

Penrith Castle Park

Development Plan/Vision for the Park

**Prepared by The Appleton Group
for Eden District Council**

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Foreword

Penrith Castle Park is the only formal park in the town of Penrith. The park has key historical and heritage links as it abuts and provides access Penrith Castle. The park is enjoyed by the town's people as well as visitors and has substantial potential for increased use and to provide a focus of activity. At 3.75 hectares the park is of a reasonable size in comparison to the overall size of the town. The local community representatives and the District Council are closely involved in the Vision and future of the park. Consultation events and community involvement has provided an insight into the value of the park to the town. The Development Plan Vision document prepared by The Appleton Group aims to set out the key opportunities and constraints of the park as well as provide an action plan for the physical enhancement, financial sourcing and improved use of the park.



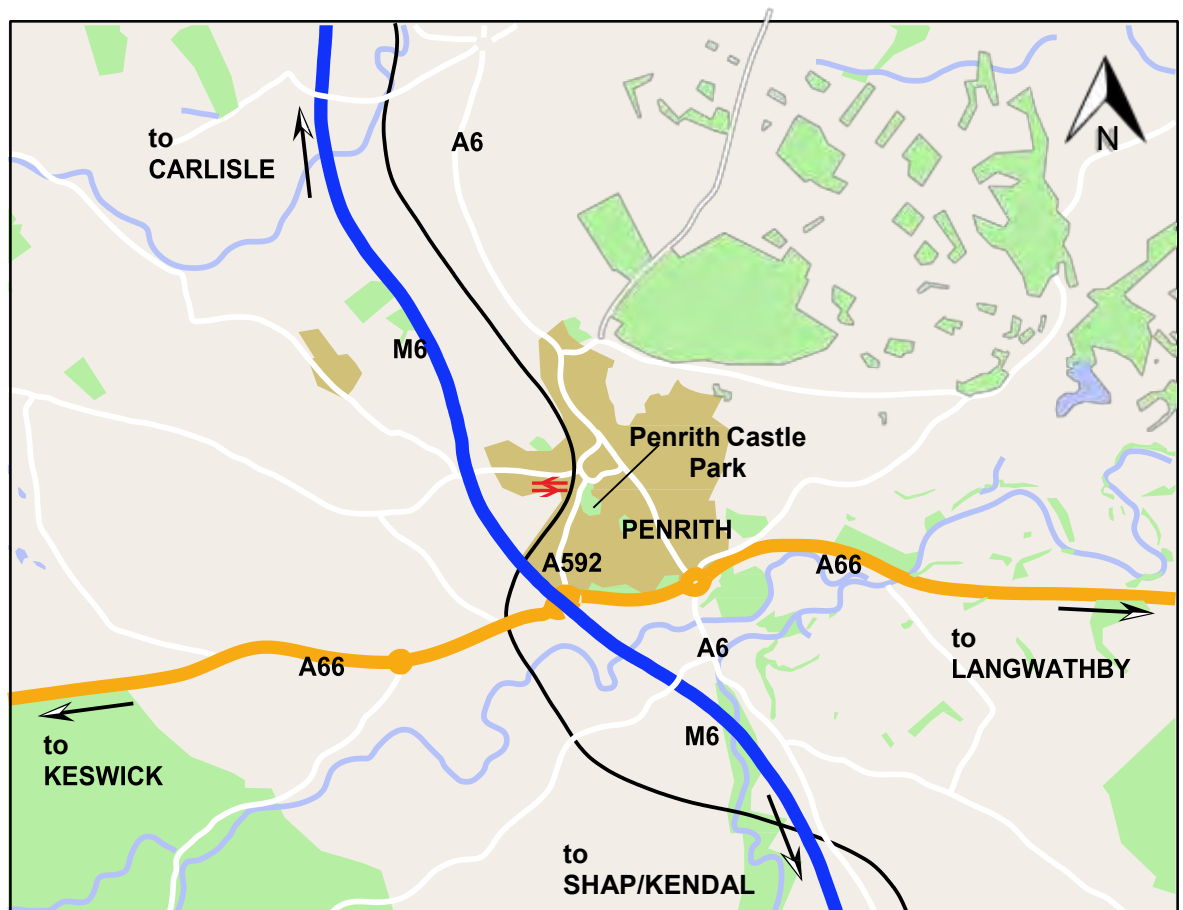
1.0 Introduction

1.1 Description of the Park

Penrith Castle Park is located to the west of the centre of Penrith, opposite the railway station and adjacent to the residential area of Castle Terrace. The main entrance to the park is from Ullswater Road/A592, an arterial road that leads to the centre of Penrith. The park covers an area of approximately 3.75ha within which lies Penrith Castle, a Scheduled Ancient Monument under the guardianship of English Heritage covering an area of approximately 0.8ha. Existing park features include, the war Memorial Lychgate, the Black Angel (war memorial), bandstand, bowling green with pavilion, public conveniences, 4no tennis courts, obstacle golf area, putting green, children's play area with equipment, rose garden and maintenance compound.

1.2 History of the Park

The development of Penrith Castle has thought to have been attributed to William Strickland (later to the Bishop of Carlisle) who in 1397 was granted a license to 'raise battlements'. It was Ralph Neville, Lord of Raby and the first Earl of Westmorland and Lord of the manor of Penrith 1396 to 1425 who developed the castle to protect the inhabitants of Penrith from Scottish invaders. In 1471 Penrith Castle was granted to Richard Duke of Gloucester who used it as his base during his period of Lord Warden of the Western Marches before succeeding to the throne as Richard III. By the Mid 1500s it was in a state of decay, much of the stone having been removed for construction of other buildings in the town. Penrith Castle Park was officially opened in 1923 witnessed by a crowd estimated at 6,000.



1.3 Heritage

The focus of the park to the north of the site is the castle ruins constructed from red sandstone. The ruins are an asset and attraction to the park and are used by visitors and residents. This northern section of the park is accessed via the Memorial Lychgate. The structure of the gate frames a mature tree lined vista towards the Black Angel monument and the bandstand on the highest part of the park. The castle ruins, moat and grounds are currently under the guardianship of English Heritage up to and including the moat. The castle has been identified by English Heritage as a key historical feature along the A66, a roman road that runs from the east to west of England.



2.0 Where are we now?

2.1 Overview

The park is currently well used and in reasonable to good condition. However, with recent parking issues, the decommissioning of the padding pool and no clear action plan, the function of the park is in decline and its focus for the town in jeopardy. There are limited parking options for visitors or members of the bowling club. Parking on the nearby road is free and unlimited allowing visitors using Penrith facilities, particular commuters using the train weekly, to leave their cars and so restricting room for park users. The avenue of trees to the park boulevard as outlined in the tree survey are in need of management and works to the trees are required for their longevity in the future. The tennis courts are under used, mainly due to their need for resurfacing. The bandstand is a central focal point to the park but is hidden behind larger overgrown Holly trees/ shrubs. The obstacle golf is well used and an enjoyable attraction to the park, but is dated, in poor condition and in need of replacing. The play equipment is in good condition but some is dated and without a designed setting. It is located away from the central hub of the park and the toilet facilities. The bowling green is a popular feature of the park, but the future of the bowling green hangs in the balance of there being sufficient parking provided for the members. Membership has already begun to reduce as members struggle to park nearby and walk to the park. The castle provides a strong back drop to the park and encourages visitors, however the space within and around the castle is under used, and the castle itself is inaccessible to wheelchair users. In general, the park can only be accessed by one entrance by wheelchair users.

2.2 Character of the Park

The character of the park with the exception of the castle ruins is Post Edwardian in nature and style. Following the destruction of the original Bower in 2012, the new pavilion has a more contemporary feel taking the colour of the castle into the cladding panels. Other modern features have been introduced such as play equipment, but in general the park has a tired and somewhat dated feel that is in need of uplifting. The castle and the park are

segregated both visually and physically by the pavilion and a deep moat, the public convenience; and the topography of the land.

2.3 Who uses the park and when?

Park usage varies during the day but also between weekdays and the weekends; this usage also fluctuates depending on the season, the weather, and which part of the park people are wanting to visit. The location of the park adjacent to the town means there is rarely a time when the park is empty. On a regular weekday the park is used as a cut through/ a commuter route for those who live, work or attend schools nearby. During the day the park is frequented by the elderly, parents with young children, and dog walkers. Weekends and school holidays are more popular times and attract a variety of ages making use of facilities. The miniature obstacle golf is popular with the younger generations. The most popular/busy facility on a regular basis is the bowling green and pavilion.

A range of age groups have been witnessed using the park and showing an interest in the future of the park. Penrith Castle Park is the only park available to the people of Penrith. Looking at the revenue figures for the tennis courts and the obstacle golf it can be seen that there is a steady income from both these facilities. The putting green displayed a mixture of highs and lows in revenue but still generates an income for the park. The lowest earning attraction in the park is the bowling green, however the figures for the last two years have not been recorded as the bowling club has become self funded. The bowlers do not pay any fees or subs to the Council for use of the green post 2012. The bowls green was transferred to the club under licence. Any income received for public use of the bowls green is transferred to the club and the club are responsible for their own maintenance of the green. They use their own groundsman and do not use the Council's works contractor.

Following conversations with a community support officer that patrols the park on his

round of Penrith, he confirmed that the park does not suffer from high number of anti social behaviour issues and is not regularly misused at night. However it should be noted the park gates are currently locked at dusk but is still accessible and there was a serious incident in 2012 that involved the bower burning down.

2.4 Who looks after the park?

Penrith Castle Park is maintained by Amey, under a contract with the Contracts Department of Eden District Council. The administration of this contracts needs to view the future of the park not just the on going maintenance. No provision has been made for upgrading the park/keeping the park modernised. This has led to the parks unkempt and dated feel. It is essential for the future of the park that the Council continue the level of maintenance they currently uphold but also include within this regime for the continued future of the park. This is to include elements such as tree pruning work, resurfacing footpaths and play facility surfaces, and keeping on top of wear and tear of the buildings within the grounds.

2.5 Feedback from the Consultation Event Days

Full details of the public consultation events are included in **Appendix A1.0**. There were two consultation days over the half term holiday. One was held on a Thursday afternoon and one on a Saturday all day during the Bowling Club's Lady President's Day. The consultation comprised of a five interactive boards that drew out more information from the consultation held in summer 2013 by the Penrith Castle Park Development Group. The summer 2013 consultation established a shopping list of wishes. This 2014 consultation sought to prioritise the list of aspirations into a timeline/ priority list. The consultation was attended by 56 members of the public in total. It might be considered that a main constraint to the results of the survey is obtaining information from wide spectrum of people. It is important to note that the level of bowlers participating in the consultation may have caused biased figures, however these are the opinions of a group that are key footfall to the park.



3.0 What do we need to consider?

3.1 Park Assets

3.1.1 Castle and the Grounds

The castle ruins stand out to the north of the park and is surrounded by a deep moat. The future use of the castle lies in the hands of English Heritage and building on establishing a relationship with the key employees at the various English Heritage offices. In the recent discussions carried out, The Appleton Group have made contact with Dr Mark Douglas from English Heritage. English Heritage were keen to meet with officers from Eden District Council on site and so a meeting was held on 7th August 2014 at the park to discuss the future of the castle within the grounds. These discussions included the maintenance of the moat. English Heritage are willing to revisit the maintenance regime. Ian Bradley, the Health and Safety Advisor at English Heritage attended the meeting to advise on the possibility of providing disabled access into the castle ground as well as funding streams available. Robert Pickles, Estate Surveyor for the North also attended the meeting and confirmed that English Heritage are happy for events to take place within the grounds of the castle. Parties wishing to carry out events at the castle are to contact English Heritage; there are guidelines for events such as no fires, but English Heritage does not object to the castle being used as the backdrop for events. It is important that a dialogue is maintained with English Heritage and they are to be more actively involved with the future of the park.



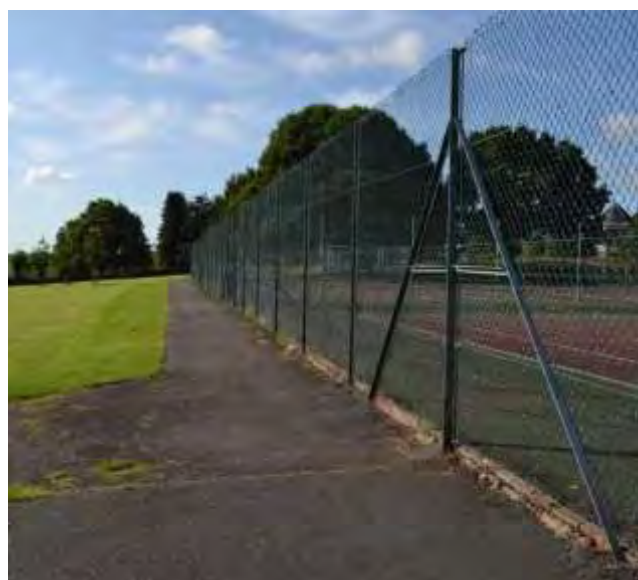
3.1.2 Tennis Courts and Sports

The future of the sports facilities in the park relies heavily on the demand, and consideration of other facilities available in the park. There currently four tennis courts that are in need of resurfacing, new netting and new ball fences to the perimeter. The need for four tennis courts should be reviewed in the context of the possibility of replacing two of the courts with a Multi Use Games Area (MUGA) facility. There are already 7 a side football/ hockey courts and MUGA's available at the Penrith Leisure Centre. It was noted that during a sunny weekend day at the park the courts were well used, although this is only a snap shot into the general day to day use of the park.



3.1.3 Children's Play Area

The quality of the play equipment is not an issue for the park users and in general the equipment is in good condition, but if anything, it is dated. The location of the equipment is away from the central location of the park; this in itself has pros and cons. The equipment is located near to adjacent residential areas and is a convenient location for children in the local area. With the equipment being located in a more remote location the noise created is away from more peaceful areas of the park. However this does mean the equipment is a reasonable distance from the toilet facilities and the kiosk. There are a number of trees in and around the Children's play area and these cause this



part of the park to feel dark and closed in. The park equipment is not very challenging for the older children.

3.1.5 Garden

The rose garden is in need of care and attention, with a less perfunctory maintenance regime. There is a potential here for the rose garden to form a formal/botanical use to a Royal Horticultural Society (RHS) standard. If the profile of the park was raised and this space was made available to group/ members club interested in tending and managing a garden this space would attract visitors and horticulturalists.



3.1.5 The Bandstand

The bandstand is in a prominent location on the highest part of the park. It is not currently used as a music venue. The location of this vantage point makes for an ideal opportunity for a music venue or picnic seating area. In order to improve this feature of the park and create more a focal point tree removal has been recommended in the overall plan for the site. Its future use as a more active part of the park would need the provision of infrastructure such as water and electricity.



3.1.6 Water Play

The park has a historic connection with water play. This is a clear memory for the people of Penrith both for the children that played in the paddling pool and the parents that took their children. There is a common reoccurring theme to create a more central new feature to attract users into the park and to use the facilities. The current paddling pool has been decommissioned due to health and safety reasons, and is now obsolete. A water play area is very popular idea, and was certainly one of the most popular subjects at the consultation days. Although all research steered towards this kind of feature or equipment the decision to install such an item needs to be viewed as a long term investment with on going costs for running, upkeep and maintenance. Water is a popular idea to the local people due to the nostalgia of the paddling pool but it might be that a central challenging large piece of equipment is more fitting to the site and the needs of the community. There is already a sum of



money allocated to replace the paddling pool with a form of water play, however this is a nominal figure when factoring in ongoing maintenance figures. The realistic option is to allow for the installation of 1-3 water jets/splash pads in the location of the paddling pool.

3.1.7 Bowling Club

The Bowling Club is a key hub of activity within the park, mainly used by the older generations. The park or surrounding area needs to provide a facility in order for the bowling members and people travelling from afar to park on match days. This is a key attraction of the park; there is a large number of members at the bowling club that feel the future of the club depends on the parking issue being resolved. The bowling club often use the pavilion building within the park to hold events. It is essential for the future of the park that this facility is utilised for the younger generation as well. The building is leased to the bowling club and they do not have exclusive rights to its use. The possibility of using the 'Bower' for other revenues or clubs such as a scout/cub/girl guide venue needs to be explored.



3.1.8 Miniature Obstacle Golf

A popular feature of the park is the obstacle golf with revenue figures reflecting its popularity, however it is a dated feature that is beyond refurbishment and is in need of redesigning and rebuilding. This could be seen as creating a major feature that is unique in the wider locality.



3.1.9 Equipment Kiosk

The equipment kiosk is located between the tennis courts and the obstacle miniature golf. The ongoing maintenance of the kiosk and its future in the park is a cause for concern, it is essential that this kiosk and all the buildings in the park are built into the continued maintenance regime of the park. They are currently looking tired but it is important that they are retained in a style that is in keeping with that of the park's character. The equipment kiosk should be restored to reflect the heritage style of the park. In particular the timber pillars at the entrance should be restored and the concrete blocks that these rest on be removed and replaced with a material more in keeping with the design of the original building.

3.1.10 The Park Parameters

One of the park's key features is the open space that surrounds the edge of the park. This area provides a buffer zone to the hustle and bustle of Penrith Town Centre, particularly the busy traffic noise of Ullswater Road

A wildlife and heritage walk to the parameters of the park that may include features such as sculptures from local schools and local artists is recommended to be incorporated into the overall plan/Vision for the park.

3.1.11 Food/Refreshments Kiosk

The refreshment kiosk is located within the Pavilion, and is a popular attraction in the park. It is important for the future of the park that the kiosk is reliable and open a majority of the time. It is recommended that the public are to be made aware that the kiosk exists, where it is located, and that it is open, which will help to draw people into the park. The provision of a covered seating area to encourage usage even during raining/winter season is a key consideration. However, the relocation and re-branding of the park's refreshment facility is also approached as an option in this report. If provided, a formal contract with regular steady opening times should be drawn up to guarantee the park users, that the facility will be available. If the cafe is relocated in a more prominent area of the park, the pavilion could be extended to incorporate a changing facility and provide an indoor event space for occasions such as weddings etc.

3.1.12 Putting Green

In addition to the obstacle golf there is a putting green area. This activity in the park is under used and takes over a large area on the east side of the park. The obstacle golf attracts more people than the putting; there is merit in replacing the obstacle golf and putting green area with a new larger themed obstacle golf area.



3.2 Park Drawbacks

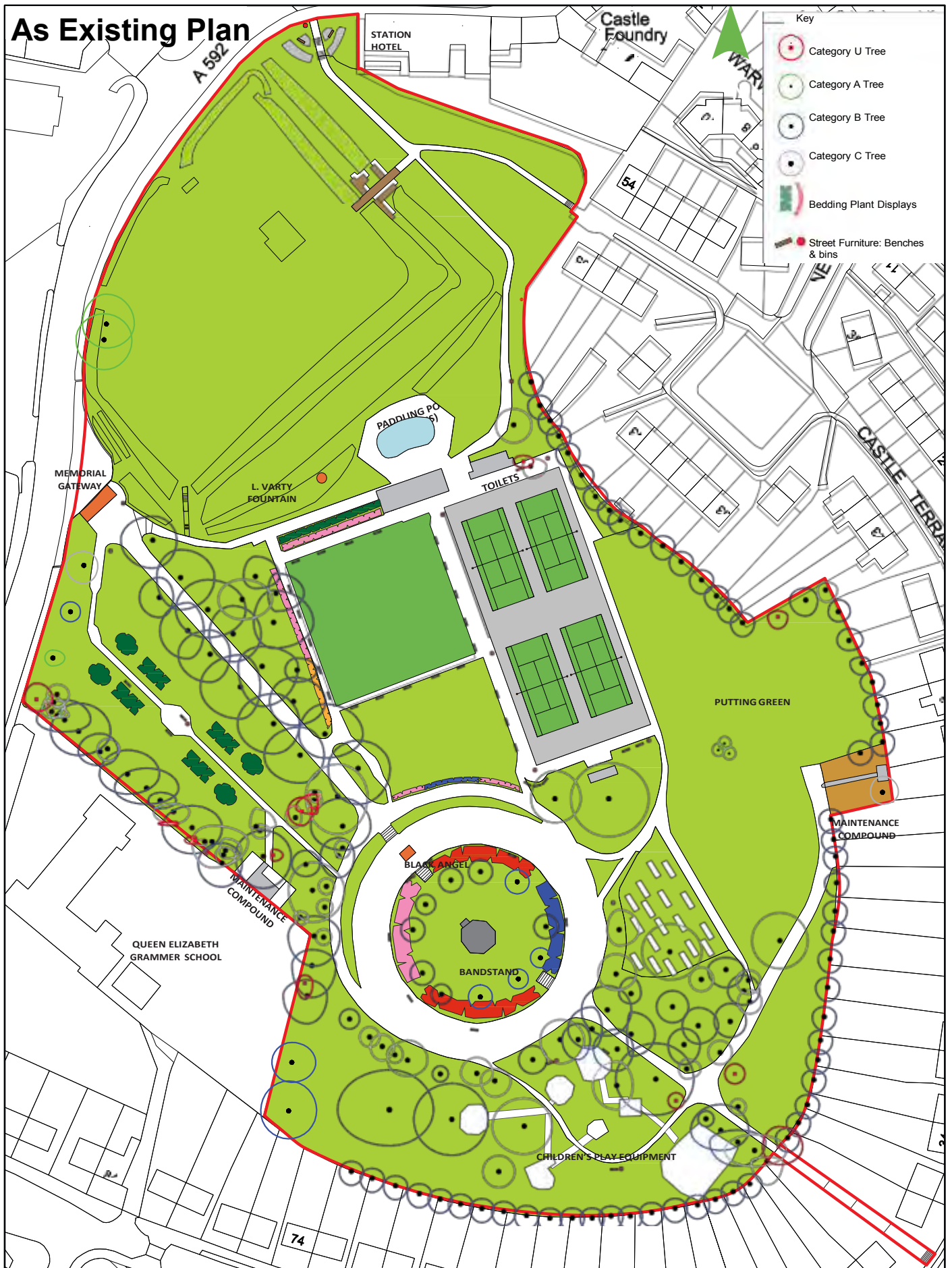
There are a number of drawbacks and issues in the park that will be addressed:

- The car parking facilities pose a real issue to the future development of the park. Providing new parking facilities within the grounds means losing a portion of the rose garden in the more tranquil area of the park;
- Access to the park is possible from four entrance points, however, only one of these entrances can be considered DDA complaint; The Lychgate entrance is the main and most attractive entrance to the park. Even though the park is compliant in providing one entrance for wheelchair users there is no wheelchair access to the castle. Furthermore, of the remaining entrances to the park, two of these could be made DDA complaint to provide additional options for wheelchair users;
- Many features of the park feel isolated and give the park disjointed usage. The play area is remote from the café and toilets. The castle is a separate feature cut off by the café and Pavilion.
- Any new features of the park might mimic the style of the castle such as the miniature obstacle golf or the new play equipment in order to create that connection;
- Footpaths through the park are of a variety of materials and in places require repair work. There are good linkages through the park but these require enhancing and rationalising;
- There is no key usable central feature to the park, and although not in a state of disrepair, the sports facilities and play equipment are dated;
- The moat is poorly maintained and as a result is an unattractive feature of the park;
- The decommissioned paddling pool is an eyesore in the park. There is no future for the pool due to health and safety and on going maintenance costs;
- There is little signage or wayfinding in and around the park;

Plan of the park as existing can be found on page 15.



As Existing Plan



4.0 What are the objectives?

4.1 Mission Statement(s)

- :: **We aim to improve the park to be inclusive and attractive to all ages and abilities**
- :: **We aim to insure that the park has a sense of identity and a main attraction to encourage visitors and raise the park profile**
- :: **We aim to provide a clear timeline/programme/schedule for the future maintenance, upkeep, enhancement and restoration of the park**
- :: **We aim to deliver facilities which reflect the consensus of the public and council aspirations**
- :: **We aim to recommend a scheme of work which is deliverable and sustainable**
- :: **We aim to provide a park which links heritage, recreation and environment for generations to come**

4.2 Analysis

Opportunities and constraints within the park have been analysed through the consultation process, meetings with stakeholders and by forming opinions as professionals with experience of working on projects of a similar nature.

The following objectives were established:

- Disabled access to be considered as a priority at each entrance where this is achievable. Where this is not possible handrails will be installed and the general standard of the entrance improved and made safe. Parking facilities in or around the park to be made available;
- A key play feature to be incorporated into the design and layout. This might be in the form of a large challenging play feature or water play if funding is available;
- A maintenance regime and programme to be prepared to begin to replace the avenue of trees at the memorial entrance and the removal of the over grown holly to the bandstand, together with other tree removal to facilitate future works;
- The obstacle golf course to be removed and a new course rebuilt in its place and within part of the putting green;
- The central bandstand is on the high point of the park. The bandstand will become a key feature of the park as well as a location where musician bands can perform. The expanse of grass around will form open free space on a day to day basis as well as for crowds of people during events;



- Reshaping the land around the bandstand to widen the recreational/ open space and reduce width of the path to the circular path around perimeter of the bandstand;
- The two of the four tennis courts to be converted into a MUGA. A MUGA will offer a different range of sports such as football, netball, and basketball. This would also leave an adjacent activity space for concrete tennis tables or outdoor games;
- The decommissioned paddling pool to be replaced with a water jet/splash pad/feature that can be turned off and provide a hard standing for future events in the castle grounds or the park;
- The rose garden to be re-designed and worked to create individual pocket or cameo gardens with different styles and features to be cared for by horticultural volunteer groups. This element would also include the creation of a role for a person to recruit volunteer members or groups to take on the design and future maintenance of the formal garden or horticultural displays.
- There will be the introduction of a new footpath to the edge/parameters of the park through a series of habitats and wildlife corridors;
- The plans for the moat are to apply for permission to establish a meadow/wildflower mix to the moat;
- Circulation rationalised and relaid to provide a clear hierarchy. This hierarchy can be seen in the circulation plan on page 18.

4.3 Aspirations

In summary the overall aspiration for the park is to:

- Retain bowling green, pavilion, and toilet block;
- Create a large focal attraction, play or water feature;

- Create a park setting that can hold events and produce an income or a revenue for the park;
- Provide proposals that are sensitive to the history of the park and the castle whilst integrating the park castle interface and setting;
- Redesign the park without overly modernising it;
- Include disable access to the park and castle grounds;
- Provide a comprehensive landscape/ circulation/wayfinding structure across the park;
- Provide areas of both activity and tranquillity across the park;
- Re-purpose the moat;
- Relocate of the cafe and leave space to extend the pavilion to provide changing facilities and create an indoor event space for occasions such as weddings.



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4.4 Objectives

The physical objectives for the park are to:

- Refurbish toilet block, and extend pavilion to incorporate changing facilities/function space for events;
- Upgrade and restore equipment kiosk to original style in order to provide a service the proposed MUGA, tennis courts and new miniature obstacle golf;
- Provide wildflower area to the sides and base of the moat;
- Carry out recommended work to existing trees along main avenue and across the site;
- Develop car park area to edge of park adjacent Ullswater Road;
- Develop formal horticultural gardens;
- Upgrade and resurface tennis courts (2no);
- Allocate 2no tennis courts for MUGA area;
- Provide two concrete tennis tables and large outdoor games;
- Upgrade bandstand, remove mature shrubs, remodel ground to create open grassed area for events and provide an interpretation board labelling the vista seen from the bandstand (the grading of this land could be linked with the provision for the car park);
- Provide central destination point by integrating café in association with bandstand, including new infrastructure (water supply/electrical supply);
- Extend the pavilion into the cafe space to enable the pavilion to be used as a function room as well as the bowling club. This would also incorporate a changing room facility;
- Provide upgraded and enhanced miniature obstacle golf feature which may mimic the theme of the castle;
- Upgrade landscape and setting to existing play equipment;
- Provide large play feature ROSPA checked (in association with existing play area) - water play or large 'adventure play' equipment - approx 1130m² (new infrastructure required if water play);
- Resurface poor footpaths;
- Remove paddling pool and replace with installation of water jets/splash pads;
- Provide DDA compliant access from Castle Terrace;
- Refurbish Memorial Lychgates that could link into a memorial/ historical trail to the outskirts;
- Upgrade entrance from Ullswater Road to be DDA compliant;
- Upgrade entrance from Castle Drive entrance;
- Introduce entrance signage, interpretation/notice boards and internal directional signage;
- Introduce entrance sign/new interpretation boards to castle subject to English Heritage approval;
- Develop a wildlife zone to the perimeters of the park;
- Introduce a sculpture, heritage walk or arts trail in association with the footpath system;
- Provide appropriate surfacing for events space and regrade ground to the back of the pavilion;
- Expand open grassed area between the bowling green and bandstand to extend vista to castle and provide public seating space;
- Install smart lighting into the park at the entrance to the pavilion and main commuter routes through the park;
- Upgrade seating/furniture including bins across the park, and installation of a cycle rack;

- Paint external railings;
- Relocate and restoration of Lucy Varty memorial;
- Clean Black Angel memorial;
- Relocate maintenance shed and incorporate this space into the wildlife area of the park.
- Installation a canopy structure adjacent to the cafe and splash pads, this semi permanent to provide shelter from the rain and protection from the sun;

4.5 Masterplan

An overall masterplan is included within the report on page 21 showing the proposals for the park to be completed in stages or all in one contract of works. An A1 size version of this plan can be found in **Appendix A2.0**. Pages 22 and 23 are additional plans to accompany the masterplan.

Firstly, the tree works plan shows works required including trees to be removed, new tree planting and the trees to be retained. The second plan is a street furniture plan with a wayfinding strategy demonstrating the signage locations and different notice boards/fingerposts and entrance signs required within the park. This plan also includes location of handrails to the entrance at Castle Drive which cannot be made DDA compliant due to level constraints, and the locations of lighting columns through to the two main pedestrian commuter routes through the park. There are proposals for the location of cycle racks, as well as the locations of other street furniture such as lighting columns, benches and bins.

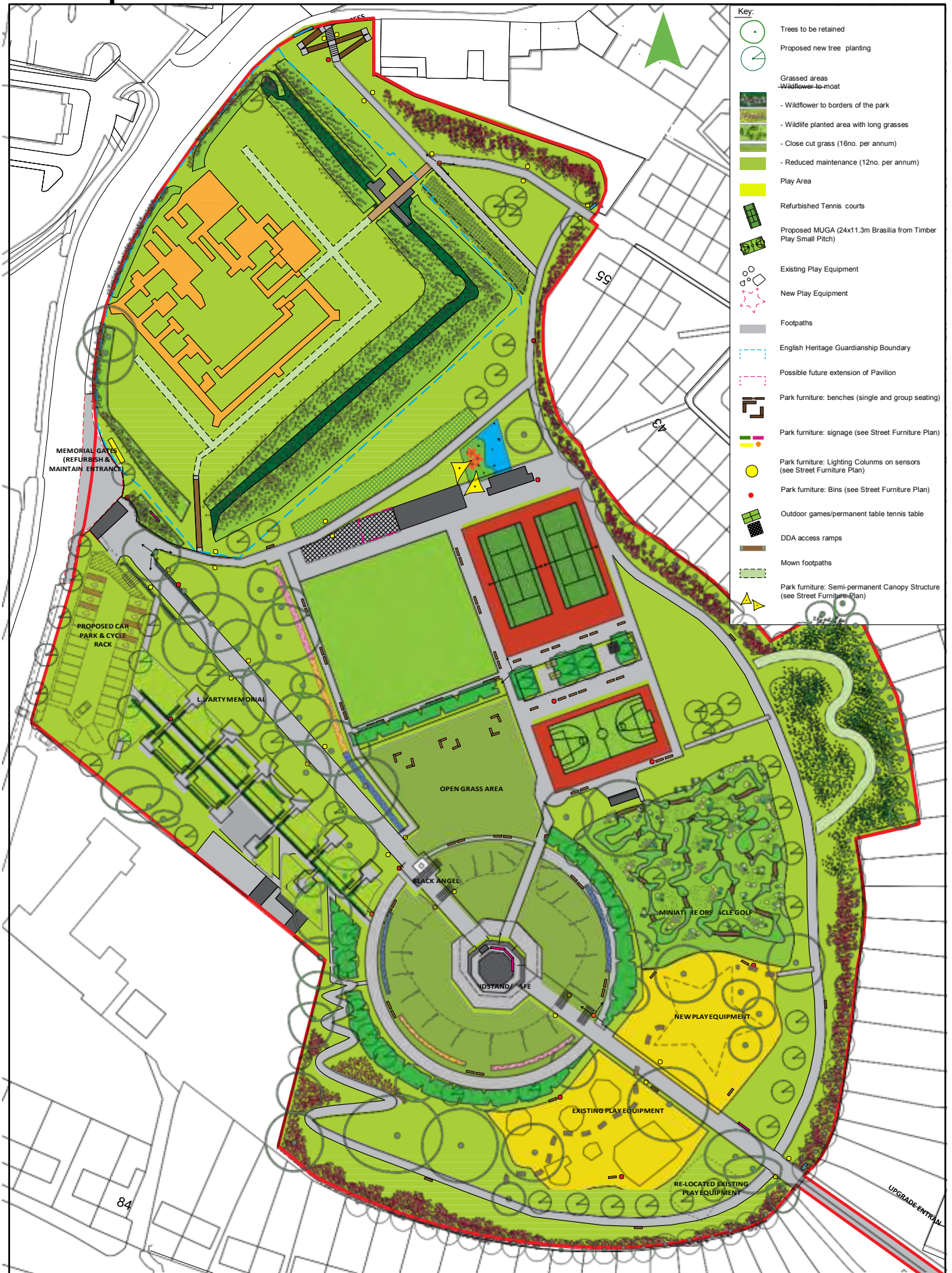
A series of precedent images demonstrating the vision for the park can be found in **Appendix A3.0**.

4.6 Maintenance

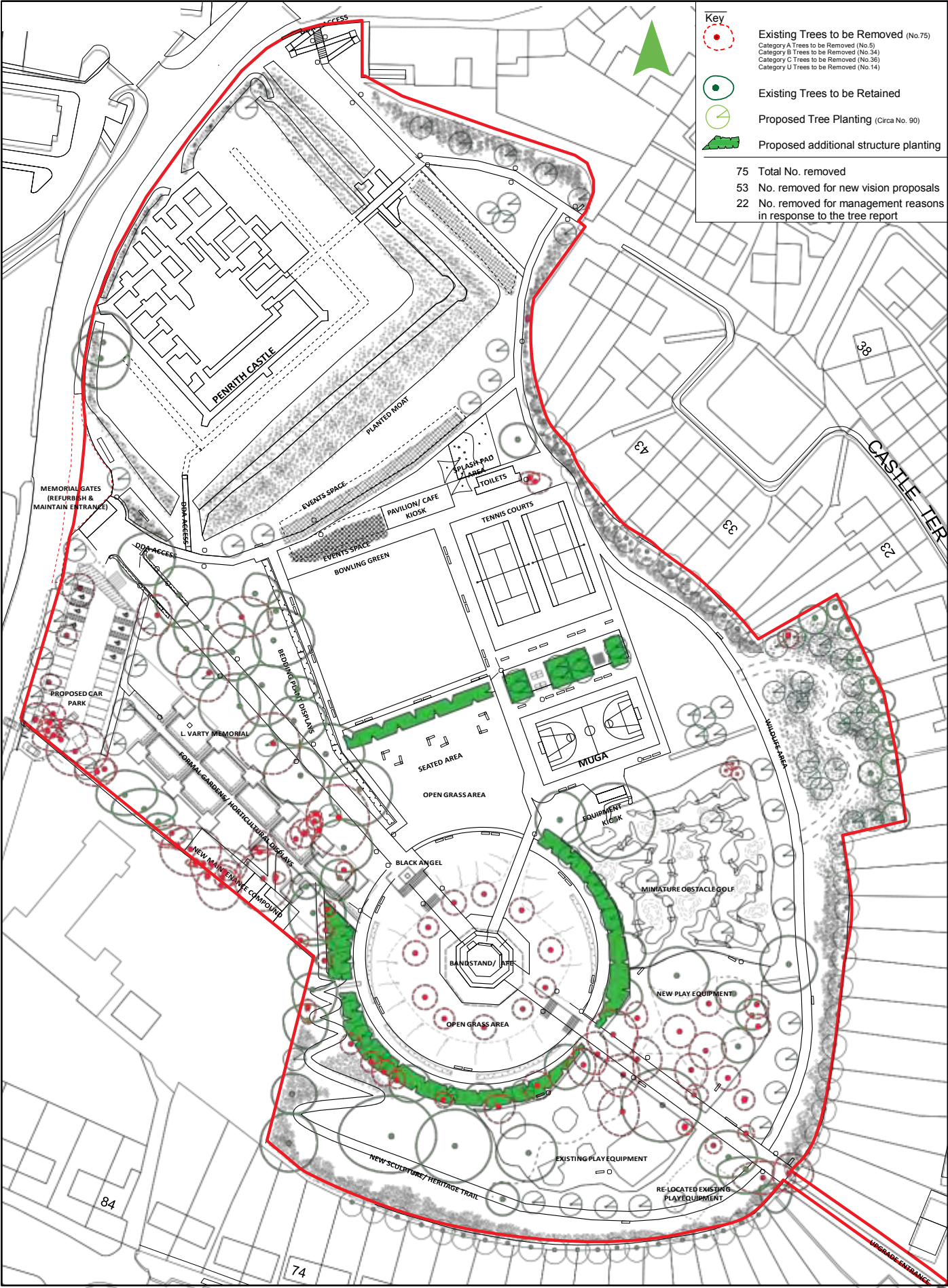
The maintenance of the park is currently managed by the contract department at Eden District Council. The level of maintenance and regularity of the checks needs to be reviewed. The grounds maintenance of the park has been up held however additional piecemeal/ ad hoc work have not been carried out under general maintenance and upkeep of the park for a number of years. The lack of footpath upgrades or tree works have lead to the park looking tired and dated. An annual maintenance programme needs to be accompanied by a 5 year rolling programme of upgrade work and a weekly checklist of items to be reviewed such as sports surfaces or footpath conditions. In discussions with English Heritage they have agreed to revisit their current maintenance regime. English Heritage also explained that they would be willing to hand over the maintenance of the moat and castle to Eden District Council and pay the council for carrying out this work.



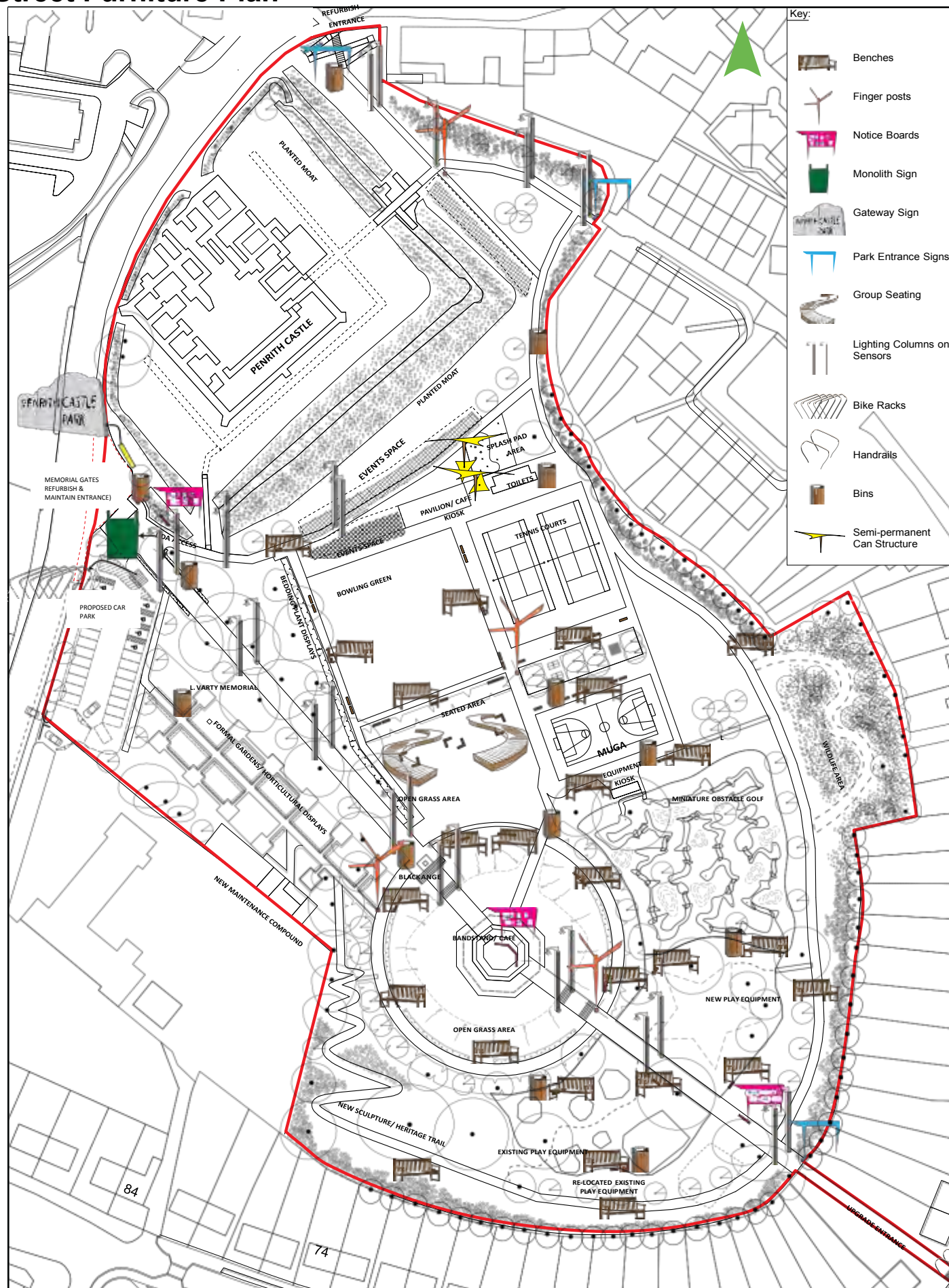
Masterplan



Tree Works



Street Furniture Plan



5.0 How will we get there?

5.1 Action Plan

There is proposed to be two action plans for the park.

5.1.1 A “do-everything-plan” approach; this action comprises of applying to Heritage Lottery Funds and Big Lottery Funds joint initiative, Parks For People, for one lump sum amount. These funds are available to not-for-profit organisations such as local authorities and charities. The priority for the programme is to conserve the existing heritage of a designed park or cemetery. The money is available for projects that guarantee key outcomes for heritage, people and communities. Priority will be given to investments that will incorporate better management of heritage, develop skills in people, and provide a better place to live, work or visit. Funds are not made available where the main focus of the project is a new car parking facility, sports or play feature, for repairing memorial, or even meeting the legal requirements of DDA. Whilst the proposals include these items none of the above are the main focus of the vision for the park. Costs that can be funded by the People for Parks include new staff or extra hours for existing staff, bursaries for trainees, professional fees, capital work, activities to engage people in heritage, promotion and additional expenses such as a new phone, photocopying or computer equipment. A conceptual plan for the park can be found on page 21. This is the best option and guarantees the full funding for the park and all aspects of the Vision can be achieved. In the discussions English Heritage explained they would be able to provide a letter of support for any funding application backing the improvements or restoration work that Eden District Council are wanting to undertake in the park and castle grounds.

5.1.2 The second option for the park is for small piecemeal elements of work in which the Council and the development group will need to work together in order to apply for funding for various phases of work. This does not guarantee all aspects of the Vision are completed and relies heavily on the

Council and the Development Group/Volunteers to work together. There is no security in this option and there is a high probability that the full scheme would not be completed. There would also be an increased possibility of the programme slipping due to the requirements of needing to apply for different streams of funding. A timeline can be found on page 27 with all the elements of the overall conceptual masterplan of the park set out chronologically in an order of phasing and indicating the funding stream required to obtain the funds.

5.1.3 It is important that if the Big Lottery Fund application is not successful the Council should review available funds/ capital gain fund and allocate for the continuation of upgrades and long term maintenance of the park based on the overall Vision masterplan.



5.2 Finances and Funding

5.2.1 Following extensive research into the available funding streams it was established that there are two options for funding. Results of this research can be viewed in **Appendix A4.0**. A single application for a large funding application which is envisaged would be delivered over a 5 year period and would require 10% matching funding from Eden District Council. It is in the interest of the community and the Council that this option is explored and is the preferred option. It would guarantee a sustainable approach and ensure the full Vision is completed within a structured time frame.

5.2.2 The second option is for a number of smaller application for funding to be phased in order to establish a future programme of works for the park. These funding streams are possibilities that have been pulled together through research and are second chance options should the big lottery fund application fail.

These would include:

- an application to English Heritage for funding to enable disabled access to the castle and incorporate headphone/ speaker tours of the castle for the visual impaired;
- an application to Sports England for funding to build a new MUGA;
- an application to the County Council to fund ramps to the park entrances that for part of a larger cycle route and network through the park;
- an application to the County Council for funding for a new large central play feature or water play;
- generating income from the Development Group charity such as Gift Aid, to facilitate new features eg new miniature obstacle golf;
- the parks maintenance and capital gain budget could be used to install the infrastructure work in the park in order to hold events in the castle grounds thus generating money to go back into the maintenance/park revenue.

5.2.3 Annual Maintenance Budget

Various elements of the work maybe considered to be taken from the annual maintenance budget for the park. These include items such as:

- tree works
- removal of the paddling pool
- resurfacing the existing footpaths

5.2.4 The timeline for progressing the Vision is included on page 28, and an A1 version of this can be found in **Appendix A5.0**. This demonstrates the various funding streams available, the work required to improve the park, and when this work could be carried out. The timeline gives two possible outcomes spreading the work over a 20 year period. One section of the time line showing when the work would be done if a Big Lottery Fund (BLF) application was successful, with the remaining timeline to be implemented if the BLF is not made available to the Penrith Castle Park Development Group. The timeline phases the work in the order in which each element of the proposals are considered should be carried out based on a priority/hierarchy order in accordance with the public consultations that were carried out.

5.2.5 It is essential that if Big Lottery Funding is not successful the Council should review available funds and allocate money for the park improvement and restoration of the park even if this is small ad hoc pieces of work done over a longer period of time.

5.2.6 There is currently a small amount of money available to Eden District Council to replace the paddling pool, this may be incorporated in the overall masterplan of the park in the form of water jets or splash pads in the same location as the existing paddling pool. This would mean less money being spent on expensive infrastructure costs to move the water play; but these features could be switched off leaving an area of flat space that could be used during events.



5.3 Revenues, Income and Expenditure

Revenue/income for the park can be created by the following activities; miniature obstacle golf, MUGA and the tennis courts. Savings on any maintenance from the Vision for the park should be utilised and put back into the park rather than assessed by auditors as a reduced future cost to maintenance. For example, if savings were made on mowing grass due to a wild flower mix being sown, this money should be put back into the park to maintain for example an ongoing maintenance and upkeep of footpaths throughout the park.

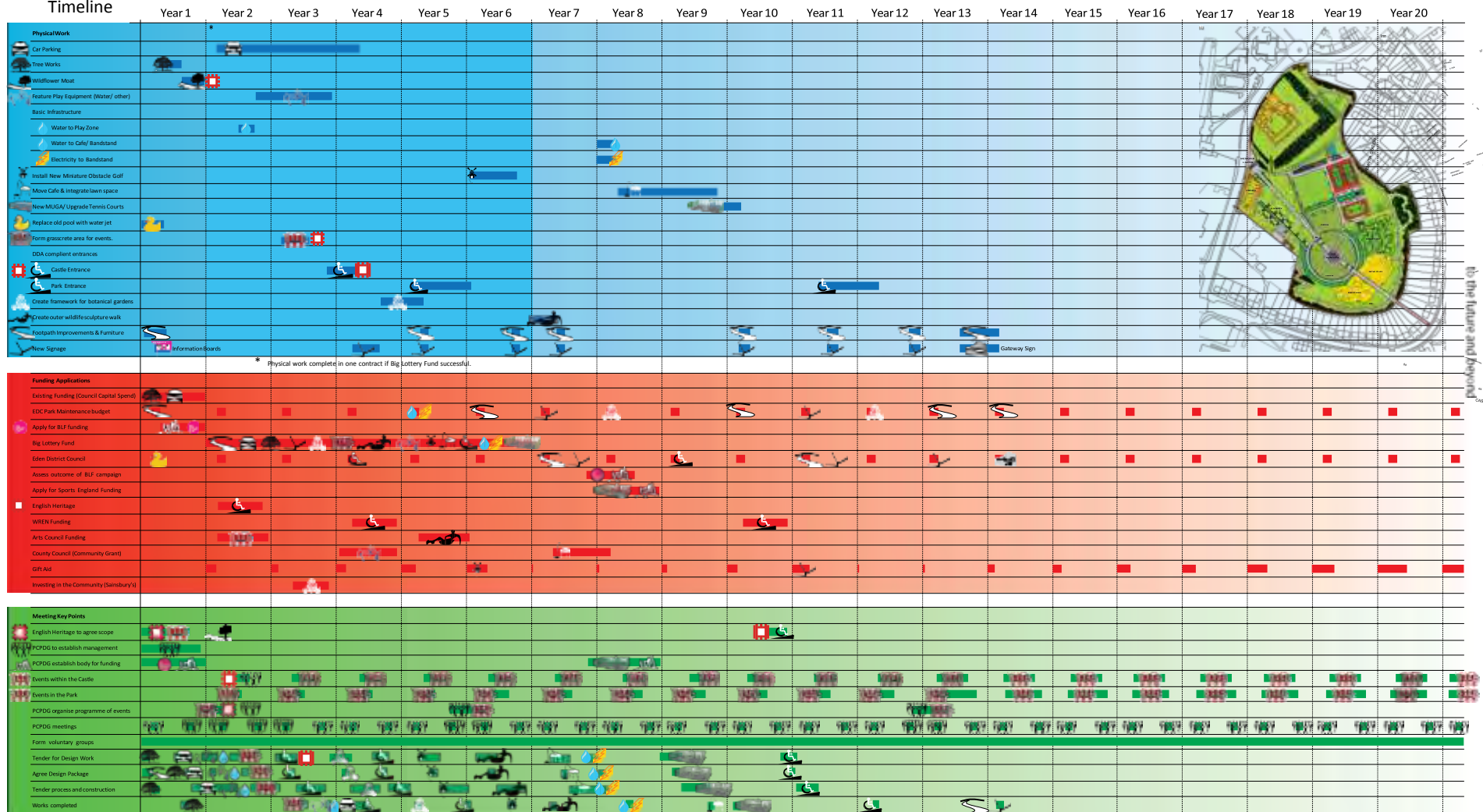
Any expenditure from income generated within the park should be aggregated and spent on the park in order to improve facilities and provide amenities.

A table of quantities, costs and professional fees can be found in **Appendix A6.0**. These costs of a approximate guide for how much funding will be required for the delivery of each element of the proposals.



PENRITH CASTLE PARK, EDEN VALLEY

Timeline



6.0 How do we approach health and safety?

6.1 DDA Compliant

Accessibility into and around the park is a major constraint in the site. Proposals are required to comply with the current DDA guidance. This includes reviewing the paths through the park as well as the park entrances. The Memorial Lychgate allows access for wheelchairs into the site, but there is currently no other means of access into the site for wheelchair users and there is no ramped access into the castle or castle grounds. Following a meeting with English Heritage it was established that inclusion is a high priority. The discussions looked at the possibility of gaining access to the park from the entrance at Ullswater Road. This would include breaking into the wall that surrounds the castle and forming a ramp up through the moat. Although this would create a disabled access into the park users would then experience difficulties accessing the bridge and the steep verge beyond the bridge into the castle grounds. English Heritage also felt that this access ramp through the moat would have to the most impact on the style and character of the castle.

It was felt that it would be possible to create a bridged and ramped access across the moat from the access point near to the Memorial Lychgate. Although there is

level constraints it was considered that this location next to the proposed car park with disabled parking bays adjacent to the only DDA compliant entrance to the site was preferable. This option would also cause the least disruption to the character of the castle. Eden District Council should contact English Heritage Disabled Action Group regarding DDA compliant access to the castle in order to obtain information on any potential funding streams available for the work.

6.2 Car Parking

Car parking is a town wide issue, and there are problems throughout Penrith that need to be addressed. However, in relation to the park, since the removal of the restriction access on Ullswater Road park users currently struggle to leave their cars close by in order to use the facilities available in the park. It is important to the future of the park that the parking issue is resolved. There was a strong consensus that a section of the park would form a car park, which would allow access into the park for larger maintenance vehicles. An alternative view to this is that the car park will affect the tranquillity of the park and it seemed a shame to lose value of green space to provide



space for cars. This would also involve the expenditure of approximately £96K (as priced by Eden District Council) to provide such parking facilities. The reintroduction of the limited parking on Ullswater Road would alleviate the issue here, however, the parking situation through out Penrith is likely to change over the coming months/year as Cumbria County Council take over the parking restriction in the area. A more long term and established arrangement with the adjacent school to allow parking for the bowlers on important match/event days such as the Lady President's/ Presentation days might also be a solution here however this presents problems during term time. And does not provide a solution for a majority of the visitors to the park.

6.3 The Moat

In discussions with English Heritage it has been made clear that for heritage and archaeological reasons the moat cannot be altered or used for recreational purposes such as a rope swing. Meeting with representatives of English Heritage took place in August 2014. The representatives from English Heritage explained that the moat is subject to English Heritage's long grass regime; this not only

improves biodiversity but also a saving on the overall maintenance cost of the moat. The proposals to plant the moat with wildflower mix was accepted as a feasible approach to English Heritage. Any work carried out to the moat or the land within the guardianship of English Heritage will require a scheduled monument consent. Dr Mark Douglas from English Heritage is the main point of contact to establish work that is feasible and likely to be given consent. The maintenance of the moat could be passed over to Eden District Council and the funds that English Heritage pay for this maintenance work could also be transferred to the Council.

6.4 Footpaths

As there has been no long term maintenance regime for the park elements such as footpaths have been left. The footpaths throughout the park are generally in a poor state. There a number of places where tree roots have grown through the path and caused trip hazards. Most of the paths do not have appropriate edges, and are crumbling away.



7.0 Making the Most of Conservation and Heritage

7.1 The Castle and Castle Events

The castle is a key asset to the park, with the links to Richard III. The following and popularity of the king provide a key feature of the park's heritage that needs to be developed. In discussions with English Heritage it was established that permission is required to hold any events. There are rules in relation to health and safety, and protecting the heritage of the castle such as weighing down marquees rather than pegging structures into the ground. There is no reason events cannot be held in the castle, however there would be a 3-4 month lead in time in order to agree arrangements and permission with English Heritage as well as the Council's own procedures. The key contact for arranging such events is Robert Pickles from English Heritage. It is also important that these events are inclusive and provide alternative access/ways to enjoy the event for less mobile members of the public. English Heritage are also working on a concept of the heritage route of the A66. This will involve the Penrith Castle and could mean that new interpretation boards are installed within the castle grounds.



7.2 The Memorial Lychgate and Avenue

This gate is the main thoroughfare into the park and leads into an avenue of mature copper beech trees and up to the bandstand. This entrance is currently the only wheelchair friendly access to the park. The avenues of trees provide a setting and important vista up to the bandstand towards the Black Angel. It is important that the tree management work begins on these trees and the process of replacing the trees that are approaching the end of their life begins now so that arboricultural features of the park are retained. Other trees identified for removal would be included within this work. The gate entrance is a memorial to both World Wars and there is a strong link with the community of Penrith. A conceptual idea of the community was to clean and refurbish this entrance and have some form of interpretation. This could be in the form of sculptures or memorial benches that were situated along the perimeter to path to the park.





7.3 The Black Angel

The proposals are to retain the Black Angel in the current location. There was request through the consultation to remove or change the location of the Black Angel. Its current location provides a focal point to the vista created at the memorial entrance.



7.4 The Lucy Varty Fountain

The proposals would be to relocated the Lucy Varty fountain into the horticultural garden. Once this area is developed into more of a botanical garden feature the fountain would sit well in this setting and potentially be filled with soil and used as a small planter.

8.0 Getting the Community Involved

8.1 Development Group

The Penrith Castle Park Development Group is an established constituted group with aspirations to become a charity. The group are the main driving force behind the refurbishment and improvement of the park. This group will need to play an active role in applying for big lottery funding and for any alternative funding stream. There are circa 12 members of the group which includes elected members. The input of the group is considered essential and is recommended to be consulted at meetings every 6 weeks relating to all progress and management of the park. Decisions on the parks future should be reviewed and agree with the development group in consultation with Eden District Council. The group should also hold open public meetings once a year.



8.2 Volunteers

Volunteers will be required, in particular a group of people with an interest in creating the botanical gardens. The volunteers will be able to offer as much or as little of their time helping the park and establishing a botanical garden. In return the park could offer opportunities to be part of a team with potentially specialist training/knowledge. A sample of the voluntary group agreement can be seen in **Appendix A7.0**. The volunteer groups will need to be developed encouraging more people to play a role in the park and carry out a multitude of tasks across the park. Other volunteer groups that may become involved in the park or that would need to be set up are listed in the appendices. Members of Penrith Partnership have offered the Penrith Castle Park Development Group an umbrella to work under in order to apply for funding and they are willing to support the work of the development group.



8.3 Eden District Council/Penrith Town Council

Eden District Council are responsible for the management and maintenance of the park. The Council also attend meetings with the Penrith Castle Park Development Group and acts as administration for the group. The Council would act as a “one stop shop” for all aspects of the park and a point of contact for anyone wishing to hold events in the bandstand/ castle grounds. The Council would be responsible for applying for the necessary permission/ permits required to hold events in the park. Council representatives will continue to meet regularly with the Development Group to review timetables of events that the group wish to organise. The Council will also need to review their existing maintenance regime for the park looking at the long term upkeep such as tree works and resurfacing work that will not be part of the day to day or even monthly maintenance of the park. It is understood that the Council would make the application for Big Lottery Funding and the Development Group should support the Council in this bid. If this application is unsuccessful the Council should go on to support and advice on other funds included in this document that might be available to the group in order to keep working towards the Vision for the park. It is important to note that Penrith is currently in the process voting to opt in/out for a Town Council. If Penrith forms a Town Council the responsibility of the Park will no longer be with Eden District Council. Penrith Town Council will provide services to upkeep play areas and update park facilities, however the principles of this report will still apply.

Eden
District Council

9.0 Making Marketing Work

9.1 Signage and Interpretation

New signage and wayfinding system has been put forward for the park. Key locations for finger posts have been suggested and locations of entrance signs are shown. This signage will also direct wheelchair users to accessible routes through the park. A location of these can be seen on the drawing on page 23. It is essential these signs not only identify the park but create a brand and list the features and attractions of the park. Any events due in the near future that will be held in the park or castle grounds should be advertised on these boards. It is essential that the signage for the park follows a clear branding and are coherent, therefore the wayfinding strategy for the park should continue to be developed and be adhered to. Interpretation boards with the bandstand identifying locations/ features that can be viewed from this high point has been suggested. There is also a recommendation for historical interpretation boards that would follow a heritage/memorial walk around the perimeter of the park. English Heritage will be looking in the future to include the park within the A66 heritage route. This work is at a very early



concept stage but would involved reviewing the current interpretation boards in and around the Council grounds. English Heritage have an expert team that design of their interpretation boards for the organisation and they would be willing to review and advise on any interpretation boards that have been designed for the park.

9.2 Promotion

It is essential that in order to maintain revenue and continue to function as an asset to Penrith the park needs to raise its profile. Events facilities and advertising will ensure this happens. This Vision masterplan needs to be taken forward in this process. Promotion of the park is a key role for the development group with assistance from Eden District Council.





9.3 Marketing/Tourism

The community should be informed and involved in the activities that take place in the park. Objectives should be undertaken to enable continued and successful marketing of the park, these include:

- An updated event programmes should be kept and continually updated and advertising developed by the Castle Park Development Group and Eden District Council;
- The park events and facilities should be linked with nearby places, visitors attractions and tourist boards. This should be considered as part of the wider tourist trail of Cumbria. These events could include the Droving Festival and Christmas/Food Markets/Festivals;
- Community newsletters, and online presence through the local press should be used to advertise/market the park and events;
- A notice board should be installed as part of the park masterplan in the location advised and this should be kept up to date with all park activities;
- Blogs on the park activities and up and coming events should be shared via a park website, Facebook and Twitter;
- Leaflets and information boards should be provided illustrating the parks history and interpretation boards of local wildlife. This could be distributed within tourist information services, libraries and newsagents etc;
- A Management Plan for the park should be in place and adhered to through direction from the Council and Penrith Castle Park Development Group;
- The park should be included in local websites, the Council's website and tourism websites;
- Marketing should be targeted to particular groups and organisations such as local charities, sports clubs, and community groups who may wish to hold events/use the site to promote Penrith.

10.0 Vision/Proposals

10.1 Possibilities

A timeline of the proposals can be found on page 28, this shows the possible outcomes of the masterplan and potential funding streams.

10.2 Management Roles/Responsibilities

Eden District Council will be the one stop shop for the park and the main contact for anyone wishing to find out about the park and the facilities available. However the Council must work closely with the park's development group and all future decisions must be agreed in the regular meetings held between the Council and the Penrith Castle Park Development Group.

10.2.1 Penrith Castle Park Development Group are required to carry out the following roles and responsibilities:

- organise events programme, a typical programme of park events is included as **Appendix A8.0**;
- coordinate fun days with volunteers to raise revenue
- and the profile of the park;
- coordinate formal volunteer activities;
- organise a 'lottery' draw type of scheme;
- organise ad hoc volunteers when required;

10.2.2 Eden District Council has an established contract for the maintenance team of the park. The bowling green is maintain as a separate entity by the bowling club. Members of the park development group including ward Councillors should oversee and influence the decisions made on the management of the park. They will be responsible for deciding where the focus of the maintenance should be and any additional work that is needed to be carried out under the maintenance regime and budget.

A management structure diagram is included as **Appendix A9.0**. A list of contacts names, number and email addresses can be found at the end of the document.



10.3 How will we know when we have got there?

The timeline included on page 28 has a service life span of 20 years. The Vision is to achieve a successful and completed masterplan before then. A management and maintenance plan should also be devised for the park by Eden Council and the Penrith Castle Park Development Group. To ensure continued longevity, the timeline and maintenance plan should be reviewed on a 6 monthly basis. Representatives from the Penrith Castle Park Development Group should be consulted and provide feedback through regular meetings with Eden District Council. The Park Development Group will also need to monitor the key points identified in the timeline and review the progress in 6 monthly meetings with Eden District Council and make adjustments accordingly. The advantage of a phased realistic masterplan means that work can be carried out piecemeal, and when funds are made available. In recent years it has been all too apparent how changes in the economy can effect the progress of overly ambitious projects, and so a phased approach means work can be carried out on an ad hoc basis if required. Penrith Castle Park Development Group will know when they have reached the objectives of the Vision when usage of the park increases and revenue is generated which can be readily monitored. The Vision for the park is not solely based on completing all the phases of the masterplan in one go but competing the work that is sustainable for the future of the park at the appropriate time in the timeline/life cycle of the park.

10.4 Aim High and Think Big

The changes to the park can be as subtle or as grand as the Penrith Castle Park Development Group wish to take them and of course the funding that is available to the group. There are simplistic and quick win approaches within the Vision that look to improve and tidy the appearance of the park. There are large scale interventions such as new play equipment and forming an event space or café at the bandstand. These changes will dramatically change the park and encourage new users.



Sketch Proposals



