

# BRANDHALL ECO-PARK

## Introduction

### Welcome

Welcome to this creative engagement workshop to shape the future of Brandhall Eco-Park.

This engagement builds on previous engagement events led by Sandwell Metropolitan Borough Council (SMBC) in July 2023, and is intended to help shape the vision for this important green space.

We would welcome your views and ideas to inform the park's future.

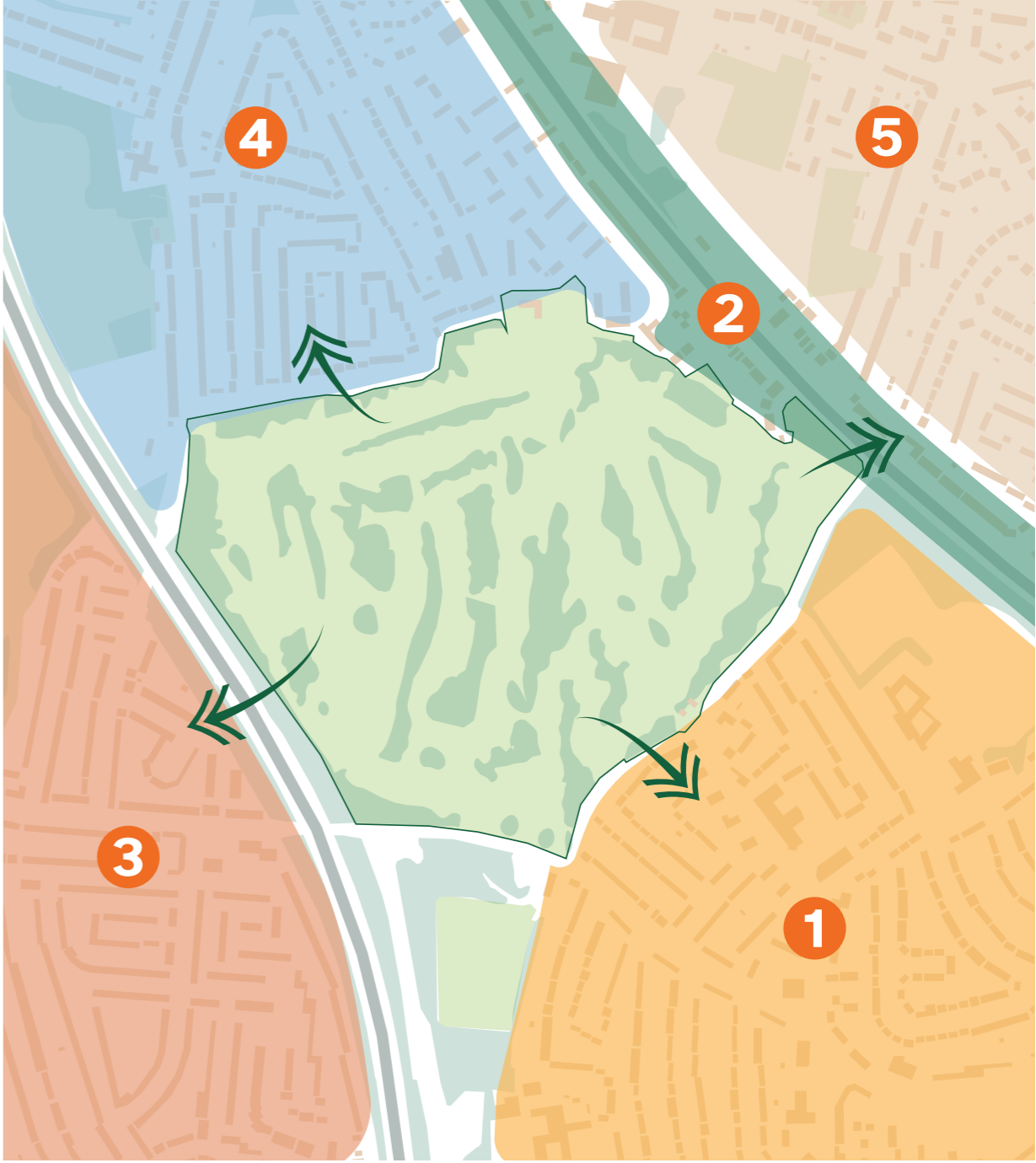
### Background

The existing consented masterplan proposes the creation of a new high-quality and sustainable community, delivering the first public park in Sandwell's 50-year history, a primary school to replace Causeway Green Primary School, and the provision of 190 new homes, 25% of which will be affordable.

The site benefits from a mature and attractive landscape character, and the proposed vision should seek to retain and enhance this character, whilst introducing new elements to improve accessibility, connectivity, and the spaces, so that they appeal to existing and new communities.

### Surrounding urban areas

The Park is surrounded by five different urban areas, as illustrated below.



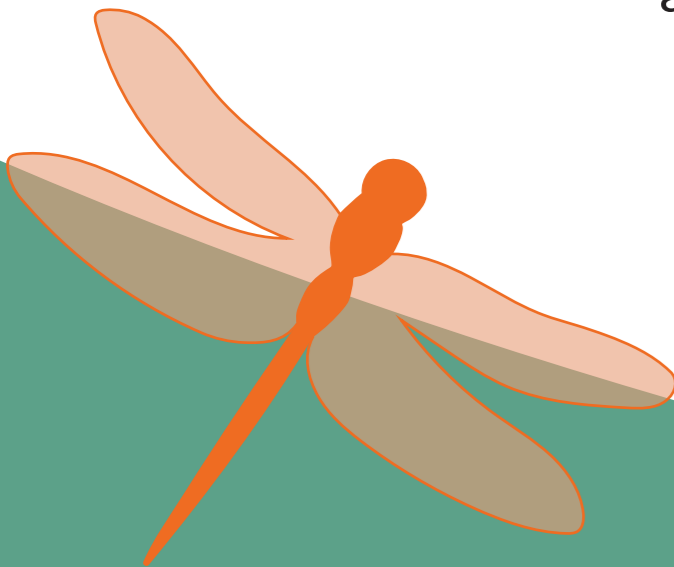
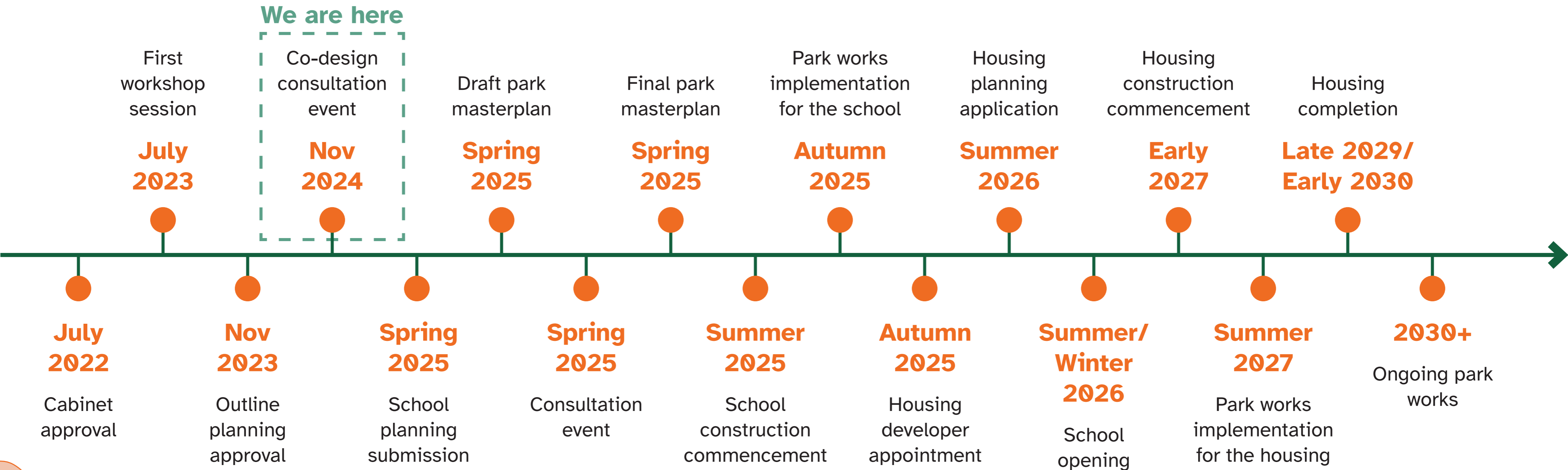
- 1 Brandhall (Old Warley Ward, Oldbury)
- 2 Wolverhampton Road (Oldbury)
- 3 Hurst Green (Halesowen North Ward, Dudley)
- 4 Causeway Green (Langley Ward, Oldbury)
- 5 Bristnall (Bristnall Ward, Oldbury)



Consented masterplan 2023 © AECOM.

- 1 Causeway Green Primary School site
- 2 Residential development sites
- 3 Proposed attenuation ponds
- 4 Existing woodland and meadows
- 5 Northern gateway
- 6 Woodland edge
- 7 Park circulation routes

### Timeline



# BRANDHALL ECO-PARK

## What you told us

### Overview

SMBC carried out initial engagement with the community to inform the current approved masterplan, through the establishment of a Working Group comprising a wide range of community interests.

The engagement sought to obtain thoughts about the current and future opportunities the park could bring.

A summary of the outcomes of the discussion groups is included below.

Our initial design ideas have been informed by the thoughts, ideas, and concerns raised.

### What does the site currently mean to you?

Common themes:

- The site is a **wildlife haven** and a place where people feel **closer to nature** and has a **significant heritage** that should be celebrated.
- The site was accessed by a wider selection of the community during the COVID-19 pandemic for **well-being** and **stress relief**.
- For some, the site was considered **unusable**, **inaccessible**, and **unattractive**, due partly to **limited access points and suitability** of these for users with mobility issues.

### What do you think the future of the site should look like?

Common themes:

- The site should remain as a **greenspace/wildlife haven** as much as possible.
- The site should be **attractive for all ages**, and opportunities for **community engagement, learning**, and **education** should be incorporated.
- The site **should be accessible** and utilised as a **community resource** to assist with **mental health** and **well-being**.
- The site should be **welcoming, comfortable**, and **secure** to ensure community safety concerns are overcome.
- The **scale of the site** offers an opportunity for **something unique** to be created for the **benefit of the whole community**.

### What are the key functions the site should have?

Key functions:

- Community building
- Informal/formal recreation
- Natural play areas/forest school
- Mosaic of habitats
  - Meadows
  - Woodland
  - Wetlands
- Accessible pathways
- Youth provision
- Community growing scheme



### Issues and opportunities

#### Natural environment

- Maintaining and enhancing existing habitats.
- Provision of different areas within the site.
- Opportunities for a community growing scheme.
- Nature first approach.
- Opportunities for community education.

#### Water environment

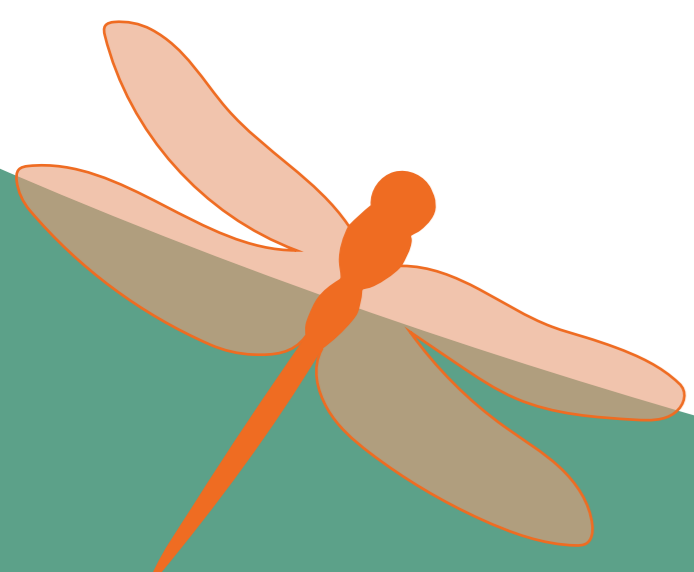
- Water environments need to be carefully designed to ensure safety but also accessibility.
- Need to ensure provision does not increase flooding risks.
- Community education on need and purpose, and clarity around initial disruption.

#### Recreation

- Nature-based activities.
- Provision of community facilities.
- Needs to be an active destination to create footfall and surveillance.
- Organised recreation on Parson's Hill Park.
- Community safety.

#### Access and movement

- Ensuring routes through the site have logical connections to destinations beyond the site.
- Ensuring accessibility for all users and in all weathers through use of suitable surfacing.
- Consideration for more vulnerable members of society.
- Public safety.



# BRANDHALL ECO-PARK

## Analysis

### Overview

As part of the design process, LDA Design conducted initial analysis of the park to understand the opportunities and constraints that exist.

This analysis has helped to inform some initial design principles and will ultimately shape the park masterplan.

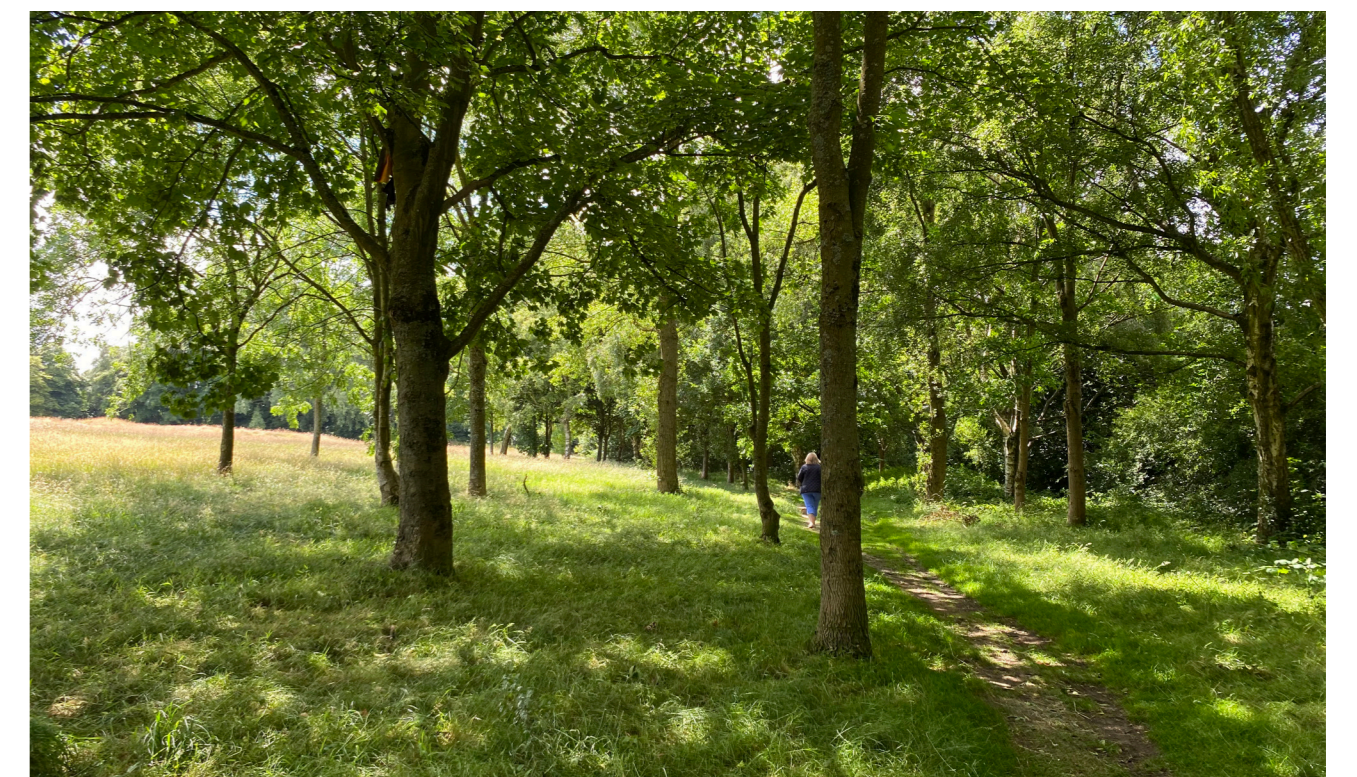
### Site character



Entrance from the golf course clubhouse



Ponds and watercourses



Woodland paths and edges



Undulating topography



Links and circulation

### Access

- Access to the park is limited due to its previous use as a private golf course.
- Existing access points are unattractive and unsafe, and wayfinding is difficult.

### Water

- Brandhall Brook runs south-north through the park, with a few ponds along its course.
- The watercourse sits within an area of high flood risk and will need careful consideration.

### Levels

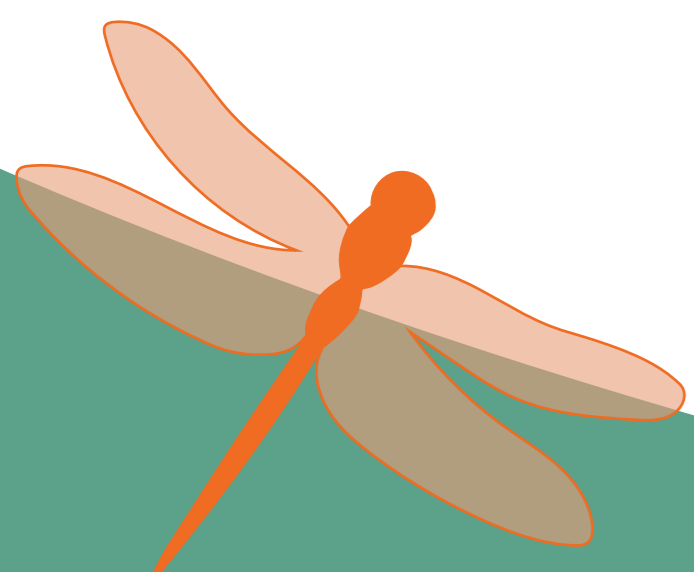
- The levels over the park generally fall from south to north with a difference of approximately 30m in total.
- The topography also falls from a higher edge to the west down towards the centre of the park.

### Connectivity

- Two Public Rights of Way exist across the park; one connecting the northern boundary to the south, and the other connecting the eastern boundary to the other PRow, although the access point to the east-west PRow has now been closed.
- Other informal paths exist from its previous use as a golf course.

### Habitat

- The park is primarily modified grassland with groups of broadleaved and mixed woodland.



# BRANDHALL ECO-PARK

## Masterplan

### Overview

Whilst high-level principles for the space have been set out in the outline planning application, this is now an opportunity to engage with the emerging masterplan, and to shape the detail for the benefit of existing and new communities.

The overall objective is to deliver a high-quality park environment which promotes positive recreation and active travel whilst protecting and enhancing the natural habitat. We have summarised below five key design drivers to underpin the masterplan.

### Design drivers



Connection to nature



Protect and enhance



Sensitive integration



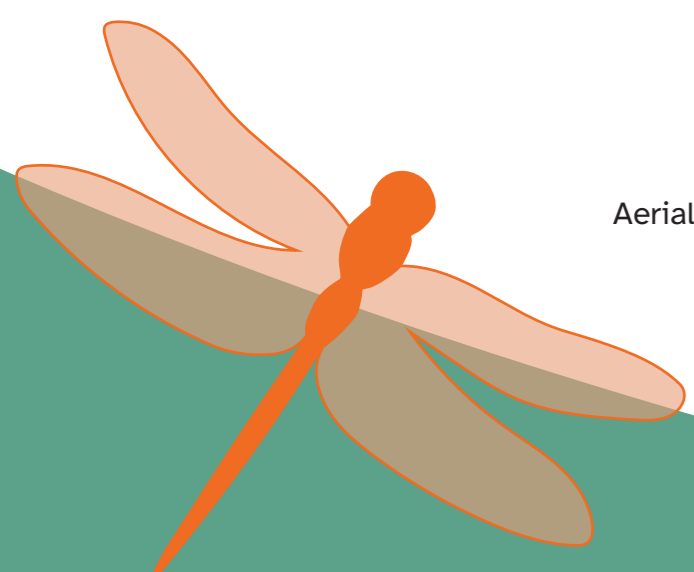
Access and inclusivity



Maintain wilderness



Aerial © Getmapping plc.



# BRANDHALL ECO-PARK

## Initial design ideas

### Overview

Our initial design ideas have been developed from feedback from previous consultation and our analysis of the existing park.

Connectivity and inclusivity through and around the park is crucial. We are exploring the idea of having three types of routes:

- Direct routes - for getting from A to B.
- Active routes - for runners, walkers, cyclists.
- Explorative routes - for those who want to take the more meandering routes through the park.

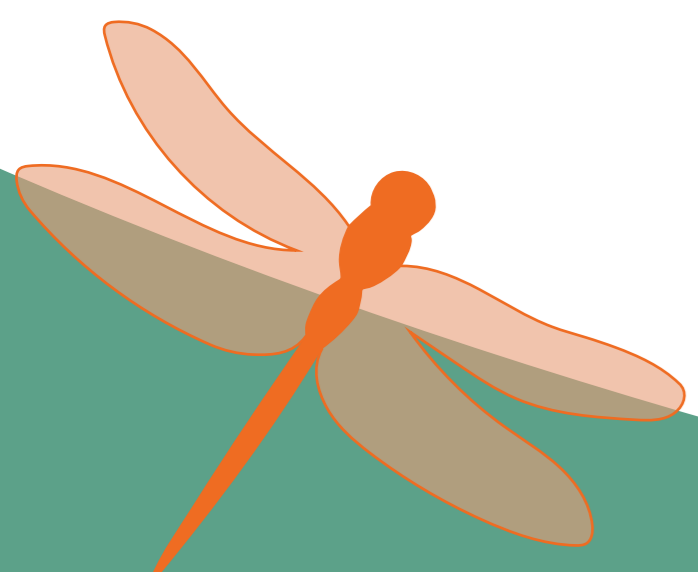
Creating character areas for the park will help to define the identity of the spaces; we are considering what and where the character areas might be.

We are looking at different habitat areas that may coincide with the character areas, and therefore help shape the masterplan from an ecology perspective.

Brandhall Brook is a key feature of the park and we are planning on enhancing and maximising the potential of this watercourse as both a recreational and ecological feature.

As well as improving the existing brook, a key objective of the masterplan will be to enhance the existing habitat that exists in the park, and to integrate new habitat for increased biodiversity and climate resilience.

Although the park will be community-focussed and for use by all, we are exploring the idea of creating areas of the park that are dedicated to the protection of wildlife. These areas will therefore be more 'wild' in nature, and may only be accessed by viewing areas.



# BRANDHALL ECO-PARK

## Precedents

### Sponge parks and wetlands

Sponge parks are important in areas of flood risk and for stormwater run-off. As the name suggests, they act as sponges by retaining water in rainy periods, and discharging water during drier seasons. Due to high flood risk towards the north of the site, this concept may be a suitable option for this area.



Photo © Srirath Somsawat

**Benjakitti Forest Park, Thailand**



Photo © Turenscape

**Qunli National Urban Wetland, China**

### Connection to water

As Brandhall Brook is a key feature through the park, different ways to connect to water will need to be considered. This could be through stepped elements and seating as shown in the example to the right.



Photos © Alan Karchmer

**Grand Junction Park & Plaza, USA**



### Natural materials and play structures

To connect with the natural setting and to be as sustainable as possible, we are exploring the use of natural materials and play equipment. The examples to the right are different ways other parks have utilised this principle.



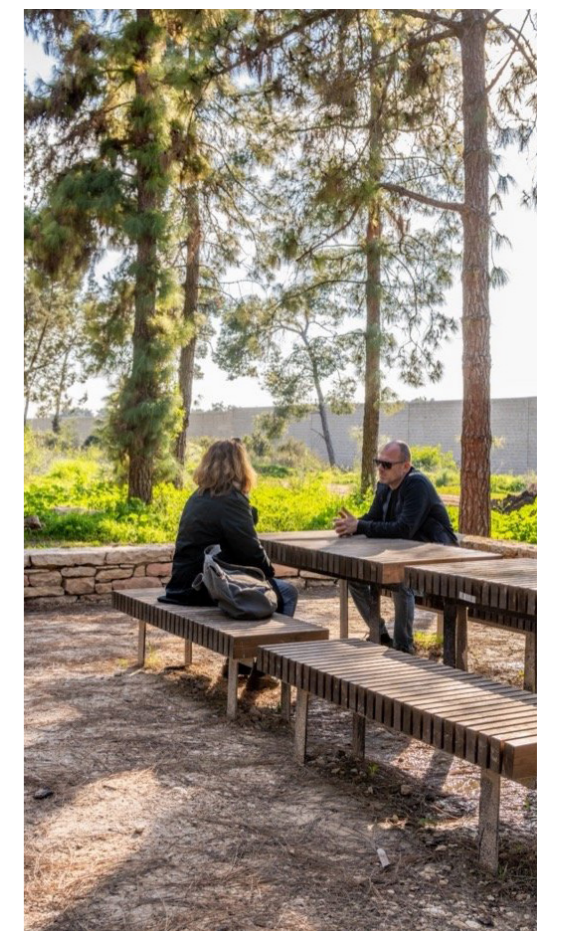
Photos © Philip Winkelmeier

**Forest Park in Bad Lippspringe, Germany**



Photos © Yoav Peled

**The Harish Forest Park, Israel**



### Education and exploration

We are exploring options to incorporate opportunities for education around the park, including signage and boards, viewing areas, and spaces to enable community and youth activities to take place.

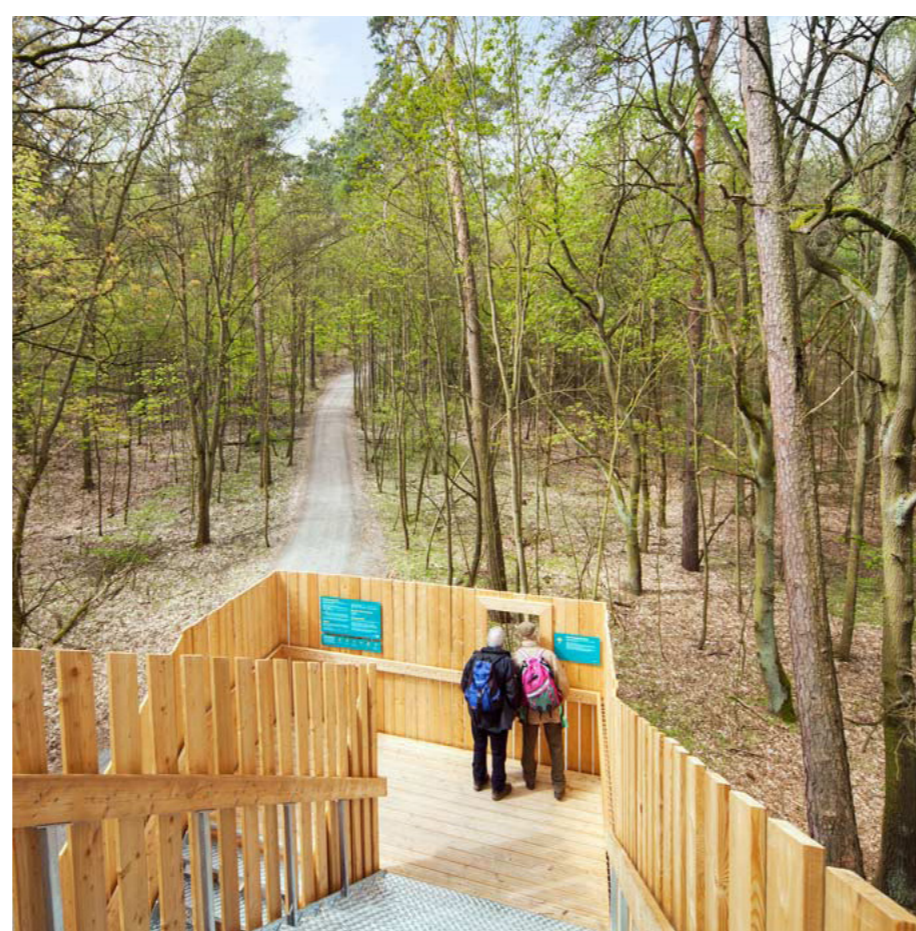


Photo © Winkelmeier

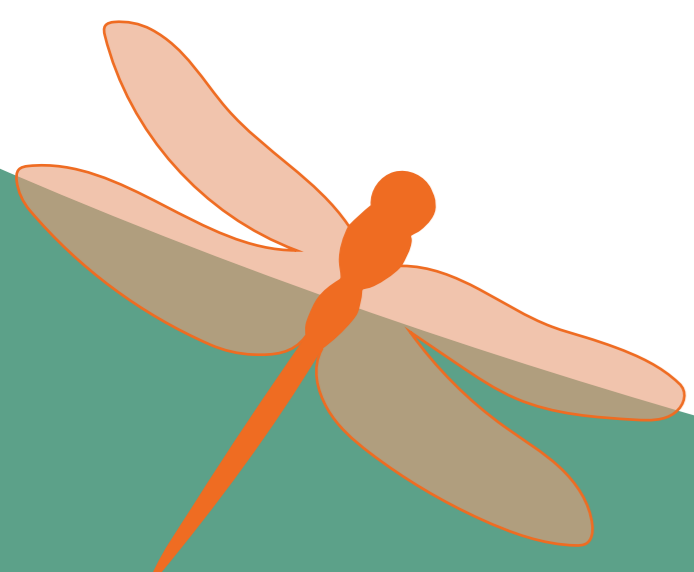
**Wald.Berlin.Klima., Berlin**



Photo © gewerkdesign

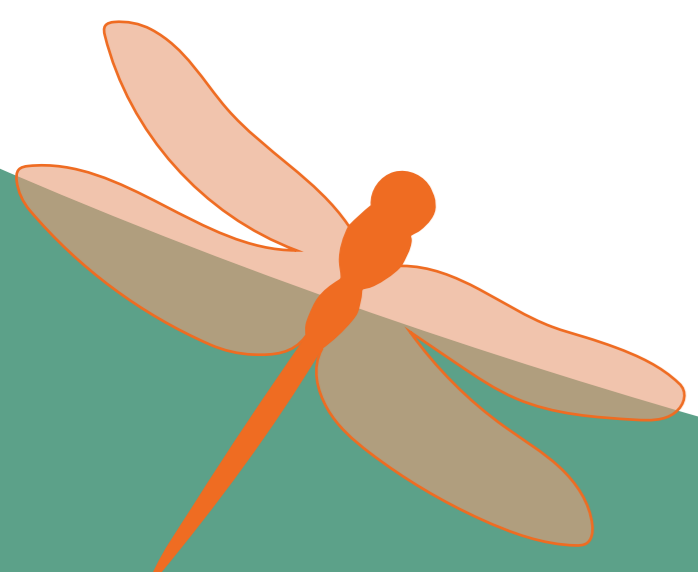


Photo © Winkelmeier



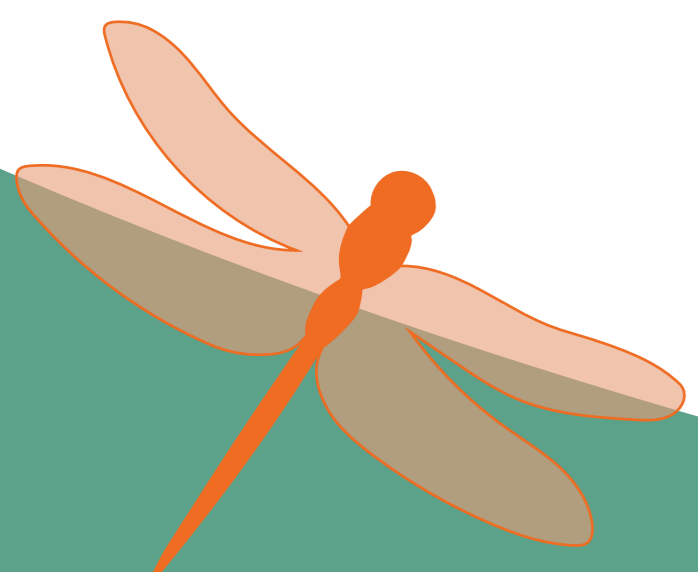
# BRANDHALL ECO-PARK

What qualities do you value most about  
your local green space?



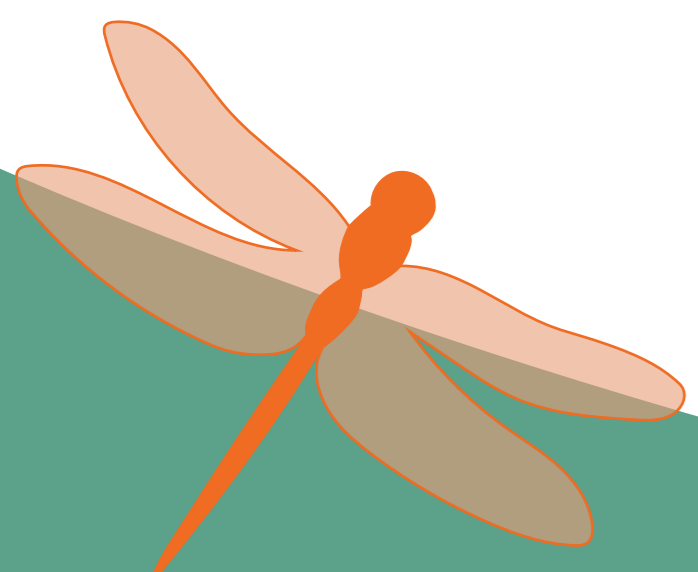
# BRANDHALL ECO-PARK

How do you use your local green space?  
What activities draw you there?



# BRANDHALL ECO-PARK

What would you consider to be the priorities for the design of the park?



# BRANDHALL ECO-PARK

## Name your park

### Introduction

We are deciding on a name for the park and would like to ask the community to come up with some options. Below are some ideas that we've come up with, please use these as inspiration for your suggestion.

Once you've decided on a name, write it on one of the pieces of paper provided and pop it into the box below. We will then decide on a winner!

### Some inspiration to get you started

**Wild Brandhall**

**Brandhall Woodland Park**

**Brandhall Meadows**

**Brandhall Green Haven**

**The Greenway**

**Brand Hall Green**

**The Green Exchange**

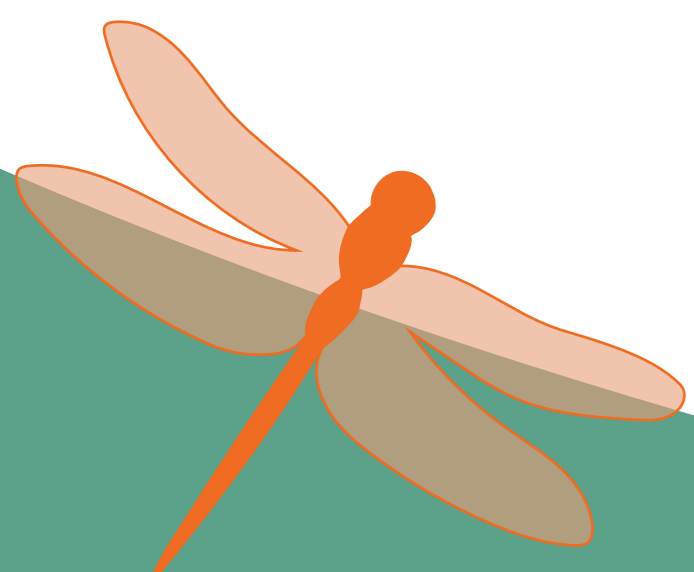
**Brandhall Forest Park**

**The Green Collective**

**The Forest School**

**Wilds of Brandhall**

**The Brandhall Wilds**



# BRANDHALL ECO-PARK

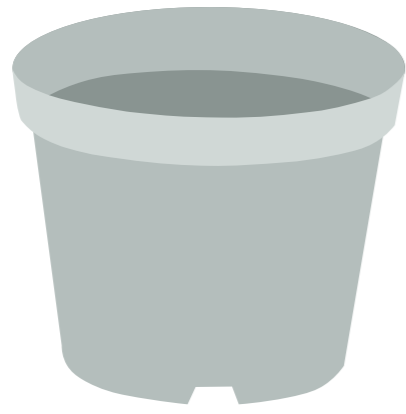
## Plant an acorn for the park

### Introduction

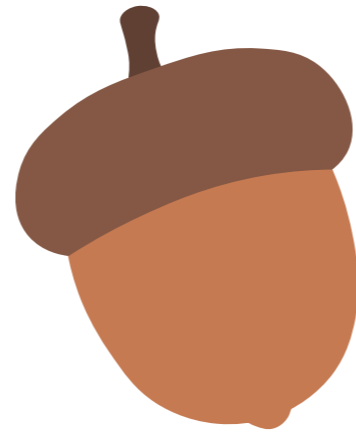
Our surveys show some of the oldest, most attractive, and wildlife-friendly trees on Brandhall are oaks. It is vital that we plant and nurture a new generation of oak trees to supplement and eventually replace these veterans. Therefore, as part of our tree planting within the park, we welcome you to take part in planting an acorn.

If you would like to get involved, please follow the planting instructions below. Please fill out your name and contact details so that we can let you know when it's time to plant your tree.

### How to plant your acorn



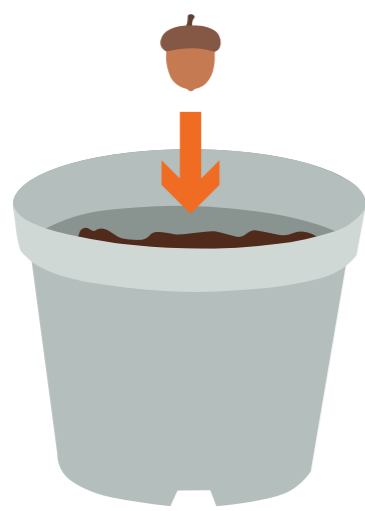
**Step 1:** Choose a plant pot.



**Step 2:** Pick your acorn.



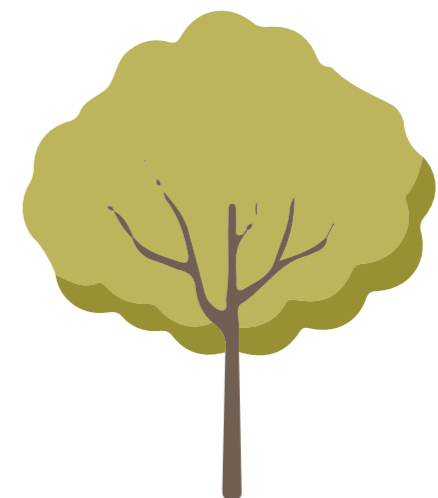
**Step 3:** Fill your pot with the soil provided.



**Step 4:** Push your acorn to the depth of 2 cm in the soil.



**Step 5:** Take your planted acorn home, care for it, and watch it grow!



**Step 6:** When it's ready, bring your oak back to us to plant within the park.

