The Old Deer Park (the Park) was established during the reign of Henry VI. It is listed as Grade I on Historic England’s Register of Historic Parks and Gardens and forms the core of the Old Deer Park Conservation Area. It is bordered by the built up areas of Richmond, the River Thames and the Royal Botanic Gardens, Kew World Heritage site.

The area is extensive, being some 147 hectares in total, with a varied character ranging from open space and natural landscape supported by many mature trees, through to car parking, sports facilities and community buildings. The majority of the land is owned by the Crown Estate, which then leases different parts of the Park to a range of organisations.

The Park’s main function is for recreation and includes the following, accessed from the A316:

- Recreation Ground, with open recreation areas, play, fitness and temporary events areas, sports pitches and tennis courts
- King’s Observatory which is a Grade I listed building and is used as a private residence
- Royal Mid-Surrey Golf Club (members club)
- Richmond Athletic Association Ground (including Grade II listed pavilion), which is home to Richmond and London Scottish Rugby Football Clubs
- Richmond Swimming Pool (Grade II listed building) & Lido, now called ‘Pools on the Park’
- Public car park, landscaped area, Royal Mail sorting office and a number of community/voluntary sector buildings
- Accessed from the A307 (Kew Road) the Old Deer Park Sports Ground which accommodates London Welsh Amateur Rugby Football Club and Richmond Cricket Club, together with tennis, archery, bowls and squash facilities

The plan above includes the location of key features within the Park

*Home to London Scottish and Richmond Rugby Football Clubs
** Home to London Welsh Rugby Football Club, Richmond Cricket club, tennis, archery, bowls and squash facilities
SPDs are formal planning policy documents. This means that they are taken into account when the Council makes decisions on development proposals. SPDs normally have a ‘life-span’ of some 10-15 years.

The reason for developing a specific SPD for the Old Deer Park is that the Council recognises there will be a desire over the next few years by some organisations, with a land and property interest in the Park, to move forward with schemes to improve their facilities. There are also opportunities to improve links into and across the Park and for wider environmental improvements. The Park is an important natural, historic and community asset, so it is vital that any decisions taken are done on the basis of looking at the Park as a whole, as opposed to a series of parcels of land with different uses. This is to ensure that an integrated approach is taken to decision-making over the next 10-15 years. The SPD will provide the opportunity for the Council to be able to do this.

The boundary of the SPD is aligned to the Old Deer Park Conservation Area boundary. The SPD will help to ensure that key historic features within the area are protected whilst allowing for appropriate enhancements to amateur sports, recreation and community facilities to support the maintenance and improvement of the wider Park environment.

In preparing the SPD the Council will need to be mindful of ‘higher level’ planning policies and designations that apply to the Park, including that:

- much of it is identified as Metropolitan Open Land
- much of it falls within the ‘buffer zone’ of the Royal Botanic Gardens, Kew World Heritage Site
- it is a Grade 1 Historic Park and Garden
- it is a Conservation Area
- there are a number of Listed Buildings/Structures and Buildings of Townscape Merit within and adjacent to the Park

**What are we consulting on?**

The Council undertook an initial consultation in the summer of 2015 alongside the consultation on the Richmond and Richmond Hill Village Plan. Having considered the range of comments received we have developed some potential ideas which could address some of the issues and opportunities identified by both the community and in research undertaken by the Council to support the development of its Local Plan.

We recognise that there will inevitably be differing views and it is important to emphasise that these ideas are NOT Council policy. Rather they are intended to help understand what the ‘opportunities’ and ‘challenges’ may be if different approaches are taken to help you in providing more detailed comments.

The results of this further stage of consultation will then help to shape the SPD, the draft of which will also be consulted on in due course.

**Policy and Historic Designations**

The adjacent plan indicates the key policy and historic designations within the Park; this includes the extent of the Historic Park and Garden, Metropolitan Open Land, the Conservation Area boundary, Listed Buildings, protected views, and landmarks within and immediately outside of the proposed SPD area.

Much of the area also lies within Flood Zones, 2, 3a and 3b. For the definitive boundaries of the policy designations please see the Council’s Local Plan Proposals Map (adopted July 2015) which can be viewed at [www.cartogold.co.uk/richmond_2015/richmond.htm](http://www.cartogold.co.uk/richmond_2015/richmond.htm).

The Park also falls within the buffer zone to the Royal Botanical Gardens, Kew.
Initial Consultation Feedback

- Too much of the area used for car parking
- Landscaping improvements including tree planting
- The main grandstand, and the Cannons Health Club and Old Golf Driving Range buildings and surroundings are in a poor state
- The desire to see all three local rugby clubs stay and play all their home games in Richmond

Issues and opportunities identified in the Council’s Playing Pitch Strategy (August 2015) and Indoor Sports Facilities Needs Assessment (May 2015)

- Issues with both the playing and training pitch(es) being overplayed with the resultant impact on their quality
- There is currently one Artificial Grass Pitch (AGP) compliant to World Rugby IRB 22 standard in the Borough (Whitton Sports). However, funding agreements mean it is only available for 1-2 hours per week for rugby training. A further pitch is being provided at Hampton Sports and Fitness Centre
- Changing facility issues
- Opportunities to improve pitch quality should be explored as this will help to address overplay
- Need for additional floodlit training provision is needed and could also help alleviate pressure on match pitches
- Any plans should be considered within the context of the capacity of pitches
- The Cannons Health and Fitness Centre on the site contributes to the supply of facilities in the Borough
- Richmond Athletic Association has expressed a desire to improve their facilities including through the redevelopment of their existing main grandstand

More information can be viewed at www.richmond.gov.uk/home/services/planning/planning_policy/local_plan/local_development_framework_research/sport_open_space_and_recreation_needs_assessment.htm

Constraints and Opportunities identified so far

- Any new development would need to consider the local policy and historic designations context and the relationship with adjoining homes
- Any proposals should maximise the opportunities to improve the current access to the site, including by moving it away from the junction with the A316
- New facilities may require additional complementary development to support the costs of improving/replacing existing facilities. These would have to be clearly justified and be of an appropriate scale
- New and improved facilities could add to the diversity of amenities in the area and provide the opportunity for visual improvements to the appearance of the site particularly when viewed from the A316 and Kew Foot Road Conservation Area

The Existing Site

The existing athletic ground has 6 rugby playing pitches and 1 training pitch. The ideas set out on the following boards show the potential relocation of the existing grandstand and reconfiguration of the pitches which would result in the loss of one pitch. This could be a concern for Sport England and the Rugby Football Union (RFU). However, the provision of one or more AGPs may be sufficient to satisfy those concerns, given AGPs can support greater use of individual pitches. This approach could widen the opportunities for local organisations and educational establishments to use the facilities, particularly during the week, through a ‘Community Use’ Agreement. The provision of an AGP would need to be balanced against the historic designations relating to the site.

It is important to note that the ideas do not include any potential locations for the replacement of buildings within the site other than the main grandstand (i.e. the Old Golf Driving Range, and the Cannons Health and Fitness Building). In addition, the ideas indicate potential alternative locations for the main grandstand but not the overall size, scale, massing and design of any replacement building.
Idea 1: Opportunities
- Would allow for the main match pitch to be changed to a broadly north/south orientation, in line with RFU/Sport England recommendations
- Would move the main grandstand away from housing
- Would provide a ‘tighter’ grouping of buildings (when taken with the Pools on the Park and the Royal Mid-Surrey Golf Course clubhouse). This could help to improve the overall ‘openness’ of the site and Park
- Views to Royal Botanic Gardens, Kew from the south would be opened up
- The context of the Grade II listed pavilion would be returned to how it was when originally built
- Could provide the opportunity to relocate the existing access away from the junction with the A316

Idea 1: Challenges
- The grandstand would be in close proximity to the first Tee of the adjoining golf course
- May require the removal of the Old Golf Driving Range and the Health and Fitness building
- Could limit the opportunity to improve longer distance views across the historic landscape

Idea 2: Opportunities
- Would improve the views across site from the south
- Would have less visual impact when viewed from the adjacent golf course
- The context of the Grade II listed pavilion would be returned to how it was when originally built
- Could provide for the opportunity to relocate the existing access away from the junction with the A316

Idea 2: Challenges
- Would place the grandstand closer to existing housing
- The main match pitch would follow the existing orientation rather than that recommended by the RFU/Sport England
- May require the removal of the Old Golf Driving Range and the Health and Fitness building

Idea 3: Opportunities
- This would improve the views across the site from the existing entrance/A316
- Would have less impact with respect to the golf course
- It would provide a ‘tighter’ grouping of buildings (when taken with the Pools on the Park and the Royal Mid-Surrey Golf Course clubhouse). This could help to improve the overall ‘openness’ of the site and Park
- It would move the grandstand further away from existing residents
- The context of the Grade II listed pavilion would be returned to how it was when originally built

Idea 3: Challenges
- The main match pitch would follow the existing orientation rather than that recommended by the RFU/Sport England
- Potentially less opportunity to improve the existing access arrangements
- May require the removal of the Old Golf Driving Range and the Health and Fitness building
- May impact on the setting of the Pools on the Park Grade II Listed Building
Initial Consultation Feedback

• The pools are seen as a valued asset in the community.
• The complex ‘looks tired’ and is seen as unattractive by some local residents.
• The internal space is poorly configured and impacts on the attractiveness of the health facilities for members; the changing rooms and toddler paddling pool need upgrading.
• Some residents questioned why the building had Listed status - its design was not considered suitable for its location having a harsh concrete and rigid office block appearance.
• The A316 acts as an inhibitor to the use of the playground, exercise area and tennis courts.
• Opportunities to improve activities for teenagers e.g. skateboard park, ice rink, trampoline park.
• The tennis courts were thought to be underused.

Issues and opportunities identified in the Council’s Indoor Sports Facilities Needs Assessment (May 2015)

• Provides an important part of the Borough’s publicly accessible swimming pool ‘offer’
• Is one of the oldest swimming pools in the Borough with concerns over its ability to meet the needs of residents in the long term.
• It will be expensive to maintain because of its age and without significant investment its running costs will continue to increase.
• Key challenge will be to maintain a quality offer for residents.
• Ideally needs replacing to offer residents a modern swimming experience.
• Future population growth will place further pressure on capacity.
• Gym facilities require investment to match the standards in other membership facilities.
• Addition of group fitness accommodation is suggested.
• The current footprint is extensive and its formal boundary creates exclusivity and prevents integration of the site with the wider area.

Objectives for the site

• To maintain and enhance the swimming pool and wider leisure facilities to provide a modern, quality offer for local residents which is efficient and financially viable in the longer term.
• Achieve an appropriate balance between the needs of the site in the future with the policy and historic designations for the site and wider environment.

Constraints and Opportunities identified so far

• Any proposals would need to consider the local policy and heritage context, including the Grade II Listed status of the building and that part of the area which lies within Metropolitan Open Land.
• Any development should maximise opportunities to improve access to the site to mitigate any potential impact, in particular on the A316 Twickenham Road.
• Any proposals should explore the opportunities to provide a more integrated approach between the Pools on the Park facilities and those contained within the adjoining public open space. The Council’s Playing Pitch Strategy (August 2015) has indicated that the cricket, football and rugby pitches on the public open space adjacent to the site are poorly served in terms of changing facilities.
Idea 1: Undertake internal improvements only

Opportunities
• Respects the Listed status of the building
• Would provide some improvement to existing facilities
• Potentially deliverable in the short term

Challenges
• Would not provide opportunities to support significant improvements to, or expansion of, the existing facilities
• Would not address the longer-term issues for the building
• Would not facilitate the wider integration of the site with the adjoining playing fields and tennis/fitness/play/events areas
• Would not maximise opportunities to improve the long-term environmental sustainability of the building

Idea 2: Limited extensions to the Pools on the Park and allow for relocation of community/voluntary sector uses

Opportunities
• Would provide some opportunity to review the internal layout of the Pools on the Park complex to create enhanced leisure/changing facilities
• Would create up-to-date facilities for voluntary/community uses with better access to open space
• Could provide the potential for the dual-use of some of the voluntary/community facilities to make better use of the buildings (recognising that consideration would need to be given to the individual operational needs of different groups)
• New community/voluntary sector facilities would sit within the context of existing development (when viewed alongside the Pools on the Park and Royal Mid-Surrey Golf Club clubhouse)
• Would provide access to buses that operate from the Pools on the Park
• Could be designed so as not to impact on strategic views
• Would make better use of a less accessible/visible part of the Park

Challenges
• The design of any extensions would need to be compatible with the main building to take account of its Listed status. This could limit what could be achieved and may not therefore provide ‘value for money’
• Would not fully address the longer-term issues for the building as set out on the previous board
• The suggested location for community/voluntary buildings lies within Metropolitan Open Land which places constraints on any redevelopment
• Could put pressure on existing car parking
• Could result in the loss of the depot which is important to support the Parks maintenance
• The retention of the existing boundary would limit opportunities to improve integration with the wider area and improved pedestrian access
Idea 3: Comprehensive or partial redevelopment of the Pools on The Park complex, together with the removal/relocation of boundary walls/fences, and allow for relocation of community/voluntary sector uses

Opportunities

• Comprehensive redevelopment would address the identified issues for the Pools on the Park by creating flexibility to re-provide and enhance the swimming pools and associated changing and leisure facilities in a coherent, efficient and environmentally sustainable form
• Partial re-development through retention of the main pool area whilst demolishing and re-providing other parts of the building in a different form would retain the core part of the Listed Building whilst providing the opportunity to re-provide the associated changing and leisure facilities in a coherent, efficient and environmentally sustainable form
• The removal/relocation of the existing boundary walls/fences would take away barriers which currently prevent better integration of the facilities with the wider recreation/sporting/events areas. This would provide opportunities to make better use of a less accessible/visible part of the Park particularly if supported by improved pedestrian links
• Would create up-to-date facilities for voluntary/community uses with better access to open space
• Could provide the potential for the dual-use of some of the voluntary/community facilities to make better use of the buildings (recognising that consideration would need to be given to the individual operational needs of different groups)
• Would create a sporting and community ‘hub’ providing an integrated approach to sport and physical activity, with an extensive ‘offer’ which could provide the opportunity to attract significant external funding
• New community/voluntary sector facilities would sit within the context of existing development (when viewed alongside the Pools on the Park and Royal Mid-Surrey Golf Club clubhouse)

• Could be designed so as not to impact on strategic views
• Would provide access to buses that operate from the Pools on the Park
• Could allow for a review of car parking, provision of the maintenance depot and improved sports pitch changing facilities

Challenges

• Comprehensive or partial redevelopment of the Pools on the Park complex would result in the loss of all or part of a Grade II listed building. Any demolition would need to be clearly justified, including through an assessment of the historic/architectural significance of all or part of the listed building and would require agreement by Historic England
• Any partial re-development of the Pools on the Park complex would result in the loss of parts of a Grade II Listed Building and would need to be designed to ensure compatibility with the main Pools part of the complex
• A need to ensure that the main operational areas of the Pools complex remain secure and safe if changing the current boundary walling/fencing
• The suggested location of community/voluntary sector facilities lies within Metropolitan Open Land, which places constraints on any redevelopment
• Would require significant investment and co-operation from a range of stakeholders and so is unlikely to be deliverable in the short-term
Initial Consultation Feedback

• The site at present is seen as unattractive by local residents
• A number of the buildings are considered to be unsightly – the site would benefit from their demolition and provision of improved accommodation within the locality and re-instate the open parkland character of that part of the Park closest to the town after relocation
• Suggestions that voluntary organisations located on the site could be relocated into a shared facility
• The site would be a good location for a school
• Parts of the site are difficult to orientate and do not provide an attractive and easy to navigate link between central Richmond (including Richmond Green) and the main part of Old Deer Park
• There could be better links created between the car park and the River
• The landscaped area between the car park and the River was seen by some as being underutilised

Objectives for the site

• To regenerate and maximise the opportunities for that part of the site that is underutilised brownfield land in order to support the wider needs of Borough residents
• To improve accessibility and legibility between the surrounding areas of central Richmond and the main part of the Park
• To create a more attractive landscape/visual offer
• To continue to provide for car parking recognising that this is an important resource close to central Richmond

Constraints and Opportunities identified so far

• The site lies within the Old Deer Park Conservation Area, the Historic Park and Garden, has potential archaeological interest and a large part of the site is designated as Metropolitan Open Land
• The A316 Twickenham Road creates physical separation within the Old Deer Park Conservation Area which impacts on the integrity of the designation and isolates this part of the Park from the remainder
• The site is located within a short walking distance of both Richmond Railway station and bus services serving the wider Borough
• Lies adjacent to Richmond Adult Community College, which offers a wide range of educational facilities, and to the sports and leisure facilities within the main Park which could be used to support, for example, education uses on the site
• The site contains some historic boundary walls and entrances
CAR PARK SITE AND COMMUNITY / VOLUNTARY SECTOR BUILDINGS

Idea 1: Re-provision of community / voluntary sector uses

Opportunities
• Would provide improved facilities for voluntary and community organisations
• Could provide the potential for dual use of the facilities (although consideration would need to be given to the requirements of different groups)
• Could provide the opportunity to consolidate the existing built form on the site
• Would provide opportunities for environmental enhancements
• Could provide the opportunity to re-configure and improve the visual appearance of the existing car parking, including potentially through some decked provision, subject to avoiding impacts on existing trees and being of an appropriate design form
• Would allow for improved / more legible links between central Richmond, Richmond Green, the River and the Park for the benefit of pedestrians and cyclists

Challenges
• Would not provide opportunities for greater access to open space / recreation facilities that relocation would provide
• Would reduce the flexibility to provide for other uses on the wider site (such as education) or to re-configure the car parking areas

Idea 2: Re-location of the voluntary/community facilities and provision of education uses

Opportunities
• Could provide the opportunity to create an education ‘hub’ (taking into account the location of Richmond Adult Community College) within easy reach of good public transport links
• Would benefit from opportunities to make use of sporting/recreation facilities on the main part of the Park and facilities offered by Richmond Adult Community College thus making best use of the site and its location
• Could provide the opportunity to consolidate the existing built form on the site
• Could provide the opportunity to re-configure and improve the visual appearance of the existing car parking, including potentially through some decked provision, subject to avoiding impacts on existing trees and being of an appropriate design form
• Could provide the opportunity to re-provide some of the existing car parking, potentially in decked form, subject to avoiding impacts on existing trees
• Would allow for links between central Richmond, Richmond Green, the River and the Park to be improved for the benefit of pedestrians and cyclists

Challenges
• Would require careful consideration of the scale and location of any new buildings to take account of the area’s historic and policy designations
• Would require the re-location of the existing voluntary/community sector buildings. However, there are opportunities for re-provision adjacent to the Pools on the Park (see the Boards relating to the ‘Pools on the Park and immediate surroundings’)
• Development may intrude into an area of Metropolitan Open Land (although it would be replacing some existing buildings)
• Would require considerable financial investment predominantly from the Education Funding Agency and would therefore be a longer term aspiration
OLD DEER PARK SPORTS GROUND – London Welsh Rugby Football Club, Richmond Cricket Club, Archery, Tennis, Bowls And Squash

Initial feedback after consultation

- The desire to see all three local rugby clubs stay and play all their home games in Richmond
- Need for improved facilities including provision of an all-weather pitch and improvements to the appearance of the existing buildings
- Need for landscape improvements
- Need for improved car parking
- Need to encourage greater use of the site
- Suggestions of providing a new grandstand and London Welsh, London Scottish, and Richmond Rugby Football Clubs groundsharing

Issues and opportunities identified in the Council's Playing Pitch Strategy (August 2015)

- Issues with the playing pitches being overplayed with the resultant impact on their quality
- There is currently one AGP compliant to World Rugby IRB 22 standard in the borough (Whitton Sports). However, funding agreements mean it is only available for 1-2 hours per week for rugby training. An additional AGP is being provided at Hampton Sports and Fitness Centre
- Opportunities to improve pitch quality should be explored as this will help to address overplay
- Need for additional floodlit training provision is needed and could also help alleviate pressure on match pitches (although this does not necessarily need to be provided on-site)

Objectives for the site

- To maximise the sporting/recreation offer available to local residents and strengthening the presence of local sports clubs in the Borough
- To balance the needs of the existing clubs and the long-term viability of the site with the historic and policy designations that apply, including recognising the close proximity of the site to the boundary with the Royal Botanic Gardens, Kew World Heritage site

Constraints and Opportunities identified so far

- Opportunities to improve the existing club facilities on site including in terms of changing room and medical facilities by reconfiguring the existing accommodation
- Opportunities to improve the quality of pitches
- Any development would need to consider the local policy and heritage designations context
- The site is bordered in various places by a historic ‘ha-ha’, gateway and boundary walls
- The site lies immediately adjacent to the Royal Botanic Gardens, Kew with views to the Great Pagoda

Idea: Consolidate and enhance the offer provided by the existing buildings and pitches on-site

The extent of the playing pitches on the site and costs limits the scope for re-location and/or re-provision of, for example, the existing grandstand and clubhouse. There are, however, potential opportunities to make better use of the existing facilities. This could involve internal alterations to the main clubhouse together with limited ‘infill’ extensions and provision of facilities below the existing grandstand. In addition the provision of an Artificial Grass Pitch (AGP) could partly address the issues of playing pitch quality and increase usage.

Opportunities

- Would provide for enhancements to the quality and quantity of changing room, medical and other facilities and improve the external appearance of the clubhouse
- Would be unlikely to impact on the historic and Metropolitan Open Land designations or the relationship with the Royal Botanic Gardens, Kew World Heritage site
- Could provide the opportunity to remove some existing aging and unattractive buildings/structures within close proximity to the main clubhouse and allow for improvements to the car parking arrangements
- The provision of an AGP would address issues of pitch quality and maximise opportunities to widen the level and regularity of use

Challenges

- Could involve the loss of a residential unit which is ancillary to the use of the club. However, it is understood that there is no identified need for its retention and it would not be appropriate for occupation by somebody not employed by the site
- The provision of an AGP would need to be balanced against the historic designations relating to the site
Old Deer Park

OPPORTUNITIES FOR ENVIRONMENTAL/ACCESSIBILITY IMPROVEMENTS

Initial Consultation Feedback

• As part of the improvement of individual facilities within Old Deer Park, there is an opportunity to improve the landscape/environmental conditions as well as accessibility and movement for local residents.

• The initial Consultation highlighted that accessibility and movement around and into Old Deer Park could be improved. Key issues include the inadequacy of some pedestrian and cycle routes around the Park and crossing into the Park from surrounding areas, particularly across Twickenham Road and the River Thames at Richmond Lock.

• Concerns were raised about the lack of public access to the Royal Mid-Surrey Golf Club and to the King’s Observatory.

• Suggestions that landscaping around the various facilities could be improved and that additional landscaping, including wild meadow planting, could improve the look and feel of the Park and the surrounding area.

The Old Deer Park Working Group (which is a joint initiative of the Richmond Society, The Kew Society, The Friends of Richmond Green, The Friends of Old Deer Park and the St Margaret’s Estate Residents Association) has highlighted a number of key issues that should be addressed as part of the improvement of the Park, notably these include:

• Issues with the poor condition and deterioration of the visual appearance of the Richmond Athletics Association ground.

• Pedestrian entry-points into the Park should be more clearly defined and celebrated. There is considerable scope to improve the waymarking of safe and attractive pedestrian links between these entry-points, to and from the sports facilities at the heart of the Park, together with the provision of interpretation boards.

• Emphasis needed to reduce the visual impact of the enlarged surfaced areas devoted to car-parking within the Richmond Athletics Association’s ground and of the significant number of unattractive ancillary buildings, structures and fences within the ground and on improving the entrances to the ground from the A316 Twickenham Road and Kew Foot Road.

• The need to reduce the visual impact of the Old Deer Park car park.

Opportunities for Enhancement

Signage

• There is scope to improve signage in the Park; including clearer direction to key facilities as well as celebrating the history of the park and its key features through interpretation boards.

Gateways

• Improve the access and visibility of the Park through the creation of new gateways including from the riverside.

• Improving the presentation of existing gateways such as the A316 footbridge, which at present is unattractive and in an inconvenient location.

• Improve the functional and visual relationship with the A316 Twickenham Road.

Trees

• Open up views to the King’s Observatory and other features (such as the obelisks) and longer distance vistas/views by the removal/pruning of trees/vegetation predominantly within the boundary of the Royal Mid-Surrey Golf Club.

Access

• Improving pedestrian links into and across the Park.