

SUBJECT:	Littleworth Common Management plan 2011 - 2021.
REPORT OF:	Officer Management Team - Director of Services Prepared by - Head of Environment

1. Purpose of Report

- 1.1. The purpose of this report is to present the responses to the public consultation on the draft Management Plan for Littleworth Common and to ask Members to consider the adoption of the Management Plan.

2. Links to Council Policy Objectives

- 2.1 The management of Littleworth Common contributes to the Council's aim to make our environment measurably cleaner, healthier and managed in a way to preserve it for future generations.

3. Background

- 3.1. Littleworth Common is significant lowland heathland of 16 Hectares/ 39.6 acres and is shown edged in black on the plan at Appendix A. The site is a Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI).
- 3.2 Members previously approved (on 31st March 2010) the preparation of a draft 10 year Management Plan for the years 2011 - 2021. The draft plan was presented to Members on 7th February 2011.
- 3.3 A consultation exercise on the draft Management Plan has been undertaken and the results are shown in this report. The draft management plan was sent to key stakeholders; a public drop in event was held on 18th May 2011 and the draft management plan has been available to view on the SBDC website, with a link from the Burnham Parish Council website. The consultation period ended on 25th July with a further offer to local residents to make comments by September 2nd.
- 3.4 Members are asked to consider the results of the consultation and advise the Portfolio Holder whether to revise the plan accordingly and whether to adopt the management plan.

4.0 Discussion

- 4.1 A copy of the Draft Management plan and the presentation made at the public consultation event are available in the Members' Room. A copy of the questionnaire is attached as Appendix B.

Stakeholders

- 4.2 The draft management plan was sent to key stakeholders. Responses to this are shown in appendix C. The management plan will be slightly amended following consideration of these stakeholder comments.

Residents

- 4.3 The draft management plan was presented at the resident consultation event and respondents were asked to complete a questionnaire that asked if they were in agreement with the objectives of the plan.
- 4.4 The questions in the questionnaire were as follows, asking people if they:
- Agree
Are a little Concerned
Do not agree.
- Q1 Do you agree with the general content of the proposed plan?
- Q2 OBJECTIVE ONE: CONSERVATION
The Vision for the Common
The Management of the Ponds
The Management of the trees around the ponds
The Restoration of the Heathland
The introduction of Grazing on the Common
The Management of the Woodlands
- Q3 OBJECTIVE TWO: PEOPLE
Establishment of a Friends Group
School visits
Interpretative signage
- Q4 OBJECTIVE THREE: RESOURCE MANAGEMENT
Do you agree that we should seek additional funding and help from third parties and groups to support our aims and objectives?
- Q5 WHAT MORE WOULD YOU LIKE TO SEE ON THE COMMON?
For example seats. (Note: We cannot guarantee that these will be provided as any structure on the common must be approved by Natural England.)
- Q6 IS THERE ANYTHING ELSE THAT YOU WOULD LIKE TO ADD?
- PLEASE CONFIRM IF YOU WOULD LIKE TO BE INVOLVED IN A NEW FRIENDS OF LITTLEWORTH COMMON GROUP?

There were 20 responses. The responses to these questions are summarised below:

Question	% of respondents who agreed	% of respondents who were a little concerned.	% of respondents who did not agree.
Q 1	55		45
Q2			
The Vision for the Common	45	20	35
The Management of the Ponds	50	35	15
The Management of the trees around the ponds	40	35	25
The Restoration of the Heathland	55	15	30
The introduction of Grazing on the Common	20	35	45

The Management of the Woodlands	45	25	30	
Q3				
Establishment of a Friends Group	65	20	15	
School visits	80	20	0	
Interpretative signage	35	30	35	
Q4	45	10	45	
Q5	See Appendix D.			
Q6	See Appendix D.			
Would you like to be involved in a Friends Group?	Yes	No	Did not answer	Maybe
	55	20	20	5

4.5 In addition, some detailed comments were received by individuals. These are attached as Appendix D.

4.6 Some of the residents held a subsequent meeting at which they discussed the proposals further. They have submitted a formal response (attached as Appendix E) to the draft management plan which indicates their broad agreement, with a few concerns, but shows that the majority of resident are happy to work with the Council to progress the management of the common.

4.7 Having considered the responses to the consultation, it is suggested that the draft Management plan is amended slightly to note the residents' main concerns.

4.8 Suggested changes/ matters to note

There is general support for the management plan. However the following are the areas of concern:

- The grazing: Many of the residents have concerns over grazing, fencing, enclosure, restricted access for children and the impact of livestock on children, dogs, horses etc. They have been told that further consultation will be undertaken about this matter, which is a medium to long term aim. It is recognised that the issue of grazing will need further investigation and may not be practicable or achievable on this site. The Management plan will be revised to reflect this.
- The management of the trees around the pond: There is local opposition to the removal of mature trees and the clearance of a 5 metre area around the ponds. Other points about the ponds were made by residents:
 - 2 of the ponds do not sustain water for more than 2 months per year therefore cannot understand why we would remove trees from 5 metre perimeter as of more detriment to the ecology than gain.
 - The largest pond that holds water for all the year we would be in agreement for the trees to be topped and shaped but we are not in agreement of them being removed.
 - The willow around the pond will not be touched to ensure that wildlife can remain.
 - The saplings around the pond may be removed in accordance with the proposed management plan.
 - None of the trees / shrubbery will be touched on the side of Common Lane to the edge of the main pond.

The community are willing to work with the Council and indicate that if the Council limits the tree works around the pond, as above, they would help with the clearance of leaves from the ponds to assist with the management of the ponds. The Management plan will be revised to reflect this.

- 4.9 Members are asked to approve the management plan, amended with the comments in para 4.8. The final management plan will need Council approval.
- 4.10 In addition to the above, the consultation referred to the forming of a Friends of Littleworth Common group. Several of the local residents have shown support for this. Members may recall that a similar group, the Friends of Stoke Common, was formed with support from residents in Stoke Poges, in association with BTCV (British Trust for Conservation volunteers) who offer assistance with the creation and running of such groups and give practical advice about works on the ground. Members are asked to give approval for officers to investigate the forming of a Friends of Littleworth Common group, with BTCV (British Trust for Conservation Volunteers.)

5. Resources, Risk and Other Implications

- 5.1 The cost to SBDC of preparing the new management plan has been met from the 2010/11 budget.
- 5.2 The Council has a capital budget from 2011/12 of £1,000 per annum for works at Littleworth Common. Together with recharges of £3,420, and some carry forward from last year, the total capital spend will be £9,000. Further funding will be applied for in future years to undertake the majority of the works identified in the management plan. It is currently envisaged that (approximately) a further £3,300 funding per annum could be available from NE plus a one off capital payment of £3,500 - £5,000.
- 5.3 However the resources available will be limited and will not cover all the works identified in the plan. The works will be prioritised in accordance with available resources.
- 5.4 The Council is required to effectively manage this site and under the Wildlife and Countryside Act to further the conservation of biodiversity. This is demonstrated by having an agreed management plan in place and carrying out the agreed works.
- 5.5 The formation of a Friends group would need a one off amount of approximately £2,000. This will be used to BTCV to facilitate meetings and training for the group. This amount can be met from current revenue budgets.

6. Summary

- 6.1 The Policy Advisory Group is to advise the Portfolio Holder and:
 - 1 - Note the contents of this report.
 - 2 - Advise whether the draft management plan should be amended and adopted following the consultation. If approved, the final management plan will need Council approval.

3- Advise whether officers should proceed with investigations about forming a Friends group.

Portfolio Holder:	Councillor B Lidgate
Officer Contact:	Simon Gray 01895 837321 email simon.gray@southbucks.gov.uk
Background papers	Services working file

Appendix B. The Questionnaire

Questionnaire

South Bucks District Council

Consultation on Littleworth Common Draft Management Plan 2011 - 2021

PLEASE CAN YOU GIVE US YOUR VIEWS ABOUT THE DRAFT MANAGEMENT PLAN

To help us progress with the management of Littleworth Common we need your views on the draft management plan. This questionnaire will take a few minutes to complete and the information you provide will only be used in connection with the work on Littleworth Common.

Q1 The proposed Littleworth Common Management Plan

Please tick below

I agree with the general content of the proposed plan

I disagree with the general content of the proposed plan

State your reasons below. If you have any concerns please read through the rest of this document before you consider your comments

PLEASE PROVIDE MORE INFORMATION ABOUT YOUR VIEWS BY COMMENTING ON THE SECTIONS BELOW:

Q2 OBJECTIVE ONE: CONSERVATION

a)
Agree

b)
A little
concerned

c)
Do not agree

Further
Comments

Please tick one a- c

Please supply

The Vision for the Common

The Management of the Ponds

a)
Agree

b)
A little
concerned

c)
Do not agree

Further
Comments

Please tick one a- c

Please supply

The Management of the trees around the ponds

The Restoration of the Heathland

The introduction of Grazing on the Common.

We aim to work closely with local partners to ensure an effective grazing regime is introduced on the Common. How do you feel about grazing on the site?

The Management of the Woodlands

Q3 OBJECTIVE TWO: PEOPLE

**a)
Agree**

**b)
A little
concerned**

**c)
Do not agree**

**Further
Comments**

Please tick one a- c

Please supply

Establishment of a Friends Group

School visits

Interpretative signage

Q4 OBJECTIVE THREE: RESOURCE MANAGEMENT

**a)
Agree**

**b)
A little
concerned**

**c)
Do not agree**

**Further
Comments**

Please tick one a- c

Please supply

Do you agree that we should seek additional funding and help from third parties and groups to support our aims and objectives?

Q5 WHAT MORE WOULD YOU LIKE TO SEE ON THE COMMON?

For example seats. (Note: We cannot guarantee that these will be provided as any structure on the common must be approved by Natural England.)

Please write in box

Q6 IS THERE ANYTHING ELSE THAT YOU WOULD LIKE TO ADD?

Please write in box

Equalities Data

Please could you provide some monitoring data? This data will not be disclosed to a third party. We will only use personal information internally for the purposes for which it has been provided.

<i>Please tick one box.</i>	Male	Female
Are you male or female?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Which of these age groups apply to you? Please tick one box.			
Up to 16	<input type="checkbox"/>	45 – 54	<input type="checkbox"/>
16 – 18	<input type="checkbox"/>	55 – 64	<input type="checkbox"/>
19 – 24	<input type="checkbox"/>	65 – 79	<input type="checkbox"/>
25 – 44	<input type="checkbox"/>	80 plus	<input type="checkbox"/>

<i>Please tick one box</i>	Yes	No
Do you have any long-standing illness, disability or infirmity? (Long standing means anything that has troubled you over a period of time or that is likely to affect you over a period of time).	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Are you without a permanent home?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Do you have access to your own method of transport?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Are you registered as unemployed?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Do you provide unpaid care for another person?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

To which of these groups do you consider you belong? Please tick one box.			
WHITE		BLACK OR BLACK BRITISH	
British	<input type="checkbox"/>	Caribbean	<input type="checkbox"/>
Irish	<input type="checkbox"/>	African	<input type="checkbox"/>
Other White background	<input type="checkbox"/>	Other Black background	<input type="checkbox"/>
Roma Gypsy or Traveller	<input type="checkbox"/>		
MIXED		ASIAN OR ASIAN BRITISH	
White and Black Caribbean	<input type="checkbox"/>	Indian	<input type="checkbox"/>
White and Black African	<input type="checkbox"/>	Pakistani	<input type="checkbox"/>
White and Asian	<input type="checkbox"/>	Bangladeshi	<input type="checkbox"/>
Other mixed background	<input type="checkbox"/>	Other Asian background	<input type="checkbox"/>
CHINESE	<input type="checkbox"/>	OTHER ETHNIC GROUP	<input type="checkbox"/>

Optional - Please print your name, telephone number and email address below.

Name :	
Telephone number :	
Email address:	
Address:	

PLEASE CONFIRM IF YOU WOULD LIKE TO BE INVOLVED IN A NEW FRIENDS OF LITTLEWORTH COMMON GROUP? Please ensure that you fill in your contact details so we can contact you.

<i>Please tick one box.</i>	YES	NO
	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Thank you for taking the time to answer our questionnaire. The results will be used to help formulate our management plan.

Please return your completed questionnaire to:

**Simon Gray
Landscape Officer
South Bucks District Council
Capswood
Oxford Road
Denham
Bucks
UB9 4LH**

Tel: 01895 837321

simon.gray@southbucks.gov.uk

Appendix C. Responses from Stakeholder Consultation.

Colne Valley Park - "Restoration of heathland at Littleworth Common is a very worthwhile aim."

Bucks County Council Rights of Way office - "I refer you to section 38 of the Commons Act 2006 - regarding obtaining consent to carry out certain works on commons which have the effect of preventing or impeding access, surfacing common land, and the erection of fencing. It may be possible that consent will be required to carry out works including new fencing.

"As the report states, there are a number of Rights of Way across the common, including public bridleways, and of course installation of new fencing across a public path will require authorisation by the County Council under section 147 of the Highways Act 1980. This would normally be given if it is required for stock control purposes. All new structures installed have to conform to BS5709 2006. Also we would like to create a disabled accessible route between Burnham Beeches and Littleworth Common. At present the public footpath is accessible in a mobility scooter, (such as the Trumper on hire in Burnham Beeches), except for one kissing gate at roadside opposite the common, so hopefully there may be an opportunity to take this into consideration.

I think it is a good idea, when it is clear that new fencing will be required, for you arrange to meet with Corinne to inspect the site and discuss authorisation of new structures etc."

The City of London (Burnham Beeches)

Page 9. Last paragraph:

The forge has now been re-built.

Perhaps need to explain what HER means?

Page 12, amphibians:

Might be worth noting that smooth snake is a rather strange record, unsubstantiated in recent years and outside the normal range for this species.

Page 16, Aims:

2. I know that a fringe of trees is an attractive idea for the local residents but we are moving away from this at Burnham Beeches and Stoke Common in favour of a wide verge and then some trees. This minimises tree safety issues over time. Also, there is a better landscape feel to the area. However, I know it is not popular and may be something that is only possible over time.

5. Perhaps 'maintaining a series of recreational linkages' would be better, I'm not sure that 'creating' more will be possible and this certainly depends on relevant land owners.

Also, you mention recreational linkages but actually ensuring linkages in a conservation perspective is certainly something that needs to be worked on.

Another aim should be to avoid damage to the Common through development pressure and creep round the edges (see also later).

Page 17, 50% of the site restored to open heathland: Is this ambitious enough, we would like to see more than this by the end of the next 10 years.

Cattle introduced to graze the East Common. Better just to say cattle introduced to graze and not be so specific about only the East Common.

Woodland largely free of holly - this implies wholesale clearance and I'm not convinced that this is needed. Actually, it would be best to graze this area too as it would keep the holly in better check once some clearance had been carried out.

Page 18, paragraph 2:

Work carried out will be proportional... yes, but in many ways it is better to put in a large amount of work initially and then, in the long term less will be needed. For example, the more birch trees cleared initially the less seeding there will be. Also there are economies of scale, it is cheaper to do larger scale work in one year than tiny amounts in several years.

Objective 1: See comments above about the woodland fringe.

Page 21, paragraph 1:

The area is not more suitable for recolonisation' it is already happening, better to express this in a more positive way?

Page 22, paragraph 1:

I think this should be expressed rather differently, yes, it is technically feasible to 'introduce measures to fence out the whole Common' but this implies fencing off from people which is not intended. Better to say 'technically it was proved feasible to graze the whole Common'.

Target C7: restoring 0.35ha per year is a relatively small area. In terms of contractors doing the work this is a tiny amount and one that will cost relatively more than doing a larger area every few years. Presumably this restoration means cutting down the trees but this is not specified in the actions. If not, what is the restoration from?

Page 23, paragraph 2:

Yes, native semi-natural woodland 'can be a very important habitat for nature conservation' but most/all of what is on Littleworth Common is secondary woodland and is growing on former heath and mire. Secondary woodland has far less of a high conservation value. Many of the mature trees on the Common are those that have developed in open conditions and their shape reflects this. On the West Common there are some wet flushes and these would benefit from removal of trees around them. Wet flushes are rarer than secondary woodland.

Page 24, target C9:

Reduce birch by 30%, is this enough?

C10: Rhododendron and Gautheria should be removed. This needs separating out from holly where reduction in cover is what it to be done, not complete removal.

Page 26: A new target needs to be added here to avoid all development pressure and creep for gardens onto the Common. The new building at the forge already looks like it is trying to create an informal garden around it by planting daffodils etc. and this needs to be avoided. In the past an area has been tarmaced at the Montessori school. Dumping of household garden material is something else that needs to be controlled.

Page 27: LHX - what about the 0.35ha/year to be scarified and also the preparation of soil after the clearance of trees, this could be covered by LHX too?

Do you agree with the long term management of Littleworth Common?

Yes

Do you believe that the restoration of the heathland at Littleworth Common is a worthwhile aim and will help to protect wildlife?

Yes

Birch scrub is so persistent and dense on Littleworth Common that we will need to use machinery to remove some of it. In areas where there is less birch we aim to use local volunteers and contractors to remove it by hand. How do you feel about this approach?

Sensible way forward. I think you will need to do some by machinery to be cost effective.

The restoration of heathland on Littleworth Common will also rely greatly, in the long term, on the work of grazing animals. We aim to work closely with local partners to ensure an effective grazing regime is introduced on the Common. How do you feel about grazing on the site?

Brilliant idea! Really the only long term solution to the management. But for the moment it is important to try and keep an open mind about which areas are grazed and how much of the site. The initial stance should be to graze all of the Common with a reduction in area if absolutely necessary.

We aim to maintain the current level of use of the site e.g. by continuing to provide a small amount of car parking. How do you feel about this approach?

Seems sensible

We aim to provide low -key information to enhance enjoyment and understanding of the site. How do you feel about this approach?

Yes, I think a greater level of interpretation and information would be beneficial to help everyone understand more about the Common but this does not need to be of a high level as you would expect in a country park.

The Council should continue to involve the local communities around Littleworth Common to help deliver the management plan. How do you feel about the above statement?

They certainly need to feel involved. If the establishment of a friends group or similar will help improve understanding and also help to get work done on the Common this seems a sensible way forward

We aim to work with partner organisations to maintain all Public Rights of Way in good condition and ensure that use is appropriate to their current designation (as either footpaths or bridleways). How do you feel about this approach?

Fine

The reduction of fire risk at Littleworth Common should be a high priority for the Council. How do you feel about the above statement?

Very difficult to know... probably the fire risk will increase as the amount of heather builds up and it certainly would be bad public relations if there was a big fire, so probably yes.

Anything we've missed?

Yes, the need to reduce the impact of development pressure around the Common and avoid encroachment

Bucks County Council Countryside officer

Do you agree with the long term management of Littleworth Common? Our Vision for the Common is; South Bucks District Council will aim to manage Littleworth Common working with our partners to restore it to a favourable nature conservation status to meet the criteria of its SSSI designation and to provide for informal recreational access for local residents and visitors. *Yes.*

Do you believe that the restoration of the heathland at Littleworth Common is a worthwhile aim and will help to protect wildlife? *To me its restoration back to heathland is imperative. I see this site as being a rich and extremely valuable remnant of once widespread heath communities which once stretched across the full width of South Bucks. Secondary woodland, the natural successor to heath as well as lowland meadow, downland etc has seen an exponential increase in cover in the last century. The primary habitats which it threatens or*

has replaced are, to my way of thinking, the much more valuable ones which need care and commitment. Given the location of Littleworth it creates an important stepping stone for many species which are now forced to occupy ever diminishing and dislocated natural spaces. Littleworth's size provides advantage as it is actually possible to carry out restoration works on a manageable but large enough scale to have real positive effect.; already evidenced by the species and habitats seen recovering on site now.

Birch scrub is so persistent and dense on Littleworth Common that we will need to use machinery to remove some of it. In areas where there is less birch we aim to use local volunteers and contractors to remove it by hand. How do you feel about this approach? *Birch scrub is an extremely tenacious and prolific invader. Given the size of the common the likely volumes of regeneration and the efficacy of machinery (both in output as well as financial terms) it would seem illogical not to seek mechanical solutions for much of the area. Hand pulling by volunteers is a tried and tested technique which can be very useful in the efforts to remove birch dominance; however it is time consuming and exhausting work so if for no other reason I would suggest mechanical clearance on the more substantial areas will be essential if the volunteers sanity and good will is to be maintained on the rest of the site.*

The restoration of heathland on Littleworth Common will also rely greatly, in the long term, on the work of grazing animals. We aim to work closely with local partners to ensure an effective grazing regime is introduced on the Common. How do you feel about grazing on the site? *I consider it essential. Heathland habitats by their very nature have come to exist as a result of land uses stretching back over many millennia; grazing pressure from domesticated animals directly replaces "natural" management pressures from the large but wild grazers which pre date them . In the modern world without formalised grazing many of the driving mechanisms for heathland habitats don't operate, with a consequent loss of species, ecological niches and the open nature of the site so valuable to its visitors. I'm my experience if managed sensitively once grazing has been effectively reintroduced the animals themselves start to be seen as "part of the place" and become a focus for visitors and regular site users. The more conservation suitable breeds particularly add to this affect. Often the issue is more to do with reconnecting the green space and forces managing it in the minds of visitors rather than just the physical challenges of reintroducing stock. People flock to the New Forest to see the cattle, pigs, goats and ponies; it would be wonderful if Littleworth could be seen as a smaller scale local example.*

We aim to maintain the current level of use of the site e.g. by continuing to provide a small amount of car parking. How do you feel about this approach? *Given the sites nature conservation status in an ideal world I can see that there is an argument for no car parking on the common; however, considering the local businesses and facilities (pubs, school, church etc) which require a limited amount of parking it would seem only reasonable to balance the two and maintain the existing levels. Much of the informal access to the area is from the surrounding area, and on foot, and so small car parks shouldn't dissuade sustainable local access to this wonderful green space. I would be opposed to any proposals to expand the car parking provision.*

We aim to provide low -key information to enhance enjoyment and understanding of the site. How do you feel about this approach? *Seems reasonable as long as its low impact and there is a need for it, often such wonderful spaces are spoiled by well meaning but jarring intrusions from large numbers of interpretive boards, signposts, formalised surfacing etc.*

The Council should continue to involve the local communities around Littleworth Common to help deliver the management plan. How do you feel about the above statement? *I consider positive local involvement to be key to the sites future given its nature, location, and history.*

We aim to work with partner organisations to maintain all Public Rights of Way in good condition and ensure that use is appropriate to their current designation (as either footpaths or bridleways). How do you feel about this approach? *Seems logical.*

The reduction of fire risk at Littleworth Common should be a high priority for the Council. How do you feel about the above statement? *I can't see how fire risk isn't a consideration for the site managers. All green spaces have risks associated with them, either in terms of their long term viability, to the species which live on them, to the site visitors and to the local natural / built environment around them. Despite occasional calls to "do away with" risks in reality this is an impossible task. As a green space manager I believe we need to take a careful and considered approach to the risks, and then manage to mitigate them as and when necessary.*

Berks, Bucks & Oxon Wildlife Trust

The management principles all look fine to me.

I note that page 16 'Aims, Objectives, Actions and Targets' states that 'with the local wildlife trust and other ngos, seek to develop a series of surveys to increase the knowledge of what is present ...', also reflected in Resource Management Target RM4 'SBDC will encourage the local wildlife trust and other relevant organisations to conduct wildlife surveys' and Conservation Target C5 which identifies BBOWT as undertaking annual condition surveys.

Due to time constraints, BBOWT survey effort is largely confined to our own reserves. However, there is a possibility that we may be able to help which will need to be explored further. We certainly have good contacts amongst the local voluntary species recorder groups who might well be better placed for monitoring site condition.

Natural England

1. Ideally there would be a section on legal obligations, there needs to be more explicit reference to the fact that the site is a SSSI and what that means. I would advise the insertion of the following wording which makes the legal obligations of the owner/occupier explicit.

The following paragraph should be included, possibly in the introduction - possibly in a later section.

Sites of Special Scientific Interest are given protection under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981, as amended by the Countryside and Rights of Way (CROW) Act 2000 and the Natural Environment and Rural Communities (NERC) Act 2006. It is the responsibility of South Bucks District Council to manage the site in accordance with the provisions of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended). Appropriate management is very important to conserve the special wildlife and geological features of SSSIs. The activities described in this management plan relate specifically to the proposed Higher Level Stewardship Agreement which will be given consent by Natural England. For any activities not described in this plan a written notice must be given to Natural England before work begins on any of the operations listed in the notification, or if someone else is to carry out these activities. None of the listed operations may go ahead without consent from Natural England

In the section entitled "Site Description", the following sentences should be inserted (unless you can think of a more appropriate section to add it too)

As a SSSI the site is legally protected. There are a number of operations which cannot be undertaken without the prior written consent of Natural England. A list of these Potentially Damaging Operations is provided in the appendix at the end of the management plan

Natural England must be consulted in relation to any operations or activities that are not described in this management plan, for which consent may be required.

2. On page 4 the “citation” describing the current condition of the common is in fact a “**Condition Assessment**”
3. On page six you should state that the common was “**notified**” as a SSSI rather than use the word “registered”
4. You refer to the “designated features” re the SSSI. The woodland, heathland and Starfruit are “**notified features**” and should be referred to as such in the plan. Our periodic condition assessments relate to these features.
5. I would recommend that the management plan should more explicitly refer to the need to manage for favourable condition and to Natural England’s Conservation Objectives thresholds for each of the notified features - possibly in Objective One - conservation section.
6. The plan should perhaps mention UKBAP and the fact that management should seek to maintain, enhance, create or extend those habitats and species which are present at Littleworth Common SSSI.
7. In relation to the Natural England Conservation Objectives, I suggest you ensure that the various thresholds (targets) for the notified features are included in the plan under each of your main conservation headings (you have already got a lot of these covered but some need to be more explicitly matched to the conservation objectives to ensure that we are heading towards favourable condition with this plan).
8. In the plans targets for the woodland I think you need to distinguish between invasive species such as holly, bracken etc, and exotics such as rhododendron and Gaultheria etc. For example the target for exotics in the conservation objectives is for there to be less than 1% (rhododendron, Gaultheria etc) but that ideally these should be eradicated completely to meet favourable condition).
9. It should be stated in the plan that Natural England has been fully consulted during the drafting of the plan.
10. Under Objective 2 - People , I would suggest that Target P2 should refer to “a minimum of two school visits a year” (although should add that it remains unclear to us as to who would host these visits since South Bucks Council lack in-house expertise in this respect)
11. With regard to Objective 3 “resource management” in paragraph 1 I do not think it is appropriate for the plan to say that South Bucks Council will “endeavour” to meet all legal requirements -It would be best to state that South Bucks Council “will meet all legal responsibilities”. Furthermore, I do not think that paragraph two in this section should be included as it does not seem appropriate.
12. Under “RM4” in the resource management section - I am doubtful that the “local Wildlife Trust” will undertake surveys on this site since they do not manage it and have no use for such information. Most recent survey work has been undertaken by special interest groups such as the Bucks Amphibian Group and the Rare Plants Groups. Perhaps reference should simply be made to encouraging special interest groups to

undertake surveys and, more importantly, that they be encouraged to share the data arising from the surveys.

13. Target RM4 refers to “listed species” - does this mean species such as Great Crested Newt, Starfruit etc, which are legally protected - if so then perhaps that needs to be stated.
14. The SSSI citation, PDO list (Potentially Damaging Operations - also known as “PLDs - operations likely to damage) and a SSSI boundary map must be included in the management plan as an appendix and be referred to in the plan where appropriate.

Appendix D. Further comments form local residents.

Littleworth Common Draft Management Plan Public Consultation responses

Comments	
(Quoted directly from feedback forms with grammar amended for clarity.)	
Q. 1. Agree/ Disagree with the general content of the proposed plan.	This proposal has been put forward by environmentalists who in my opinion have not taken any consideration (of) the recent history of the common and taken in(to) account a practical solution that involves families with children, dogs and horses who live around the common who are ultimately the eyes and ears i.e. stakeholders of the common.
	I agree with the general content of the proposed plan but feel it is not practical.
	There are no financials in the plan, no costs to compare with the potential benefits everything seems to depend on involving 'local residents' to 'volunteer' to do the work. 'Friends of Littleworth Common' - we formed a 'Commoners' group some years ago but our comments were largely ignored y SBDC officials who conveyed a 'we know better' patronising attitude. It will take much effort to bring the local residents round now. I believe they/ we are very suspicious of this new plan's real objectives.
	Your 1 st phase of the common cleared too many of the trees. My children enjoy the common. But I feel further work would spoil the privacy of residents.
	I agree with the general content of the proposed plan - 'open area' preferable to birch + bracken intrusion which would soon exist if unmanaged. Common should be available for all to enjoy but remain secure (e.g. stout posts etc) to keep out vehicles etc, Long term future paramount.
	I agree with the general content of the proposed plan - recognising the importance of heathland in this area is vital & good to see it echoed in the plan. Though perhaps the vision should recognise that heathland extended further than simply the eastern area. Grazing is key part of any vision for a heathland site. But woodland fringing the heathland areas should also be included. A little confused as to the aims of the plan in regard to Rhododendron and other exotic invasive species. These should be removed and not caught up in the 50% reduction targets for holly.
	Concerned re cattle grazing - is this all year, how many appropriate species/ breed. Maybe sheep rather than cattle.
	I believe the statement that there are no commoners to be factually incorrect.
	I do not agree with enclosing any part of the common
	I believe the plan is unnecessarily expensive and the lowland heath element should be regarded as a low priority and not proceeded with.
	I care very strongly about conservation and protection of wildlife but I feel many of your suggestions completely

	<p>crazy. We live here, and see and hear the fantastic wildlife that lives along side us and use the common and woods on a daily basis.</p>
	<p>I believe that the proposals have been prepared by a group of idealists who do not live in area around the common and therefore have little or no knowledge of what life in the area is like or all about.</p>
	<p>You have approached this project by your own admission without any idea on total costs to the taxpayer. If you know what the costs are to the South Bucks District Council please supply these details. No decision, or contemplation of actioning matters referred to in your plan should take place without a comprehensive cost plan.</p> <p>Natural England informed me that they have some funds to spend. It does not necessarily follow for the funds to be spent at Littleworth Common.</p> <p>Your previous plan which ended in 2011 effectively cut away the central woodland of the main part of Littleworth Common. Your next proposals seek to further thin the area of trees around the perimeter of the common and of course, in 2012, the plan will show a complete flattening of the area into heathland. You have shown no proposals as to how you will deal with the potential influx of travelling people into the site. Some pathetic little bollards were put up around the site, through which cars, lorries and vans can be driven. Birch are natural trees for English countryside. To cut these down is pure vandalism. They are things of beauty, not to be cut down because of some management plan.</p> <p>The concept of creating heathland is bizarre. 100 years ago when it was heathland and people grazed their animals over the area, there were no cars and there was nigh on no population in the near vicinity. You are reviewing the concept of heathland with rose-tinted glasses without any comprehension of the necessities and realities of the 21st century.</p>
	<p>This is only true since the Bronze Age, as lowland heath is a creation of Bronze Age man. Prior to that, woodland would have been the natural habitat. Furthermore, one of the ponds that is subject to work to restore its 'natural status' was not even in existence in the 1876 Ordnance Survey map of the area, and did not appear until the 1899 map, and so is barely more than a hundred years old.</p>
	<p>However the UK still has 20% of the worldwide extent of lowland heath and there is still over 200 square miles of it in the UK.</p>
	<p>Specifically, please list which endangered species are found at Littleworth Common, please provide precisely what evidence is there of these, and evidence how specifically the plan protects these species based on measurable outcomes. The habitat of the Great Crested Newt is protected by law - please show how the plan is providing for the non-disturbance of its habitat.</p>

	<p>There is an implicit assumption in this document that the whole of Littleworth Common (as defined under the Commons Acts 1899 and 1965) is covered by the SSSI. Various DEFRA, SBDC and other documents confirm that the SSSI area is in fact significantly smaller than this. Please confirm and evidence the <u>precise</u> area covered by the SSSI, within the larger area that is Littleworth Common.</p>
	<p>Specifically, in 1987, the Nature Conservancy Council (predecessor to Natural England) requested and recorded representations and objections to the SSSI. They conveyed these to SBDC, but the map on which these were recorded was not complete. SBDC were never given details of these representations and objections by the NCC, despite requests by SBDC for them. If these representations and objections cannot be evidenced, this process should be repeated to ensure proper representation and consideration of objections before any further work is undertaken.</p>
	<p>For the avoidance of doubt however, both the original 1952 agreement referred to below, the various acts quoted and the HLS scheme contain both explicit and implicit requirements to consult with those who use and reside around the common. Despite requests to do so, the consultation did not involve all 180 or so dwellings in the Parish of Dropmore, merely an incomplete email listing provided to SBDC at their request. The argument put forward, which is that the consultation cannot be furnished to all residents of Dropmore Parish because of Data Protection Act issues, seems inconsistent with SBDC's policy on writing to affected residents with regard to a planning permission, and with their previous use of a similar, smaller email listing.</p>
	<p>There are residents whose properties adjoin or overlook the common, whose addresses are known to SBDC, who have not been included in a direct communication of the proposals. Furthermore, no consultation appears to have been addressed to the 800 or so petitioners who in 2008 expressed a view on the tree felling on Littleworth Common. Please explain why none of these issues have been addressed.</p>
	<p>It is understood that Dropmore Holdings Ltd is the current owner, but that liability for management and the associated cost resides with SBDC as a result of the 1952 agreement and the precedent set by the CSS activity running to 2010.</p> <p>Please confirm however that all notifications, consultations and other procedures required for an HLS scheme have been obtained or that they will be before any scheme commences, advising the details of all the parties involved in this process.</p> <p>Please also confirm (a) that manorial and other rights retained by the Kemsley Estate and documented as such have been checked and that the Kemsley Estate has no</p>

	objection to the works being undertaken; and (b) that with regard to the proposal to enclose the common for grazing, permission will be sought from the Secretary of State to enclose Common Land under Section 194 of the 1925 Law of Property Act.
	<p>Please provide specific empirical evidence of the success of the plan against these 3 objectives eg evidence to demonstrate the regeneration of rare plants. It is noted that on DEFRA's own website, when the site was last surveyed in 2006 they record that no plants were found. As stated in the attached, "Site surveyed in c. June 2006, but no plants discovered"</p> <p>http://webcache.googleusercontent.com/search?q=cache:n3e5Tzxgf14J:ukbars.defra.gov.uk/uploaded/advice/53d21804ad33479b96f1a0c88a9010bc.xls+littleworth+common+sssi&cd=6&hl=en&ct=clnk&gl=uk&source=www.google.co.uk</p> <p>In addition, in 2009 the House of Commons Public Accounts Committee produced a report entitled 'DEFRA: Natural England's Role in Improving Sites of Special Scientific Interest', see below -</p> <p>http://www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm200809/cmselect/cmpubacc/244/24404.htm</p> <p>Please demonstrate and confirm how the proposed works and the site of Littleworth Common itself meet the conclusions and recommendations set out in the Public Accounts Committee report, especially conclusions 2-5, and how they were met by the previous scheme that ended in 2010.</p>
	However, as noted above in 2006 no plants were recorded by DEFRA. Please provide conclusive evidence of improvements directly resulting from the CSS.
	If the woodland is a notified feature, please explain why there further are plans to cut it back.
	It seems incongruous to describe the removal of bracken and birch as a 'success', since its re-establishment resulted from the removal of the previous woodland under the CSS scheme.
	Natural England's website does not show any successful prosecutions since 1981 for failure to manage an SSSI against a desired status. The list of prosecutions would indicate that a bigger risk to the owner/occupier is presented by unauthorised third party activity such as quad biking. By removing a significant part of the tree border in 2008, SBDC increased its risk to such incidents, and has since been forced to spend extra public money restoring a barrier with posts, something which required Natural England consent. The proposal herein to further reduce the tree covered border increases the risk to SBDC that unauthorised activities will be undertaken of the type that appear more typically to have resulted in prosecution, with the risk of associated legal costs, costs of restoral of the common and negative publicity

	for SBDC. Such activities could of course cause much greater environmental damage to Littleworth Common.
	Please explain the extent to which the proposed scheme exceeds the absolute minimum required under the law, and the cost of works that exceed the legal minimum.
Q. 2. Objective One: Conservation.	
The Vision for the Common	This is an unpractical and uneconomical plan.
	Very impractical.
	Introduction of cattle on common. e.g. fencing restriction.
	As parents we moved to Littleworth Common to be able to give our growing child the freedom we feel it is rare to have in this modern life. Many children in the village use the common and woods on a daily basis to play and exercise; with their parents having confidence in their safety. Opening up this area will only expose it leaving them vulnerable!!!
	I have concerns on the visions for the common which are expressed in the draft plan as they have completely overlooked the many examples of wildlife ranging from deer and foxes to bats and caterpillars whose habitat you intend to remove, or reduce if not decimate.
	Your vision of the common is not a vision, it is a plan which has been drawn up without any thought of the consequences for the people who live in the immediate area. Heathland is not required in this immediate vicinity. Those species which grow in the area naturally reflect the 21 st century. Assisting the growth of the star fruit around the ponds can be commended.
	What alternatives exist to an HLS scheme to achieve favourable condition. How were they evaluated and on what basis were they not chosen?
	Which partners have been engaged for this purpose.
	Please outline the precise extent to which this is not already being done ie what will be different as a result of the scheme.
	Please provide details of the success measures proposed.
	Please demonstrate how will the above be measured and evidenced.
The Management of the Ponds	I am happy for the pond to be cleared but do not want the plantlife to be removed around it.
	Pond clearance is fine but I do not agree with any trees or foliage being removed.
	No mention of the newts!
	Some overhanging vegetation isn't always bad.
	The area around the ponds needs some maintenance but there are many crested newts here which can be clearly seen. I understand there's a very strict law about touching or changing their habitat. (Not to mention all the other amphibians and bird families living here.)
	Please explain how and why these two ponds are to be 'restored' and how this supports Starfruit and in turn

	requires grazing, when it is clear that these two ponds are temporary phenomena which will run completely dry during extended warm and dry periods of the type we have experienced during this summer.
	I have concerns on the management of the ponds, for whilst I appreciate that regular maintenance needs to be carried out to the area around the ponds it is important that careful consideration is given before a group of uninformed 'do gooders' are let loose in this area as there are crested newts (which are a legally protected species) in the ponds and the penalties for destroying, disturbing or even touching these are extremely high. Also as both ducks and moorhens live on the ponds and nest in the surrounding shrubs there environment needs to be protected.
	Please evidence that Starfruit has ever been recorded other than at Quaves Pond. If it is the case that Starfruit has only ever been recorded at Quaves Pond, please advise why it is proposed to manage all three ponds in the manner suggested. It is noted that the citation under which Littleworth Common was notified as a SSSI refers to two ponds, not three and it is therefore unclear why the third pond needs to come within the scope of the programme of work under the SSSI requirements at all. Please explain.
The Management of the trees around the ponds	Very against all the surrounding trees within 5 metres.
	No trees should be removed from the area surrounding the pond.
	The more open the better.
	Wildlife in trees around pond (woodpeckers esp.)
	I have concerns on the management of the trees around the ponds as apart from destroying nesting areas there, exposing the ponds could easily prohibit vulnerable animals from using them as a source of drinking water for fear of being attacked.
The Restoration of the Heathland	I would accept the rolling of the ferns down in the areas previously treated.
	Removing of some bracken and fern but please no more trees removed.
	Very important to restore this important habitat.
	Need to carry on the work undertaken to date.
	The area of common land already cleared needs little attention as the bracken and birch sapling could be dealt with the 3 stage treatment once a year at little or no cost. Removing the adult birch trees surrounding this area as suggested, will make no difference to the quantity of new saplings as there are many birch trees in nearby private gardens and farms.
	I do not agree with the proposals for the restoration of the heathland as set out because there are many interesting grasses and heathers etc. growing there naturally and these encourage insect and snakes. However there is some maintenance required to the

	area for example to prevent trees such as birch from taking over but this can be achieved by removing the saplings rather than cutting down the established trees.
	Please explain how 50% is measured - is this 50% of the East Common only.
	Plans dating back to 1987 committed to mosaic on the East Common, supported by a minimum of a 10 metre perimeter tree line. Please confirm what has changed since 1987 to drop the 10 metre perimeter and why it should not be reinstated.
The Introduction of Grazing on the Common	This is totally inappropriate for effectively a small area of common used by children, dogwalkers and horseriders.
	Our children and dogs use the common all the time. To fence this of would disadvantage our children's freedom to run freely and look for wildlife and enjoy the common as it should be.
	Have you asked any of the local farmers about the dangers of having livestock graze on unfenced areas which are open to dog walkers
	Need to fully research how this could be achieved.
	But why limit to the eastern area? There is a real danger of the SSSI being split to its woodland/ heathland sections and I don't think it is that clear cut. Woodland areas were/ are still part of the overall heath.
	Suggest you ensure you reference Commons Act and requirement for public consultation for permission to fence etc.
	Placing cattle on the common area means the children will be unable to go there unattended, if at all, having spent 11 years living on a farm I know cattle can be <u>very</u> unpredictable.
	Cattle may 'work' elsewhere but the cleared area of the common suggested is surrounded on all sides by roads, so fences would have to be put up. These are expensive to erect and maintain. It would make access from all sides difficult. Horses with very young riders use this area often, how would that work? Cattle and dogs don't mix and the majority of villagers all have at least 1 dog. We will all be walking through cow pats!
	I most strongly disagree with the proposals to introduce grazing on the common for the following reasons: Firstly, I have always understood that residents have a legal right to graze their animals on common land, however your suggestion to 'work with local partners to introduce an effective regime of grazing;' smacks of the council raising money by charging the local partners (whatever that term may mean) for the right. Secondly, as local residents of the area our children use the common for play, cycling and horse riding the introduction of animals to the common would make this unsafe for both the children and the animals. As a parent I would like to know if grazing was to be introduced that all users of the common were indemnified against damage to the animals and to be advised whom action could be taken against in the event

	<p>harm was caused to persons using the common. Thirdly who would be responsible for removing the excrement left by animals as this would be a health hazard and most unpleasant for users of the common. Fourthly as the common is surrounded directly on four sides by roads how would grazing animals be kept off these as they could be considered to be a life threatening hazard to motorists and cyclists, and furthermore whom action could be taken against in the event damage was caused to gardens and property situated on these roads. If it was suggested that pens were constructed to keep the animals in certain areas this would defeat the whole purpose of the exercise as they would not be grazing on the whole common. If it were suggested that the entire common was fenced in with entrance via gates, I would suggest that it would then become a park rather than a common which again defeats the whole object of the exercise.</p>
	<p>Grazing on the common in 21st century when there will be traffic in the immediate area and now people living in some density is an absolute conflict in the offing. This will mean enclosure of the common. There is no point saying "we will only be doing this over a short period". People will use the common for their own recreational purposes and let their dogs run free. This is common land - dogs may run free. They will not be able to allow their dogs to run free where there are cattle. There is no point saying "some cattle are much safer than others" because if 15 - 20 stones drop onto a dog, they die, as they will with elderly people and children who could also be lured into stroking what may appear to be an innocuous animal. To make for an effective amount of manure to be created by grazing herds there would necessarily have to be a massive enclosure of the entire area and very expensive non - Eco friendly fencing. If the fencing is to be taken down after a while, it is highly unlikely that it would be capable of being re-used. Who is going to fund the fencing? Who is going to be the beneficiary of the animals grazing on the land? You will be seeking to create tenure over common land. Is this not Ultra Vires?</p>
	<p>The above suggests grazing will have been reintroduced by 2012, whereas later on the document suggests it will not occur until 2016. Please advise which is correct, and if it is to be 2012, please explain how will this be achieved within 18 months.</p>
	<p>In point of fact, the Bucks and Milton Keynes Biodiversity Action Plan states that re-introducing grazing is the <u>only</u> long term sustainable method of providing the mosaic of vegetation which previously existed. That being so, the whole plan is predicated upon the successful reintroduction of grazing and therefore presumably fencing. http://www.buckinghamshirepartnership.gov.uk/assets/content/Partnerships/BMKBP/docs/Lowland%20Heathland.pdf</p>

	http://www.plantlife.org.uk/uploads/documents/Damasonium_alisma_dossier.pdf
	<p>If grazing is not feasible, please outline what alternative plans exist to sustain lowland heath.</p> <p>If the above plan is successful, please confirm the estimated annual ongoing cost, both to SBDC and other funders, of successfully maintaining it.</p> <p>Please outline the public liability issues for SBDC associated with this plan, and how will they be mitigated.</p> <p>Please explain the implications of fencing for public access.</p>
The management of the Woodlands	If managed properly as a health and safety view point.
	As long as managed with people's views have been taken on board.
	All the mixed woodlands need managers.
	Keep established trees now existing but 'cull' birch ingress.
	Scallop targets of 5 trees / annum seems quite small? Will this have desired impact?
	Eradication of rhododendrons should be done, rather than selective thinning.
	The area of trees close to the water board facility is a haven for so much wildlife especially owls, woodpeckers, and many other birds feeding their young on the caterpillars that thrive in the woodland there. Deer including roe and minkjak, rabbits, foxes, weasels, bats and many others live here and I understand there are very strict laws about removing bird habitats.
	The Thames water board keep the areas around their reservoir neat but to remove the undergrowth around these facilities exposing them could leave them at more of a threat to vandalism.
	<p>Living close to this area we know there is already enough activity especially at night with young 'boy racers', graffiti 'artists' and 'courting' couples etc. Opening the area up will only expose it and attract more of this behaviour. It was pointed out that the area of woodland close to the Jolly Woodman Public House would not be touched, if it is not necessary there, why should the woodland near the water board facility need to be interfered with.</p> <p>Removing or reducing too many of the trees will only expose the residents to more pollution, sound and fumes from cars and as we live directly under the Heathrow flight path we need all the trees we have.</p>
	I vehemently disagree with the proposals for the management of the woodlands as to me they sound like the butchering of the woodlands. Please advise me of any gardener that you have come across that chops down a healthy tree to prevent its seeds from rooting in a lawn or other part of the garden surely the solution is to remove the saplings not the tree. Additionally these trees provide a home for thousands of caterpillars which

	<p>hatch annually just in time to feed the newly born birds which live in the trees. The rhododendrons which were referred to are beautiful shrubs and as such provide much pleasure to the users of the common, whilst there may be a need for these to be pruned not butchered as they have been in other areas of the district controlled by the council.</p> <p>The holly trees which grow on the common together with the rhododendrons and the birch all provide nesting places for the various birds that inhabit the common and cutting these down will inevitably reduce the bird population. Reducing the vegetation on the common will also destroy the places where the bats (a protected species) reside and legally before this is done a study has to be carried out and a report prepared and from experience, costs a lot of money.</p> <p>Furthermore as a local resident I would like to point out that the area of woodland which includes the water board's facilities and backs onto the houses at the top end of Horeshoe Hill is used frequently by courting couples and boy racers, opening this up would only encourage this and create additional nuisance to the inhabitants.</p> <p>Finally on the subject of the management of the woodlands I would make two points;</p> <p>a) As Littleworth Common is surrounded by a motorway, roads which are used by lorries and high speed vehicles not to mention being under the flight path of the planes coming into and leaving of Heathrow and a lesser extent Northolt it is exposed to excessive emissions the very vegetation which you are considering cutting down is an important means of oxygenating the atmosphere and needs to be encouraged.</p> <p>b) Also it provides a screen to protect the residents from excessive noise levels yet another reason for not cutting it down.</p>
	<p>What do 'a landscape barrier' and 'appropriately sited glades' mean.</p> <p>Please provide a full list of those species regarded as invasive and proposed for removal, with justification.</p>
	<p>Please confirm on what basis is holly described as 'invasive', and which type specifically are referred to here (there are over 600 varieties of holly, some of which are rare in themselves).</p>
	<p>Deforestation is the single biggest contributory factor to anthropogenic greenhouse gas production. Whilst it is acknowledged that other issues such as biodiversity are both important and linked to this, scientific consensus has largely been reached on the preeminent importance of controlling carbon emissions amongst the many environmental priorities that currently exist. Please demonstrate how the council will offset the carbon emissions (a) caused by the transport movement and works undertaken on the common, and (b) by the absorption capacity lost from trees cut down, all measured cumulatively since 2001 and through to 2021. In addition, it is noted that the UK already has the</p>

	lowest average tree cover in Europe (12% against a European average of 44%).
	Please outline the plan for these woodpiles, which if left on the common could provide an incentive for unwarranted access in order to steal a potentially valuable fuel resource.
Q. 3. Objective Two: People.	
Establishment of a Friends Group	The residents are already the friends of the common!
	But we already have had one - who's views were ignored by SBDC officials whilst they spent our money!
	Has worked well elsewhere but ideally should commit to helping deliver the management plan.
	I am certain there are many residents (myself included) who would be prepared to join an annual prune and tidy up of the common and woodlands involved.
	Yes - but this should be parish residents.
	I definitely consider establishing a friends group to protect the common to be a good idea and whilst I am not in a position to be physically involved, I would certainly be willing to work in an administrative capacity.
	By the establishment of a Friends Group, the Council is effectively trying to get the works done for free. It means that the works proposed are not sustainable in their own right and therefore should be dismissed. If the Council cannot afford to carry out the works out of its own budget, it should not contemplate the works. It cannot rely on the goodwill of others.
	Many members of the community, including many of the 800 people who signed a petition in 2008 opposing tree felling, would probably consider much of the activity undertaken since 2001 as having removed many 'special qualities' of the common. If the community is to be engaged in the manner suggested, please confirm whether this will happen on the basis of the community simply executing this plan, or whether a genuine voice and right of strategic determination of the outcomes be permitted.
	Depends on what objectives and powers it has.
	Please advise which community organisations and NGOs have been or are proposed to be contacted in this regard.
	None of the above are measures of community pride and engagement. Rather, they are activities eg a friends group could be established, but remain inactive. A truer test of community engagement would be a survey to establish a baseline of community pride and measurement of ongoing improvements against the baseline.
	As noted above, please define 'involvement' ie is this simply to execute a predetermined plan, or does it involve something more.

	If this means majority by frequency of visit, it may be true. But there are only about 100 residents of Littleworth Common, only 180 dwellings in Dropmore Parish, and over 800 signatories to the petition regarding tree felling, whose addresses suggested visitors can come from a significant distance.
	Please explain what would constitute 'formal' use and when does this happen.
School visits	I would keep low key and run regular walks etc - face to face.
	Whilst in principal I have no objection to school visits to the common, I do have reservations as to whether they would be well supervised to ensure that they did not cause damage or destruction, create excessive noise and did not leave rubbish when they left.
	School visits can be carried out as of today.
	Please define what 'educational access' means as a term, and confirm how will it be provided.
	The primary school at Dropmore can be contacted direct, as can Burnham Montessori School. Teachers at the latter school have certainly confirmed that the common had significant more utility as a recreational area prior to tree felling than it does now, but their views should doubtless be reconfirmed. Dropmore School does annual outings to both Odds Farm Park and Burnham Beeches. A discussion up front with the school about why these venues are attractive from an educational perspective would presumably inform plans for Littleworth Common in that regard. Whilst a copy of the consultation has been forwarded to both school heads, it is noted that neither were directly approached despite both schools being within Dropmore Parish and on the edges of Littleworth Common.
Interpretative signage	Clearly not appropriate
	Make 'rustic' and minimal.
	Regular, current dynamic information is always better than stake fixed - but less easy to fund externally!
	Interpretation is important (if you have the resource!)
	New signs would be an unnecessary and unwelcoming sight on the common. Mostly everyone living in the village and surrounding area is familiar with the access and paths, in fact residents enter the area from all directions. To put up expensive signs would only attract more people from afar to churn up the verges parking, leave litter, scare the wildlife and defeat the object of conservation. There are Burnham Beeches woods so close by for people travelling by car, where they have rangers to maintain the area and several car parks.
	Once again I vehemently disagree with the proposals for signage as people in the area all know of the existence of the common and to encourage visitors from outside the area would cause problems in so far as there are currently insufficient parking spaces for walkers and visitors to the two public houses and cars are often

	parked on narrow roads. If visitors are seeking an open space area there is always Burnham Beeches which has all the facilities you are suggesting for Littleworth Common and additionally is a much larger area.
	Signage within the common would be very nice but a total waste of taxpayers' money.
Q. 4. Objective Three: Resource Management.	
Do you agree that we should seek additional funding and help from third parties and groups to support our aims and objectives?	Funds could be better spent elsewhere especially in this current economic climate.
	Agree, but only if the local residents have the final say on the use of the money raised.
	Funds from Natural England and Council should be sufficient.
	I do not agree that funding from third parties should be sought as it is a well known fact of life that there is no such thing as a 'free lunch' and notices advising of sponsorship from McDonald's or Marks and Spencer's is the last thing needed on our wonderful common.
	If the Council cannot afford to carry out the works out of its own funds, it should not rely on third parties. It shows that the works do not have a high priority and therefore spare resources should be directed to where most benefit would be capable of being created.
	Please advise the amount of funding required for the scheme in its entirety, the sources and amounts, and profile over the duration of the scheme. Please advise how - specifically - community support can make an effective contribution to securing the funding Please outline what are the potential sources of funding that can be sought.
What more would you like to see on the Common?	Clearly this common must be protected from travellers/squatters but at the same time be a nice place the residents treasure. I feel that the balance between trees and heath is now correct it provides some protection to the common and homes that surround it.
	I would like to see it left to its natural beauty - but yes with some maintenance but within reason.
	How about starting by having a sensible speed limit of 30 mph around the whole area rather than encouraging drivers to increase their speed by, for example, by putting 40 signs halfway down the very dangerous hill approaching Horseshoe Hill. To encourage walkers, cyclists, horse riders to use the common the roads which give access to the common need to be safe from speeding traffic.
	Are we just cutting & clearing for the sake of it. Being a Common. (none of the residents own cattle.)
	1. Improvements to the footpaths & bridleways with better signage. 2. A few picnic tables.

	More parking.
	A seat overlooking the pond.
	Would like a seat situated near the large pond.
	No seat toilets or any other such items. The common should remain open space - no fences and semi wild in appearance rather than groomed. Dog owners, horse riders would have difficulty if grazing here.
	Cows
	<u>No</u> seats/ children's play areas/ picnic areas etc. <u>No</u> cycle paths.
	Please, no bins.
	I would like to see more of the site restored to heath than shown at present. There is so little precious heath left in the county why lose 50% more than needed?
	Nothing
	Seats or benches are another really bad idea, more maintenance, more vandalism opportunities.
	We do not need seats or anything else on the common as they would likely be abused, damaged and left in a state by visitors for the local users of the common to view.
	A cricket pitch.
	Trees / woodland
Is there anything else that you would like to add?	This proposition has not been thought through from a practical view point. I would suggest in the first instance that the zoning of SSSI the common is questionable. The history of the handling of the management of the common is one of incompetence there has been £100,000 spent with no record or monitoring of work carried out. The logic of cutting all trees down 5 metres from the pond because Natural England (a quango set up five years ago) is in favour of (it) is ridiculous especially as some of the trees are over 100 years old (this queries the concept of 'natural' as who is to say what is natural.) In our opinion being a commoner of Littleworth Common this is against (the) Human Rights act.
	I feel that you are trying to take a lot of things away that are special to the local community and many of the above questions must be thought through very carefully.
	You say that the common is owned by Dropmore Holdings Ltd, who own Dropmore House which is now in the hands of the receivers, Price Waterhouse I think owing £28 million to RBS! I suggest SBDC approach them and offer to take over the common (which will be listed as one of the Holding Company's assets) and the responsibility of running it for a nominal £1. SBDC can then approach the city of London who own and run Burnham Beeches and invite them to take over responsibility for running the common. The B Beeches ranger and his staff should then be shown the SBDC plan for the place and invited to comment before preparing and implementing their own plan at their costs. The Livery Company's of the City of London have their own budgets for this purpose. I am a Liveryman, and am a

	past Master of my own Livery and would be happy to assist in this 'approach'. The common would then be physically linked with the Beeches. I am confident the local residents would also support this strategy, and then become involved and supportive.
	By clearing it would invite all sorts of the wrong type. Fencing for cattle will not be able - walk dog freely. I am a capable & willing resident who would be pleased to give time towards a common group if the group agreed to a less aggressive policy.
	South Bucks needs to make funding available to manage this important site.
	The money would be better sent on the potholes or even better day centres.
	Removal of roots on pathways (particularly around pond) - Health & Safety issue. Annual clearance of birch saplings + bracken on the main area particularly. A 'mosaic' of trees/ heathland, to be maintained.
	Would like the footpaths to be cleared of dangerous roots etc.
	The numbers of trees removed, should be minimal as they provide good screening from the road, and may deter gypsies from trying to settle. I am in favour of any of the ponds being well maintained the necessity of removing overhanging trees which produce detritus.
	Just to repeat I do feel the long term management of the common should be dealing with it as a single unit & am concerned
	I do feel the long term management of the common should be dealing with it as a single unit & am concerned that some plans on the proposed management plan will end up with areas being managed very differently & being almost as different sites. Littleworth Common is very isolated & unless viewed in a more Area based way will remain so to the detriment of species living there. However I do feel that work to date to restore the heathland areas has achieved a lot & SBDC should be congratulated on trying to find a way forward in managing this special SSSI - not sure I fully understand what the long term vision for the common is.
	Personally I think that local people around here should be educated more on what a common actually is so they distinguish it from Burnham Beeches. Until this understanding exists you will have a prolonged and uninformed battle on your hands!
	Effective means of preventing vehicles from gaining access beyond roadways. No enhancement of the existing footpath network - paths should be left as they are with <u>no</u> artificial surfaces applied.
	I would like to see the householders living around the common to stop treating it as a compost heap. I think the dumping of garden/ green waste on the common is more of a reflection of their real concern for it - i.e. a

	piece of convenient wasteland.
	I would like neighbours to show more respect for Littleworth Common. They can do this by: <u>not</u> dumping their garden & decorating waste on the site; learning about the value of the wonderful heathland they have on their doorstep. Simply walking your dog on the site does <u>not</u> mean you are a 'guardian' of the common.
	Who is going to pay for all this suggested work was not made at all clear but wouldn't the money be better spent repairing and maintaining the roads surrounding the common???
	The additional comments that I would like to make are: PLEASE, PLEASE, PLEASE LEAVE OUR COMMON ALONE!
	Please note that to date, by your own admission, you have no idea on costs; outcome; manpower; you are proposing the enclosure of common land and the destruction of perfectly healthy trees. Please confirm the total costs of creating the questionnaire and the presentation at the church. How many man hours have been spent to date by yourself and your team?
	Please explain where are there bridges on Littleworth Common - does this imply there is a plan to construct one.
	Please ensure the outcome of any safety inspection is made publicly available.
	Whilst acknowledging that SBDC has to comply with the law, written assurance is sought that access will remain at the level currently enjoyed by users of the common. At the same time, written assurance is sought that (whatever scheme is implemented), the common is maintained in a manner which secures it from unwarranted access eg travellers.

Appendix E. Additional comments from a Residents meeting on 31st May 2011.

Meeting Objective	A meeting was held in The Jolly Woodman at 7.30p.m where the following people attended John Frost, Alan Frost, Sarah Frost, Gill Frost, Davina Pateman-Hall, Pam Gross, Dave & Anne Lee, Kit & Anne Martin, Mick Hall, Jeremy Caine, Elgan Davies, Marianne to discuss the proposed Management Plan for Littleworth Common 2011 – 2021.
Agenda	Synopsis of the plan and the following parts as listed below
Ponds	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All in agreement that 2 of the ponds do not sustain water for more than 2 months / year therefore cannot understand why we would remove trees from 5 metre perimeter as of more detriment to the ecology than gain. • The largest pond that holds water for all the year we would be in agreement for the trees to be topped and shaped but we are not in agreement of them being removed. • The willow around the pond will not be touched to ensure that wildlife can remain. • The saplings around the pond may be removed in accordance with the proposed management plan. • None of the trees / shrubbery will be touched on the side of Common Lane to the edge of the main pond. • The community are willing to help with clearance of leaves subject to reasonable notice to ensure again that the trees are not removed.
Scalloping of the internal wooded boundary	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All were in agreement as long as the following is adhered to <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ 5 trees / year, where the initial removal would be dead trees ○ Birch to be removed first with no beech / oak to be touched ○ Trees to be marked 28 days before contractors remove ○ Boveney Wood Road has little to no wooded boundary therefore we wish to propose planting of oak and beech saplings to thicken and guard against dumping. • We understand that none of the boundaries will physically change from the road view and that the depth will remain. • If possible a local resident should attend to oversee that the contractors remove the correct trees at the appropriate time.
Open Heath Land	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We are all in agreement for the birch saplings to be removed and that the community would be willing to help remove some of the saplings and that the school might want to be involved as well. • If saplings are to be removed using chemical methods then we ask that residents are notified via email and also by signs giving walkers at least 24 hours notice. This also applied to any form of chemicals being applied anywhere. • No further removal of any trees from the central common unless dead / diseased. Small copses that have formed should be allowed to remain to ensure that wildlife can live there. • Removal of tree stumps to pathways for Health & Safety reasons. • We are in agreement with the removal of bracken as long as mechanical removal does not go ahead.
Shrubbery & Exotic Bushes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Rhododendron bush by Blackwood Arms side should remain as we feel that this is part of the boundary and significant wildlife lives there. Other areas can be removed including West Common after consultation. • We would ask that Buddleia to remain on the bunny hill, no removal

	<p>of honeysuckle.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Brambles to be removed from pathways only where it is trip hazard, not to be removed from north side due to significant butterfly & dragonfly populations.
West Common	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Proposed areas of glades to be mapped out and further consultation to be presented due to concerns of exposure of water reservoir and homes. • We are in agreement to clear dead and dangerous trees as necessary in accordance with good husbandry practice.
Grazing of Cattle	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We are not in agreement of this at all for the following reasons <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ East Common is only 25 acres this compares to Stoke Common which is 207 acres where the grazing of cattle has taken place. We believe the only grazable are to be around 9 acres which would not sustain cattle for a reasonable amount of time. If limited space is available to cattle the common would be subject to sever poaching of the ground which may cause more harm than good. ○ We have grave concerns re the proposal to fence parts of the common and do not believe it would be possible due to rights of way, access for disabled & push chairs, and would currently restrict the resident's enjoyment as outlined in your plan. ○ Cattle have been in the press due to increased numbers of attacks on people which have resulted in severe injuries and therefore we think this is another health & safety issue which would be of detriment to visitors and potentially scare off visitors. ○ The grazing cattle has been proposed in the use for breaking down the edges of the pond but as there is only 1 real pond on the common the need for the cattle should not take priority over the detrimental aspects above.
Seating & Signage	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We are in agreement that no more than 3 educational signs are to be positioned on the entrance of the common. • We would like a bench placed close to the main pond area but these should not be made out of sawn timber in order to look natural. • Litter bins to be suitable and positioned on edge of common, essential to have one in Car Park near Blackwood Arms.
Remaking of verge	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The acute angle verge at the junction of Common Lane/Boveney Wood Road requires remaking having been damaged by contractors' vehicles renovating Boveney Wood Farm on behalf of the Portman Burtley Estate. Suggest contact is made with the Land Agent (Smiths Gore, Oxford) to ask for appropriate action to be taken.
Dangerous Road Turning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The site line when leaving Common Lane into Dorney Wood Road needs to be addressed as this is a very dangerous junction where the site line is reduced to 4 metres from oncoming cars. We would be in agreement to the removal of a few trees and shrubs from the boundary point.
Legality of the ownership of the common	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We are all still very in the dark as to the ownership of the Common and the implications of the proposed plan as put forward by SBDC.