

BROADLAND COUNTRY PARK

WELCOME



We are delighted to share plans for a new visitor centre and café at Broadland Country Park. These developments are designed to elevate the park's appeal as a key outdoor destination and country park, with significant improvements to toilet facilities, parking, and accessibility.

THE EXISTING SITE & THE PROJECT NEED

Broadland Country Park was acquired by Broadland District Council in 2020 as a Suitable Alternative Natural Greenspace (SANG). SANGs are created to offer high-quality, accessible recreational areas that help alleviate pressure on sensitive natural habitats, such as the Norfolk coast and the Norfolk Broads.

Broadland Country Park, as a large-scale country park offer, is considered as being able to provide an alternative visitor destination to sensitive sites in Norfolk. The Country Park is a 57-hectare area of woodland, heathland, and fenland in the parish of Felthorpe, with an additional 19 hectares of land adjacent to the site that is leased by Broadland District Council to form the park area.

Today, Broadland Country Park has a series of informal paths, a restricted bridleway and two small car parks totalling 35 informal spaces. The bridleway will remain open during construction but may be re-routed to ensure public safety. This will be a temporary measure only and the route will be fully reinstated post construction.

To ensure the right amenities are being provided with the new scheme, recent visitor surveys have indicated a strong desire for additional visitor facilities at Broadland Country Park - when users of other country park sites in Norfolk were surveyed, 92% supported the introduction of toilets and 82% felt that a modest refreshment option was essential or desirable.

When asked, current visitors, including volunteers, stated a desire for improved information on site conservation work, additional waymarking, and clearer information at entrance points.

This feedback and the importance to retain the Country Park's rich ecology has shaped the scope and design principles of the proposal as follows;



A new visitor centre and café located next to the existing restricted byway close to the access to Broadland Country Park



The building will be situated on a small area of disturbed land, adjacent the heathland with good views over the heath to the south.



The existing car parks will be upgraded and expanded to 80 spaces including minibus drop-off and parking, accessible spaces and electric vehicle charging points. Secure bicycle stands will be provided close to the visitor centre in sight of the building.

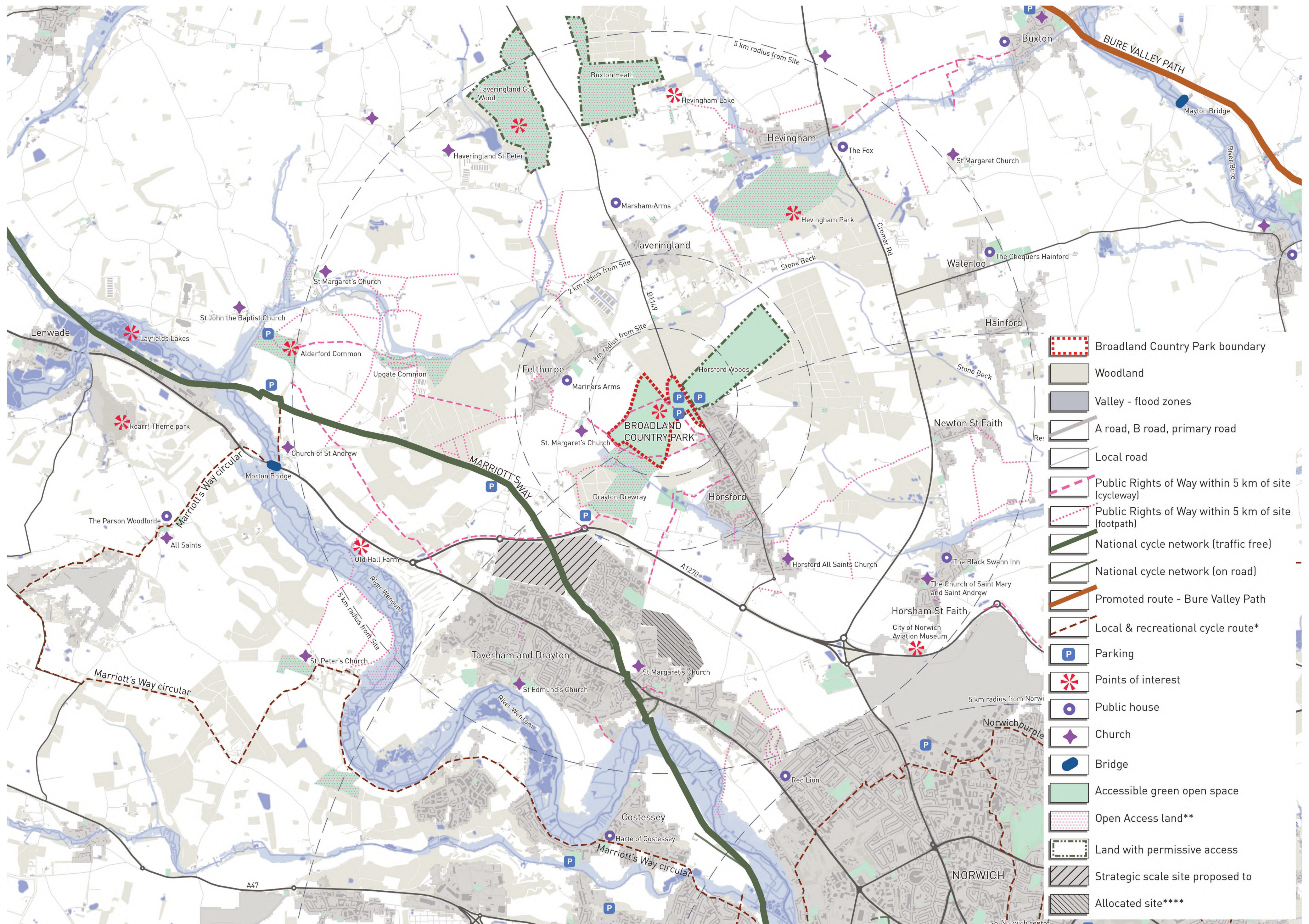
FUNDING

Broadland Country Park was purchased using Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) funds, which support infrastructure projects like parks and green spaces. CIL funding will also be used to build the visitor centre and café, avoiding the use of Council reserves. Section 106 funds from developments without greenspace have also helped deliver features of the park.

Income from leasing the visitor centre will help fund park maintenance, volunteer projects, school programmes, and the development of future paths and trails.

BROADLAND COUNTRY PARK

PROPOSAL



LANDSCAPING

VISITORS CENTRE & CAFE

The building is to be located on the edge of the woodland to minimise impact on trees and take advantage of the dramatic views over the heath to the south. The location on a small area of disturbed land adjacent to the heath will permit views but avoid disturbance to the sensitive habitat. The existing bund will be removed as part of the construction process and heathland reinstated. Additional heathland will also be created southeast of the building after installation of the drainage field required as part of the sewage treatment plant. Overall, an additional 450m² of heathland will be re-established.

The existing pines west of the building are retained with root disturbance minimised by elevating the deck on this side of the building to follow the general principles of a 'no-dig' construction.

The flat part of the roof of the building will be designed as an extensive green roof with species selected in conjunction with the project ecologist to maximise biodiversity.



Broadland Country Park is a 57 hectare area of woodland, heathland, and fenland in the parish of Felthorpe.

The project offers over six acres of new woodland to be established, enhancing coniferous areas and increasing broadleaf woodland to 80%.

BROADLAND COUNTRY PARK

LANDSCAPING



CAR PARKS (SOUTHERN & NORTHERN)

The car parks will be located utilising the existing gravel surfacing of the existing car parks but expanded to provide additional parking spaces. Studies of projected visitor numbers suggest 80 parking spaces in total will be required with approximately 30% in the southern car park and the balance in the northern car park. The south car park is to be reconfigured to provide minibus drop-off, accessible spaces, electric vehicle charging spaces and standard spaces. Both car parks have been redesigned with the project arboriculturist to minimise tree loss and in particular of Category B trees. All mature Category A trees are retained and where possible existing hard surfacing in their root protection areas will be removed. In other new areas of the car park, a 'no-dig' construction method will be utilised in accordance with a site-specific arboriculture method statement prepared by the project arboriculturist.

LINKING PATHWAY

The car parks will be connected by a linking path which generally follows the alignment of the existing route, but the path will be laid out with all-weather surfacing again utilising 'no-dig' construction. A two-metre width is proposed in line with best practice guidance. The routing is carefully designed to retain as many trees as possible.

SUSTAINABILITY


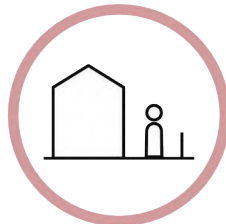
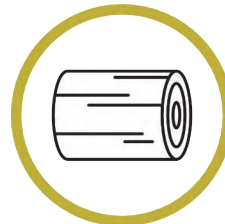
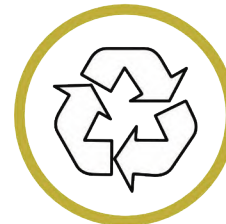
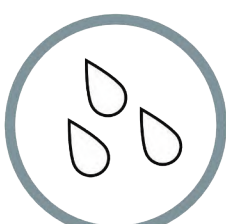

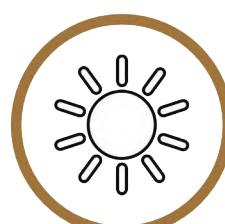
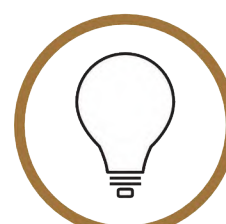
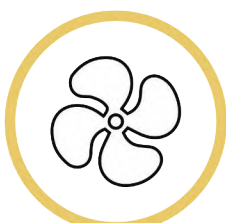
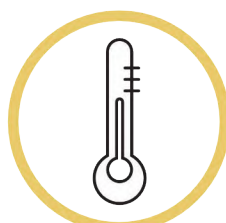
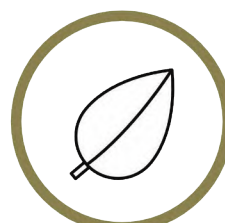
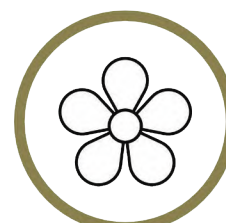
Sustainability is at the forefront of the design with a desire for not only the use of sustainable materials where possible but the use of locally sourced materials. Broadland Country Park boasts a history of timber plantation and the building design will subtly honour this unique heritage.

Sustainable materials, such as structural timber frames, will be used wherever possible and the use of steel structure used only where required. Concrete foundations will be minimised to reduce environmental impact and the design of screw pile foundations aims to ensure that the ground has as minimal disturbance as possible.

The visitor centre will operate at net-zero emissions, with high-performance insulation to reduce heating demand.

An air source heat pump will provide low-carbon heating and cooling, while solar panels will reduce dependence on grid electricity.

Any remaining electricity will come from a renewable energy tariff. Wastewater will be treated on-site through a sewage treatment plant, ensuring no discharge into mains or watercourses.

			
COMMUNITY The development presents an opportunity for community involvement with engaging with the local and regional communities and recruiting volunteers is crucial.	MATERIALS Timber is a key material throughout the design. It is one of the most sustainable forms of construction, benefiting from low embodied CO ₂ , as well as being organic, non-toxic and naturally renewable.		
			
WATER Conservation of water is inherent within the building proposals which include the use of low flow sanitary appliances and the possibility to utilise rainwater to maintain the buildings planted elements.	STRUCTURE The building will be a timber frame structure, paired with a steel structure for the canopy that is infilled with timber. The foundations will be screw pile foundations to provide a sensitive connection to the landscape.		
			
INTERNAL COMFORT Tactile, warm materials will provide a calm and engaging space. Views and access to the external terrace provide a strong connection with the landscape outside, encouraging social interaction and flexibility through open plan designs.	BIO-DIVERSITY A green roof provides protection from the weather and frames views across the park. A mix of plants within the green roof make-up will promote bio-diversity by increasing insect numbers; a primary food source for birds and bats.		



BROADLAND COUNTRY PARK

THE VISITOR CENTRE

The park was created to offer a beautiful, tranquil space for residents and visitors to enjoy nature and recreation, providing a much-needed green space for relaxation, biodiversity, conservation, and exploration. As the park's popularity increases, so does the need for improved visitor facilities to fully establish it as a go-to destination for the community.

To address these needs, the proposal includes a new visitor centre that comprises of a café, toilets, and indoor seating areas, as well as, enhanced parking facilities, including the addition of dedicated spaces for buses, school groups, and visitors with disabilities.

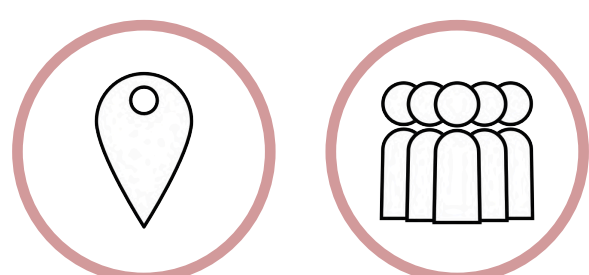
Along with additional facilities, visitors have also requested clearer wayfinding signs and more information about the park's natural features and conservation efforts. The new facilities will significantly enhance the overall visitor experience, transforming Broadland Country Park into a vibrant and inclusive space for recreation and leisure. By making these important upgrades, we are committed to creating a park that appeals to a wide audience, from local residents to tourists, and serves as a prime destination for outdoor activities in the Greater Norwich area.

These investments in infrastructure mark a major milestone for Broadland Country Park, ensuring that it can continue to grow as a beloved outdoor haven for the entire region. The council looks forward to welcoming even more visitors to enjoy the park's natural beauty and new amenities.

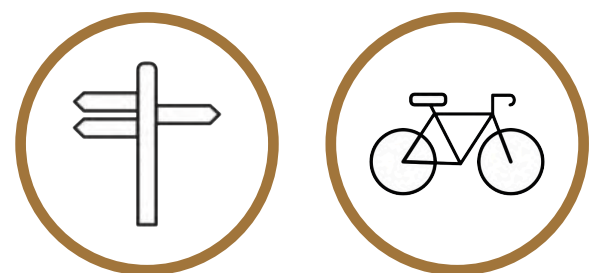


The upgrades will make the park more accessible and enjoyable for everyone, from families to older visitors and those with mobility needs. The improvements will mean that the park is welcoming to all, encouraging visitors to explore everything the park has to offer.

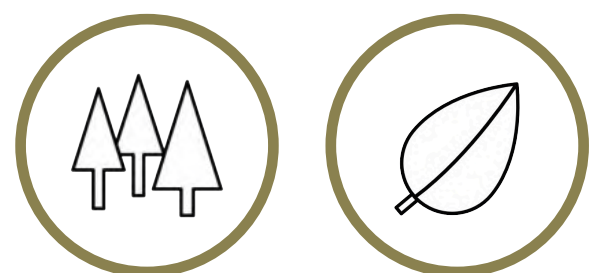
AMENITIES



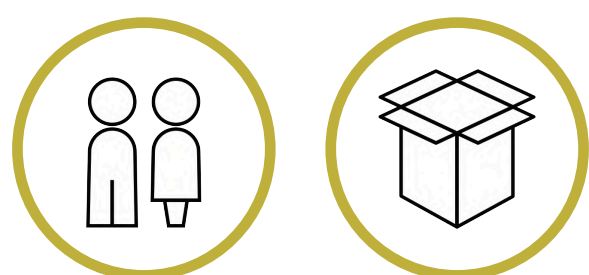
The new visitor centre and cafe will create a space that will foster local communities, grow a sense of place, support wellbeing and outdoor education as well as enhancing and promoting biodiversity.



Improved parking facilities and a new accessible path linking these areas connect the site and improve accessibility for all.



The building has been located to prioritise minimal environmental impact whilst allowing the building to sit within the unique nature and setting of the Park. The 'threshold' between on-site infrastructure and the new visitor facilities has been designed to enhance and improve the overall visitor experience.



A low-energy packaged treatment plant will be installed to process foul water on site and ensure only high-quality water re-enters the environment.

COVERED EXTERNAL SEATING

To provide shade from the South facing sun whilst allowing visitors to take in the view of Broadland Country Parks wildlife rich heathland

GRAB AND GO

The cafe has an openable hatch in the front side of the building, adjacent to the path to allow visitors to make the most of the new facilities whilst continuing their walk

BAT LOFT

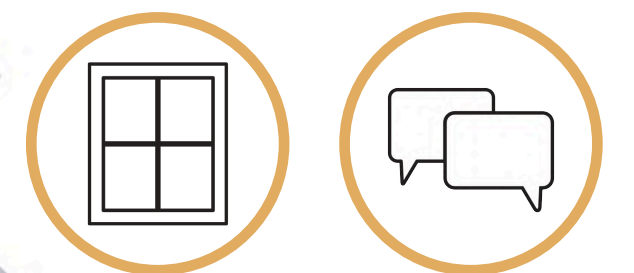
The gable end of the building provides an East facing aspect and incorporates a bat roosting loft area to provide an additional place for bats to roost

LEVEL ACCESS

The visitors centre provides level access around the building and under the external canopy ensuring all visitors are able to enjoy the views, site and facilities



The new Visitor Centre provides a number of functions: light catering, information and interpretation. The simple form and layout provides flexibility and can be easily adapted and extended to meet a variety of functions at handover and in the future.



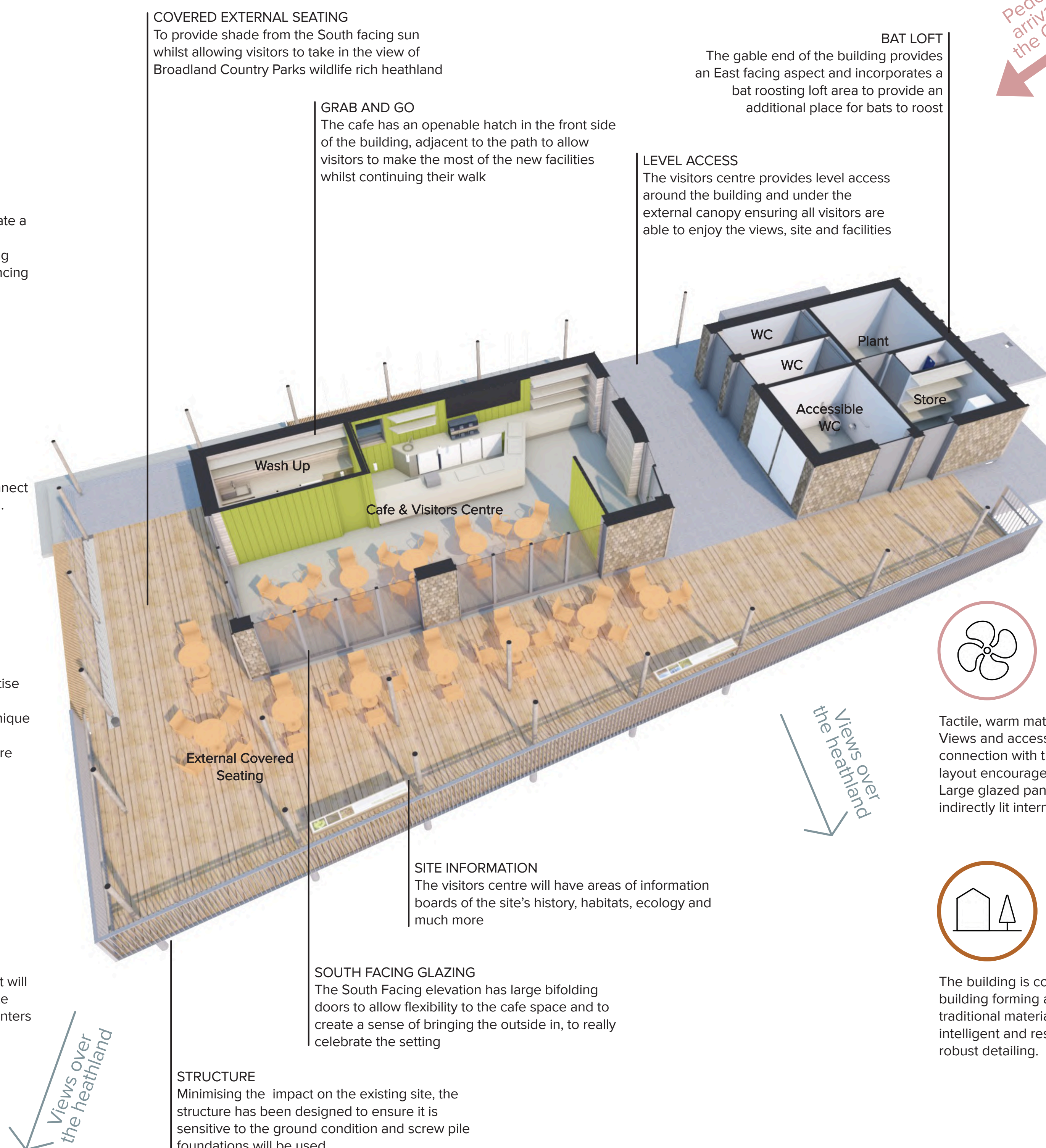
Large glazed windows will allow natural light to flood the internal space and provide views out across the park to the south.



Tactile, warm materials will provide a calm and engaging space. Views and access to the external terrace provides a strong connection with the landscape outside and the open plan layout encourages social interaction and provides flexibility. Large glazed panels provide views across the park and an indirectly lit internal space.



The building is conceived as being a traditional Norfolk farm building forming a clear marker in the open landscape. A mix of traditional materials and construction techniques are used in an intelligent and resourceful combination with contemporary yet robust detailing.



STRUCTURE

Minimising the impact on the existing site, the structure has been designed to ensure it is sensitive to the ground condition and screw pile foundations will be used

SITE INFORMATION

The visitors centre will have areas of information boards of the site's history, habitats, ecology and much more

SOUTH FACING GLAZING

The South Facing elevation has large bifolding doors to allow flexibility to the cafe space and to create a sense of bringing the outside in, to really celebrate the setting

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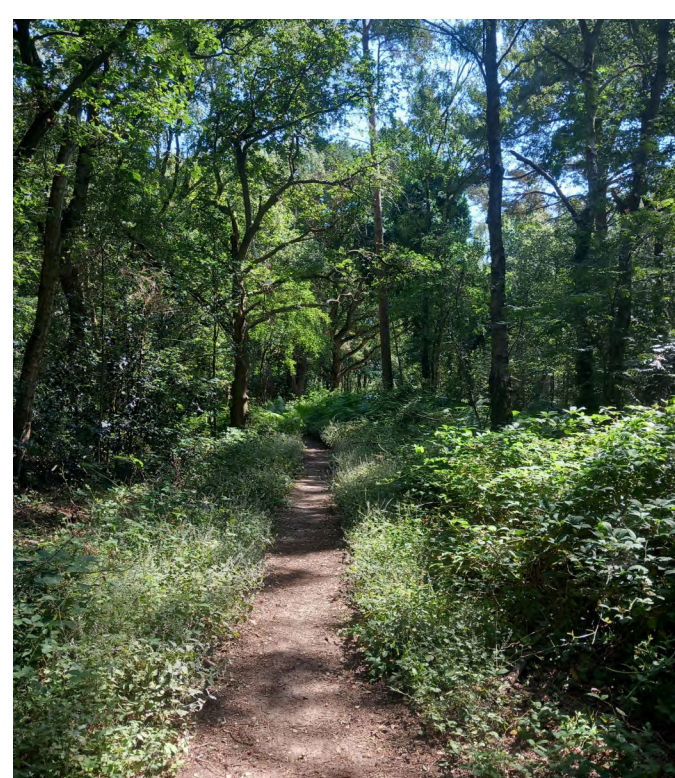


The planning application includes a range of ecological surveys, such as assessments for bats, fungi, and reptiles, in addition to standard evaluations.

BIO-DIVERSITY NET GAIN

We are committed to achieving operational net-zero CO2e emissions within the cafe and visitor centre by integrating renewable energy systems such as heat pumps and solar panels, along with the use of sustainable materials. Throughout the design process, we're focused on reducing embedded carbon and are working closely with local architects and specialist contractors to ensure the project is as eco-friendly as possible.

The project aims for a minimum of 10% Biodiversity gain through several measures. To offset the woodland lost to pathways and parking, over six acres of new woodland will be established, enhancing coniferous areas and increasing broadleaf woodland to 80%. This will diversify the existing tree stock, boost biodiversity, and protect against pests and diseases.



ECOLOGY

PROTECTING GREEN SPACE & HABITATS

Not only preserving but enhancing Broadland Country Parks rich ecology is at the heart of the projects ambition, prioritising minimal environmental impact.

We'll also take great care to preserve the surrounding landscape, minimising excavation near tree roots and incorporating solutions that allow important trees to flourish. Any significant trees that are removed will be replaced either through on-site replanting or on alternative Council-owned land. During pathway construction in woodland areas, a 'no-dig' method will be employed to protect tree roots and prevent soil compaction.

Tree removal is necessary for expanding the car parking facilities. Detailed surveys have pinpointed and targeted lower-quality trees for removal, enabling us to preserve higher-quality specimens. Additionally, trees have been evaluated for bat roost potential to avoid disrupting these important habitats and maintain their ecological value.

Smaller areas on site will be restored to heathland, and low-quality bracken and scrub will be converted into valuable heathland habitat. The visitor centre will feature a green roof with native species, bird and bat boxes will be installed throughout the site, and a hibernaculum will be added to the heathland for reptile shelter and hibernation. These initiatives, in line with the emerging Management Plan for the Country Park, are designed to protect and sustain diverse habitats over the long term.

Broadland District Council's ongoing management at Broadland Country Park has already resulted in significant biodiversity improvements, from restoring heathland to reintroducing the Silver Studded Blue Butterfly and seeing the return of nightjars. This project reflects the continued dedication to protecting the park's natural beauty while creating a sustainable, welcoming space for everyone to enjoy.



Please use the QR code to access the consultation information from

9 September 2024 to 27 September 2024

Please let us have your comments by completing a questionnaire. These are available on the website.

