



Reigate & Banstead
BOROUGH COUNCIL
Banstead | Horley | Redhill | Reigate

REPORT OF:	Head of Property
AUTHOR:	Alison Peet
TELEPHONE:	01737 276023
E-MAIL:	Alison.peet@reigate-banstead.gov.uk
TO:	EXECUTIVE
DATE:	15 October 2015
EXECUTIVE MEMBER:	Councillor Natalie Bramhall

KEY DECISION REQUIRED:	YES
WARD (S) AFFECTED:	SOUTH PARK AND WOODHATCH

SUBJECT:	LAVENDER SANDPIT, COCKSHOT HILL, REIGATE: FEASIBILITY OF POTENTIAL RESIDENTIAL DEVELOPMENT AND CREATION OF NATURE RESERVE.
-----------------	---

RECOMMENDATIONS:

- (i) Authorisation is given to the Head of Property Services in consultation with the Executive Member for Property and Regeneration to make the necessary consultant appointments to carry out feasibility studies, not exceeding the budget of £40,000, to assess the possibility of a small residential development on part of the site, with the creation of green open space on the remainder of the site; and
- (ii) The Capital programme is revised to provide the funding of up to £40,000 for these feasibility surveys.

REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS:

If the feasibility studies show that it is possible to create a small residential development on the southern third of the site, this will unlock the potential of the entire site, which is currently disused, fenced off and subject to incursion.

The funds from the sale of any residential development will help finance a 10 year management plan to enhance the semi-natural habitats and the creation of footpaths and a nature reserve.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY:

Lavender Sandpit is a piece of land in the Council's ownership and shown on the attached plan at Annex 1.

The intention is to carry out a feasibility study by procuring necessary consultants to assess whether it is possible, bearing in mind the site's ground conditions, potential contamination, geological and nature conservation considerations, to create a small residential development on the southern section of the site.

If initial studies are encouraging, a planning application will be submitted and the funds from the sale of that part of the site for residential development will finance the creation of footpaths, green open space/ a nature reserve on the remainder of the site and the two management plans for ecological management and nature conservation. We have obtained informal planning advice which considers a scheme might be acceptable in principle, subject to the environmental, highways etc issues being overcome.

This would support the Council's emerging policies by achieving benefits with the enhancement of biodiversity in support of the forthcoming RBBC Green Infrastructure Strategy.

The anticipated cost of the feasibility studies is £40,000.

Executive has authority to approve the above recommendation (i). Full Council approval is required for recommendation (ii).

STATUTORY POWERS

1. The Council has wide ranging powers of competence to promote schemes which will enhance the economic, environmental and social well-being of the Borough. These powers are derived from the Local Government Act 2000 and also the Localism Act 2011.

BACKGROUND

2. Lavender Sandpit is currently a disused sand quarry, fenced off from the public, located on the west side of Cockshot Hill, the A217, south of Reigate town centre and is designated as Urban Open Land, albeit this may be capable of being overcome due to the benefits which would accrue from the enhanced management of the site.
3. It is also designated a RIGS (Regionally Important Geological Site) for the exposure of the Hythe beds in the north east of the site and has been selected as a SNCI (Site of Nature Conservation Importance).
4. A preliminary ecological assessment was carried out in 2012 by Surrey Wildlife Trust, who highlighted the potential ecological issues and opportunities for enhancement and carried out an assessment of the habitat for Hymenoptera (bees and wasps). The initial SWT advice suggested that a development scheme may be acceptable.
5. Surrey Highways provided initial positive advice on the feasibility of accessing the site off Cockshot Hill using the former access to the sandpit.

KEY INFORMATION

Surveys required

6. Property Services are now looking to carry out the next tranche of feasibility studies, including a contamination survey, engineering report and speed survey on Cockshot Hill. Surrey Wildlife Trust have highlighted the need for a reptile survey, invertebrate

survey, great crested newt assessment, bat survey, tree report and drawing up management plans with RIGS specialists for both the development area and the remainder of the site.

7. The estimated costs of the above feasibility studies are approximately £40,000.

OPTIONS

8. Take no action – this would entail the continued deterioration of the site, which is becoming increasingly overgrown despite the efforts of the Reigate Area Conservation Volunteers and is subject to incursion by bike course constructors and the occasional camper. This is not recommended.
9. To proceed with the feasibility studies to ascertain whether residential development on the lower third is possible prior to submitting a planning application, which if successful, would mean that the remainder of the site could be turned into green open space / a nature reserve accessible to the public whilst retaining the semi natural habitats and ecological features. This is recommended.

LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

10. There are no legal implications raised in commissioning the feasibility study. Should the scheme appear viable then a further assessment will take place of the legal risks and issues in bringing forward a project along the lines indicated in this report.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

11. Up to £40,000 for surveys.

EQUALITIES IMPLICATIONS

12. There are no equalities implications arising from this project.

RISK MANAGEMENT CONSIDERATIONS

13. Foreseeable risks relate to physical site characteristics: that the amount or type of contamination on the site will render it unviable to develop, or that the ground conditions will not prove suitable. In which case we will not proceed to planning application stage and the funding spent on feasibility studies cannot be recovered.

OTHER IMPLICATIONS

14. There are no other implications.

CONSULTATION

15. Executive Members have been consulted on the proposals both formally and informally.
16. The Head of Legal Services and Chief Finance Officer have been consulted on the contents of this report.

POLICY FRAMEWORK

17. The recommended option is in line with the Council's priority areas within the Community Plan to encourage community wellbeing by opening up inaccessible areas, to maintain and enhance green space for the future and to help realise the Borough's emerging Green Infrastructure Strategy.

Background Papers: None

Annex 1 – site plan.

Location Plan 1:1250 @ A4

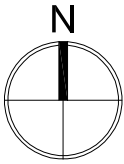
Annex 1

Notes

1. This drawing is the copyright of MH Architects Ltd
2. Do not scale this drawing except for Local Authority planning purposes
3. All dimensions must be checked on site by the contractor prior to commencement of the works.

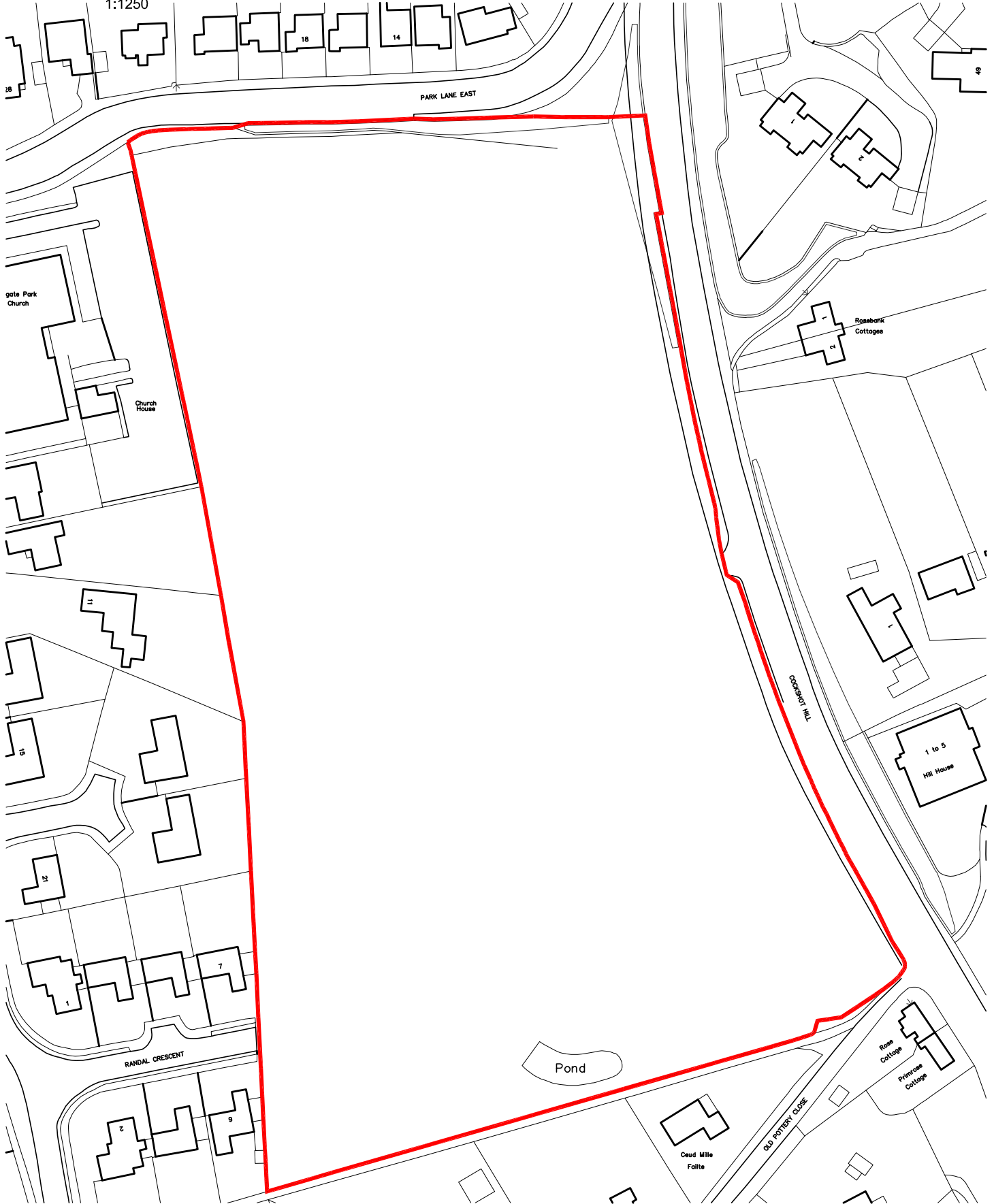


Rev.	Revision	By	Date	Check	Date



10 0 10 20 30 40 50 100m

1:1250



Project & Drawing title

Location Plan

Lavender Sandpit

Cockshot Hill - Reigate

Reigate and Banstead B C

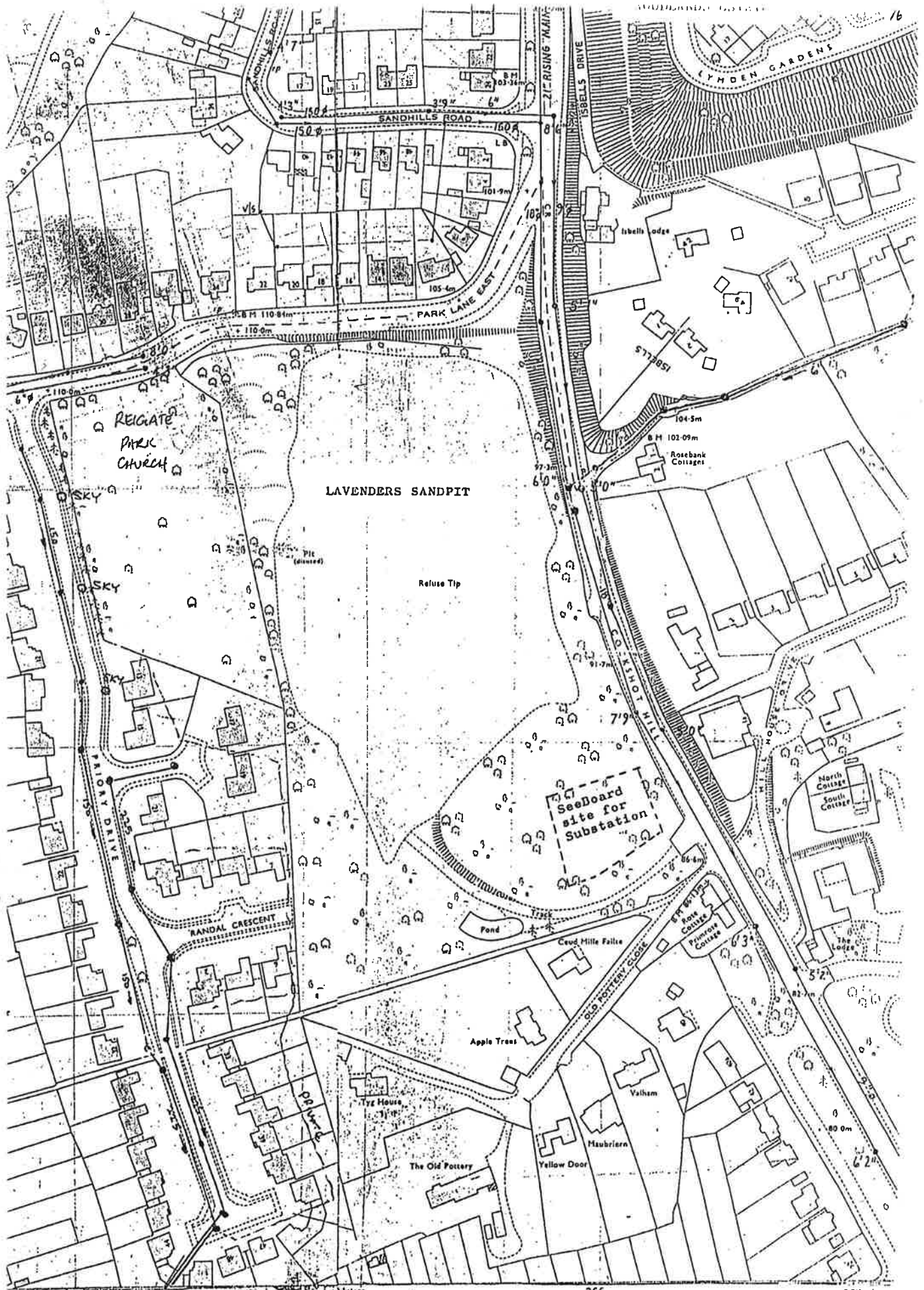
Drawn	Date	Checked	Date	Scale at A4
pjh	07/07/15	***		1:1250
Job N°	Drawing N°	Rev.		
13-029	03	.		
Status	Concept			

Ground Floor | Bicentennial Building
Southern Gate | Chichester
West Sussex | PO19 8EZ

t. 01243 774748
e. admin@mharchitects.co.uk
www.mharchitects.co.uk

Limited Company
Registered in England No. 5994933





LAVENDERS SANDPIT

Refuse Tip

Seeboard site for Substation

REIGATE PARK CHURCH

North Cottage
South Cottage

The Old Pottery

Primrose Cottage

SCALE 1/1250

25500

256

257

250

251