

Proposals for Linford Christie Stadium

Presented to Wormwood Scrubs Charitable Trust Committee

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with full support from the
Trustees of Friends of Wormwood Scrubs

1. The Wormwood Scrubs Act, which is the Charitable Trust's governing document, declares that the entire area is held in trust for the population of the metropolis for their exercise and recreation.

This remains the principal purpose and guiding principle under which the WSCT manages the 'more wild than tamed' open space under the trusteeship of the London Borough of Hammersmith & Fulham, of which WSCT is a sub-committee.

In some areas of the Scrubs, there are issues arising from the desire to provide areas for wildlife within the c 80 hectares of space comprising the Scrubs, which can sometimes result in conflicts between the needs of wildlife, whether nesting birds, small mammals or others, and human users, especially where those human users are also exercising their dogs, personally or professionally.

2. However, there need be no conflict in the area of Linford Christie Stadium, part of WSCT's owned assets, which is clearly devoted to exercise and recreation.

This paper provides a reasoned proposal for a properly planned, comprehensive, and unified

approach to modernising the facilities provided within LCS to the benefit of all residents of LBHF and its neighbouring boroughs at a time when formal and informal leisure and sporting activities are of prime importance to well-being, particularly as new property developments continue to bring new residents on all sides of the Scrubs, and with them new pressures on the 'more wild than tamed', and more structured elements of the Scrubs.

There are leases of parts of LCS to Thames Valley Harriers (TVH), one of the UK's leading athletic clubs; and to Kensington Dragons (KD), a major local youth soccer club. Facilities are also made available to London Sports, which organises the baseball games during the spring and early summer, and needs storage for equipment as well as occupying significant areas of open space immediately north of LCS while games are being played; and to the Gaelic football organisation, to lacrosse players, and to numerous school sports events on the track and surrounding area; and for the regular Park Run events.

These various activities, and particularly those organised and managed by TVH and KD offer major benefits to the local community. Both organisations offer very low costs for participation, relying on continuing philanthropic support, which has been forthcoming for many years.

KD is currently implementing a major upgrade and improvement to the sports pitches within the stadium, with the benefit of appropriate lease arrangements and financial support from WSCT. All the proposals offered here are compatible with the KD project.

TVH have plans, supported by WSCT, to upgrade its Clubhouse and thereby to offer café and toilet facilities to the public, i.e. to all Scrubs users, not just TVH members. All the proposals offered here are compatible with the TVH project.

3. The facilities within LCS are in need of significant upgrading, to meet 21st century sporting requirements, including compliance with National Athletics League standards, and to be fitting for TVH who are currently National Athletic Champions. The track is several years past the date on which it should have been replaced, and the covered track (which could beneficially be replaced with something closer to an indoor track which would have much greater use by clubs and schools) is too short to be useful. The viewing stand is very 'tired', with no usable storage facilities in the space beneath it, and the immediately adjacent toilet facilities have not been usable for some years. The changing rooms and their toilet facilities, while still in use, are a disgrace to LCS, WSCT and LBHF.

The Consultation recently completed by the London Development Trust on behalf of WSCT describes the position as follows: 'Many parts of LCS are in a state of dire disrepair.'

4. There has also been significant interest in the idea of finding space for a LIDO (an outdoor heated/unheated swimming facility) as part of any upgrade, with more than 1,200 individuals, as well as FOWWS, offering their support. These proposals do not extend to the lido's development, but they do extend to the provision of a site partly within LCS ready for the development of a Lido, or indeed for other sports facilities to

complement the existing facilities at LACS and the Scrubs. The merits of a Lido are that there are no age restrictions and it can be for gentle leisure as well as proper sports.

5. Attachment 1 comprises proposals prepared by FOWWS with significant help from TVH and KD, guidance from The Sports Consultancy who have previously worked on various earlier concepts for improving LCS, and major input from consultant Mark Thomas who has also been similarly involved. FOWWS would be pleased to provide introductions/connections to all these, if not already known, for LBHF/WSCT Officers. These proposals relate to the upgrading of the LCS facilities, with full recognition included for the planned improvements to the TVH Club House which, with WSCT support, is intended to provide café and toilet facilities to ALL Scrubs users, and showing the potential feasibility of space for the inclusion of a Lido.
6. Indicative costings are also provided for the proposals for improvements, based on national guidelines by Sport England, with additional input from TVH and Mark Thomas.
7. It is proposed that the costs of upgrading the LCS facilities should be met by a combination of WSCT and LBHF. Additional fund-raising could be undertaken by any/all of TVH/LCS/WSCT whether from National Governing Bodies of Sport, Sport England, other organisations offering grant funding, and general philanthropic sources. For the purposes of this note I am assuming that WSCT/LBHF will finance the urgently needed works.

WSCT is now showing an annual surplus, and it would be appropriate to invest at least some of this, over several years, in the upgrades proposed for LCS, which forms part of WSCT's owned assets.

WSCT's annual surplus, and its improved financial position, is the result of two unconnected factors:

a. the continued presence on the Red Gra 'parade ground' of the portacabin temporary school facilities for Kensington Aldridge Academy, paying a significant annual rental. This is likely to remain/continue until the demolition or other solution to the question of the future of Grenfell Tower, which it seems may not be very soon.

b. the new - since February 2022 - maintenance contract for the grounds, albeit with the same contractor, has resulted in an improved level of maintenance, including litter removal, at a very significantly lower cost to WSCT.

8. Why should LBHF contribute to the LCS upgrade?

- (a) LCS is owned by WSCT of which LBHF is sole Trustee and provides the management. LCS lies within LBHF, and it would therefore be to the benefit of all residents of LBHF, as well as residents of the neighbouring boroughs, to see improved leisure and sports facilities. Improved facilities at LCS would have the ability to advance LBHF sports activities and development including providing local opportunities to be more active, support current sports developments and initiatives, and help implement LBHF's Community Sport and Physical Activity

Strategy, which already lists LCS as their venue. LBHF lacks other facilities of a similar kind within the Borough, whether for athletics or other outdoor games.

- (b) For the fourteen years of the previous W SCT management contract — a poorer service at a higher cost — the contract formed part of an LBHF Borough wide contract. While the proportion of the total contract charged to W SCT is said to have been properly assessed in 2008, the significantly lower cost from 2022 - by about E400,000 p.a. — at least raises the question as to whether the cost of services provided elsewhere within LBHF may have benefited, perhaps inadvertently, from this assessment. It is also acknowledged that during the same period LBHF has contributed some E3.2m of funds for the improvement of WSCT, including in particular about E2.5m for LCS. The apparent disadvantage to WSCT over the 14 years amounts to between €3 and E4m. Without seeking to go further into the issues raised in this paragraph, it would be entirely within the powers, and on the face of it to the best interests of, LBHF to be an active financial partner in such a major improvement to facilities within the Borough, as well as managing the upgrade as the Trustee and Manager of WSCT.

9. The LIDO. These proposals do not extend to the development of a Lido, but they do extend to the provision of a site partly within LCS ready for the development of a Lido. The plans in Attachment 2 show possible locations within, or partly within, LCS for its provision. The promoters of the Lido project believe that it can be independently financed, although it would

clearly be highly advantageous for LBHF/WSCT to provide some initial financial stimulus and be closely involved, including providing space and a suitable lease. It remains for discussion whether LBHF/WSCT, or an independent operator with relevant experience, should manage the Lido when it is built, and, in either case, what the financial arrangements should be as between the operator and WSCT. Similar considerations apply to any other additional complementary sports facilities.

FOWWS Trustees request that these proposals be carefully reviewed and studied by LBHF Officers, with their review and recommendations to come to the next meeting of the WSCT Committee.

Attachment 1:

The objective is to provide facilities to form a part of LBHF high quality sporting infrastructure suitable for use by schools, clubs, teams, and individuals, from within and neighbouring the Borough. To support the aims and ambitions of TVH, KD, and other users of the facilities, which will also increase user satisfaction and participation in grassroots, club-based sport for the local LBHF community and those from further afield.

The plan shows the existing facility locations with each building named.

To upgrade the facilities of LCS, there would need to be a phased plan, with some of the below needed urgently and some less immediately, but all should be planned from the start.

- a) The running track was laid in 2005 and the refurbishment of such tracks should be about every 7 years. This is now 17 years. Estimated cost of a refurbishment is cE350,000 (based on comments from TVH and The Sports Consultancy)
- b) The floodlights do not work reliably and predictably, due to their age and because they are prone to flooding and fusing. Estimated cost of replacement/repair - E1 ()0,000 - E1 50,000 (based on comments from TVH and Mark Thomas)
- c) To refurbish, modernise and optimise the existing stand and its seating, to increase its capacity to the requirements for hosting National Athletics League events and to ensure disabled spectator access; to bring the adjacent male and female toilets back into use; to create storage beneath the stand for field, track, and related equipment. Estimated cost cE370,000 (based on comments from Mark Thomas)
- d) Covered Running Track
This is too short to be useful, and is also well past its due date for refurbishment. The associated storage may also need upgrading or rebuilding.
- e) Changing Rooms and Club Rooms.
As previously stated, these are in very poor condition, and may be more effective to replace than to refurbish. It needs to be studied whether the existing provision is appropriate, or whether a better design would enable a smaller area to be equally, or more, effective, perhaps on two stories. It may be appropriate/possible to include studio or gym spaces capable of generating revenue.

Cost of these last two items, d and e above, will depend on decisions following proper investigation, and the area required, but at the higher end with increased and improved facilities, may be of the order of c£3.5-5m.

A review conducted by WSCT/LBHF Officers should be capable, relatively quickly, of identifying more precisely both the timelines and costs of the above, and it is suggested that liaison with The Sports Consultancy and Mark Thomas would be both reasonably economical and draw on their existing knowledge of LCS.

Such a review would look at the refurbishment of LCS to provide modern and compliant facilities to meet the demonstrable needs and demands from the local community and those further afield, e.g. in neighbouring boroughs.

Allowing LCS facilities to continue to decline without taking the necessary remedial action, and implementing improvements, will only increase the eventual cost, and puts at risk the provision within WSCT of the prime sports facility within LBHF.

Attachment 1

- LINFORD CHRISTIE STADIUM BOUNDARY
- ADJACENT SITE BOUNDARIES
- EXISTING BUILDINGS



Linford Christie Stadium scale 1:500@A1



Existing Arrangement
LCS_01/B



Attachment 2:

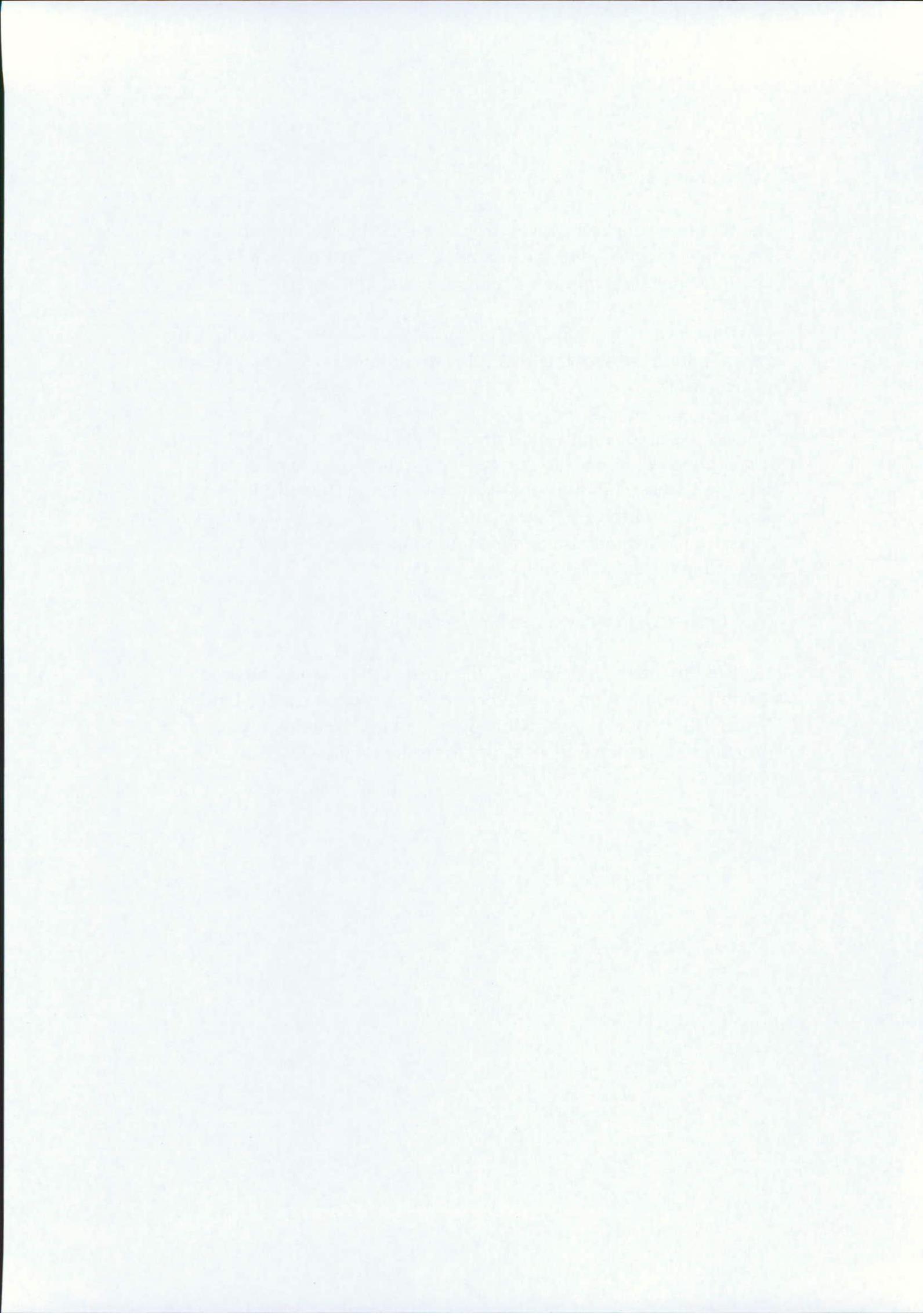
The first three pages are taken from the Lido Project documents, and show their suggestions for locations adjacent to or partly inside LCS. These are marked Option 1, Option 2A, and Option 2B

The fourth page is the location preferred by FOWWS, with the handdrawn indication, showing the Lido 'straddling' the long-condemned artillery wall.

This preferred location would be partly within LCS and partly on the car park — on the LCS site the area is currently a large patch of brambles, whose biodiversity merits can be replaced within the Scrubs; west of the LCS sit, on the car park, where at least some of the space has been unusable for some years due to the scaffolding supporting the artillery wall.

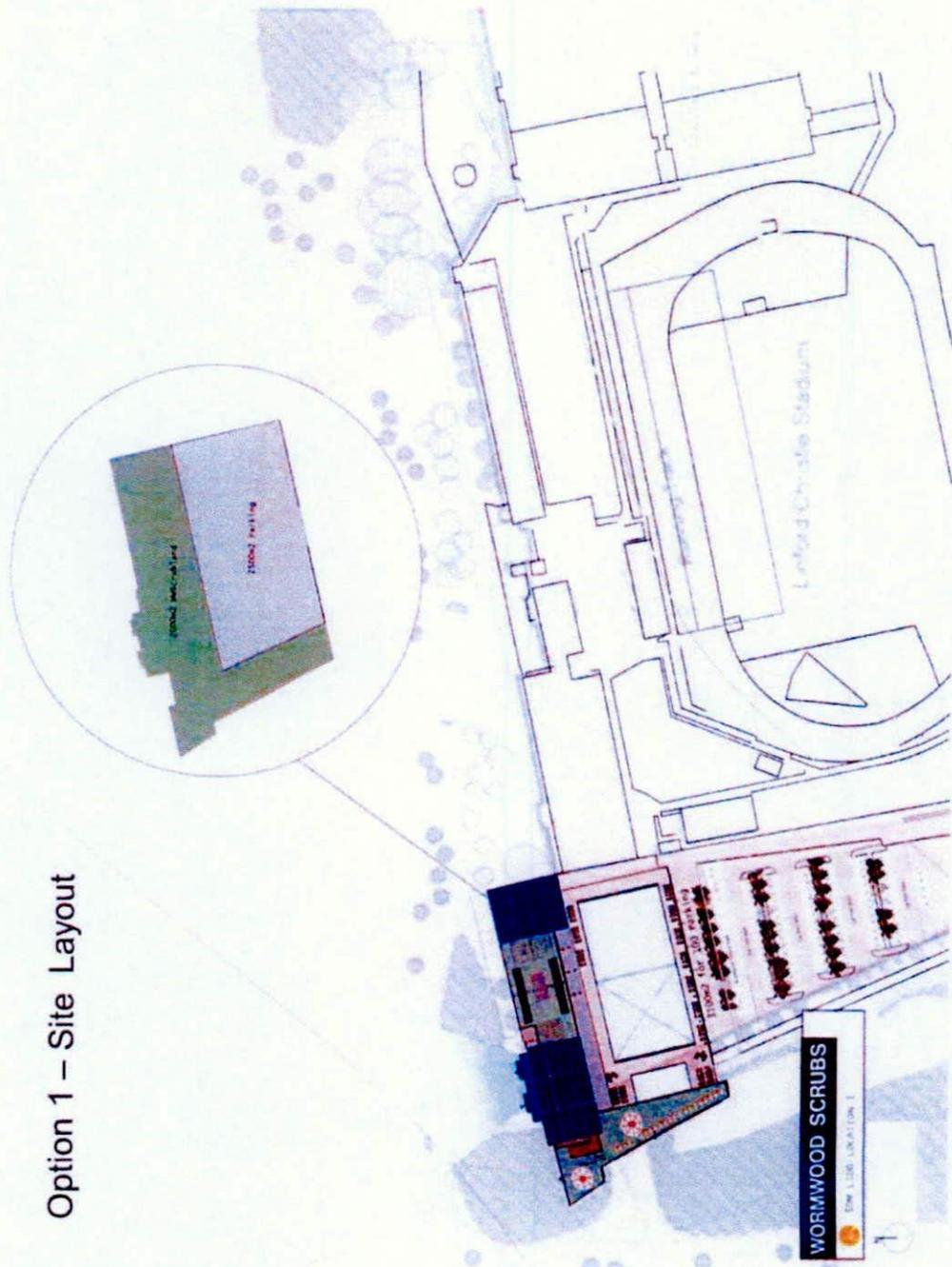
With this location, access can be external to LCS.

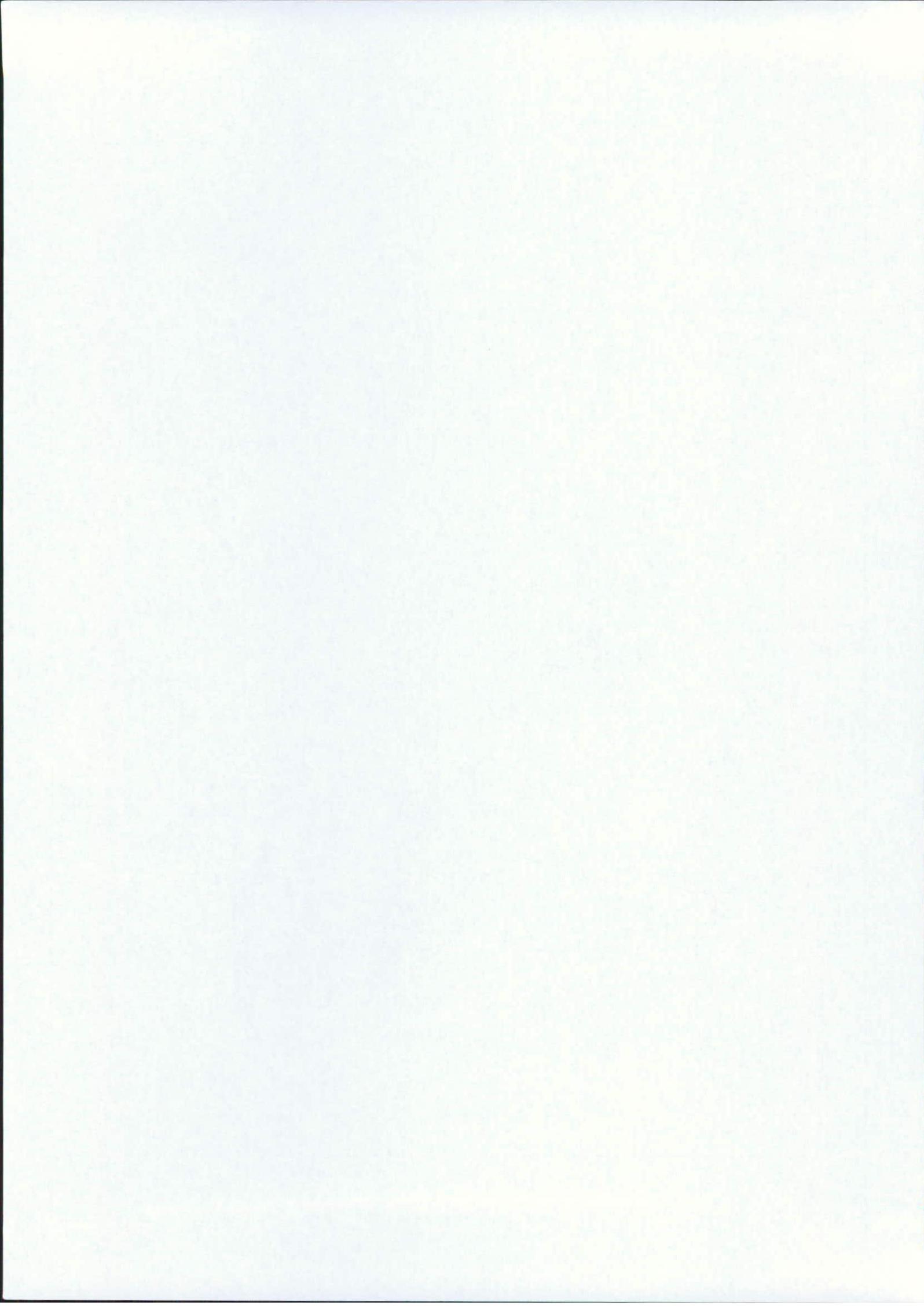
As stated in the main document, the present purpose of showing possible Lido locations is not for immediate action nor for funding by WSCT/LBHF, but to ensure that the possibility remains open and can be actively considered by Officers for bringing back to WSCT in due course.



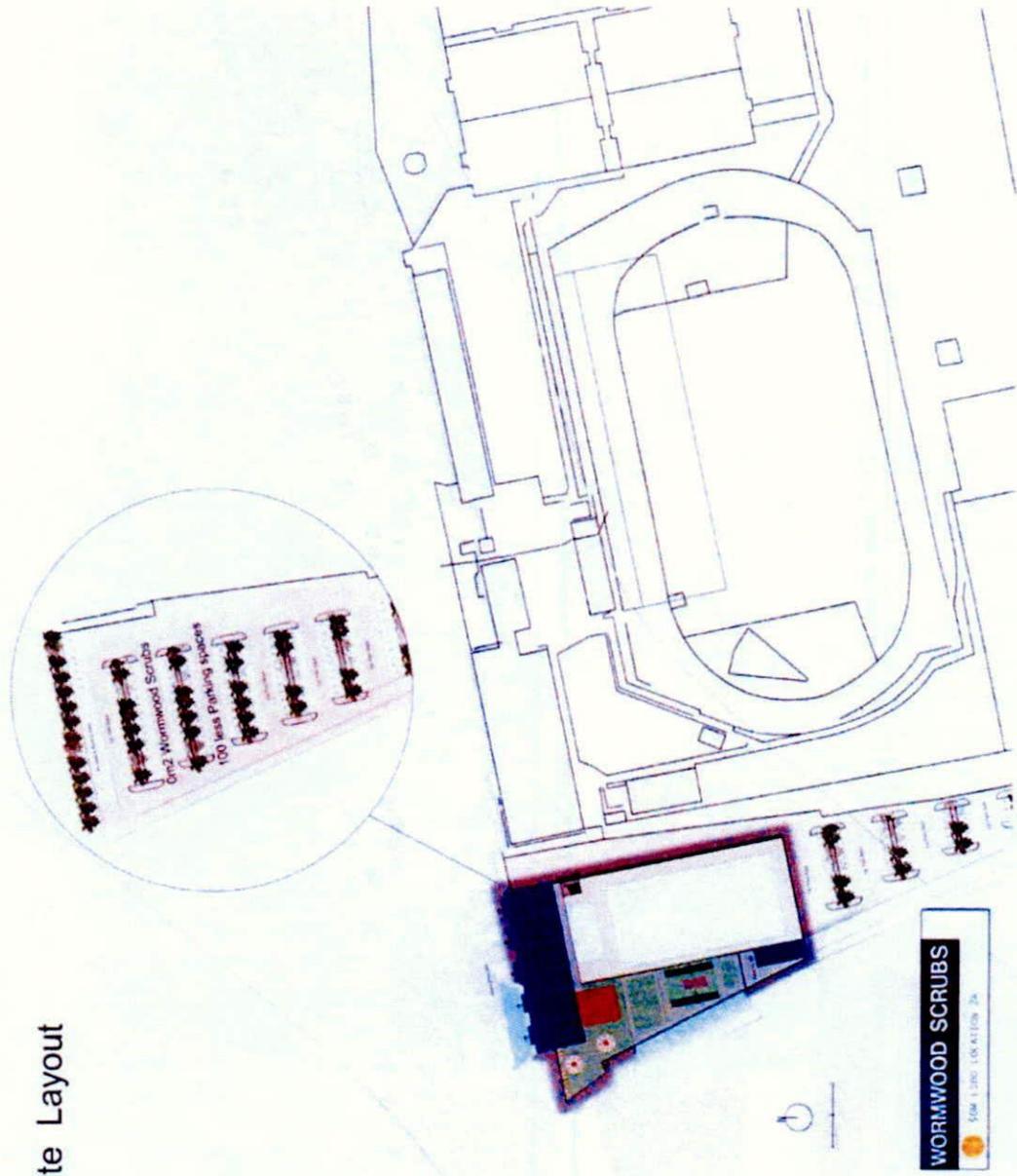
Attachment 2 (4 pages)

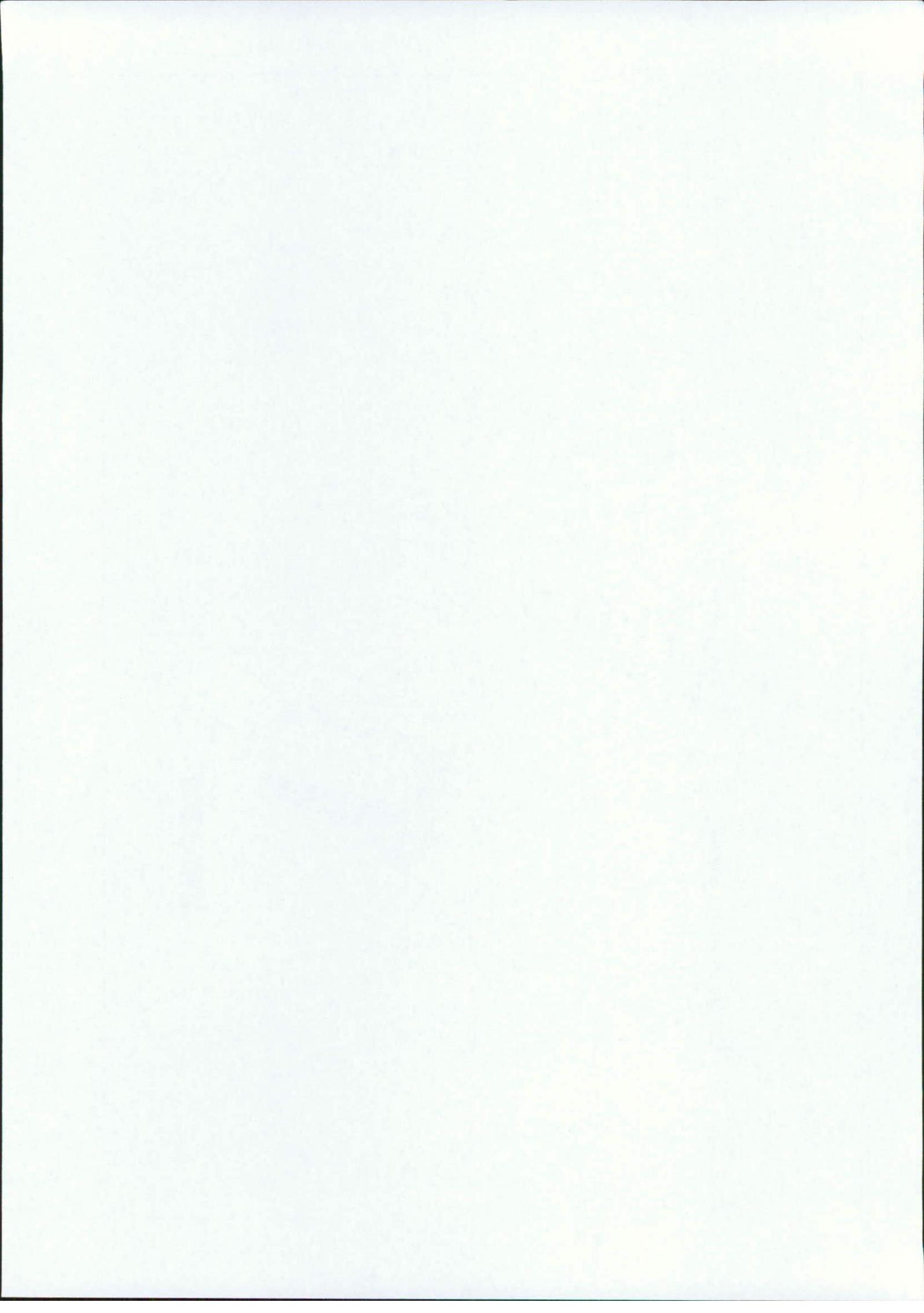
Option 1 – Site Layout





Option 2A – Site Layout





Option 2B – Site Layout

