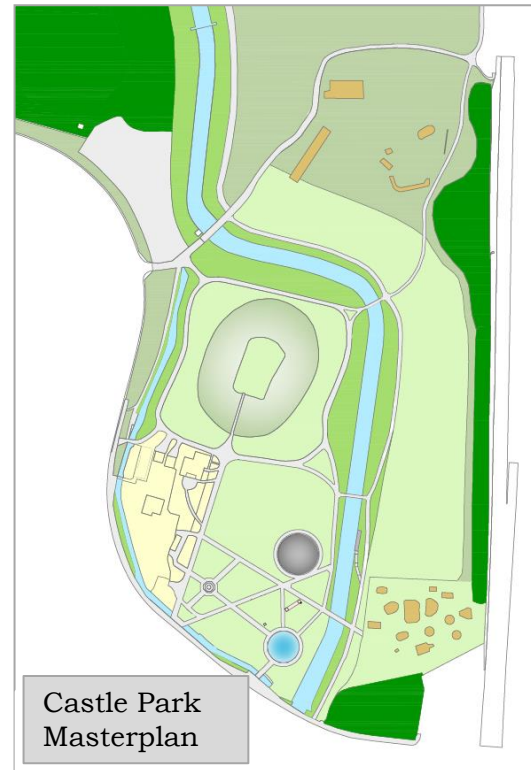
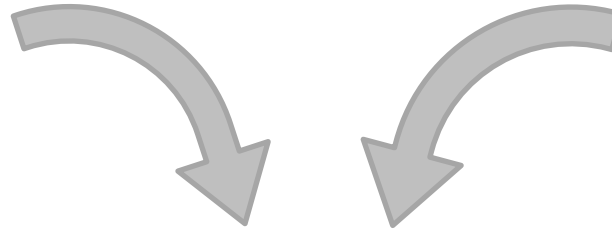
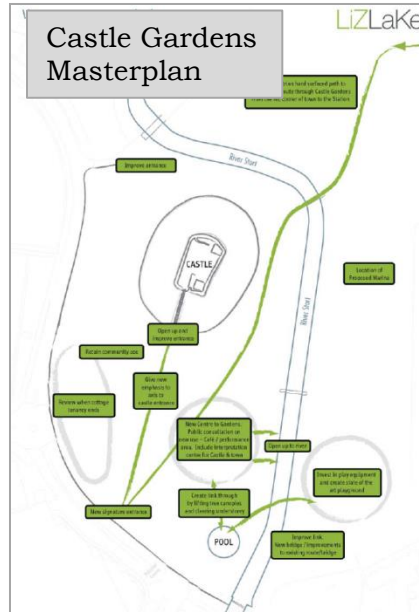


# Castle Park:

Our proposals for Castle Gardens and Swarder's Field



# Castle Park: A Unified Approach to Castle Gardens and Swords Field



## **A single masterplan for a single greenspace...**

Castle Gardens is owned by East Herts District Council, whereas Sworder's Field is owned by Bishop's Stortford Town Council. This had previously led to two separate plans and different approaches to the two spaces. To visitors the ownership is of little significance, and this is all one single park.

East Herts District Council and Bishop's Stortford Town Council, with the support of the Countryside Management Service, have come together to produce a joined up approach. Castle Gardens and Sworder's Field will be managed collectively under the banner of Castle Park.

Through collaboration between the land owners, Castle Park will be managed as a single greenspace. Joined up thinking and shared objectives will ensure that the two sides of the park are supportive of each other's functions, whilst a single masterplan across Castle Park will allow easy and coherent movement across the ownership boundary.



# Castle Park: Heritage Lottery Fund - Parks for People

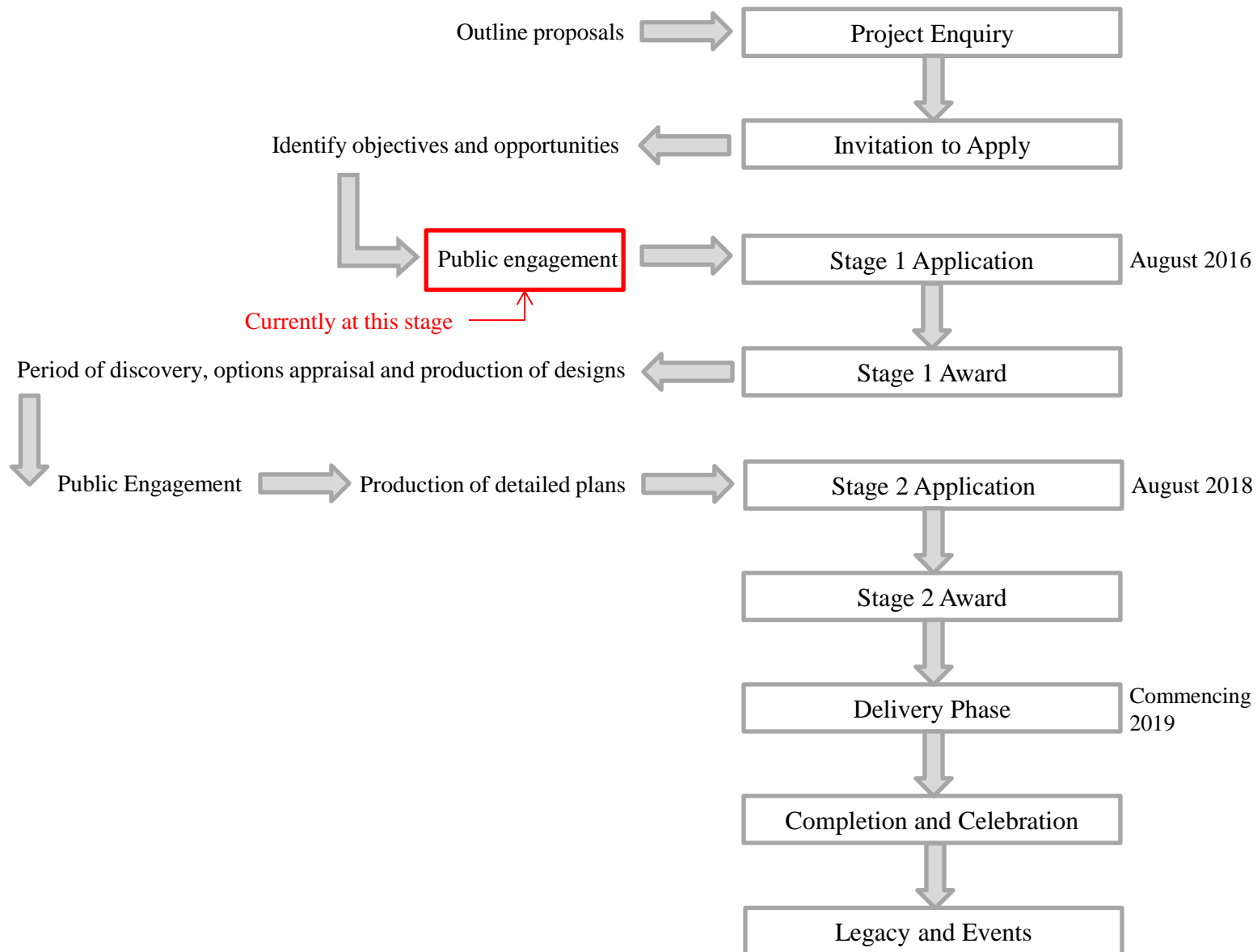
## **An HLF bid to deliver our vision for Castle Park**

We want Castle Park to be an outstanding park that will:

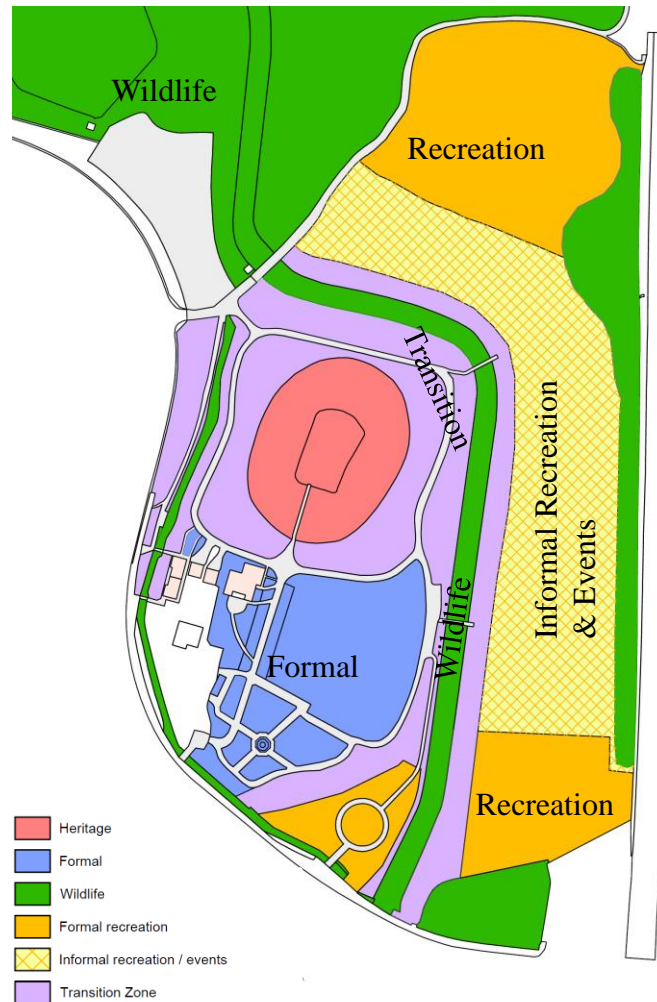
- protect and celebrate heritage
- enhance wildlife through habitat improvements
- be used and valued by people
- support the activities of local communities



To allow us to fully deliver this ambitious vision we are putting together an application to the Heritage Lottery Fund through their Parks for People grant programme. This will be a two-stage application process, throughout which we would welcome the input of the public and other stakeholders.



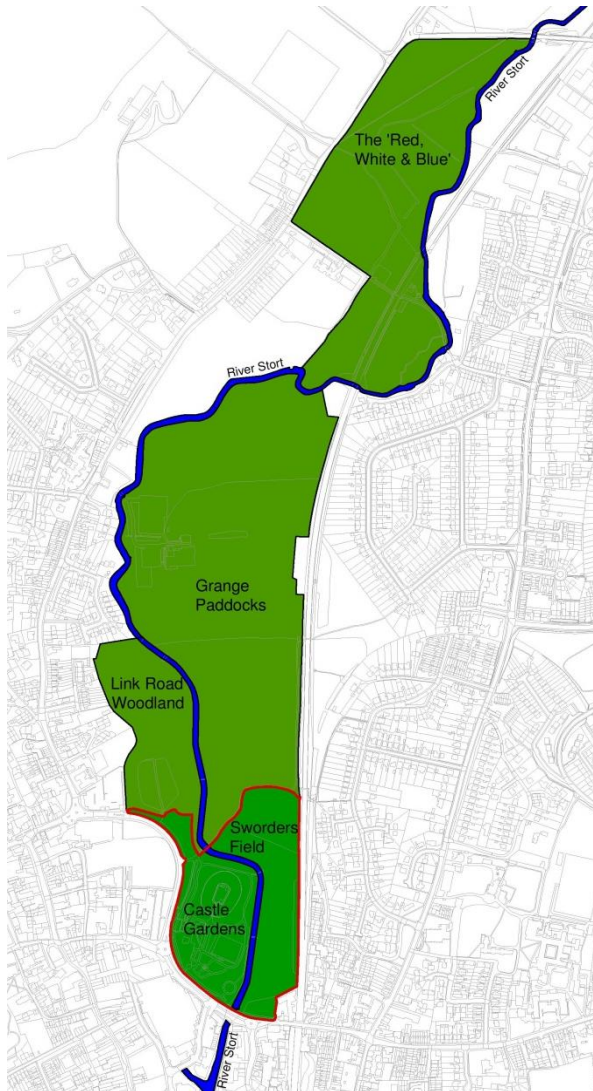
# Castle Park: Character Areas and the Green Finger



## Character Areas

The new masterplan for Castle Park will be based upon clearly laid out zones, ensuring that the park has a logical and coherent function.

The southern part of Castle Gardens will be a formal, pleasant and relaxing space. This will transition across a natural corridor to the vibrant and exciting recreational space of Swarder's Field.



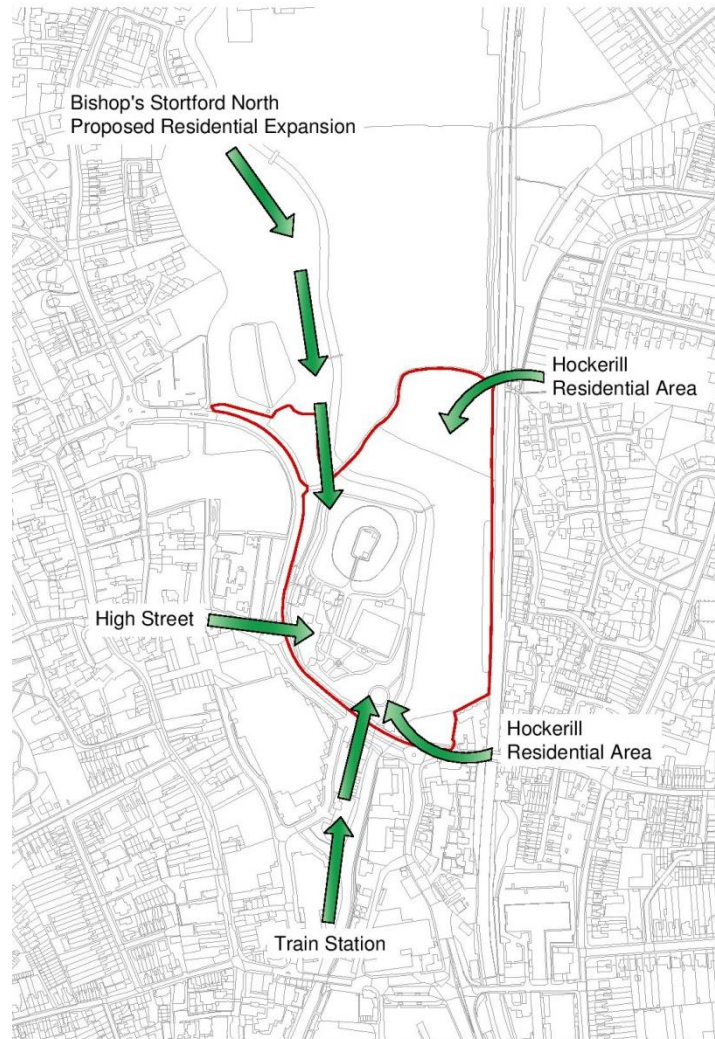
## **The Green Finger**

Castle Park will be at the southern end of a 'Green Finger' that runs right into the heart of Bishop's Stortford. For those in the town centre the park will be a gateway to the countryside.

As Bishop's Stortford North residential development progresses, travel into the town will increase in importance. The River Stort forms an axis of movement through this green finger, continuing south into the town centre. A riverside path offers a sustainable transport route into and out of the town that provides a direct, healthier and more enjoyable alternative to the car.



# Castle Park: Access



## **Getting People into the Park**

New entrances will provide a straightforward and attractive welcome, allowing people to easily access the park.

As a destination point located within the centre of Bishop's Stortford, Castle Park will be in a strategically important location that draws people in and connects to the surrounding areas.

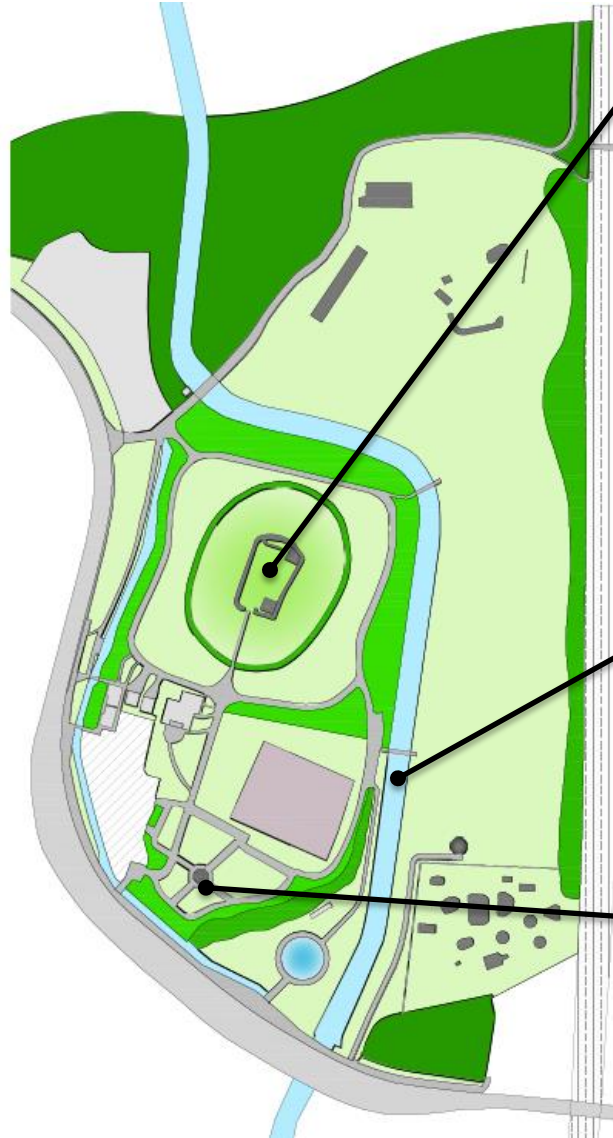
## **A New Path Network**

With the production of a new masterplan, a new path network will be introduced that allows people to easily move between the currently disconnected areas of the park.





# Castle Park: Heritage and Education



## **Waytemore Castle**

Waytemore Castle will be given a central position in the landscape by opening up visibility of the mound from across the park and potentially replacing the surrounding hedgerow with formal wildflower planting.

A specialist conservation plan will be produced to ensure the castle remains are adequately protected, creating the potential to open up the castle for public access. Archaeological investigations will discover any lost remnants of the bailey that will have once surrounded the castle.

A scheme of interpretation will provide people with the opportunity to learn about the history of the castle and visualise how it would have once looked.

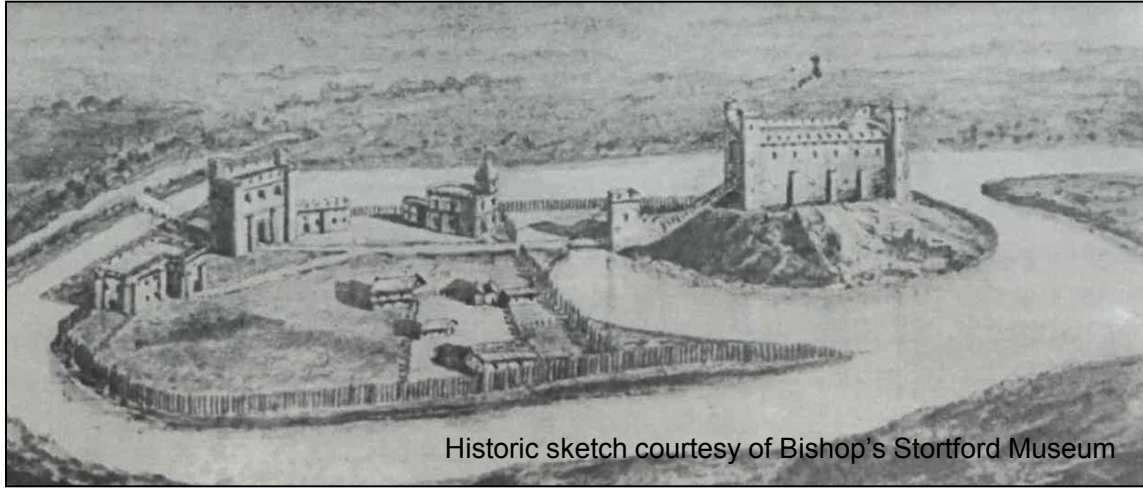
## **River Stort**

The River Stort is closely tied to the history of Bishop's Stortford's economy and society. A reduction in tree cover and a viewing platform will increase interaction with this important piece of heritage. Interpretation will be extended to the River Stort and explain the importance of the river.

## **War Memorials and Drinking Fountain**

The war memorials, as well as the Victorian drinking fountain, will be central points of a new path network, ensuring they become key focal points of the park.



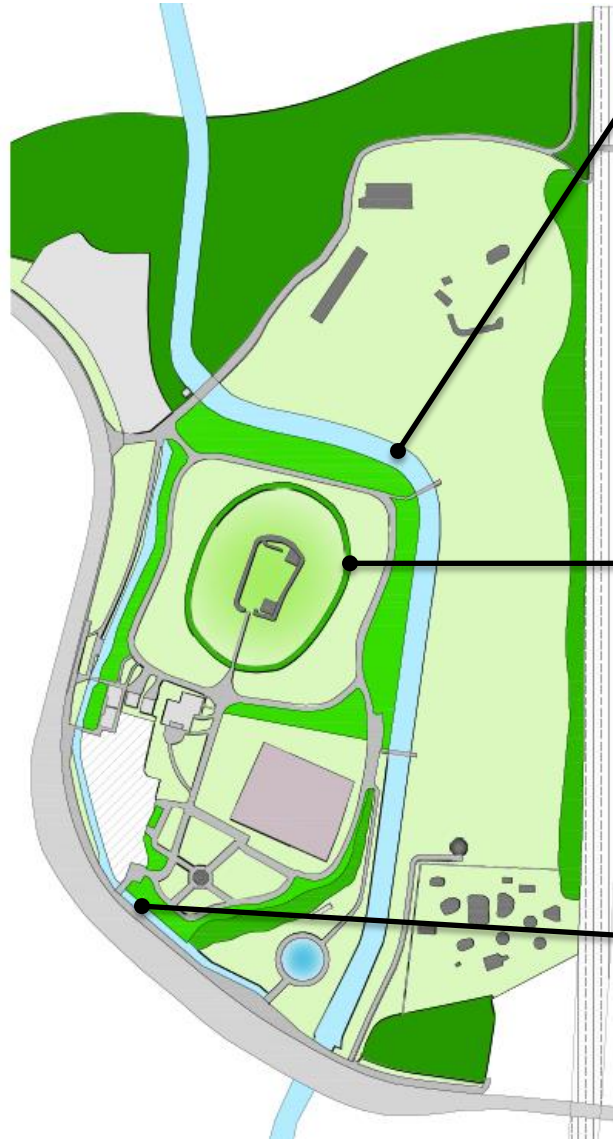


Historic sketch courtesy of Bishop's Stortford Museum





# Castle Park: Biodiversity



## **River Stort**

The River Stort is currently classified as having a bad ecological status. A reduction in tree cover will not only increase the prominence of the river within the landscape, but also improve the habitat of the river corridor.

Increased light levels will support a greater abundance and diversity of plant species. These in turn will provide a habitat for a range of animals, including a number of bird species and also water voles, which have recently been re-established to the south of the town.

These habitat improvements will allow people to get close to nature right in the heart of Bishop's Stortford.

## **Attractive Planting that Supports Wildlife**

The formal area to the south of Waytemore Castle will transition to the recreational space of Sworder's Field through a natural zone.

Tired, ornamental shrub beds around the castle could be replaced with formal wildflower planting beds. These could provide stunning displays but also be of significant benefit to bees and other insects.

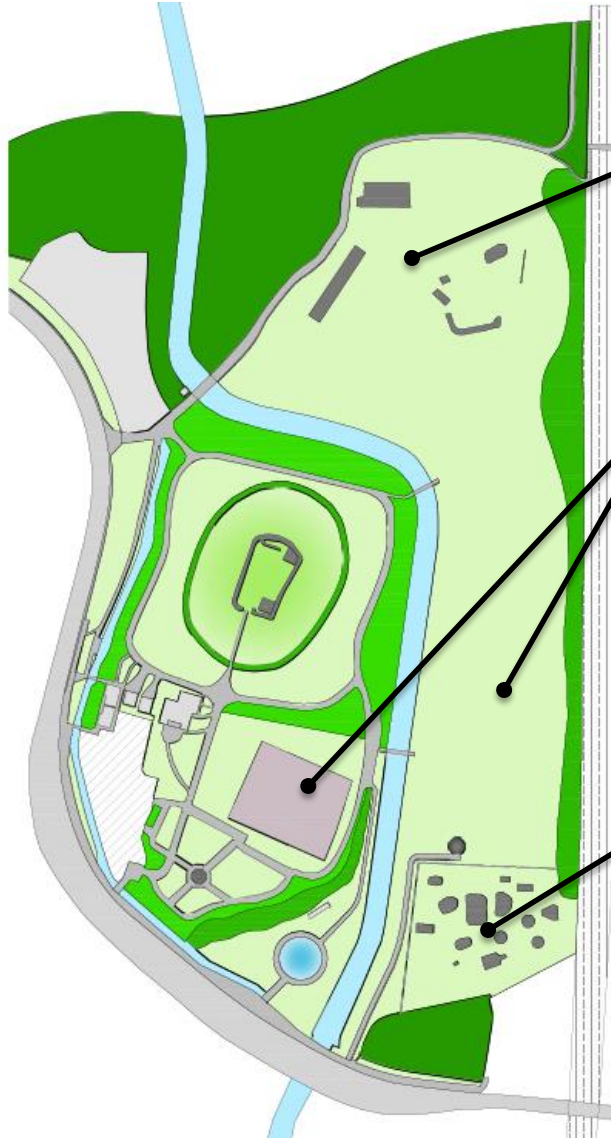
## **Water Channel**

The water channel surrounding Castle Gardens will be improved with attractive wetland planting that will create an impressive and biodiverse feature.





# Castle Park: Recreation and Public Health



## **Health and Recreation Facilities**

High quality recreation facilities will allow people to easily enjoy and make use of amenities that will encourage exercise and healthy living.

## **Open Spaces**

A new open space will be created where people can relax with a view of the castle. This space can then also be used for smaller events. The tennis courts could be relocated.

The central part of Sworder's Field will remain open, allowing people to use the space as they wish. This will also provide a larger events space.

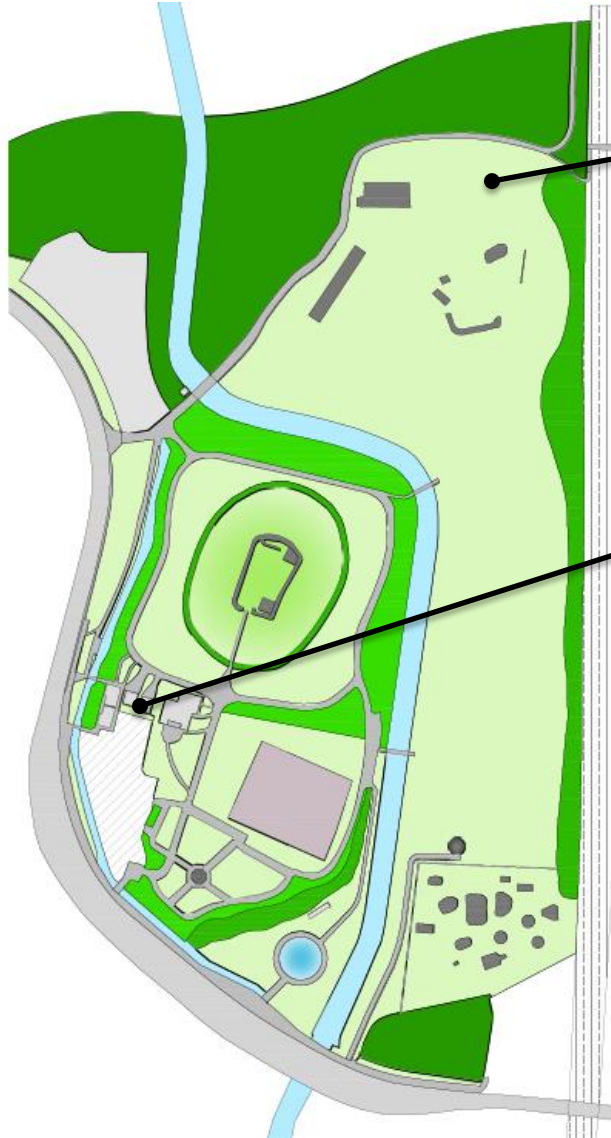
## **Children's Play**

Connectivity between the existing children's play area and the paddling pool will be improved with a new bridge crossing over the River Stort, allowing the two spaces to function as one.





# Castle Park: A Park for the Local Community



## **A Space for Young People**

Amongst the recreational area of Sworder's Field will be a designated space that young people can identify with.

By working with Youth Connexions, young people will be engaged with the design of this improved space. This will ensure facilities are provided that young people want and that they will take pride and feel ownership of the end product.

## **Community Building and Café**

The closed toilet block is a potentially attractive feature facing the town centre. It may be repurposed and extended to provide a community meeting space linking the town with the park. It may host a café and a range of facilities to improve upon and replace those provided by the Markwell Pavilion. The location of this new facility would be less intrusive on the castle monument than the existing community centre and could provide outside seating areas from which to enjoy the park.

If the designs for this new building can satisfy the needs of current users, it is proposed that it could replace the Markwell Pavilion and garages.







# Castle Park: How you can be Involved



## **Events**

Our vision is for Castle Park to become the 'go to' place for local events. If there are any events you would particularly like to see please let us know through our consultation form.

Within the Heritage Lottery Fund application we can include costs relating to events. If you are part of a local group and think that you would be able to hold events that would get people using and enjoying Castle Park we would love to hear from you. Please contact us on 01992 556725 or [gregory.ault@hertfordshire.gov.uk](mailto:gregory.ault@hertfordshire.gov.uk)

## **Friends Group**

As this project develops we will be setting up a Friends group for Castle Park. This will allow local people to take an active role in promoting and taking care of the park. If this sounds like something you might be interested in please contact us on 01992 556725 or [gregory.ault@hertfordshire.gov.uk](mailto:gregory.ault@hertfordshire.gov.uk) and we will keep you up to date with the progress of the project.

## **Public Engagement**

We would like to hear your views on our proposals. Please go online to [www.eastherts.gov.uk/castleparkconsultation](http://www.eastherts.gov.uk/castleparkconsultation) to complete our short survey.

Alternatively, please contact the Countryside Management Service on 01992 588433 for a paper copy of the feedback form.