

Appendix 1: Briefing Note

Land at Lewes Brooks
Landport Road, Lewes, East Sussex,
BN7 2SU

Background

A 36.80 acre parcel of land has become available for sale at Landport Lewes. The land is formed of 2 separate parcels divided by the Lewes to London trainline but joined by an underpass under the railway line. The eastern boundary (approximately 1km long) is the River Ouse and to the west is Landport Estate and a flood defence bank sits on the land that is maintained by LDC to protect properties at the bottom of the estate.

The land is marketed by Lambert & Foster for £275,000. This works out at approximately £7500/acre.

<https://www.lambertandfoster.co.uk/property/lf003034/>

Site description

The land is low lying alluvial marsh with no development potential. It is currently laid to grass and grazed between March and October by a tenant farmer with an annual agreement.

The land is subject to a current Environmental Stewardship Scheme Agreements for Organic Entry Level plus Higher Level Stewardship expiring 31/05/2023.

The main river bank is currently undergoing improvement works. The Environment Agency maintain the river bank in terms of erosion and a 1:30 or 1:20 flood defence.

The EA works include the planting of several hundred trees to mitigate for vegetation clearance along the bank of the river.

The north of the site is part of the Offham Marshes SSSI. Three amphibian species breed in large numbers in the ditches. These include several thousand common toads *Bufo bufo*, making this one of the best sites in the county for this species. Less obvious are the smooth newt and the palmate newt. Smaller numbers of common frogs breed more frequently in the shallow pools that form in the fields. These large amphibian populations provide a food supply for grass snakes, which

breed on the site. The ditches support the scarce hairy dragonfly, the variable damselfly, and many water beetles, including Britain's largest species, the rare great silver beetle. The damp fields support several uncommon flies.

Legal

The land is owned in Trust and is represented by a local Lewes resident whose father farmed the land for a number of years. Further title checks need to be undertaken but no concerns have been flagged.

Benefits

If the Council was to purchase the land there are numerous benefits that can be attained. Working with partners the Council could use the land to realise stackable benefits that could include:

- Biodiversity Net Gain
- Flood alleviation
- Carbon sequestration/offsetting
- Obligations under the Biodiversity Duty
- District Level Licencing (Great crested newts)
- ELMS/Countryside stewardship
- Public amenity
- Health and wellbeing outcomes
- Income generation through grazing

- Aerial photo and site plan

