



SALISBURY GARDENS' GREEN ACCESSIBILITY

TOWN COUNCIL MEETING

REPORT 32/19

8 APRIL 2019

The purpose of this Report is to ask Members to consider the Isle Access Report on the accessibility risks of the Salisbury Gardens' Green and a consequent recommendation of the Assets and Services Working Group about Ventnor Day 2019.

NO. DETAILS

1) BACKGROUND

- a) Following the Accessibility issues highlighted during last year's Ventnor Day event it was agreed to commission an Accessibility Risk Assessment of the area from Isle Access.
 - b) The Executive Summary of the Isle Access Report together with its plan of the site are attached to this Report.
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2) RECOMMENDATION

- a) The Assets and Services Working Group considered the Report at its meeting of 26 March.
 - b) Its decision was to recommend to this Town Council meeting that plans for future events on the Green – including Ventnor Day 2019 – be discontinued until the implications of the Isle Access Report have been fully considered and potential remediation of the identified risks has identified and, where possible, implemented.
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Summary

The remit

Isle Access have been engaged to survey the Salisbury Gardens Green area ('the site') and comment on its accessibility and general safety, including identifying any potential remedial actions / improvements.

The Green is used all year round by the general public for leisure purposes and is also used for events such as 'Ventnor Day'.

The site

The recreational parts of Salisbury Gardens Green that are within the site are spread across 5 distinct levels, including:

- Upper Terrace
- Lower Terrace
- Lower Level Field*
- Upper Mezzanine Level*
- Lower Mezzanine Level*

(*named for the purposes of this survey)

These are labelled in green on the accompanying plans.

Issues identified

Issues are picked out with a red star and labelled in black on the 'Hazards Identified' plan.

Poor step-free access

Only the Lower Level Field has step-free access.

Access to the Lower Level Field is either via the Eastcliff Car Park or via a steep path from the Esplanade / Winter Gardens area.

The Upper Terrace is accessed via a single step from the entrance path which leads to the Ventnor Town Council offices / Coastal Visitor Centre building. The Lower Terrace is accessed via a single step from Dudley Road or via more steps from the Upper Terrace or Lower Level Field.

The Upper and Lower Mezzanine areas can only be accessed via steps or by slopes of varying height and gradient.

This makes much of the site inaccessible to users of 'personal mobility devices' ('PMDs') such as wheelchairs and mobility scooters.

Unprotected drops

The entire site is characterised by a series of landscaped terraces separated by embankments (earthworks) with heights varying between 0.5m and 4.4m, and slopes varying between 30% (1:3.3) and 75% (1:1.3).



These embankments are shown cross-hatched in light green-brown on the plans.

The Lower Terrace has a length of guardrail along its Western edge (above the Eastcliff Car Park) and has a small length of low bund (earthwork) protecting its southern edge (overlooking the Lower Level Field).

None of the other drops are protected, presenting a potential falling hazard to those with low vision or poor mobility. These are identified on the plan.

There is also a steep ridge along part of the southern edge of the Lower Level Field down to the footpath, as well as the embankment between the footpaths.

In addition, there is a section of unprotected low wall near to the entrance of the Town Council / Coastal Visitor Centre building. Any vision-impaired persons on the grassed area of the Upper Terrace might not be able to detect this.

Uneven surfaces

There are a series of footpaths across the site, in varying states of repair. The paths are delineated by dark brown dotted lines on the plan.

In the Upper and Lower Terraces, the paths consist of stone slabs laid directly in the grass. These are uneven and are not only a trip hazard but also provide insufficient surface for many PMD users.

Stairs

There are 14 sets / flights of steps / stairs within or adjacent to the site. Most are of inconsistent rise / tread (height / depth) and are uneven (especially those in and around the Upper and Lower Terraces), all but one are also lacking handrails.

Other issues

Within the site, there are no seats or benches for people to sit on (the only available bench being near to the Children's Play Area).

The Eastcliff Car Park has one Blue Badge parking bay, and fills up very quickly. Alternative parking is in the main public car park further East on Dudley Road. Access to the site from here is either via a stepped footpath or along Dudley Road (which has an intermittent footway on the South side).

There is also parking behind the VTC / Coastal Visitors Centre building (including one BB bay) and on Dudley Road itself.

The main path running from the Eastcliff Car Park along the South edge of the Lower Level Field has steep sections with a gradient up to 1:4. There is no handrail here.

Suggested remedial actions

Any remedial action needs to be proportionate and to not adversely affect the aesthetic of the area, which is a local beauty spot.

The nearby cliff edge is constantly moving

Remedial actions will likely be limited to that which is affordable.



The suggested actions to consider are shown in blue on the 'Possible Remedial Actions' plan.

Improving step-free access

Step-free access could be provided to the Upper Terrace from the entrance to the VTC / Coastal Visitors Centre building by removing the single step and re-profiling the path. This could be undertaken as part of the works to re-lay the paths across the Upper Terrace.

Step-free access could be provided to the Lower Terrace from Dudley Road by removing the single step at the side entrance and re-profiling the path as part of the path remedial works.

NB Dudley Road is on a gradient here, so any ramp may have a significant cross-fall over part of its length.

There is step-free access to the Western end of the Lower Level Field from the bottom of EastCliff Car Park. This could be utilised (and signposted) as the main pedestrian route, particularly during the Ventnor Days event.

A long term option may be to replace the 13 steps from the Salisbury Gardens / VTC car park with a long ramped section of path (with landings). This is unlikely to conform to the desirable maximum gradient of 1:20 and will exceed the maximum recommended length for ramps in the built environment.

However, it may be possible to achieve this with sections of 1:10, which could be acceptable in this context if sufficient landings are included. This would provide more access options to the eastern end of the site and could be integrated with ramped access to the two mezzanine levels.

It may be possible to remove the existing steps from the Lower Level Field to the Lower Mezzanine and from the latter to the Upper Mezzanine and replace them with ramped sections of up to 1:10 – 1:20.

Protecting drops

Priority should be given to protecting the drops where falls are more likely to happen and / or where the level of likely injury is greatest.

The longest drops are from the Upper and Lower Terrace to the Lower Level field. Protection here should be improved by installing some sort of barrier along the top edge. This could take the form of guardrailing, but also could be achieved by raising the embankment edge to create a bund (as a small bund already exists). The guardrail and / or bund could be reinforced / enhanced by natural planting on the South (i.e. non-pedestrian) side.

This method could also be used at the steep 'ridges' identified along the South edge of the Lower Level Field.

The existing guardrail between the Lower Terrace and Eastcliff car park needs to be extended to the stairs in the SW corner. Ideally, this guardrail and its supports should be replaced with something which is detectable by a cane user and the diagonal supports removed with something less likely to cause trips.



Addressing the uneven surfaces

The paths at the terraces will require relaying to be more suitable for people with mobility and other impairments, including users of PMDs.

Isle Access may be able to advise on appropriate widths, surfacing materials etc.

Improving stairs

Most of the steps and stairs could be improved by being rebuilt with more uniform spacing (with risers no more than the recommended maximum and the treads a suitable depth). All but one will also need to have handrails added.

More detail is shown on the plan.

Some of the steps could be removed altogether (e.g. at the entrance to the Upper and Lower Terraces, and to the Upper and Lower Mezzanine) and replaced with ramps.

Other issues

We recommend that adequate seating be installed at all levels.

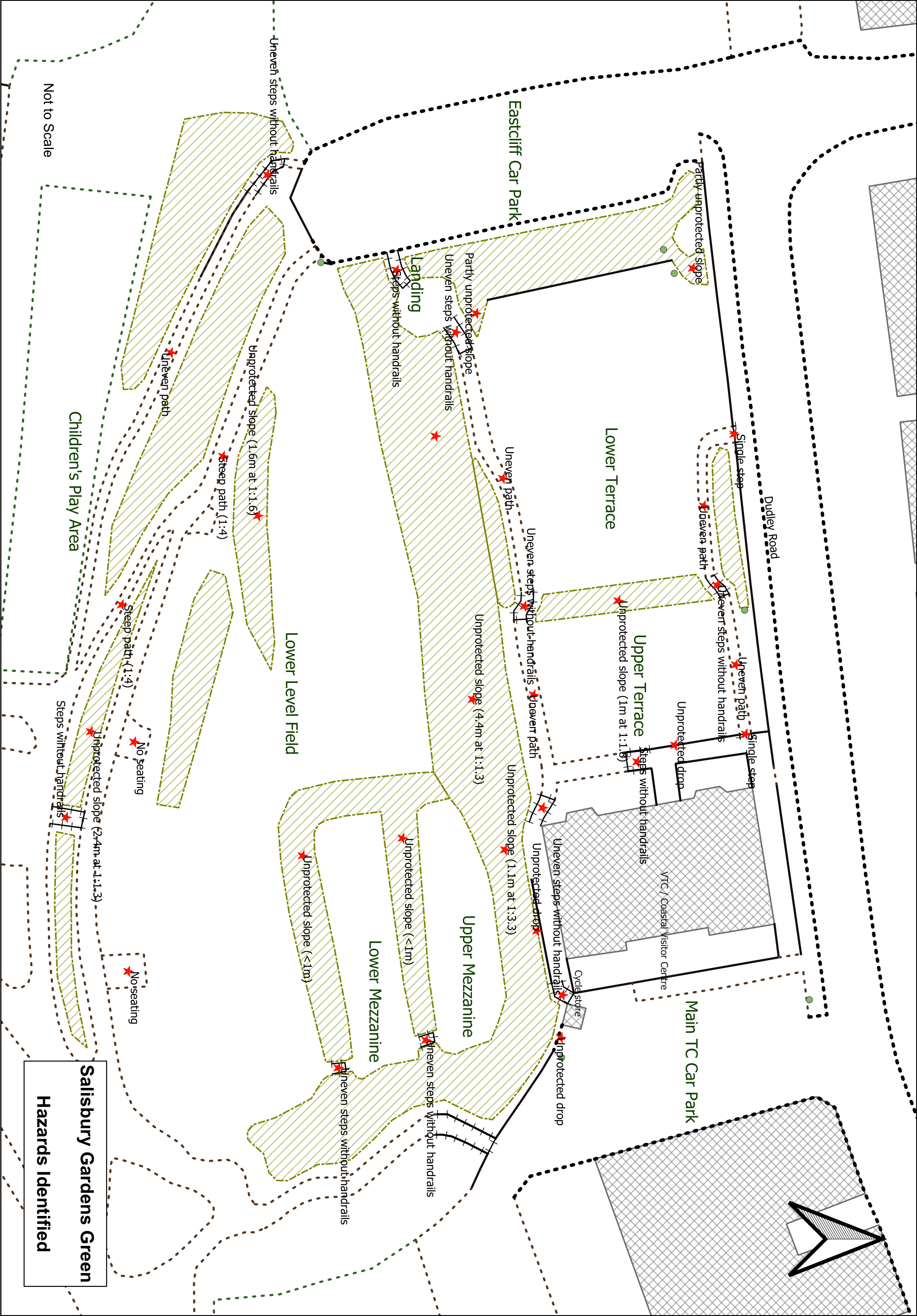
It is suggested that VTC consider some sort of step-free strategy for the site (including for events). This should be done in conjunction with the Ventnor Access Group.

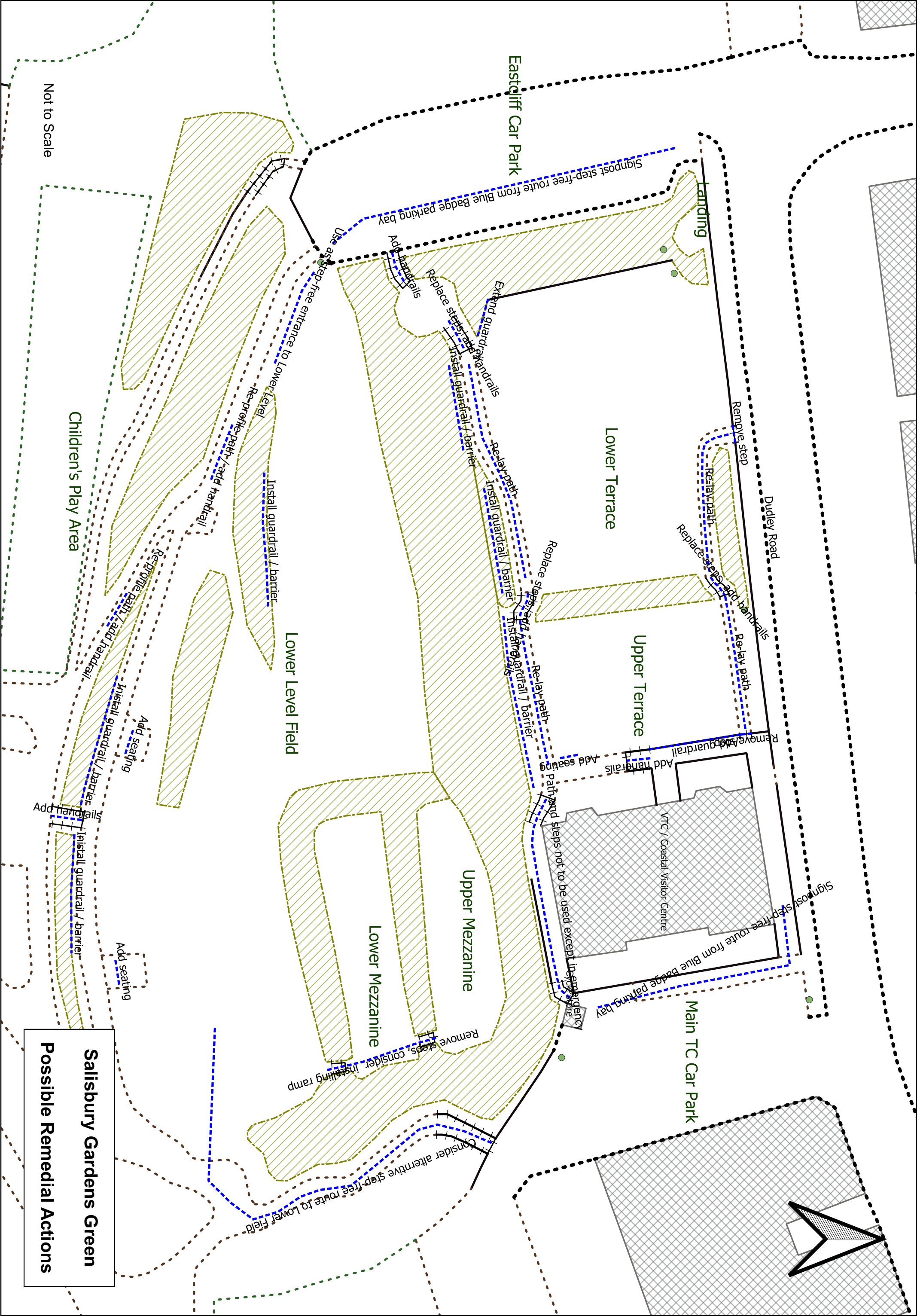
Step-free routes may need to be signposted and care taken that these routes are kept free from temporary or permanent obstructions.

In the longer term, VTC and the IoW Council will need to consider the provision of footpaths overall in the wider area. Some are well-used, despite having steep sections. The steep sections may need realigning, or at least have some sort of handrail alongside to help people use them.

Jim Morey 2019-03-07







Not to Scale

Children's Play Area

Eastcliff Car Park

Landing

Lower Terrace

Upper Terrace

Lower Level Field

Upper Mezzanine

Lower Mezzanine

Main TC Car Park

VTC / Coastal Visitor Centre

Salisbury Gardens Green
Possible Remedial Actions