

Cabinet Member for Policing and Equalities

25th July 2019

Name of Cabinet Member:

Cabinet Member for Policing and Equalities Councillor A Khan

Director Approving Submission of the report:

Deputy Chief Executive (Place)

Ward(s) affected: Woodlands Ward

Title: Petition – Improve the footpath that runs adjacent to the Brookstray in Mount Nod, between Fletchamstead Highway and Alderminster Rd.

Is this a key decision? : No

Executive Summary:

This report responds to a petition containing 89 signatures which was submitted to Coventry City Council and calls upon Coventry City Council to improve the footpath that runs adjacent to the Brookstray in Mount Nod, between Fletchamstead Highway and Alderminster Rd.

The petition reads:

“I am raising this petition following contact from a number of residents who live in Woodlands ward and who use the Brookstray footpath on a regular basis. Elderly residents have reported difficulty walking on the uneven surface, parents with pushchairs have also highlighted difficulty and sadly on one occasion a wheelchair user fell out of their chair. The Brookstray footpath is a well-used community resource and I want Mount Nod residents to be able to continue to access the area safely.”

The footpath concerned is a hard-surfaced path on land managed and maintained by the Council's Streetscene and Greenspace Service and runs adjacent to the Guphill Brook. The footpath is not a registered right of way.

Reductions in the budgets allocated to the management and maintenance of the city's parks and open spaces has increased the importance of prioritising proposed works against competing demands. This has included budgets set aside for the replacement and repair of greenspace infrastructure where demand far exceeds the budget available.

The footpath is largely composed of old macadam which is deteriorating in many places. The cross-fall of some existing sections of the path is irregular and the path has several raised areas and ruts due to the effect of tree roots, periodic flooding and general erosion etc.

Over the past three years, the Parks Service has identified and repaired approximately 216 square metres of the footpath where particularly severe issues were identified. These repairs

were made with compacted road planings at a cost of £6500. The estimated cost to repair the equivalent area in Tarmac would have been around £18,000.

The main section of the footpath measures approximately 1435 square metres from the pedestrian underpass beneath the A45 to its junction with Alderminster Road, excluding side paths.

The cost to break out the existing surface of the path and relay it in Tarmac to a standard suitable for occasional light vehicle use would cost approximately £119,000. If the same length and width of path were to be resurfaced in Tarmac but only suitable for pedestrians, it would cost roughly £100,000. Relaying the path in self-binding gravel would cost in excess of £86,000. None of these costs could be met from existing resources.

Recommendations:

The Cabinet Member for Policing and Equalities is recommended to:

1. Consider the content of the petition and note the concerns of the petitioners'
2. Note that that budgetary reduction has increased the emphasis on the Parks Service to prioritise proposed works against competing demands and that annual demand for such works far exceeds the budget available.
3. Note that the cost of entirely resurfacing the footpath surface area would be beyond the Council's Parks Service budget.
4. Agree that the Parks Service will continue to inspect and undertake repairs to maintain the path in a safe and usable condition and where necessary, ensure the paths are levelled when repairs are carried out.
5. Agree that a prioritised programme of resurfacing will be undertaken on a phased basis over a number of years subject to available funding.

List of Appendices included:

N/A

Other useful background papers:

None

Has it been or will it be considered by Scrutiny?

No

Has it been or will it be considered by any other Council Committee, Advisory Panel, or other body?

No

Will this report go to Council?

No

Report title: **Petition - Improve the footpath that runs adjacent to the Brookstray**

1. Context (or background)

- 1.1 This footpath is situated on land which is managed and maintained by the City Council's Streetscene & Greenspace Service and follows the Guphill Brookstray from the Allesley Old Road to a little west of Alderminster Road (Ladbrook Close) and then from east of Stonebury Avenue to Farcroft Avenue. It is not a registered right of way.
- 1.2 The path itself is made up of a combination of surfaces. A hard-surfaced section of the path runs from the A45 to Ladbrook Close with various side paths leading to neighbouring streets. The remainder is an informal path without a defined route other than that formed by users to create a desire line through the mown grassed area.
- 1.3 The majority of the hard-surfaced footpath is laid with macadam. A few sections of the path were re-laid with self-binding gravel / compacted road planings during the past three years. This was undertaken to repair damage caused by the adjacent river bank collapsing (taking the path with it) and where the path had become so uneven as to present a trip hazard.
- 1.4 It seems likely that the Tarmac sections of the path were laid with macadam when the neighbouring estate was built possibly during the 1960s - 1970s.
- 1.5 The footpath is approximately 40-50 years old and deteriorating in many areas due to the effect of tree roots; frost and thaw; weeds breaking through the Tarmac; river-bank erosion and sporadic flooding due to its proximity to the Brookstray.
- 1.6 The path is inspected along its entire length at least once a quarter and any major trip hazards or potholes are scheduled for repair. The Tarmac is in such poor condition however that relatively minor issues require substantial patches to be excavated and re-laid.
- 1.7 Reductions in Government spending has seen a corresponding reduction in the budgets set aside for the management and maintenance of the city's parks and open spaces. In 2016 the parks budget was reduced by £1m this represented 25% of the overall budget. This included budgets set aside for park infrastructural repairs and maintenance including footpaths.
- 1.8 In the past two years approximately 216 square metres of the hard-surfaced path was re-laid with compacted road planings and self-binding gravel. The total cost for these works was approximately £6,500. The cost for reconstructing the affected areas with Tarmac was estimated at £18,000 and this could not be met from the parks infrastructural budget at that time.
- 1.9 The cost to break out the existing surface of the path and relay it in Tarmac to a standard suitable for occasional light vehicle use would cost approximately £119,000. If the same length and width of path were to be resurfaced in Tarmac but only suitable for pedestrians, it would cost roughly £100,000. Relaying the path in self-binding gravel would cost in excess of £86,000. None of these costs could be met from existing resources.

2. Options considered and recommended proposal

- 2.1 The option not to undertake repair works to the footpath has been considered however this has been rejected.
- 2.2 The cost of undertaking a full resurfacing of the footpath to highway standard could not be met from existing resources however the service will continue to inspect and undertake repairs to maintain the surface in a safe and usable condition. Furthermore, when repairs are carried out, any severe cross-fall or other issue with the area of path concerned will be corrected to make the path more user-friendly. A prioritised programme of phased resurfacing will also be implemented to be undertaken over a number of years subject to available funding. It is this option which is recommended.

3. Results of consultation undertaken

No consultation has taken place on this issue

4. Timetable for implementing this decision

To be agreed subject to approval of a recommendation within this report.

5. Comments from the Director of Finance and Corporate Services

5.1 Financial implications

The cost of undertaking repair and programmed resurfacing works will be met from existing resources available for the repair and maintenance of footpaths.

5.2 Legal implications

The Council has limited duties and responsibilities towards users of the path to take measures to ensure the safety of visitors which are reasonable and proportionate in the circumstances. This is not a prepared footway and therefore the appropriate action would be to maintain a regular inspection regime and monitor any reported incidents which occur.

6. Other implications

6.1 How will this contribute to achievement of the Council's Plan?

Parks and green spaces are highly valued by the citizens of Coventry and contribute greatly to improving the quality of life to those that live and work in the City, help address health inequalities and provide valuable wildlife habitats.

6.2 How is risk being managed?

Risk will be managed through the existing Place directorate risk profile.

6.3 What is the impact on the organisation?

A safe footpath network in the city's open spaces encourages use. The footpath concerned can still be maintained as an informal path without requiring major investment from the limited budgets currently available.

6.4 Equalities / EIA Implications

No equality impact assessments have been undertaken.

6.5 Implications for (or impact on) the environment

No direct impact

6.6 Implications for partner organisations?

None

Report author(s):

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Enquiries should be directed to the above person.

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| Gill Carter | Solicitor Team Leader (Regulatory) | Place | 9 th July 19 | 9 th July 19 |
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| Andrew Walster | Assistant Director (Streetscene and Regulatory Services) | Place | 10 th July 19 | 16 th July 19 |
| Councillor Abdul Khan | Cabinet Member for (Policy and Equalities) | - | 24 th June 19 | 24 th June 19 |

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