

MUNICIPAL YEAR 2011/2012 REPORT NO.

ACTION TO BE TAKEN UNDER DELEGATED AUTHORITY

PORTFOLIO DECISION OF:
Cabinet Member for Environment

REPORT OF:
Director - Environment

Agenda – Part: 1	KD Num: NA
Subject: Enfield Greenways - Proposed Path through Hilly Fields Park	
Wards: Chase	

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1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- 1.1 This report presents proposals to provide new or upgraded paths in Hilly Fields Park to create an east-west route through the parkland. This would be a shared facility for pedestrians, cyclists and wheelchair users. The drawing in Appendix A shows the route proposed during the consultation exercise.
- 1.2 The Forty Hall section forms part of a wider route between Hadley Wood and Enfield Island Village. The drawing in Appendix B shows the full route as currently proposed. The section between the A10 and Enfield Island Village is largely complete.
- 1.3 Minor highway improvements to aid crossing movements of Clay Hill near the Rose & Crown public house are also proposed.
- 1.4 The cost of implementing this facility is estimated to be £200,000. This is being met by the Corridors, Neighbourhoods and Supporting Measures 2012/13 budget.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

To approve the implementation of the amended route shown in Appendix F for construction in summer 2012. This differs from the former proposals as follows:

Route north of the brook to follow the existing path past the football pitch rather than following the path shown through the woodland. All new and widened paths to be constructed in hoggin or similar self-binding gravel surfacing.

3. BACKGROUND

- 3.1 Enfield Council has allocated £20k of its Corridor funding from TfL to design the 8 Hilly Fields Park section of a proposed Greenway route between Hadley Wood and Enfield Island Village. A further £200k will be allocated in 2012/13 to implement the scheme. The proposed route runs east-west across the north of the borough and is shown in Appendix B.
- 3.2 The Council is committed to introducing a network of Greenway routes across the borough. These routes will, in turn, tie-in with a London wide network in co-ordination with other London Boroughs.
- 3.3 The aims of the Greenway programme are to increase the levels of walking and cycling throughout London by providing a network of largely off-highway routes that are safe, pleasant and appealing to users.
- 3.4 A Greenway is a route which can be used, enjoyed and shared by people of all ages and abilities, on foot or on bike, for leisure, play and commuting. They will connect people to woodlands, watercourses, parks and open spaces and will make use of existing walking and cycle routes and quiet minor roads.
- 3.5 In Enfield, a network of Greenway routes has been developed in consultation with local stakeholders including the Enfield Cycle Forum. This network is being continually reviewed with routes being amended or added as further consultation is carried out.
- 3.6 The network in Enfield is to be introduced on a year-by-year basis by the implementation of individual routes or sections. The Hilly Fields Park section is 1.2km in length and is all off-road.
- 3.7 The proposed Hadley Wood to Enfield Island Village route, in total, is approximately 14km in length. Approximately 12km of this is off-road following existing or proposed off-road paths. The remainder of the route is on carriageway using lightly trafficked roads. To date a 4.5km length of the route has been implemented.
- 3.8 The route overall will improve access to and through some of Enfield's most attractive green parks and open spaces. It will create a continuous east-west route that avoids a number of heavily trafficked roads such as Hadley Road, The Ridgeway, Lavender Hill, Baker Street, Hoe Lane, Hertford Road and Ordnance Road. Long sections of the proposed route follow Turkey Brook, consequently providing a route for walkers and cyclists avoiding some of the steep gradients found on the alternative on-road route.
- 3.9 The Hilly Fields Park section is important for the continuity of the overall route but its primary benefit will be in providing an attractive all-season path enabling walkers, joggers, leisure cyclists and wheelchair users to follow the attractive course along the brook all year round.

- 3.10 Within the design process consultation and discussions have been carried out with the following people and groups: Friends of Hilly Fields Park; Enfield Cycling Campaign; the Council's Parks Department; Chase Ward Councillors Tom Waterhouse, Marcus East and Simon Maynard; park users; and residents of the immediate area. A summary of the outcome and responses from officers is included in section 5 below.

4. PROPOSALS

- 4.1 The proposals that were advertised in February 2012 are shown on the drawing in Appendix A. These are summarised, from east to west, in the paragraph below.
- 4.2 a) Western Section: The existing unmade track running south from Strayfield Road through the wooded area as far as the western bridge is shown being upgraded into a new 2.5m wide path.
- b) Central Section: The existing tarmac path – typical width 1.3m – running between the two bridges is shown being widened to 2.5m.
- c) Eastern Section: A new 2.5m wide path connecting the eastern bridge to the eastern entrance to the park is shown following the line of the brook.
- d) Clay Hill Crossing Point: Minor improvements are shown on the drawing in Appendix E to aid crossing movements in the vicinity of the Rose & Crown public house.
- 4.3 Preferences were sought on the type of materials used for the new and widened paths. The two options offered were tarmac or a self-binding stone surface such as hoggin. The latter is less durable but, being lighter in colour, is commonly thought to provide a more rural-looking surface.
- 4.4 In response to particular opposition to the proposals for the Western Section the amended proposal (see Appendix F) is for the route to enter the park from Strayfield Road east of the cricket club and follow the existing tarmac path directly south to meet the western bridge. This path will be widened from 1.5m (typical) to 2.5m.
- 4.5 In response to concerns from residents that the new path would spoil the rural look of the park the proposals in Appendix F show all the sections of path being constructed with a hoggin surface.

5. OBJECTIONS & COMMENTS ON THE PROPOSALS

- 5.1 The drawing shown in Appendix A was distributed to the stake-holder groups listed in Paragraph 3.10 above in February 2012. The same was displayed at all the key entrances to the park for three weeks in March to seek the views of park users directly.
- 5.2 Independently of this exercise the Conservative Ward Councillors for Chase Ward included a proforma within their spring newsletter seeking views on the

proposals. See Appendix C. This was delivered to several roads in the vicinity of the park. The proforma directs the recipient to vote either for or against the proposals. Respondents in favour are then directed to state their preference for the paving materials. Respondents in opposition are directed to vote for either of two alternative routes described on the proforma.

- 5.3 Together these measures generated 84 written responses, 10 in favour and 74 opposed. The majority of these were made using the proforma, although several respondents appended further comments to this document when submitting their thoughts.
- 5.4 Appendix D provides a numerical summary of the consultation responses.
- 5.5 Councillor Tom Waterhouse arranged for a meeting to take place with Assistant Director Gary Barnes and others in March 2012 to discuss his and his constituents' concerns with the proposals. This was attended by Gary Barnes and Liam Mulrooney (Group Leader) representing LBE; by Tony Claydon representing the Friends of Hilly Fields Park and by local residents Annette Dreblow, Bill Puddicombe and Sean Wilkinson. The key points of discussion from this meeting are given in the three paragraphs below.
- 5.6 Bill's main concern was the section of route through the mixed woodland. Bill also felt that the consultation was not reaching as many park users as it could. Sean was also concerned about the section of route through the mixed woodland, which he felt was nearly as steep as an alignment past the pitch. Gary and Liam undertook to amend the proposal to pass by the pitch and avoid the mixed woodland. This was subject to considering the other responses to the consultation which were still being scrutinised.
- 5.7 Sean supported the new path along the river past the bandstand. Tony had concerns about the proximity of the route to the bandstand and possible Health & Safety issues when events are held. Liam reported that James Downing, who assesses park events for the Council, did not feel that the Greenway would pose a significant Health & Safety problem. The meeting felt that hoggin (bound gravel) should be used to surface the new path past the bandstand.
- 5.8 The meeting also expressed their preference for aligning the Greenway route through Whitewebbs Parks and avoiding Hilly Fields Park. Gary expressed strong reservations about this route as it would involve a dangerous crossing of Clay Hill at Flash Lane. Gary assured the meeting that the views of the meeting would be included in the scheme report to the Cabinet Member. He also undertook to review our consultation process for this type of scheme.
- 5.9 The paragraphs below detail the key comments that were received in writing and officers' responses to them.
- 5.10 **Mixing Cyclists With Other Park Users:** 21 responses raised concerns at allowing cyclists in the park. The most common concern was that this would impact upon the safety and enjoyment of other users, particularly dog-walkers

and children at play. Other respondents stated that they simply did not want to see bikes in the park.

Officer comments - The route is not intended, nor anticipated, to be used extensively by commuter cyclists; rather it is primarily a leisure route where cycle speeds are expected to be lower. Commuter cyclists and those wishing to ride at higher speeds typically avoid such paths because the presence of pedestrians is likely to delay them and prefer, instead, to use the more direct routes afforded by the existing road network.

While the perception that cyclists can cause a danger or inconvenience to other path users is quite common, it is not supported by any evidence. Complaints about cyclists riding irresponsibly on shared-use paths elsewhere in the borough and beyond are very few. The Parks Department, for example, recorded only 1 complaint about cycling in the parks of the borough between 15 Feb 2011 and 15 Feb 2012, and this about an incident involving no physical contact between the cyclist and the complainant. As a comparator, in the same period, the department recorded 57 complaints about aggressive or poorly-controlled dogs, some of which involved serious injuries to the park-users.

Signs at each end of the route will instruct cyclists to give priority to other users. In light of these measures officers think it very unlikely that a problem will develop between cyclists and other users.

Encouraging more people to visit parks and open spaces and take exercise therein is a key aim of the Greenways project. Encouraging more people to take up cycling is in line with Enfield Council's wider policies on sustainable travel. Officers believe that these considerations should outweigh the opinions of those existing users who do not want to see users on bikes visiting the park.

The proposed route through the park is set some distance away from the nearest properties. The line of mature trees around the edge of the park and the natural valley along which the brook runs increases the degree of separation further. Therefore, residents will not be troubled by either the sight or sound of cyclists from their properties once the route is introduced.

- 5.11 Loss of Habitat and Greenery:** 15 responses raised concerns at the loss of habitat and greenery that would result from the path works being implemented.

Officer comments - No tree removal is anticipated as part of these works. Amending the proposals to avoid the wooded area should alleviate concerns about intruding into this particularly secluded area of natural habitat. The sections of new or widened path that remain in the proposals are all subject to regular use by pedestrians, dog-walkers etc. Officers feel that neither the paving work proposed nor the introduction of cyclists will impact upon the wildlife of the park.

Officers believe that the case made by some respondents that the proposals constitute a significant 'paving over' of existing green space is overstated. The figures below support this defence. The park as a whole is approximately

262,500 square metres in area, or 26.25 hectares. The area of existing paths running through the park, which are all tarmac, totals approximately 0.32 hectares or 1.2% of the total area. The total area of new paving proposed (not including areas where existing paving is replaced with new) totals just 0.19 hectares, or 0.7% of the total area. The proposals, therefore, would see the area of paving within the park rise from 1.2% to 1.9% of the total area and all along routes already well-trodden by visitors to the park.

- 5.12 **Loss of Tranquility:** 8 responses raised concerns that the new facility would spoil the peace and tranquillity of the park.

Officer comments - The route is not intended for racing, nor anticipated to be used extensively by commuter cyclists. Rather it is primarily a leisure route where cycle speeds are expected to be lower. The number of cyclists using the route is not anticipated to reach such levels that the facility will start to look like the 'roadway' that some respondents fear. Given that cyclists are generally no noisier than dogs or children at play, officers do not agree that the introduction of cyclists will spoil the tranquillity of the park.

- 5.13 **Anti-social Activity:** 6 responses raised concerns that the new facility would increase levels of anti-social activity within the park and encourage the use of motorbikes.

Officer comments – The park does not suffer with any particular problems at present with anti-social activity and officers do not believe this would change by introducing the facility proposed. In fact the increase in park usage is likely to discourage anti-social behaviour by those who prefer to remain unseen. It is not possible to enclose the parkland in such a way as to entirely prevent access by those with small motorbikes or similar without also denying access to those in wheelchairs. In general the access restrictions to the park will not be changed by the proposals.

- 5.14 **Spoiling the Wooded Area:** 5 responses raised specific concerns that the new facility would spoil the wooded area.

Officer comments – The proposals have been amended in response to this concern so that the proposed route no longer goes through the wooded area.

- 5.15 **Poor Use of Money:** 5 responses stated explicitly that the proposed works were a poor use of money.

Officer comments – The cost of these works is being met by TfL's Corridors funding. The facility proposed will create a path through the park that is wide and firm enough to be used in comfort by pedestrians, cyclists and wheelchair users in all seasons. This will increase the number of people visiting the park and exercising within it. The new path will promote cycling in general by providing a pleasant 'nursery' environment for novice cyclists and will continue to serve this function for many decades before any significant maintenance work is required.

- 5.16 **Proposed Path Overly Wide:** 4 responses raised concerns that the proposed path was too wide, some stating that it would be akin to introducing a 'roadway' through the park.

Officer comments – The proposed width of 2.5m is the minimum recommended width for a mixed-use path, when taking a consensus view from the many different guidance documents available. The existing paths within the park vary in width but tend to be relatively narrow. A width of 1.35m is typical but some existing lengths are as wide as 2m. For context, a typical estate road is 7.2m wide and a very narrow estate road just wide enough to permit two-way traffic is, perhaps, as little as 5.0m wide. Hence officers do not agree that a 2.5m wide path can legitimately be described as a 'roadway'.

A path of 2.5m width will allow three pedestrians or two parents pushing buggies to walk in comfort side by side. It has been observed that groups of people prefer to walk side by side rather than in files and hence the wider path is likely to prove popular with groups on foot, as well as with cyclists.

- 5.17 Two alternative routes have been suggested in preference to the route through the park. These are detailed on the proforma distributed by Ward Councillors.

The first alternative route follows existing paths or quiet lanes around the perimeter of the park and only enters the main park when crossing north-south between Strayfield Road and Cook's Hole Road.

The exact line of the second alternative route is unclear but is generally intended to avoid Hilly Fields Park entirely by continuing east on Strayfield Road to the junction of Clay Hill before crossing into Flash Lane. From here it would bear east through Whitewebbs Park and connect to the route around the perimeter of Forty Hall Park.

Officer comments - The first alternative route benefits from serving various entrances into the park but has several more drawbacks. Firstly the route around the perimeter of the park is hilly, a particular drawback for wheelchair users, while the route following the brook is flat. Secondly the route around the perimeter is less direct. Thirdly the route around the perimeter is less attractive than the route following the brook.

The perimeter route still requires the provision of a widened path across the park and so would not necessarily assuage the concerns of those who do not wish to see cyclists mixing with other users, or loss of green space or the provision of 2.5m wide paths in the park. This may be reflected in the fact that only 8 of the 52 respondents expressing a preference chose this option on the proforma.

The remaining 44 respondents chose the second alternative route. However, this may be for no other reason than that the route avoids Hilly Fields Park entirely. Officers are strongly opposed to the second alternative route. The emergence of this route onto Clay Hill at the junction of Flash Lane and Strayfield Road would be unsafe due to the high traffic speed and poor visibility at this particular junction.

6. ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED

- 6.1 The 'Do Nothing' option is not considered suitable as this would leave a significant 'gap' in the overall Greenway route for cyclists between Hadley Wood and Enfield Island Village. The section through Hilly Fields Park is particularly picturesque and attractive to leisure users. Doing nothing would miss the opportunity to create an all-season facility for existing users and to allow easy access by cyclists and wheelchair users.
- 6.2 The two alternative routes described in section 5.17 above have been considered but have been rejected in favour of the original proposals for the reasons stated above.

7. REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

- 7.1 Approving the implementation of the proposed path will enable Enfield Council to complete an important link in the wider Greenway route proposed between Hadley Wood and Enfield Island Village.
- 7.2 Continuing with the proposals will create an all-season facility for existing users and allow easy access for cyclists and wheelchair users onto an existing well-used and attractive leisure route.
- 7.3 Generally speaking, this project can play a significant role in meeting some of the visions of Enfield's 'Parks and Open Spaces Strategy 2010-2020' by 'Making open spaces in Enfield places for everyone' and in 'Creating sustainable open spaces for the future'. Key objectives in those strategies, which developing the Greenway network can help to achieve, are to 'promote health and well being', to 'create safer places' to create 'accessible open spaces' and 'Amenities for everyone'.

8. COMMENTS OF THE DIRECTOR OF FINANCE, RESOURCES AND CUSTOMER SERVICES AND OTHER DEPARTMENTS

8.1 Financial Implications

The cost of these improvements is estimated to be £200,000. This will be met by the Corridors, Neighbourhoods and Supporting Measures 2012/13 budget.

8.2 Legal Implications

- 8.2.1 The general power of competence is set out in s. 1.1 of the Localism Act 2011 and states that "A local authority has power to do anything that individuals generally may do". Where the authority can do something under the power, the starting point is that there are to be no limits as to how the power can be exercised. Section 2 sets out the boundaries of the general power, requiring local authorities to act in accordance with statutory limitations or restrictions

- 8.2.2 A dedication order is required to dedicate as a public footpath the new route proposed along the brook at the eastern end of the park. Cycling is not illegal on footpaths unless a byelaw at the location prohibits this usage specifically. The borough-wide byelaw prohibiting cycling within parks is being varied to allow cycling within parks on routes signed and intended by the local authority as routes for bicycles.
- 8.2.3 Where the Greenway intersects or uses part of the Highway network it may be necessary to make Traffic Management Orders under the Road Traffic Regulation Act 1984 and the Road Traffic Act 1991 to make alterations to the way in which the footway and carriageway are used. The making of such orders will need to follow the prescribed procedure of consultation and publication as appropriate.
- 8.2.4 Where it is proposed to allow cycling on existing footpaths, Orders made in the prescribed form, may need to be made to permit the shared use of the footpath and will need to meet any minimum statutory requirements. The routes will also need to be formally designated as permitted cycling routes and should be identified as such through the appropriate use of signs.
- 8.2.5 The recommendations contained within this report are considered to be in accordance with the Council's powers and duties.

9. KEY RISKS

No risks identified.

10. IMPACT ON COUNCIL PRIORITIES

10.1 Fairness for All

The proposed Greenway network has been developed in consultation with local walking and cycling groups to ensure the needs of all users can be accommodated as far as possible. For these particular proposals the views of all stakeholders have been taken into account in a fair and consistent way. Once developed, the Greenway will provide a safe, accessible and pleasant pathway for users of all ages and abilities. For these reasons the proposals are aligned with the aim of Fairness for All.

10.2 Growth and Sustainability

- 10.2.1 The provision of a green and attractive route that is safe, continuous and free from barriers, will help to reduce the common fears that currently discourage people from walking and cycling. This will support the aim of encouraging the use of more sustainable means of travel.
- 10.2.2 The new path will help meet the outcome of improved and accessible parks.
- 10.2.3 The continued linking of Enfield's cycling facilities into the wider London network of Greenways helps meet the outcome of improved sustainability of transport.

10.2.4 Providing improvements to assist crossing movements of Clay Hill near the Rose & Crown public house will help meet the outcome of reducing road casualties within the borough.

10.3 Strong Communities

The provision of a new and free-to-use leisure facility, and the further addition to the local Greenway network, helps meet the outcome of improving the health and wellbeing of Enfield's residents.

11. EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT

Corporate advice has been sought in regard to equalities, and an agreement has been reached that for the approval of the proposed path through Hilly Fields Park, an equalities impact assessment/analysis is neither relevant nor proportionate.

12. PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT IMPLICATIONS

This report supports Aim 2.5 of the Councils Business Plan i.e. "Improved sustainability of transport and reduce its impact on the borough – Introduce cycle lanes to link Enfield's network to the London Greenway".

13. HEALTH AND SAFETY IMPLICATIONS

The introduction of a largely off-highway walking and cycling route that is accessible to all, combined with measures to improve crossing points and intersections, will help to reduce road casualties.

Background Papers

Portfolio Decision of the Cabinet Member for Environment and Street Scene (ENV 09.121) dated 1st March 2010.

Portfolio Decision of the Cabinet Member for Environment and Street Scene (ENV 10.60) dated 6th December 2010.