

CAMBRIDGE CITY COUNCIL

REPORT OF: Head of Environmental Services – Joel Carre
TO: East Area Committee
WARDS: Petersfield

Petersfield Green – Palmers Walk Pathway Consultation

1 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 Palmers Walk Pathway was provided in its current format as part of the 1995 Petersfield Mansions development. The path is currently 1.2 metres in width and is bounded by grass on one side and a brick wall on the other.
- 1.2 The pathway connects Mill Road with Bradmore Street and provides a route to Anglia Ruskin University. Whilst the path has predominantly foot traffic it is also used by cyclists and this can cause conflict whereby the current width means that some users invariably have to move onto the grass in order to pass comfortably. During winter months this can lead to degradation to the grass along the path edge.
- 1.3 A suggestion to widen the pathway alongside Petersfield Mansions was raised at an East Area Committee several years ago and this was then taken forward by the Cambridge Cycling and Pedestrian Steering Group (CCPSG) to appraise the options and identify potential funding sources.
- 1.4 As part of this process a letter was sent to local residents in August 2015 to gauge views on widening the pathway to overcome this problem.
- 1.5 This approach was deemed to be insufficient as a consultation and in October 2016 a new consultation was undertaken. This report outlines the consultation process and feedback to date.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

2.1 Members are asked

a) to note, discuss and comment on the outcomes of the October 2016 consultation focusing on two key elements:-

- The potential options to widen the pathway or not;
- To implement a cycling ban on the Palmers Walk footpath.

b) Give feedback to Officers that will be used to inform and make recommendations to the Cambridge Cycling and Pedestrian Steering Group.

3. BACKGROUND

3.1 During August 2015 a letter was sent to local residents of contiguous properties of Petersfield Green proposing the widening of the open space section of Palmers Walk pathway. The proposal was to widen the footpath from its current width of 1.2 metres to a new width of 2.2 metres.

3.2 The initial feedback indicated that, whilst views were split there was slightly more respondents opposed to the widening than against it. Amendments were put forward by the CCPSG to address concerns raised were communicated to local residents. A decision was made to proceed with the amended proposal. This decision prompted by a petition and complaint to the City Council was investigated by the Independents Complaints Inspector (ICI in January 2016).

3.3 The ICI concluded that the format of the consultation undertaken was insufficient as it did not offer/explore other options. The ICI recommended that a new consultation should be undertaken to offer viable alternatives including leaving the footpath at its existing width.

3.4 The Senior Asset Development Officer from Streets and Open Spaces, with no previous dealings on the proposal was asked to undertake the new consultation.

4. CONSULTATIONS

4.1 Two consultations have been undertaken in relation to the Palmer's Walk Pathway project.

4.2 The first consultation in August 2015 was in the form of a local resident letter to properties in the immediate vicinity of Petersfield Green – see Appendix A. There were 19 respondents, 7 in favour, 12 against widening the pathway from 1.2 metres to 2.2 metres. The ICI concluded that this was not thorough enough as it only offered one option which was to widen and recommended the following actions:

- That the current decision to widen Palmers Walk was set aside.
- That a new consultation process was discussed with more inclusive stakeholder representation
- That a range of options rather than one option were identified to address original concerns.
- That the new consultation was undertaken by someone not personally involved in the current project.

4.3. In line with the recommendations outlined the Senior Asset Development Officer contacted and met on site on 29th July 2016 with several key stakeholders, the Petersfield Mansions Management Company and Anglia Ruskin University, the Petersfield Residents Association, Petersfield Ward Councillor's, Cambridge City Council Officers (Conservation and Access), Cambridgeshire County Council Highways and residents with a vested interest, notes from this meeting are available as background reading.

4.4 The new consultation, offering three options (Appendix B) ran between 7th October and 31st October 2016.

4.5 The consultation document also carried a further question as a result of a petition received in respect of whether the pathway in question should include a cycling ban, respondents were asked whether to support this petition by a simple yes or no response.

5 OPTIONS

5.1 The second consultation with a wider public consultation received a total of 62 responses.

There were 60 responses to the question asking which potential option people preferred, these options were:

1. Widen the path to 1.8m width;
2. Widen the path to 2.2m width; and
3. Do not widen the path and maintain at its current width of 1.2m.

- 11 of the responses (or 18%) preferred option 1,
- 14 of the responses (or 23%) preferred option 2 and
- 35 of the responses (or 59%) preferred option 3.
- Therefore 41% of respondents wanted to widen the footpath in some form and 58% wanted to maintain the current path width at 1.2 metres.

5.2 In relation to the question - Cambridge City Council has received a petition, signed by 76 Petersfield residents which asks for a cycling ban on Palmers Walk footpath, irrespective of whether the path is widen or not. Do you support this proposal?

There were 59 responses to the question with the options Yes or No, asking whether people supported the proposal for a cycling ban on the Palmer's Walk footpath.

- 46 of the responses (or 78%) said Yes they supported the proposal for a cycling ban and
- 13 of the responses (or 22%) said No they did not support the proposal for a cycling ban.

A majority of all respondents represent Petersfield Mansions.

6 CONCLUSIONS

- 6.1 In relation to whether the path should be widened or not there is a majority of just over half of respondents (59%) who wish for the path to remain at its current width.
- 6.2 In relation to support for a cycling ban on this route there is a significant majority (78%) that wish this to be implemented.
- 6.3 Whilst there are clear majorities for each of the options it should be noted that in terms supporting these, the original concerns raised around insufficient widths for users passing and subsequent ground deterioration during the winter months will remain.
- 6.4 It is also not clear on how respondent's opinions may have been altered or influenced as a result of the petition campaign. The petition was a canvassed position, not anonymous, derived from door to door contact. The consultations undertaken by CCC were anonymous and could be completed without direct external influence and after an extended period of consideration and thought.

6.5 The Final decision will be made at the meeting of the CCSPG on February 9th 2017.

7. IMPLICATIONS

(a) Financial Implications

Should the widening of the path be taken forward the cost would be in the region of £15,000. As part of the original proposal Anglia Ruskin University were willing to contribute £10k. At present this offer has been placed on hold until such time as the second consultation and recommendations are determined.

The remaining funding would be met from the Cambridge City Council Cycleways Budget (capital item PV007)

To provide the required advisory signage on a ban on cycling along the route would cost in the region of £500 with no current budget identified.

(b) Staffing Implications

No additional staff resource required over and above existing staff levels, if the scheme moved forward work would need to be scheduled using existing resource base.

(c) Equality and Poverty Implications

An Equalities Impact Assessment will need to be completed should the scheme proceed.

(d) Environmental Implications

Climate change rating = NIL

(e) Procurement

No procurement implications foreseen.

(f) Consultation and communication

The most recent consultation provides clear outcomes on public opinion. There has been stakeholder engagement thought the process and this will continue through the Senior Asset Development Officer until the final decision is communicated at the Cycling and Pedestrian Steering Group meets on 9th February 2017.

(g) **Community Safety**

The original enquiry discussed at East Area was based on an issue raised by a resident of Petersfield Mansions who raised safety concerns when exiting the properties directly onto the pathway. The concern related to fast moving cyclists along the route and that the path being narrow did not allow residents to step out directly onto the path with an adequate buffer zone to avoid such conflict. Any proposal to widen seeks to address this issue. The petition submitted at the second stage of consultation also relates to this concern.

BACKGROUND PAPERS:

The following are the background papers that were used in the preparation of this report:

- Notes taken from the stakeholder meeting on Petersfield Green 29/07/16
- Petersfield Green – Palmers Walk Pathway Consultation October 2016 results analysis

To inspect these documents contact Anthony French on extension 8521

The author and contact officer for queries on the report is Anthony French on extension 8521

Report file:

Date originated: 22 December 2016

Date of last revision: 22 December 2016

Appendix A – Letter sent to residents August 2015 detailing proposals for path widening at Palmer Walk, Petersfield Green.

Dear Resident,

Proposed widening of Palmer's Walk

The path running in front of Petersfield Mansions (identified below in red) is only 1.2m wide. This means that when passing each other pedestrians and cyclists often have to use the grass which is problematic when it is wet and muddy. It is also difficult for residents of Petersfield Mansions when exiting their properties as there is very little space for people to manoeuvre around each other.



Usage of this path has increased over the years with more cyclists using the path to access the cycle racks which have been installed on Bradmore Street as part of the expansion of Anglia Ruskin University. It is therefore proposed to widen the path by 1metre to cater for this increased usage and to improve access from Mill Road with the removal of a short section of railing and the installation of a flush kerb.

Petersfield is owned by the City Council and the path in question is maintained by the County Council as highway.

The cost of these works is approximately £20,000 and this project will be joint funded by Cambridge City Council and Anglia Ruskin University.

The path marked in blue is maintained by the City Council and we hope to improve the surface of this path at the same time if funding can be identified.

If you have any comments regarding the widening of this path or would like more information please contact cycling@cambridge.gov.uk by 14th September 2015.

Yours faithfully,

Clare Rankin - Cycling and Walking Officer

Appendix B– Petersfield Green – Palmers Walk Pathway Consultation October 2016



Petersfield Green - Palmers Walk Pathway Consultation

During August 2015 a letter was sent to local residents of Petersfield Green proposing the widening of the open space section of Palmers Walk pathway (shown in red on plan insert). The proposal was to widen the footpath from its current width of 1.2 metres to 2.2 metres.

Feedback received suggested that other options should have been considered and subsequently it was determined that the consultation should be repeated to offer viable alternatives including leaving the footpath at its existing width.

The purpose of any widening would be to alleviate conflict between users passing on the pathway, be they walking, cycling, in a wheelchair or pushing a pram or pushchair, particularly in poor weather when users may be required to use the grass which can deteriorate quickly in the winter.

Residents of Petersfield Mansions report safety concerns when leaving the building due to the use of the path outside their front doors by cyclists.

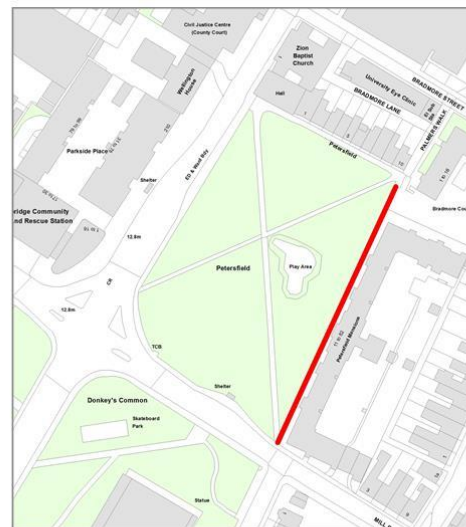
Inevitably, with options 1 and 2 below there will be a loss of open space by the increased width proposed along the stretch of pathway shown in red on the plan which is approximately 120 linear metres.

We would like your views as a local resident on the options for Palmers Walk Pathway.

The potential options are:

1. To widen the path to 1.8 metres (standard path width used in current new build areas - this would be a 0.6m increase on current width).
2. To widen the path to 2.2 metres (as originally proposed in 2015 - this would be a 1 metre increase on current width)
3. To not widen the path and maintain at its current width of 1.2 metres.

Please indicate your preference 1, 2 or 3 in the box below:



Petersfield Green - Palmers Walk Pathway Consultation

Cambridge City Council has received a petition, signed by 76 Petersfield residents, which asks for a cycling ban on the Palmer's Walk footpath, irrespective of whether the path is widened or not. Do you support this proposal?

Yes:

No:

Please enter your postcode

This will only be used to analyse the geography of respondents and for no other purpose.

Additional comments

If you would like further information please contact the Streets and Open Spaces Development Unit using the information provided below. Please return this leaflet to the freepost address below, or you can email your response to Parks@cambridge.gov.uk Additional copies of this survey can be requested by using this email address or by calling 01223 458530.

The consultation will end on Monday 31st October 2016

Freepost: Petersfield Green Pathway Project, Freepost RTGU-HXRA-REBZ, Cambridge City Council, Mill Road Depot CB1 2AZ