



Derby City Council

**CONSERVATION AREA ADVISORY
COMMITTEE
26 January 2017**

ITEM 6

Report of David Gartside, Acting Director of
Strategic Partnerships, Planning and
Transportation

Darley Abbey Path, Darley Park

SUMMARY

- 1.1 The Darley Park Conservation Management Action Plan, developed with the assistance of independent historians and landscape architects, identifies the need for improved accessibility to support recreational users and visitors to Darley Park.
- 1.2 The Council has recently secured capital funding to support access improvements and proposes a new path through Darley Park to enable full access to the Park for all of its users. Further advice on the detailed alignment and materials of the path is sought from the Committee prior to a planning application being submitted
- 1.3 The proposed path will run from the lower southern end of Darley Park to adjoin the existing macadam path near to the Rowing Club boathouse in continuous formation up to and through Dean's Field car park at the most northern end of the park at Darley village.

RECOMMENDATION

- 2.1 To note the report and proposals for the path in Darley Park.
- 2.2 To discuss and give pre-application advice at the meeting.

REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATION

- 3.1 To highlight the proposal to Members so that advice can be taken on board prior to the submission of the formal Planning Application.

SUPPORTING INFORMATION

- 4.1 The Darley Park Conservation Action Plan developed with the assistance of independent historians and landscape architects has identified the need for a new multiuser path to support recreational users of the Park. The lower end of Darley Park has in recent years been blighted by desire lines that have become very muddy and the grass has been unable to recover. In light of complaints regarding poor accessibility through Darley Park, a surfaced path connecting both ends of the Park is proposed, and funding has been secured through the Our City Our river (OCOR) project to enable construction to take place. Planning permission will be required prior to construction.
- 4.2 In August 2016 staff from Parks and Traffic and Transportation carried out a consultation on site over two days with users of the Park to gauge opinion on the construction of a new path. The results of the survey were analysed and there was a majority consensus of 93% (194 of all respondents) who are in favour of a surfaced path through the Park.
- 4.3 Three options for the location of the route through the Park were put forward. The most popular option is the most direct route through the Park, but this also impacts on the UNESCO monitored view and has the most visible presence. Officers however favoured the second most popular option, as this also provided direct access, but had a much less significant impact to the monitored view and visual impact on the landscape.
- 4.4 The lower end of Darley Park has in recent years been blighted by desire lines formed through the grass that have become very muddy and the grass has been unable to recover. This has scarred the vista. By offsetting the path away from the centre of the Park to meander in line with the river, the grass should recover and the visual appearance of the park will improve. A defined route will be created and this will ultimately protect the fabric of the wider park. This supports the recommendations of the Darley Park Conservation Management Plan to limit adverse visual impacts to views down and across the Park
- 4.5 The materials chosen are intended to be of a natural appearance of either resin bonded or macadam in natural stone finish, whilst also providing durability and minimal maintenance. Either of these materials will blend naturally with the environment, and as it is intended for the path to follow the meander of the river and the natural ground contours at its most visible locations, the path should have minimum visual impact upon the historic landscape setting. Where possible these materials shall be permeable.
- 4.6 Current Department for Transport guidance recommends three metres as the preferred minimum width for unsegregated shared use routes. It is proposed to construct the path three metres wide along the entire alignment to comply with this guidance. This will ensure there is comfortable and safe passage for all users and reduce the risk of any potential conflict between pedestrians and cyclists.

- 4.7 The proposal includes the construction of a boardwalk parallel to the meadow. This will run near to the hedge line and will provide a recreational facility for the park users as well as year round access, and also have minimum disruption to the ground profile. A boardwalk will also overcome the localised flooding issue that can occur within this area during the winter months preventing access to this area and ensure that access is maintained during times of prolonged waterlogging. The boardwalk shall not be visible from the UNESCO monitored point and will be constructed from sustainable materials.
- 4.8 The sensitive location of the park sitting within the World Heritage Site will be respected through choice of materials used to construct the path, and also through the construction methods used to lay the path. Where it is known that there may be archaeological features 'no dig' construction methods will be used to protect the ground. The same methods shall also be used in areas in close proximity to mature trees to ensure they are not damaged by the construction works, and the impact of a constructed path on the tree root system in the future.
- 4.9 The proposed path through Darley Park will provide a route to enable safe accessibility for all from the City Centre into Darley Village, and also provide a link through to the wider Derbyshire countryside path network. This could link directly with future ambitions to provide a traffic free pedestrian and cycle route from Derby to Matlock and beyond.
- 4.10 Should the path receive support, further changes to Darley Street in Darley Abbey will be necessary to provide route continuity for cyclists to safely travel from the end of the proposed Darley Park Path and Old Lane. This would require changes to the current one way traffic order to permit cyclists to travel northbound.
- 4.11 The scheme has the full support of local groups including The Friends of Darley Open Spaces, the DerwentWISE Landscape Partnership and the Derwent Valley Mills World Heritage Site Officers. The Local Policing Team support this proposal. They make regular inspections of the Park on foot and bicycle and the construction of a path will make the park more accessible to them during their patrols.

OTHER OPTIONS CONSIDERED

- 5.1 None arising from this report

This report has been approved by the following officers:

Legal officer Financial officer Human Resources officer Estates/Property officer Service Director(s) Other(s)	David Winslow (DCC Parks), Tony Gascoigne (DCC Traffic and Transportation)
For more information contact: Background papers:	Richard Lawrence 01332 641546 richard.lawrence@derby.gov.uk None

List of appendices:	Appendix 1 – Implications
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IMPLICATIONS

Financial and Value for Money

- 1.1 The Capital costs of this scheme will be funded from the Our City Our River (OCOR) project. Full costs for the scheme will be developed as part of the design.

Legal

- 2.1 None arising from this report

Personnel

- 3.1 None arising from this report

IT

- 4.1 None arising from this report

Equalities Impact

- 5.1 This proposal will have a positive impact, enabling access for all to enjoy Darley Park.

Health and Safety

- 6.1 None arising from this report

Environmental Sustainability

- 7.1 The path will define a pedestrian and cycling route through the park. This will help to prevent continued damage to the grassland that is currently being eroded by the formation of desire lines as a result of the public navigating their way through the muddy areas at the lower southern end of the park. The recovery of the grassland will improve the ecology of Darley Park.
- 7.2 The proposed boardwalk will be constructed entirely of recycled materials. All of the materials proposed for the construction will be robust and durable to ensure they have a maximum lifespan. No dig construction techniques will be used where required to protect any potential tree roots within the proposed line of the path from damage. This proposal also supports the use of sustainable transport choices.

Property and Asset Management

8.1 None arising from the report

Risk Management and Safeguarding

9.1 A construction risk assessment shall be undertaken as part of the project management process

Corporate objectives and priorities for change

10.1 The construction of a path through Darley park supports the 'A Different Council' Our Council Plan 2016-19 meeting the priority outcome:

- Promoting health and well-being