

## Environment Committee

13 July 2017

<b>Title</b>	<b>Brookside Walk Lighting proposal</b>
<b>Report of</b>	Strategic Director of Environment
<b>Wards</b>	All
<b>Status</b>	Public
<b>Urgent</b>	No
<b>Key</b>	No
<b>Enclosures</b>	None
<b>Officer Contact Details</b>	<p>Kiran Vagarwal,  <i>Strategic Lead - Safer Communities Environment Commissioning Group</i>  <a href="mailto:Kiran.vagarwal@barnet.gov.uk">Kiran.vagarwal@barnet.gov.uk</a>            Tel 0208 359 2953</p> <p>Peter Clifton,  <i>Community Safety Manager</i>  <a href="mailto:Peter.clifton@barnet.gov.uk">Peter.clifton@barnet.gov.uk</a>            Tel: 0208 359 3120</p>

## Summary

A petition signed by 136 residents was presented to the Hendon Area Committee requesting that Brookside Walk, a section of the Dollis Valley Walk, have lighting installed. In October 2016 the Area Committee received a report into this and took the decision that the proposal to light Brookside Walk should be escalated to the Environment Committee to “consider options for funding the scheme from an agreed budget prior to progress of the scheme to detailed design, public, consultation and implementation.”

This report provides an assessment of the proposal covering what the lighting scheme would involve, potential advantages and disadvantages of the lighting scheme and a detailed cost estimate. The recommendation of this report is that the scheme not be proceeded with, however an alternative option (to proceed with the scheme) is also provided for the Committee’s consideration.

## Recommendations

1. That the Environment Committee agree not to implement a lighting scheme in Brookside Walk for the reasons set out in the report below

OR

2. That the Environment Committee agree to implement a lighting scheme as set out in section 3 of the report below and agree that the scheme should be funded through the Network Recovery Programme capital budget

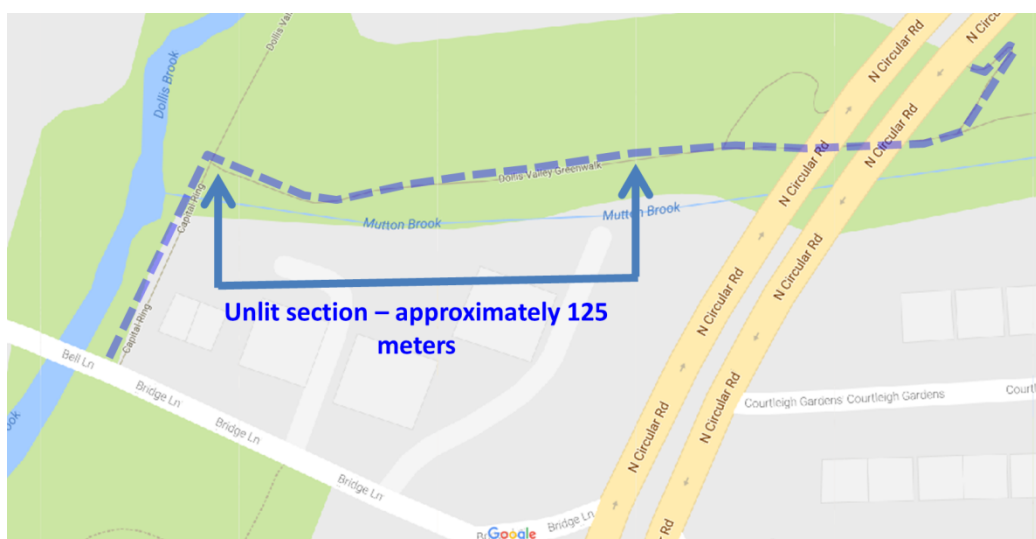
### 1. WHY THIS REPORT IS NEEDED

- 1.1 A petition signed by 136 people asking for lighting to be installed in Brookside Walk was received at the July 2016 Hendon Area Committee. In response the committee requested the matter of lighting Brookside Walk be looked into and the findings brought back to the committee in a light touch report.
- 1.2 The October 2016 Hendon Area Committee received the light touch report which gave an outline of what the lighting scheme would involve and provided some indicative costings.
- 1.3.1 These estimated indicative costings of lighting the footpath given in the report exceed the approval threshold of the committee (£25,000).
- 1.3.2 Given this context the Hendon Area Committee's decision was to "escalate the proposal within the report to the Environment Committee to consider options for funding the scheme from an agreed budget prior to progress of the scheme to detailed design, public, consultation and implementation"
- 1.3.3 Following receipt of the petition asking for lighting in Brookside Walk, site visits to the location have been carried out by engineers from the Street Lighting Team, Community Safety Team officers and the police. The purpose of these visits was to assess a) any potential impacts on crime, antisocial behaviour and safety. (b) the practical details of what the proposed lighting scheme would involve b) estimated costs for such a scheme, and c) any apparent advantages and disadvantages of implementing the scheme.
- 1.4 This report summarises the findings relating to the above points (1.3) and provides two options for the Environment Committee to consider:
  - a) *Not to proceed with the lighting scheme.* (This is the recommend option), or:
  - b) *To instruct that the scheme be progressed to detailed design, public, consultation and implementation, and to identify an agreed budget for this purpose.* (This is the alternative option)

## 2. REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

### Background Context

- 2.1 A petition signed by 136 people asks for lighting to be installed in the section of Brookside Walk between the lit Capital Ring path and the lit TFL path adjacent to North Circular Road.
- 2.1 The route illustrated by the dashed line on the map below is used by local residents to walk between Bridge Lane junction with Capital Ring and a point by North Circular near South Bourne Crescent.
- 2.3 Some sections of this route have lighting in place; however the approx. 125m section (denoted on the map below) of the Dollis Valley walk between the Capital Ring path and the TFL lit section near the North Circular is currently unlit.



### Potential advantages of lighting the unlit section

- 2.4 The following points are advantages which could result from implementing the lighting proposal:
- The lighting is likely to encourage more people to use this path and hence encourage walking – a healthy, low cost and sustainable transport mode.
  - Increased perception of safety of those using the path during hours of darkness.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> However the increase in 'perceived' safety would not necessarily be matched by a corresponding increase in actual safety (the reasons for this are outlined in the 'Potential disadvantages' section of this report)

- The route using Brookside Walk is 1 minute 30 seconds shorter than the alternative route (along Bridge Lane and the North Circular).<sup>2</sup>

### **Potential disadvantages of lighting the unlit section**

- 2.5 The following points are disadvantages which could result from implementing the lighting proposal:

#### Possible increase in the risk of crime

- 2.6 There is a risk that the addition of lighting to Brookside Walk will result in an increase in crime and anti-social behaviour at the location during the evening. The reasons for this are given below.
- 2.7 At present there are no significant issues with crime or anti-social behaviour at the location – police figures show no report of any crimes or anti-social behaviour (ASB) there over the last 12 months.
- 2.8 The characteristics of the physical environment are one of the key factors which affect and influence the risk of crime at particular locations.
- 2.9 Lighting the 125m section of Brookside walk would alter the characteristics of the location in a way which may increase the opportunity for crime, as explained in the following points
- The risk of crime against individuals (such as robbery or assault) could increase because the presence of lighting would encourage more people to enter into Brookside Walk during the hours of darkness and some of those people would find themselves quite isolated and unable to easily escape from the pathway. (Because there is no exit route from the pathway once you've entered into it, except at the entrance and exits which are over 125 meters apart).
  - In addition the lighting would mean that while the path would be lit the areas either side of it would remain in darkness thereby allowing a potential perpetrator to remain hidden and unseen from those using the path, while they themselves would be able to observe people walking on the path.

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<sup>2</sup> The route using Brookside Walk is 285 meters and takes approximately 3 minutes and 30 seconds to walk. The alternative route using existing lit pathways was measured at 391 meters and takes approximately 5 minutes to walk.

- Given this, lighting may provide more, not fewer, opportunities for crime, while at the same time encouraging more people to enter into the pathway where they would be exposed to those risks.

2.10 In conclusion – given the vulnerabilities of the location as outlined above, serious consideration should be given as to whether it is sensible, or safe, to encourage residents, to use the footpath during the hours of darkness, whether lit or not. Especially given that there is a well-lit and convenient alternative route, already available for use after dark. This alternative route is along Bridge Road, together with the well illuminated footpath alongside the North Circular Road. Most of this section has the added safety consideration of CCTV coverage.

#### Possible increase in the risk of anti-social behaviour

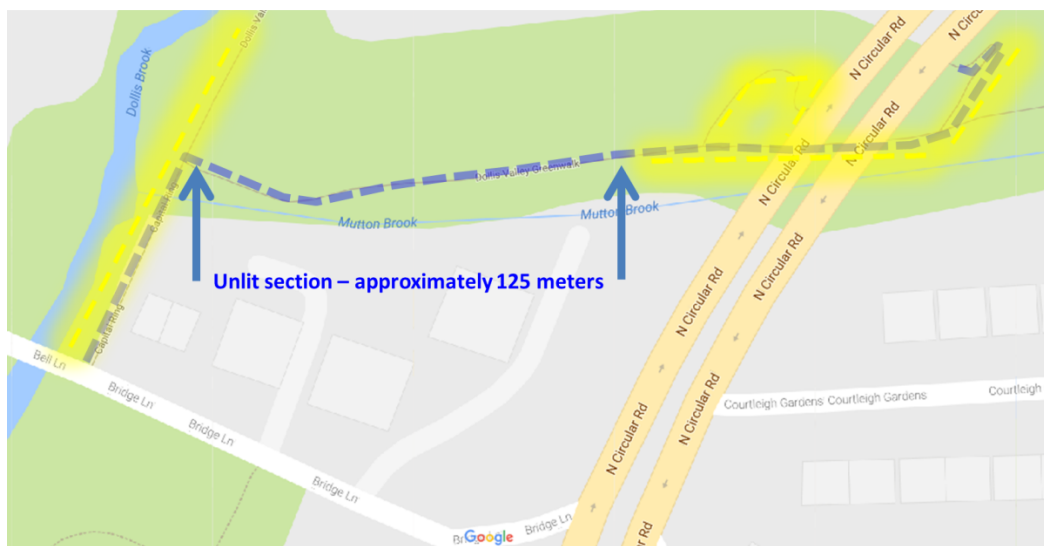
2.11 Whilst it would not be the intention to light the playground itself, any illumination of the footpath will, by virtue of proximity, also illuminate the playground area. Experience suggests this area would then have the potential of attracting anti-social behaviour and illegal activities, which could be especially prevalent during the hours of darkness.

#### Other potential disadvantages

2.12 The footpath itself is an integral part of the wider nature corridor, provided by the Dollis Valley Brookside Walk and, as such, has previously been deemed unsuitable for lighting. The reason for this is because it would seriously interfere with local wildlife activities, particularly during the hours of darkness when bats, moths and all manner of nocturnal species are likely to around.

### 3. ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED AND NOT RECOMMENDED

- 3.1 The alternative option is that the Committee instruct the scheme to light Brookside Walk be progressed to detailed design, public, consultation and implementation, and to identify an agreed budget for this purpose. (See 3.4 for cost estimates)
- 3.2 The section of the path which would be lit under this scheme is the approximate 125 metre part of Brookside Walk between the Capital Ring path and the TFL lit section near the North Circular. (Illustrated on map below)



- 3.3 The site visit conducted by engineers from the Street Lighting Team established that there are no convenient electricity points in place along the unlit section, consequently, a separate electricity supply feeder pillar will be required to service the number of assets required to provide an appropriate standard of lighting to this footpath.
- 3.4 Further to the initial indicative cost estimates provided in the report to the Hendon Area Committee a more detailed assessment of the cost of the scheme has been carried out by the Street Lighting team in June 2017. The estimated costs given by this assessment are as provided in the supplementary paper “Brookside Walk Lighting Cost Estimates”
- 3.5 Members should note this is an estimate and the costs will require confirmation through a full commissioning and design process.

## **4. POST DECISION IMPLEMENTATION**

- 4.1 If the recommendation is agreed by the Committee the lighting scheme will not be progressed.

If the alternative option is chosen by the Committee and funding identified then the Commissioning Director Environment will instruct that the scheme outlined in the alternative options is progress to detailed design, public, consultation and implementation.

## **5. IMPLICATIONS OF DECISION**

### **5.1 Corporate Priorities and Performance**

- 5.1.1 The Council will work with local, regional and national partners, and will strive to ensure that Barnet is the place:
- Of opportunity, where people can further their quality of life
  - Where people are helped to help themselves
  - Where responsibility is shared, fairly
  - Where services are delivered efficiently to get value for money for the taxpayer

The Council's 2015-2020 Corporate Plan includes the objective that: "Barnet's local environment will be clean and attractive, with well-maintained roads and pavements, flowing traffic, increased recycling and less waste sent to landfill."

### **5.2 Resources (Finance & Value for Money, Procurement, Staffing, IT, Property, Sustainability)**

- 5.2.1 As the funding recommended is in excess of the Hendon Area Committee's £25,000 budget the committee has asked that the proposal to light Brookside Walk be escalated to the Environment Committee to consider options for funding the scheme from an agreed budget prior to progress of the scheme to detailed design, public, consultation and implementation.

### **5.3 Social Value**

- 5.3.1 The Public Services (Social Value) Act 2013 requires people who commission public services to think about how they can also secure wider social, economic and environmental benefits. This report does not relate to procurement of services.

### **5.4 Legal and Constitutional References**

- 5.4.1 The Council's Constitution (Clause 15A, Responsibility for Functions, Annex A) sets out the terms of reference of the Environment Committee. This decision is within the remit of the committee and therefore it is deemed appropriate for the Environment Committee to consider and determine this report.

### **5.5 Risk Management**

- 5.5.1 Should option 2 of this report be selected, a risk management assessment will be undertaken prior to implementation of the lighting scheme.

### **5.6 Equalities and Diversity**

- 5.6.1 Section 149 of the Equality Act 2010 requires a decision-maker to have 'due regard' to achieving a number of equality goals: (i) to eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other conduct that is prohibited by the Act; (ii) to advance equality of opportunity between those with protected characteristics and those without; and (iii) to foster good relations between persons with a relevant protected characteristic and those without.
- 5.6.2 The relevant protected characteristics are age, disability, gender reassignment, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex and sexual orientation. It also covers marriage and civil partnership with regard to eliminating discrimination.
- 5.6.3 With regard to the council's public sector equality duty under section 149 of the Equality Act 2010, it is not considered that the proposals in this report will disproportionately disadvantage or benefit members of any protected group.
- 5.6.4 Individual proposals have been or will be subject to further consideration of equalities impacts as they are developed and approved.



## 5.7 Consultation and Engagement

5.7.1 As a matter of public law, the duty to consult on proposals which may vary, reduce or withdraw services will arise in four circumstances:

- Where there is a statutory requirement in the relevant legislative framework.
- Where the practice has been to consult or where a policy document states the council will consult then the council must comply with its own practice or policy.
- Where the matter is so important that there is a legitimate expectation of consultation.
- Where consultation is required to complete an equalities impact assessment.

## 5.8 Insight

5.8.1 Not relevant in relation to this report.

## 6. BACKGROUND PAPERS

6.1 **“Progress update on Hendon Area Committee Actions”** Hendon Area Committee 26 October 2016  
<https://barnet.moderngov.co.uk/documents/s35347/Progress%20update%20on%20Hendon%20Area%20Committee%20Actions%20October%202016.pdf>