

DECISION AUDIT FORM

For use by Assistant Directors in Exercising (Category 3) or delegated powers
– (Protocol for Officer Delegation)

DEPARTMENT: HEALTH AND COMMUNITY SERVICES DESIGN AND ENGINEERING TEAM

DECISION: WOODBERRY DOWNS TO WALTHAMSTOW WETLANDS GREENWAY: NEWNTON CLOSE IMPROVEMENTS

Agree to:-

1. Note the favourable outcome of the consultation exercise.
2. Give approval to proceed with the implementation of pedestrian and cycle improvements at Newton Close
3. Give approval to proceed with the advertisement of the adoption of Newton Close.

Reason

The proposals will:

- 1.0 Create a greener and more attractive entrance to the Woodberry Downs Wetlands which is due to be opened to the public in 2016.
- 2.0 Improve the local air quality and encourage more local walking and cycling trips.
- 3.0 Introduce sustainable urban drainage systems which will help reduce localised flooding.

BACKGROUND

Encouraging the use of more sustainable modes of transport is one of the Council's key transport priorities. The recently adopted Transport Strategy 2015-2025 aims to more than double the existing cycling levels of around 7% to 15% by 2025. The Strategy also commits the Council to encourage more walking trips, improve resident's access to green spaces and increase the level of tree canopies and green infrastructure in the borough.

Hackney is very fortunate to have an extensive network of green spaces and watercourses. The Woodberry Downs Wetlands Centre is due to open in 2016 which will provide an attractive open space in north-west Hackney. They are a huge asset to the borough providing shared space routes and places which attract thousands of

visitors as well as providing much needed access to green space for Hackney residents.

The Council has obtained funding from the Mayor of London's Big Green Fund to help initiate a 3km long walking and cycling greenway to link Woodberry Wetlands in Hackney with Walthamstow Wetlands in Waltham Forest. Both wetlands centres are due to be opened to the public for the first time by 2017. The greenway will encourage visitors to walk or cycle between the wetlands by linking parks, marshland, quiet roads and towpaths, avoiding busy roads.

Currently, the carriageway surface at Newton Close is in poor condition, is badly lit and suffers from localised ponding. As a result, pedestrians and cyclists have been less inclined to use the route despite the relatively attractive route over the New River and emerging Woodberry Down development.

In order to kick-start the implementation of this greenway, the Council consulted on proposals at Clapton Common and Newton Close. Authorisation of proposals at Clapton Common will be made separately.

PROPOSALS

The proposals at Newton Close include:

1. Adopting a piece of land between Bethune Road and New River and converting it into a pocket park with trees, shrubbery, soft verges and a swale.
 2. Installing a walking / cycling path with a gentle ramp at both ends using standard paving materials.
 3. Replacing the gate at the Bethune Road and fixed barrier at New River with lockable and fixed bollards.
 4. Improving the existing lighting facilities by installing three new lamp posts along the route
 5. Installing wayfinding signs and branding at key points along the Wetlands route.
 6. Installing 'At any time' waiting restrictions at the Bethune Road / Newton Close junction to improve cycle / pedestrian accessibility.
- All materials will comply with those detailed in the Public Realm Design Guide.

PUBLIC CONSULTATION

Five hundred copies of the public consultation document were sent out to local residents around the Newton Close area in November 2015. The consultation was also made available for comments on the Council's Citizen Space website. The public consultation period started on 27 November 2015 and finished on 18 December 2015. The consultation document is attached to this report for reference.

Stakeholder Consultation

Prior to preparing the consultation materials, Hackney officers consulted with representatives from the Greater London Authority, Berkeley Homes, the London Wildlife Trust, Thames Water and officers from the London Borough of Waltham Forest as part of the overall Wetlands to Wetlands project steering group. The group are working on proposals for the route signage. Some of the more detailed comments in terms of securing access for service vehicles and improving sightline safety at the entrance to Newton Close are outlined below.

Prior to sending out the documents to residents key stakeholder groups were consulted including the Council's Parking Service, Living Streets in Hackney or LSiH, London Cycling Campaign in Hackney or LCCIH, The London Fire Brigade or TLFB, Age Concern (representing Disability Backup) and the Police.

Streetscene officers also attended two evening events in the Woodberry Down community centre over the consultation period. All the key stakeholder groups were generally supportive of the proposals and where possible their comments/suggestions were taken on board.

Other works on the Wetlands to Wetlands Route

Public consultation for proposals at Clapton Common was carried out at the same time as these proposals. Authorisation of the proposals is being undertaken separately. Discussions on way finding and signing of the route are currently in progress with officers from Waltham Forest Council.

Main points raised by the stakeholders:

The Cabinet Member for Neighbourhoods and the ward councillors for Woodberry Down ward had approved the consultation document before it was sent out.

Highlights of the public consultation

A summary of the consultation results is shown on the table below.

Paper Leaflets sent out	Total responses received	Paper responses received	Web based responses received	Total in favour of scheme proposals	Total not in favour of scheme proposals
500	19	11 (58%)	8 (42%)	(100%)	0

Nineteen responses were received from the public. Of these eight were online submissions received through Citizen Space and eleven were paper copy submissions returned via the post.

All submissions were in favour of the proposals.

The main points raised in relation to the proposals along with Officers' response are as follows:

Main comments raised by the public:

1.0 Additional Lighting

Four respondents wanted to see more safety features or additional lighting as part of the scheme. Additional street lighting will be installed as part of the scheme.

2.0 Need for wider access for service vehicles

Thames Water contacted officers to suggest that the proposed access width of 2.5m was too narrow to accommodate Thames Water service vehicles that need to access a number of boreholes throughout the LWT site and reservoir. The access point needs to be a minimum of 3.5m wide to enable operation vehicles to service the site. The use of retractable bollards are supported.

3.0 Need for clear sightlines at Bethune Road entrance to prevent collisions

The London Wildlife Trust (LWT) based at Newton Close has suggested the present arrangement of parked cars immediately adjacent to the entrance of Newton Close on Bethune Road obstructs sightlines and has caused a number of minor collisions and near misses between cyclists exiting Newton Close and motorists using Bethune Road. An extension of double yellow lines on either side of the entrance to enable better sightlines is suggested.

4.0 Concern for resident congestion and need for CCTV

Whilst supportive of the scheme generally one resident has suggested that there may be an issue with resident congestion as a result of the proposal. The resident has also requested that CCTV would be installed to monitor criminal activity.

Officer response

There are no plans to install additional CCTV coverage as part of this proposal but this may be incorporated at a later stage.

IMPACTS

Permanent Impacts

The proposals will provide a safer, greener and more coherent route for pedestrians and cyclists to the Woodberry Wetlands areas.

The proposals will require that Newton Close be formally adopted as part of the borough network. The formal adoption process is in progress and full authorisation will be in place before implementation of the proposals.

The scheme will add more greenery, shrubbery and trees to that already owned by the Council. In addition, three street lighting posts will be installed. This will have an impact on the annual maintenance budget of the Council.

Temporary Impacts

Whilst pavement works are in progress, normal chapter 8 signing and guarding will be in place.

All works will be carried out under normal working hours of 08:30am to 4:30pm Monday to Saturday.

The works will be implemented in February/March 2016.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

Funding has been secured from the Mayor of London's Big Green Funding for the introduction of these proposals during the 2015/16 financial year's.

The total budget for the scheme is £100k and is being funded by the GLA and Transport for London LIP Funding.

RECOMMENDATIONS

It is recommended that the proposals outlined in this decision audit be agreed and taken to implementation stage.

APPROVAL

I have noted the contents of this summary and agree with the recommendations contained therein.

Signed.....

Dated 10/02/2016

Seamus Adams
Interim Assistant Director – Parking, Markets & Streetscene

cc Andrew Cunningham – Head of Streetscene

cc Councillor Demirci – Lead Member – Neighbourhoods

