

 Executive 18th April 2012		Agenda Item No. 8	
Title		Millbank open space proposed improvements.	
For further information about this report please contact		David Anderson X6214 david.anderson@warwickdc.gov.uk	
Wards of the District directly affected		Warwick North Ward	
Is the report private and confidential and not for publication by virtue of a paragraph of schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972, following the Local Government (Access to Information) (Variation) Order 2006?		No	
Date and meeting when issue was last considered and relevant minute number			
Background Papers		No	
Contrary to the policy framework:			No
Contrary to the budgetary framework:			No
Key Decision?			Yes
Included within the Forward Plan? (If yes include reference number)			Yes (Ref 396)
Equality & Sustainability Impact Assessment Undertaken			Yes/No (If No state why below)
Officer/Councillor Approval			
Officer Approval	Date	Name	
Chief Executive/Deputy Chief Executive	8 th March 2012	Andrew Jones	
Head of Service	5 th March 2012	Ian Coker	
CMT	12 th March 2012		
Section 151 Officer			
Monitoring Officer			
Finance	6 th March 2012	Mike Snow	
Portfolio Holder(s)	5 th March 2012	Cllr David Shilton	
Consultation & Community Engagement			
<p>The Gap Action Partnership consulted local residents when developing The Percy and Emscote Area Plan.</p> <p>Extensive consultation has been undertaken between Council officers and The Gap Action Partnership over the last 6 months.</p> <p>It is planned that Phase 2 improvements will be consulted upon over the coming months with the local community.</p>			
Final Decision?			Yes
Suggested next steps (if not final decision please set out below)			

1. **SUMMARY**

- 1.1 This report outlines the proposals and finance required to improve Millbank open space, and asks Members to approve the funding of Phase 1 of the project.

2. **RECOMMENDATION**

- 2.1 That Executive approves the Phase I improvement plan (section 5.1 refers) for Millbank open space and that the required funding of £70,770 is appropriated from the Capital Investment Reserve (CIR).
- 2.2 That Executive notes that should it approve recommendation 2.1, the financial commitment can be used by The Gap Action Partnership to source further external funding to implement Phase 2 of the project.

3. **REASONS FOR THE RECOMMENDATION**

- 3.1 The improvement plan provides a long-term plan for the development of Millbank open space. It aims to update the park to make it as welcoming and inviting as possible for the local community, thereby increasing the number of park users, and the amount of natural surveillance and increase in perceived safety. It also aims to encourage people to use all parts of the park, and to provide facilities for a wide and diverse range of users of all ages and abilities.

- 3.2 The proposals include:

- A new path network to improve circulation and access to the park
- Outdoor gym equipment
- Teenage shelter
- BMX provision
- Welcome signage
- New goal posts
- Wildlife enhancements
- Bike stands
- Tree works
- Soil mounding

Full details of the improvement costs are included within Appendix 1, with an attached plan.

- 3.3 The emphasis of the new proposals is to improve the quality of the park for all of its users. The works will breathe new life into the park, and create spaces park users can enjoy. The proposed tree work will create more open views offering natural surveillance through the park, and also improve perceptions of safety. Most importantly, the new path construction will improve access to the site and throughout.
- 3.4 It is estimated that approximately £105,940 will be required to undertake both Phase I and Phase II of the works. It should therefore be recognised that this is a long-term plan for the parks development, and as such has been broken down into two phases.
- 3.5 Due to the large costs involved in constructing footpaths, over 50% of the overall project costs, this has been proposed to be Phase 1 of the project and

includes other works, while Phase 2 includes the outdoor gym equipment and a teenage shelter. Therefore this report is asking Members to support the funding of Phase 1 improvements, which is £70,770, while the Gap Action Partnership sources the other funding requirements in Phase 2 of the project.

4. **POLICY FRAMEWORK**

- 4.1 **Policy Framework** – This report does not bring forward any changes to the policy framework.
- 4.2 **Fit for the Future** – The Council’s purpose is to improve the quality of life for everyone who lives in, works in or visits Warwick District. With our partners, we aspire to build sustainable, safer, stronger and healthier communities. Ensuring we have good accessible green space will contribute towards these aims.

5. **BUDGETARY FRAMEWORK**

- 5.1 The total estimated costs for both Phase 1 and Phase 2 are as follows:

Phase 1

Access footpath (DDA compliant)	£20,000
Circular path	£22,000
Footpath links to circular path	£11,000
Resurfacing existing tarmac path	£2,500
BMX provision	£2,400
Welcome signage	£1,000
Reinstatement	£1,000
New goal posts	£1,000
Wildlife Enhancements	£2,000
Bike stands	£500
Soil mounding	£1,000
Tree Works	£3,000
Contingency (5%)	£3,370
Total phase 1	£70,770

Phase 2

Outdoor gym equipment	£26,495
Teenage shelter	£7,000
Contingency (5%)	£1,675
Total Phase 2	£35,170

Total Phase 1+2 **£105,940**

- 5.2 Funding options for Phase 2 include s106 funding, emerging Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL), new Homes Bonus monies, external grants including Big Lottery ‘Awards for All’, Biffa Award and Wren amongst others. Support for applying for the external funding will be through Council Officers, including the Community Development Worker and relevant park officers.

6. **ALTERNATIVE OPTION(S) CONSIDERED**

- 6.1 The Council could decide not to fund this project which would deny the local community to fully access and use Millbank open space as community asset and focal point for a range of recreational activities. Without Phase 1 funding this

could also deny other external funding opportunities for the Phase 2 improvements, which either require or prefer match funding.

7. BACKGROUND

- 7.1 Millbank open space is located within the Warwick North Ward and is classified as a neighbourhood park, catering for residents in the Emscote and Percy Estates. Its importance is significant since it is the only sizeable recreational green space within that locality, and is highly valued by the local community. In the most recent quality audit it scored an 'average' for quality, with the opportunity to improve.
- 7.2 Even though the park is popular with local people, it does lack appropriate facilities for a park of this type and size, and is also difficult to access due to the steep terrain. The play area offers something for families and younger children but beyond that, the park lacks facilities for other users and older age groups, including teenagers and older people.
- 7.3 Anti-social behaviour in the park is no different to other district wide green spaces, though unauthorized vehicles have entered the park and the play equipment has received some minor vandalism. The trees within the park, and its surrounds, presently screen the park from the road and neighbouring residents, reducing the level of natural surveillance.
- 7.4 A number of existing features within the park have deteriorated with age, and need improving, including the signage, the existing steep footpath and goal posts. Access to the park is by the way of steep slope footpath, which is not DDA compliant, and discourages those less able to access the park. In addition there is no circular route around the park to encourage users to explore and use other parts of the park.
- 7.5 The wildlife value of the park is limited to trees and hedgerows.
- 7.6 The play area has been the subject of a recent upgrade funded through an offsite developers contribution and includes traditional play equipment mixed with more adventurous and challenging pieces of play equipment.
- 7.7 An initial site survey has been undertaken to assess the feasibility of introducing a DDA compliant footpath to the open space. From this survey various footpath design options have been calculated indicating that this is possible.
- 7.8 Extensive consultation has been carried out over several months, with the Gap Action Partnership, over plans to improve Millbank Open Space. This community group is a sub group to The Gap a successful community development project. They are a mixed group of local residents passionate about their local environment, including Millbank open space.
- 7.9 The Percy and Emscote Area Plan was developed by the Gap Action Partnership in 2007 and followed an extensive consultation with local people to understand what the local issues were and what they would like to see happen in the area. It identified the need to improve Millbank open space and more activities for younger and older people. The group are presently formalizing themselves to be a fully constituted group, and are preparing a business plan to support their future applications for external funding to improve the park.

- 7.10 Through working with this group, it has become apparent that their number one priority is to improve access to and within the park, followed by introducing outdoor gym equipment that will encourage healthier activity.
- 7.11 Even though the improvement plan meets with the needs of the Gap Action Partnership group, it is planned that further consultation with the wider community will be undertaken for Phase 2 of improvements. This potentially will take place at a number of events over the coming months within the area, including open evenings, events organized by the group, and for leaflets to be distributed to neighbouring residents, and posters placed around the park. From this wider consultation Phase 2 improvements can be finalised.

Appendix 1 Millbank Open Space Estimated Improvement Cost

Improvement works	Detail and rationale	Links to Green Flag Criteria	Estimated cost
Access Footpath	Construction of 1.5m wide Breedon Gravel edged footpath from Millbank Road to open space to be DDA compliant. To encourage access for all. Both the elderly and disabled find it difficult to access the open space. Total length 170m with resting platforms at every 30m, handrails and seating.	A Welcoming Place	£20,000
Circular Path	Circular pedestrian footpath within open space that links new access footpath and gives access to remainder of open space, new Outdoor Gym Equipment, access to wildlife enhancement, measured miles. Some areas of the open space are not accessible in the winter months. Total length 320m x 1.5m wide Breedon Gravel and will be DDA compliant.	A Welcoming Place	£22,000
Footpath links to circular path	Construction of 1.5m wide Breedon Gravel edged footpath linking new access footpath to circular path.	A Welcoming Place	£11,000
Resurfacing existing tarmac footpath	An alternative route to the new Access footpath that will be used by those who are more able and prefer a more direct access route to the open space	A Welcoming Place	£2,500
Outdoor gym equipment	To compliment the play area and to be available to all ages and all abilities. To encourage people to become more active in sport and exercise with all the health benefits. Equipment to be located evenly around the circular path.	Community Involvement	£26,495
Teenage shelter	Presently nowhere for young people to meet outdoors within this area. Some evidence that shelters help reduce the local crime rate and reduce the fear of crime for both local residents and young people. Portable so can be moved or removed if the need arises.	Community Involvement	£7,000
BMX provision	Small track construction to create more activities for young people. Local PCSO has been working with young people and this is one of their priorities. Similar tracks have proved very successful in other parks. Local teenagers can get involved in	Community Involvement	£2,400

	the design of track. Soil with gravel surface.		
Welcome signage	To inform park users of the park, byelaws, contact details. To make park users welcome. To identify entrance points to the open space.	A Welcoming Place	£1,000
Reinstatement	Reinstate areas around redundant play area, mainly tarmac and safety surfacing. Presently looks untidy and distracts from the open space.	Healthy, Safe and Secure	£1,000
New Goalposts	New goalpost with metal nets. Existing ones have been fire damaged. The mini football pitch has proved very popular with local children and young people	Community Involvement	£1,000
Wildlife enhancements	Mainly meadow establishment on banks, woodland structural improvements. Changes of grass cutting regime and the introduction of bird and bat boxes will also help the biodiversity of the site. Presently not maintained to be wildlife friendly.	Conservation and Heritage	£2,000
Bike stands	Install bike stands to encourage sustainable travel to the park	Sustainability	£500
Soil mounding	Soil mounding to Millbank Road to discourage unauthorised vehicles entering the open space. Soil to come from footpath works, profiled and seeded.	Healthy, Safe and Secure	£1,000
Tree Works	To thin the two spinneys and remove lower branches. This will improve sightlines into the open space and increase the level of natural surveillance.	Healthy, Safe and Secure	£3,000
Contingency (5%)			£5,045
TOTALS			£105,940

Other works

Footpath links	Links to river and Potterton site to be explored	Sustainability	tbc
Survey	Survey work required of Millbank open space to enable design and costing options of access footpath.	N/A	Complete