

THE CLOSES RECREATION GROUND, WEST DRAYTON - PETITION FOR A CYCLE TRACK

Cabinet Member(s)	Councillor Jonathan Bianco
Cabinet Portfolio(s)	Finance, Property & Business Services
Officer Contact(s)	Alan Tilly Planning, Environment, Education and Community Services
Papers with report	Appendix 1. Location Plan

1. HEADLINE INFORMATION

Summary	To advise the Cabinet Member that a petition has been submitted asking the Council to build a cycle track around the edge of the The Closes Recreation Ground, The Green, West Drayton.
Contribution to our plans and strategies	The petition will be considered within the context of the Council's Sustainable Community Strategy and Local Implementation Plan including the transport strategy
Financial Cost	There are none associated with the recommendations to this report.
Relevant Policy Overview Committee	Residents' and Environmental Services
Ward affected	West Drayton

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

That the Cabinet Member:

- 1. Meets and discusses with petitioners their aspirations for a cycle track around the edge of The Closes Recreation Ground, The Green, West Drayton.**
- 2. Subject to the above, asks officers to consider the petitioners' suggestions, undertake further studies and report back to him.**

Reasons for recommendation

To give the Cabinet Member the opportunity to discuss in detail the petitioners' concerns.

Alternative options considered / risk management

None at this stage.

Policy Overview Committee comments

None at this stage.

3. INFORMATION

Supporting Information

1. A petition with 20 signatures has been submitted to the Council under the following terms:

We the undersigned are in favour of enhancing our local park. We would like to propose the implementation of a cycle track around the edge of the The Closes, The Green, West Drayton, Middlesex. This would enable children to ride their bicycles safely and create an excellent opportunity for adults to exercise.

2 'The Closes' recreational grounds is an area of grassed public open space approximately 1km south of the West Drayton town centre and is situated in a residential area. Laurel Lane Primary School forms the southern boundary of the park. It occupies an area of approximately 94,000 square metres and has a perimeter of 1.5 kilometres. The area is shown in the plan at Appendix 1.

3. In the north west corner of the park, Church Close provides access to a small unmade car park. Two footpaths cross the grounds. The first is known as 'The Avenue' and links Laurel Lane with Church Road. This footpath is lit and tree lined. The second footpath follows a diagonal line across the park linking Laurel Lane with Avenue Close. Both footpaths are in a satisfactory condition. There are also two tennis courts, a children's play area, basket ball nets, an exercise area consisting of seven pieces of equipment and a small obstacle/keep fit course.

4. The petitioners have specifically asked for a cycle track around 'the edge' of the park. Although it has not been possible to develop detailed proposals in anticipation of the petition hearing, it is likely that the overall cost could be in excess of £200k for a cycle track around the perimeter. However, the petition makes no mention of the type of cycle track desired. It is not known, for example, whether petitioners would like a BMX track for children and teenagers, or a track with banked corners suitable for racing bikes. The former would probably be used by local people, whereas the latter could attract adults travelling to the park by car, similar to the track at Minet Country Park, Hayes. A young BMX rider would want a 'dirt track' with jumps, whereas a road cyclist would prefer a smooth surface allowing them to keep fit by riding at higher speeds.

5. The Cabinet Member will recall that in April 2011 the Council was one of 13 London Boroughs that submitted a successful bid to Transport for London for Biking Borough funding. The limited budget available may be used to help fund those projects that would most effectively improve safety and convenience for cyclists. Use of the Biking Borough budget would, however, first need to take into account other commitments and priorities, and the Cabinet Member will doubtless wish to consider the other competing demands on this budget.

6. The Hillingdon local strategy for physical activity, 'Active Hillingdon', aims to encourage more people to be more active, more often. The plan's objective is to embed physical activity as a cultural norm improving the quality of life for Hillingdon residents. The plan uses an

evidence based approach to determine which initiatives work best with the limited resources available. It seeks to deliver facilities that are cost-effective, deliverable and likely to be supported by a significant number of local people. At this stage, the likelihood of wider community support for a scheme at The Closes is not yet known.

7. The Closes Recreation Ground is a resource enjoyed by the whole community. As a Biking Borough, the Council actively supports cycling but the impact a cycle track would have on other park users should clearly be taken into account, for example dog walkers, children playing football or people enjoying the tranquillity of the park. Similarly the on-going maintenance of any new cycle track would need to be calculated and a budget identified.

8. It is recommended that the Cabinet Member meets with petitioners and considers their request for a cycle track around the edge of The Closes. The Cabinet Member may wish, for example, to discuss with them the type of cycle track they have in mind, including its size and location. The type of people that would use the track could also be discussed, for example, age group, level of fitness, cycling experience and type of bicycle ridden. On this basis, the Cabinet Member may wish to instruct officers to undertake further investigations and report back to him and his Ward Councillor colleagues before he considers any further action.

Financial Implications

There are none associated with the recommendations to this report.

4. EFFECT ON RESIDENTS, SERVICE USERS & COMMUNITIES

What will be the effect of the recommendation?

To allow the officers to consider the concerns of petitioners and investigate the problems in detail.

Consultation Carried Out or Required

At this stage no consultation has been carried out. If the Cabinet Member decided to instruct officers to undertake further studies and report back to him, residents living on the roads immediately surrounding the park would be contacted and their views on a new cycle track asked for. West Drayton Ward Councillors would also be consulted as would Longmead Primary School. Internally, colleagues in Green Spaces who are responsible for the recreation ground and the Sports Team would also be consulted.

5. CORPORATE IMPLICATIONS

Not applicable

Legal

There are no special legal implications for the proposal, which amounts to an informal consultation. A meeting with the petitioners is perfectly legitimate as part of a listening exercise, especially where consideration of the policy, factual and engineering issues are still at a formative stage. Fairness and natural justice requires that there must be no predetermination of a decision in advance of any wider non-statutory consultation.

Should there be a decision that further measures are to be considered then the relevant statutory provisions will have to be identified and considered.

In considering any informal consultation responses, decision makers must ensure there is a full consideration of all representations arising including those which do not accord with the officer recommendation. The decision maker must be satisfied that responses from the public are conscientiously taken into account.

Corporate Property and Construction

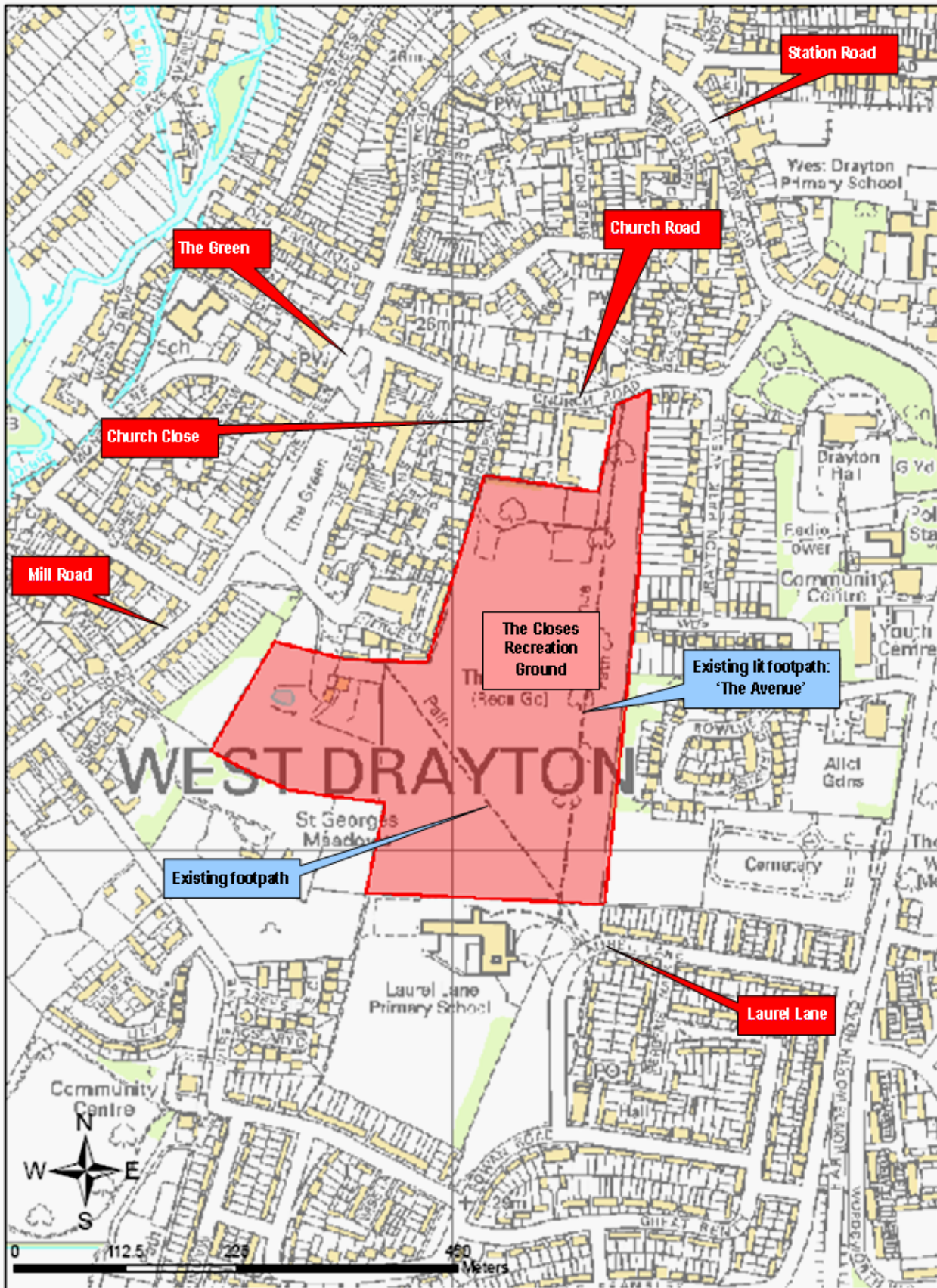
There are no property implications resulting from the recommendations of this report.

Relevant Service Groups

None at this stage.

6. BACKGROUND PAPERS

NIL



Map Notes

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