

PETITION REQUESTING THE INTRODUCTION OF LIGHTING IN STONEFIELD PARK, SOUTH RUISLIP

Cabinet Member(s)	Councillor Keith Burrows
Cabinet Portfolio(s)	Cabinet Member for Planning, Transportation and Recycling
Officer Contact(s)	David Knowles, Residents Services
Papers with report	Appendices A, B, C

1. HEADLINE INFORMATION

Summary	To inform the Cabinet Member that the Council has received a petition requesting the introduction of lighting to Stonefield Park.
Contribution to our plans and strategies	The request can be considered in relation to the Council's strategies for road safety and green spaces.
Financial Cost	There are no direct financial implications associated with the recommendations to this report.
Relevant Policy Overview Committee	Residents, Education and Environmental Services.
Ward(s) affected	South Ruislip.

2. RECOMMENDATION

Meeting with the Petitioners, the Cabinet Member for Planning, Transportation and Recycling:

- 1. Listens to their concerns regarding Stonefield Park;**
- 2. Notes that the Council, in common with many other local authorities, generally does not retrospectively introduce artificial lighting within its established parks and open spaces;**
- 3. Notes that the allegations of drug dealing have been referred to the Police, as set out in the body of the report;**
- 4. Whilst welcoming the early engagement with Bourne Primary School referenced in the body of the report, nevertheless asks Ward Members to further encourage the school to work with the Council's Road Safety and School Travel Team;**
- 5. Encourages the petitioners themselves to offer to engage with the school as part of this further dialogue;**

Reasons for recommendations

To allow the Cabinet Member to discuss with petitioners their concerns.

Alternative options considered / risk management

These will be discussed with petitioners.

Policy Overview Committee comments

None at this stage.

3. INFORMATION

Supporting Information

1. A petition with 67 valid signatures has been submitted to the Council. Although the petition appears in part to seek enhanced lighting within Stonefield Park, South Ruislip, it also alludes to underlying issues of concern. The petition heading is worded as follows:

"Stonefield Park is currently unlit. Parents/ Children in winter face a daunting walk out of school into a dark unlit park. Our Children should be our top priority and lighting the park would make them feel safe. We the undersigned call on Hillingdon Council to provide lighting to this area in order to make our community a safer place. Dear Council, it has been a concerning factor for residents for some time now. We have now approached jointly to petition for the immediate resolution of lighting for the safety of residents and children. The area we are targeting is Stonefield Park. Children exiting from the school and taking exit routes to all five exits of the park have to walk in pitch black which is not safe. More recently we have had a number of issues with drug dealing as well. As winter approaches we would like parents/ concerned residents to feel safe walking in and out of the park."

2. Stonefield Park is a long-established green space in South Ruislip which is owned and maintained by the Council. The park and nearby road layout is shown in Appendix A attached, whilst Appendix B shows the wider context of the park's location within the area.

3. The park is situated to the east of West End Road, and is immediately adjacent to Bourne Primary School. There are six formal gated entrances, the locations of which are indicated on the plan at Appendix A and are illustrated in greater detail in the photographs set out in Appendix C. These gates are not actively opened and closed.

4. The park itself is essentially a large flat grassed space, bordered on most sides by residential premises, other than where it runs along the side of Bourne Primary School. The park benefits from an outdoor gym and separate children's play area.

5. The Cabinet Member will appreciate and wish to make clear to the petitioners that whilst their request has been addressed to the Council as a whole, the matters it raises embrace more than one portfolio.

6. Whilst transport and planning matters are considered by the Cabinet Member for Planning, Transportation and Recycling, all matters related to Parks and Green Spaces are overseen by the Cabinet Member for Finance, Property and Business Services, and therefore any changes that might be proposed or considered for Stonefield Park should also be subject to his approval.

7. The purpose of the petition hearing will be for the Cabinet Member for Planning, Transportation and Recycling to hear the representation and case made by the petitioners on behalf of the Council and, subject to the outcome of this, determine whether he wishes to discuss the matter with his Cabinet colleagues and decided whether further investigations and studies are required.

8. The petitioners have highlighted two specific areas of concern, namely the safety of children (and their parents or guardians) using the park in periods of darkness, and reported incidents of anti-social behaviour and illegal activities, such as drug dealing, in the area.

9. The Cabinet Member may be aware that as a general principle, the Council, in common with many other local authorities, does not usually support the introduction of artificial streetlighting within established green spaces, parks included. This can be for a number of reasons including all or some of the following:

- Artificial lighting can interfere with the visual amenity of the green space - in other words, it introduces something with an 'urban' character into a place which is essentially intended to be more natural;
- Lighting can have a detrimental effect on the local nature of the scheme, impacting night-dwelling invertebrates and other wildlife, some of which is protected by legal statute;
- The introduction of lighting brings with it considerable cost and disruption at the installation stage, and an ongoing cost to run and maintain (however, the modern equipment adopted by the Council is far more energy-efficient than older lighting infrastructure);
- There is a risk that lighting overspill might generate 'light pollution' in nearby homes.

10. The plan at Appendix A clearly indicates the extensive streetlighting in nearby streets, with several lamp columns adjacent to entrances to the green space.

11. The Cabinet Member will be aware that the Council's Antisocial Behaviour Team works closely with their counterparts at the Metropolitan Police to jointly tackle such serious antisocial and illegal matters, and the petitioners' concerns referenced in their petition have already been shared with these bodies.

12. The Council's Antisocial Behaviour Team has cross-referenced their records as regards ASB incidents in the park. There have not been any incidents reported to them which would support the introduction of lighting. In summary, their records for the past three years include an illegal traveller encampment (which was quickly dealt with), an issue related to cycling in the park, and two incidents of graffiti and damage to the play equipment. It should be noted that serious criminal behaviour would normally be reported to the Metropolitan Police and not the Council's ASB team.

13. The Cabinet Member may however seek further testimony from petitioners, and this may be further shared as appropriate with the Police or Council teams as applicable.

14. The petitioners have stated that '*Parents/ Children in winter face a daunting walk out of school into a dark unlit park*'. In general, most school day activities take place during the hours of daylight, although it is understood that there may be some after-school clubs and similar activities which may mean that there is greater likelihood that some members of the school community may find themselves using the unlit park paths after sunset.

15. To date, this has not been highlighted by any of the local schools as a specific concern, although it is appreciated that the petitioners have made reference to the issue, and they may wish to expand on their concerns and any representations which conceivably they may have independently raised with the school(s) themselves. Further information on the times of the school day at Bourne Primary is referenced later in the report.

16. The Cabinet Member will be aware that the Council's dedicated Road Safety and School Travel Team ('RS&STT') works with the majority of the schools in the Borough. More than 75% of the Borough's schools work with the RS&STT in some way that benefits them materially. Services offered include appropriate pedestrian and cycle training, tailored as necessary to the year groups involved, but the team is also keen to work with individual schools to help improve the safety and sustainability of all the journeys made by the school community.

17. Until recently, Bourne Primary had not chosen to work with the RS&ST team in this manner, despite a series of regular overtures; however upon receipt of the present petition, the team repeated its invitation to the school to encourage them to work with the Council so that there can be shared understanding of ways to improve the safety of their pupils. This has resulted in welcome engagement between the school and the RS&STT.

18. As part of this dialogue, the team asked the school for a 'post code plot' and a class 'hands up' survey on how children travel to and from school, which will assist the RS&STT to better understand the routes that children are obliged to follow as part of their journeys to and from school. The school has indicated that their primary safety concerns relate to the roads in the area rather than any specific worries about the park.

19. The RS&STT will be pleased to investigate these wider concerns, and it is possible that the petitioners may wish to be part of this dialogue. It may be, for example, that the school may wish to investigate the deployment of staff or parent volunteer marshals at the park entrance at times where the light levels are poor.

20. The school has helpfully provided the following information on key times during the school day:

- Breakfast Club - 07:45 - 08:45 (typically six pupils)
- School gates open at 08:30
- Soft start - Children can go into their classrooms from 08:40
- School finishes - 15:00
- After School Club - 15:00 - 18:00 (Never more than 16 but varies day to day)

21. In summary, the Cabinet Member may wish to meet with the petitioners and hear the detail of their concerns. He may wish to advise the petitioners that whilst their request for lighting inside the perimeter of Stonefield Park will not be progressed, their concerns may prompt further work by officers and the school, and with that in mind, he may wish to encourage the petitioners, parents, guardians and ward members to work with the school to establish what other improvements may be viable in the circumstances.

Financial Implications

There are no direct financial implications associated with the recommendations to this report; however if the Council were to consider progressing a lighting scheme, funding would need to be identified from a suitable source.

4. EFFECT ON RESIDENTS, SERVICE USERS & COMMUNITIES

What will be the effect of the recommendation?

To allow the Cabinet Member to consider the petitioners request and available options the Council has to address these concerns.

Consultation Carried Out or Required

None at this stage, although should the request be processed into further studies, a range of stakeholders will need to be engaged and their views sought.

5. CORPORATE IMPLICATIONS

Corporate Finance

Corporate Finance has reviewed this report and concurs that there are no direct financial implications associated with this report.

Legal Implications

The Borough Solicitor confirms that there are no specific legal implications arising from this report.

Corporate Property and Construction

None at this stage.

Relevant Service Groups

None at this stage.

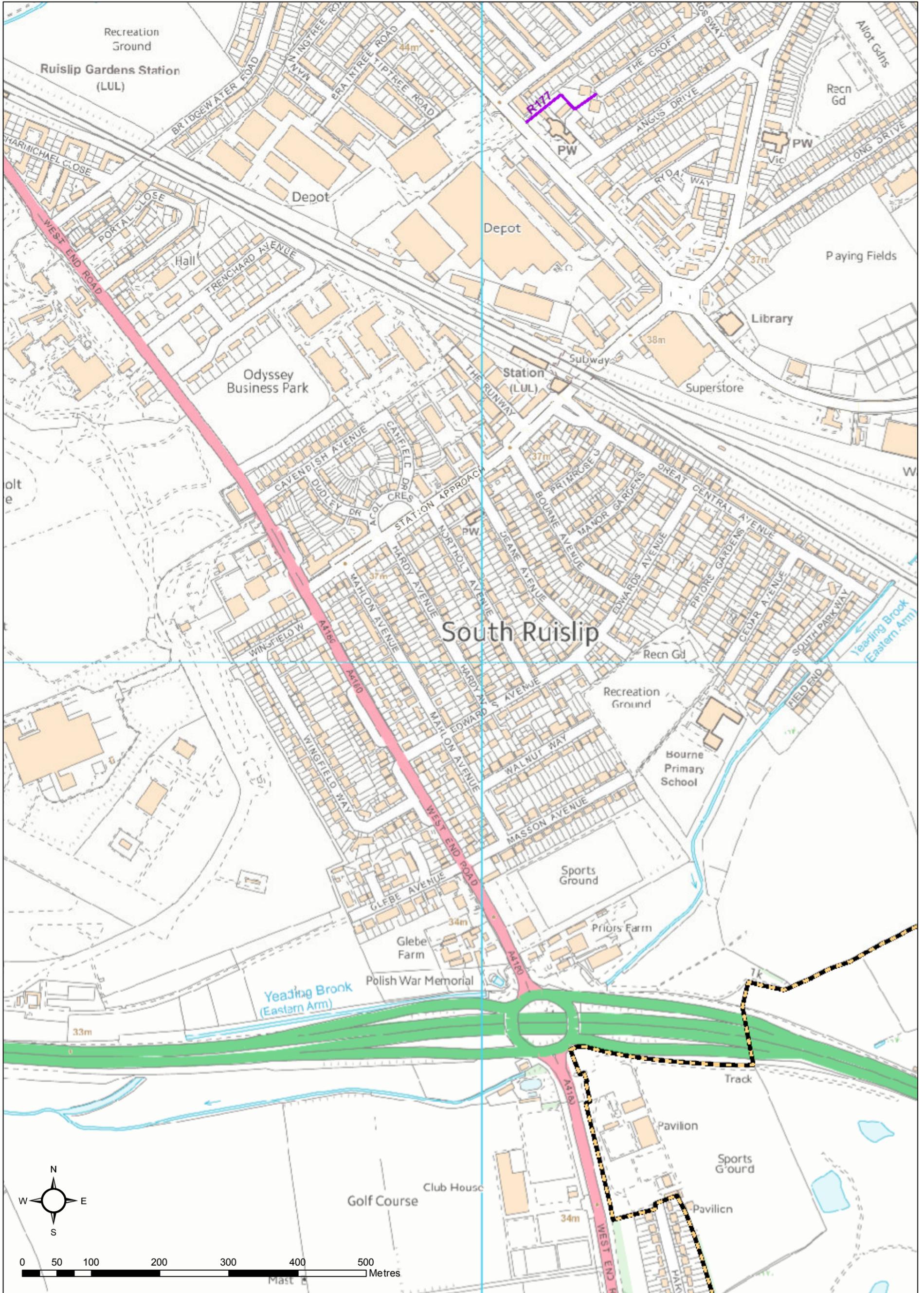
6. BACKGROUND PAPERS

Petition received.

Appendix A: Stonefield Park



Appendix B: Stonefield Park in Context - Local Area



APPENDIX C: PHOTOS OF THE SIX ENTRANCES TO STONEFIELD PARK



Masson Avenue (above)



Walnut Way (above)



Nairn Road (above)

For location of each entrance, see Appendix A



Frazer Avenue (above)



Priors Gardens (above)



Cedar Avenue (above; also showing entrance to Bourne Primary School at left)

For location of each entrance, see Appendix A

APPENDIX D - BOURNE PRIMARY SCHOOL POST CODE PLOTS (Zoomed in and out)

