

RIBBLE VALLEY BOROUGH COUNCIL REPORT TO COMMUNITY SERVICES COMMITTEE

meeting date: 24 AUGUST 2021
title: BRUNGERLEY PARK
submitted by: JOHN HEAP, DIRECTOR COMMUNITY SERVICES
principal author: MARK BEVERIDGE, HEAD OF CULTURAL SERVICES

1 PURPOSE

- 1.1 To ask Committee for approval to rectify a significant issue with a main access route through Brungerley park.
- 1.2 Relevance to the Council's ambitions and priorities
 - Community Objectives - To help make people's lives healthier and safer.
 - Corporate Priorities - To sustain a strong and prosperous Ribble Valley.
 - Other Considerations – The steps are an important part of the circulation route in the park and will inconvenience people for as long as they remain out of use.

2 BACKGROUND

- 2.1 Brungerley Park is a significant public open space area on the edge of Clitheroe. Like many similar places, it is popular for people to walk through. This has increased significantly during the lock down periods of the pandemic.
- 2.2 There are several paths running through the park, some formal and some arising out of desire lines for people to follow. The Park itself lies on the side of the River Ribble so the paths form natural routes on some steep banks.
- 2.3 There are two main paths. A lower one which was subject to significant erosion some years ago, when the force of the river in flood caused part of the path to collapse. That led to that part of the path being closed permanently. What remains of the lower footpath is joined to the upper route by a path and some steps. The upper path which is around 35m higher up the banking links the two main entry points to the park from the main roads.
- 2.4 The steps linking the lower and upper paths are in a poor state of repair. They have been closed for several weeks following an assessment. Repairs are required but the sum involved is substantial and will require this Committee to determine if a request is made to Policy and Finance Committee for funding to carry this work out, or if the steps are to be closed permanently to the public.

3 ISSUES

- 3.1 The steps have over time eroded and this has accelerated recently to the point where they have had to be closed.
- 3.2 The steps are quite basic with wooden front treads and rolled stone construction. A trench has developed alongside the steps over time as rainwater has flowed down the bank and further eroded the ground around the steps.

3.3 An estimate of £13,100 has been obtained to properly rebuild the steps with concrete treads, plus a drain alongside to stop water erosion. It is recommended that a handrail be installed as part of the work for a further £9,800, which if funding was agreed would be a sensible addition. Because of the unpredictability in the current supply chain officer advice is that it would be prudent to add a contingency of 10% to the approved proposals. Thus, making the total sum £25,200 if handrails are included.

3.4 Additional quotes would be required prior to any work being committed, however, at the current time, obtaining quotes is proving difficult from the building sector due to the issues they are facing. As a result, the request is for budget based on the one quote that has been received. By seeking approval on this basis, it will allow work to progress as soon as the requisite number of quotes have been received. The contract will then be awarded in line with Contract Procedure Rules.

3.5 This approval would require an addition to the capital programme, however, there are three options available to the Committee:

A - the path could simply be closed, and the steps made inaccessible, this would be a significant inconvenience for many people and making the steps inaccessible in the long term would be an almost impossible task to achieve without some major work, which itself would have to be funded.

B - a bid could be supported by Committee when the capital programme is being determined as part of the Council's budget setting for 2022/23 to carry out the work, which would if successful delay the work for around a year.

C - Committee might wish to ask Policy and Finance to consider to the work being funded this year (2021/22) to ensure the steps are put back into use as soon as possible. This would, however, be a departure from the Councils' budget process

3.6 Given that this is a primary route through the park, it is proposed that option C would be the preferred and recommended route to follow for Committee. Should committee approve this request, committee would need to refer the matter to Policy and Finance Committee for capital budget approval.

4 RISK ASSESSMENT

4.1 The approval of this report may have the following implications.

- Resources – The Council would need to obtain further quotes from suitable contractors to carry out this work. The building sector is under high demand currently and their prices and timelines are difficult to predict, hence the proposal for a contingency sum for the budget.
- Technical, Environmental and Legal – The steps have been cordoned off though that does not prevent anyone if determined from using them, the work involved to reinstate would be weather dependent and would be difficult to carryout in the winter period.
- Political – None arising as direct result of this report.
- Reputation – The Park is a popular area and having the main set of steps closed for any period is both inconvenient for people and may be seen as a poor reflection on the Council.

- Equality & Diversity – The Park is open to all, although access on some routes is limited, due to the nature of the topography.

5 **RECOMMENDED THAT COMMITTEE**

- 5.1 Approve the proposed rebuilding of the steps at Brungerley Park.
- 5.2 Agree to the rebuilding work to be carried out in the current financial year and refer the capital budget request for £25,200 to Policy and Finance committee.

Mark Beveridge
Head of Cultural and Leisure Services

John Heap
Director of Community Services

BACKGROUND PAPERS

None

For further information please ask for Mark Beveridge 01200 425111