

Report to	Policy & Resources Committee
Date	28 November 2019
By	Access and Recreation Strategy Lead
Title of Report (Decision)	Falmer – Woodingdean Path Resurfacing

Recommendation: The Committee is recommended to:

- 1) Approve the allocation of £100,000 from the Strategic Fund to the Falmer – Woodingdean Path resurfacing project.**
- 2) Delegate authority to Director of Countryside and Policy Management in consultation with the Chair of the Policy & Resources Committee to determine the appropriate release of funds in the event that the project proceeds on the basis of a phased implementation.**

1. Introduction

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to seek the Committee’s approval of the allocation of funds to support the refurbishment of the Falmer- Woodingdean shared use path near Brighton.
- 1.2 With 26,000 users annually, the 2.5km path is a key sustainable transport link into the National Park and also to the universities, Stanmer Park and the Amex Stadium. Part of the route lies within Brighton and Hove and part within East Sussex. The whole route falls within the National Park boundary.
- 1.3 The path was first created in 2013 as a partnership project between Brighton and Hove City Council (BHCC) (landowners, rights of way authority and scheme promoters), East Sussex County Council (ESCC) (the rights of way authority) and the SDNPA (the planning authority). The majority of funding for the path came through the Department for Transport’s Local Sustainable Transport Fund (LSTF) programme. The SDNPA did not contribute financially to this scheme although it was a partner in the wider LSTF programme.

2. Policy Context.

- 2.1 The project relates directly to PMP outcomes and priority programmes as set out in the Project Brief at the **Appendix I**.
- 2.2 In a wider context the project supports the aims and objectives of the [SDNPA Cycling and Walking Strategy 2017-2024](#), and also the government and partner authorities’ aspirations for Cycling and Walking set out in their various strategies.

3. Issues for consideration

- 3.1 The original path construction and surface specification was in accordance with the accepted bridleway standards approved by the Planning Authority. However, the challenging topography has resulted in severe erosion and despite remedial works, erosion has continued and the path is now in a state of severe disrepair.
- 3.2 The path shortcomings now deter many cyclists from using the path, leading them to choose the busy Falmer Road joining motorised traffic at speeds of up to 60mph.

3.3 The poor state of the path has also led to a delay to its adoption by the rights of way authorities as a public bridleway meaning there is no on-going maintenance programme in place.

4. Options & cost implications

4.1 BHCC as lead partner have secured £100k towards the refurbishment of the path and together with ESCC and SDNPA, a range of measures to address the failing path have been explored and costed.

4.2 Partners are in agreement that an unsealed surface specification, such as that typically used for the SDNPA shared use path schemes like Phase 4 of Egrets Way, would not be appropriate in this location due to the difficult site conditions. Partners concluded that a sealed surface was likely to be the only durable solution for this well-used route.

4.3 The preferred sealed surface specification has been costed at £357k including 10% contingencies. The surface has a predicted lifespan of 20 years, significantly longer than any of the options considered by the partner authorities.

4.4 Funding breakdown

Falmer - Woodingdean Path	Total - £357k
Contributions	
BHCC (Lead partner)	£100k (confirmed)
SDNPA	£100k (to be confirmed)
ESCC	No cash contribution but will take on adoption and future maintenance of path in its area.
Highways England	To be confirmed – pending decision on Designated Funds
Other external sponsors	Private sector funding is being sought for shortfall
	Forecast funding: £200k
	Shortfall: £157k

5. Next steps

5.1 If SDNPA funding contribution is secured, the project partners will continue efforts to secure the remainder of the required budget with a view to letting a contract early in 2020. Should the required funding not be secured then partners will explore the feasibility of a phased approach to construction although this is the least desirable option and may result in an overall increase in project costs.

5.2 The rights of way authorities have begun the process of drafting a creation agreement which would allow the route, once works are complete, to be legally added to the definitive map.

6. Other Implications

Implication	Yes*/No
Will further decisions be required by another committee/full authority?	No
Does the proposal raise any Resource implications?	Beyond the requested funding contribution, the resource implications in terms of staff time are minimal as the project will be managed by BHCC officers. SDNPA staff time has been approved by line managers.

How does the proposal represent Value for Money?	The £100,000 contribution from the SDNPA will release match funding of at least £100,000 from BHCC, with decisions on additional funding from other partners pending. This is considered good value for money.
Are there any Social Value implications arising from the proposal?	No
Have you taken regard of the South Downs National Park Authority's equality duty as contained within the Equality Act 2010?	Yes. The project will increase access for all. The surface type proposed will support those with disabilities to access the path and the path will be promoted as a Miles without Stiles route.
Are there any Human Rights implications arising from the proposal?	No
Are there any Crime & Disorder implications arising from the proposal?	No
Are there any Health & Safety implications arising from the proposal?	The existing path will need to be closed during the works and appropriate measures will be taken by the lead authority to ensure the public are notified in advance of the closure and can make alternative travel arrangements.
Are there any Data Protection implications?	No

7. Risks Associated with the Proposed Decision

Risk	Likelihood	Impact	Mitigation
Required funding package not reached	Medium	High	There remains a shortfall in confirmed funding and all partners are currently exploring additional options including third party sponsorship. If the full funding package is not secured, the project may be indefinitely postponed. A phased approach is feasible though not desirable. If the phased approach is pursued further decisions in relation to the release of funds will be taken by the Director
Cost is over-budget	Low	Medium	Preferred construction methodology and materials reflect the budget range available. The project has been costed by BHCC Transport and Engineers team, and will be competitively tendered to achieve best value. 10% contingency is built into the budget.
Changes to project brief	Low	Medium	Significant changes to the project brief will put the project at risk. The project scope has therefore been extensively explored with key partners at the outset to avoid any surprises.

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Appendices I. Project Brief: Falmer–Woodingdean Path Resurfacing
SDNPA Consultees Chief Executive; Director of Countryside Policy and Management;
Director of Planning; Chief Finance Officer; Monitoring Officer; Legal
Services, Business Service Manager
External Consultees None
Background Documents [SDNPA Cycling and Walking Strategy 2017-2024](#)