



ASHINGTON AND BLYTH LOCAL AREA COUNCIL
DATE: 11 MARCH 2020

PETITION - REQUEST FOR PUBLIC FOOTPATH FROM SEATON VALE TO
NCEA SCHOOL, ASHINGTON

Report of: Service Director - Local Services, Paul Jones

Cabinet Member: Councillor Glen Sanderson, Environment & Local Services

Purpose of report

To acknowledge receipt of the e-petition received by Ashington and Blyth Local Area Council requesting that a new footpath is installed to link the Seaton Vale development to NCEA School.

Recommendations

It is recommended that the Local Area Council note the content of this report and acknowledge receipt of the petition. A further detailed report will be presented in due course once the feasibility study has been completed.

Link to Corporate Plan

How - "We want to be efficient, open and work for everyone"

Enjoying - "We want you to love where you live"

Connecting - "We want you to have access to the things you need"

Key Issues

1. An e-petition has been received requesting that a pathway is introduced from the main road of the new Seaton Vale development into the back field of the school.
2. The petition claims that this would mean that children, parents and carers would only need to walk a distance of 0.3 miles as opposed to 2.1 miles to get to the school.
3. The petition notes that currently children, parents and carers are walking along "the black path" which is mainly flooded, overgrown and dangerous in the winter nights.
4. The petition has currently received 171 signatures.
5. It is intended to carry out some initial work to investigate the feasibility of providing such a path. Whilst the general proposal to reduce walking distances and encourage walking is supported and would have a positive impact on the Council's goal to reduce carbon emissions, the proposed route (as well as other potential

alternative routes) would need to be considered in conjunction with the school and to take account of safeguarding and effects on the school grounds and playing fields.

6. Consideration would also need to be given to how the works could be funded. As an initial step the request for a new footpath has been added to our Directory of Requests Database for consideration for inclusion in a future Local Transport Plan programme, although depending on the suggested solution other forms of funding may need to be considered.

Background

The County Council has received an e-petition stating that “there are hundreds of children aged 3-18 who live on the estate and attend the Northumberland Church of England Academy (NCEA). At present these children, accompanied by parents / childminders / carers etc have to walk at least 2.1 miles (40 minutes) to get to the school. The development and children would benefit from a pathway being installed from the main road in the development to the back fields of the school. This would result in having to walk approximately 0.3 miles and would take about 5 minutes. At present they are also walking along the black path which is mainly flooded, overgrown and dangerous in the winter nights”. The petition has currently been signed by 171 people.

The Seaton Vale housing development has been constructed without a direct access path between the estate and the NCEA school. Provision of a new footpath with more direct access to the school would clearly be beneficial for local residents and would reduce walking distances. This would encourage walking and reduce reliance on car travel, thus increasing use of more sustainable transport and reducing carbon emissions.

However for any new footpath a route would need to be identified and agreed with landowners. In particular any route would need to be agreed with the school with full consideration of safeguarding and health and safety, as well as taking consideration of effects on the school grounds and playing fields.

Councillor Lang has indicated that he is happy to fund preliminary design through his Members Local Improvement Scheme allowance to identify possible routes and a potential solution. Consideration of how to fund construction of a new footpath would then need to be addressed. As an initial step the request has been added to our Directory of Requests Database for consideration for inclusion in a future Local Transport Plan Programme. However depending on any potential solution identified other forms of funding may need to be considered. Funding options will be considered as part of the preliminary design work.

Implications

Policy	The response to the issues raised in this petition is consistent with LTP Policies.
Finance and value for money	Preliminary design to be funded through Councillor Lang's Members Local Improvement Scheme allowance.
Legal	None
Procurement	None
Human Resources	None
Property	None
Equalities (Impact Assessment attached) Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> N/A <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	None
Risk Assessment	n/a
Crime & Disorder	None
Customer Consideration	Any new footpath would need to accommodate measures to ensure safeguarding.
Carbon reduction	Any new footpath would assist with carbon reduction
Wards	Seaton with Newbiggin West

Background papers:

None

Report sign off

	Name
Finance Officer	N/A
Monitoring Officer/Legal	N/A
Human Resources	N/A
Procurement	N/A
I.T.	N/A
Director	Paul Jones
Portfolio Holder(s)	Glen Sanderson

Author and Contact Details

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