

Service and community impact assessment (SCIA)

Footpath 74 (FP74) and Fairfax Avenue / Purcell Road pedestrian and cycle link

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Environment & Economy

Introduction

This report assesses the impacts of the proposal to upgrade Footpath 74 (FP74) and the city council's path that runs through Marston recreation ground between FP74 and Fairfax Avenue / Rippington Drive, and conversion of these to bridleway to permit their use by cyclists and horse riders, as well as by pedestrians.

Impact on customers

Age

The perception that the route will be unsafe for pedestrians due to its use by cyclists could affect pedestrians of any age which might mean that they avoid the route.

Younger children, without an adult, may be less confident pedestrians. Encouraging use of the path by cyclists could introduce fear about conflict between pedestrians and cyclists and deter younger children from walking on the path independently.

Disabilities associated with old age are covered in the Disability section.

Widening the path and improving its surface will make it easier for all users of all ages to pass each other. There would also be an overall beneficial impact for cyclists of all ages.

Disability

Visually impaired pedestrians could perceive the route as less safe due the presence of cyclists. They may be less able to detect on-coming cyclists from a distance and be concerned of conflict as a result of this. The smoother surface will benefit those with visual difficulties because trip hazards will be reduced and will make the route more easily usable.

Pedestrians with hearing impairments may find negotiating the path more difficult with the presence of cyclists if they are unable to hear cyclists approaching from behind. However, the increased width of the path will make it easier for all users to pass each other, and cyclists tend to take greater care when approaching pedestrians from behind as they are aware that they cannot be seen.

Ambulant mobility impaired pedestrians will benefit from a smoother, wider surface accessible all year round.

Wheelchair users will benefit from a smoother, wider surface accessible all year round. Some may perceive the use of the path by cyclists as a hazard, but the increased width of the path will enable cyclists and wheelchairs / mobility scooters to pass each other safely.

People with learning difficulties should find it easier to navigate the route due to its increased width, smoother surface and more direct route. Some people with learning difficulties may be more wary about using the route if they perceive cyclists as a hazard.

Gender reassignment, race, pregnancy and maternity, religion or belief, sex and sexual orientation, people living in rural areas, people living in urban areas, deprivation.

Pedestrians with pushchairs will benefit from a smoother surface. It will also enable cyclists with chariots (child seats in trailers) to use the path, which they are not currently able to do with ease due to the narrow width and barriers located along the route.

The increased width will enable all users of the path to pass each other with ease.

The proposals will not have a differential impact on service users arising from any of the other characteristics listed.

Summary

The path is currently narrow, uneven and often overgrown with vegetation. Muddy areas and puddles develop on its surface in places. Resurfacing the path will enable its use by all users through all seasons.

The proposed lighting in the recreation ground will benefit users of the path as it will extend the hours of use.

Conversion of the path to bridleway may have the potential to affect people differently according to their age and disability due to the perception that cyclists may cause a risk to the safety of pedestrians. However, officers consider that the increased width of the path and improved surface will enable all users to safely pass each other.

On balance, the proposals will be beneficial to all users by improving access between Marston, the university science area and the city centre by non- car modes of travel.

The disadvantages mainly relate to the perceived safety risk to pedestrians as a result of permitting cycling along the route. This risk is considered to be minimal and outweighed by the benefits of improved access for all users as a result of the physical improvements, and also by increased opportunities for people to use the route by different non-car modes of travel (i.e., cycling and horse riding, as well as walking).