
Meeting: Traffic Management Meeting
Date: 27 March 2012
Subject: Petition – Provision of a Diamond Jubilee Walk in Shillington
Report of: Basil Jackson
Summary: The purpose of this report is to present a petition received from Shillington Parish Council and signed by 93 signatories.

Contact Officer: Nick Chapman
nick.chapman@amey.co.uk

Public/Exempt: Public

Wards Affected: Silsoe and Shillington

Function of: Council

CORPORATE IMPLICATIONS

Council Priorities:

Financial:

There is currently no budget for the construction of new footways as requested in this petition, although priorities are currently being reviewed through the Local Area Transport Plan.

Legal:

None as a result of this report.

Risk Management:

None as a result of this report.

Staffing (including Trades Unions):

None as a result of this report.

Equalities/Human Rights:

None as a result of this report.

Community Safety:

None as a result of this report

Sustainability:

None as a result of this report

RECOMMENDATION(S):

1. **(a)** The Executive Member for Sustainable Communities - Services is requested to note the contents of the report.
- (b)** The lead petitioner be informed of the outcome.

Background and Information.

1. A petition of 93 signatures was presented to Shillington Parish Council in September 2011 requesting the provision of a continuous walk using existing and new footways on roads around the village. The proposal is shown on the plan in the Appendix to this report.
2. Although the Parish Council supported the proposal, it has no authority to decide on footway improvements and was not able to provide any funding. Therefore the petition was subsequently handed to Central Bedfordshire Council for consideration.

Discussion of the request in the petition

3. The proposal includes approximately 1.8 kilometres of new footway on Hanscombe End Road and Upton End Road. Although an accurate costing for this would not be possible without considerable research, over £150,000 is likely to be required.
4. The proposal has the support of the Parish Council and has some merits although usage is likely to be low. However, there are possible difficulties with the proposal. These include uncertainty over whether there is enough room for the new lengths of footway. If there is not, then lengthy delays and increased costs could be encountered in negotiating with landowners. In addition the surface would need to be of a suitable quality for wheelchairs and a costly maintenance regime would be anticipated.
5. Although this proposal can be added to the already lengthy list of highways requests in the Shefford and Silsoe Local Area Transport Plan (LATP), it is almost certain that it will not gain approval in any medium term works programme. As the Parish Council cannot assist financially, the proposal as in the petition is very unlikely to proceed, unless significant sources of finance are located.
6. An alternative could be that the petitioner agrees to a much reduced version of the proposal. Potentially this could consist of a short length of new footway allied with improvements to existing public rights of way. This could create a less ambitious but equally appropriate circular walk to celebrate the Queen's Diamond Jubilee.
7. It is recommended that the lead petitioner is asked to consider a reduced version of the proposal. This could be developed in partnership with the Countryside Access Service, to see if a realistic proposal could be promoted.

Conclusion and The Way Forward

8. The petitioner should be informed that no current funding exists for this work, but that the proposal as in the petition can be put forward to the Shefford and Silsoe LATP for evaluation and prioritisation under the scheme evaluation framework. However the petitioner should be advised that there is no realistic possibility of achieving sufficient priority for funding for the proposal in the medium term future. Alternatively, development of a much reduced version of the proposal in conjunction with the Countryside Access Service could be considered.

Appendix: Plan of the proposed Diamond Jubilee Walk as put forward with the petition (please see next page)