



REPORT TO EXECUTIVE

PORTFOLIO AREA: LOCAL ENVIRONMENT

Date of Meeting: 4th June 2010

Public

Key Decision: No

Recorded in Forward Plan: Yes

Outside Policy Framework

Title: RICKERBY PARK ACTION PLAN
Report of: Assistant Director of Local Environment
Report reference: CS17/10

Summary:

This report takes forward the proposals for the restoration of Rickerby Park following the petition presented to Council on 26 October 2009. The draft Action Plan is appended.

Recommendations:

The Executive notes the Action Plan as a basis for the restoration of Rickerby Park over the coming 5 years. A capital bid will be brought forward as part of the 2011-12 budget round to seek funding to implement the plan.

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Note: in compliance with section 100d of the Local Government (Access to Information) Act 1985 the report has been prepared in part from the following papers: None

1. BACKGROUND INFORMATION AND OPTIONS

- 1.1 Rickerby Park has been a victim of its own popularity over recent years and has been subject to intense visitor pressures to the point that the onsite infrastructure is in need of replacement or updating. Public feeling has indicated that some major investment is needed in order to preserve and enhance this important historical park. This was highlighted when a petition from local residents was presented to Council in October, 2009.
- 1.2 In response, the Green Spaces team drew together an action plan which indentified essential repair and maintenance work that is needed to bring the park up to standard, and also investment that is considered necessary to invest in the future of the park. This action plan forms Appendix 1 to this report. A wide range of opinions and expertise from within and outside the Council was sought in order to make sure that the problems identified in the petition could be fully addressed.
- 1.3 The draft plan was presented to the public and councillors at a special neighbourhood forum event in February 2010 where the action plan was discussed and where the public were invited to comment on all aspects of the park's management. Further public consultation on the action plan has since been held at Carlisle Library and also at the Carlisle and Borders Spring Show in May 2010. Common themes that were indentified through the consultation process have been built into the action plan where applicable.
- 1.4 The action plan identifies a programme of restoration work adding up to approximately £254,000 over 5 years. Members will wish to consider how this project could be funded. Officers can investigate sources of external funding but it is likely that a capital bid would be required to provide match funding at least. Any capital bid would come forward as part of the normal budget process for the 2011-12 financial year.

2. CONSULTATION

- 2.1 Consultation to Date.
Ward Councillors
Stanwix Neighbourhood Forum (Special Meeting, 1st February 2010)
Friends of Rickerby Park (Inaugural meeting, 19th May 2010)
Exhibition, Carlisle Library, April 2010
Face-to-face questionnaire, Carlisle Spring Show, May 2010

- 2.2 Consultation proposed.
Continue consultation via Friends Group and Neighbourhood Forum.

3. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 3.1 The Executive notes the Action Plan as a basis for the restoration of Rickerby Park over the coming 5 years. A capital bid will be brought forward as part of the 2011-12 budget round to seek funding to implement the plan.

4. REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

- 4.1 To ensure the good stewardship of Rickerby Park and the restoration of its historic features and landscapes as a fitting memorial to the sacrifice of World War 1.

5. IMPLICATIONS

- Staffing/Resources – Additional resources would be needed to implement the Action Plan. While officers can prepare bids for external funding it is likely that there will be a requirement for match funding. A capital bid would be required, to be brought forward as part of the 2011-12 budget cycle. Maintenance costs would not be affected and would be met from existing resources.
- Financial – There is currently no provision within the capital programme to fund this action plan. Therefore funding for the scheme will need to be subject to a budget bid as part of the 2011/12 budget process, once alternative sources of funding such as external grants and contributions have been exhausted.
- Legal – In its capacity as the land owner the Council has the power to properly maintain and manage its land. By virtue of the same capacity the Council, under the Occupiers Liability Acts, is also obliged to ensure that the land is controlled and managed in such a way that those entering the land are safe from harm.

The Local Government Act 2000 (Section 2) provides that the Council has the power to do anything which it considers likely to achieve the promotion or improvement of the economic, social or environmental well-being of its area. The power may be used in relation or for the benefit of the whole or any part of the community or all or any persons present or resident in the Council's area. The Council is able to incur expenditure but in exercising the power, the Council must have regard to its Community Strategy.

- Corporate – Rickerby Park has attracted a high degree of public interest and comment in the past 12 months. It was entrusted to the care of the Corporation

of the City of Carlisle in 1922 as a war memorial and as such the Council is responsible for its care and maintenance.

- Risk Management – Low impact. Risk to the Council's reputation for careful stewardship of parks and green space and respect for the war memorial.
- Equality and Disability – Positive impact. Increased quality of access to the open space and more welcoming environment.
- Environmental – Positive impact. The natural environment of the park and riverbanks would be improved. Access to the park for visitors and residents would be improved. Tree planting benefits the Council's carbon footprint.
- Crime and Disorder – Positive impact. Measures to prevent anti-social behaviour and vehicle crime would reduce incidents of criminality.
- Impact on Customers – Positive. Better access to the park, improved quality of experience for park users, improved image of Carlisle as a place with high-quality green space and respect for the war memorial.

Rickerby Park Action Plan – Appendix 1

The following sections of this plan describe the essential repairs, maintenance, and investment that needed to bring the park up to standard, and address the issues identified in the petition that was presented to the council. The plan also shows investment that is needed to ensure Rickerby Park continues to be a natural asset to the city for future generations.

This action plan has had widespread public consultation and the public's views have been built into the action plan where it has been applicable to do so.

This action plan will be the backbone of the 5 year Rickerby Park management plan which is now nearing completion.

The implementation of this plan will require significant financial input which is not yet secured. Once the plan is adopted it will be used as the basis for a campaign of fundraising in order to bring it into reality.

Introduction and acknowledgements

This report includes proposals for improvements on a number of different aspects and components of Rickerby Park. It has been informed by the consultation events we have held in the past 6 months and aims to address the priority issues that have been identified. It should be read in this light and remembering that the day-to-day maintenance of the Park would take place in addition to these projects.

The City Council's Green Spaces team is grateful to all those who have made suggestions and comments on the future of Rickerby Park and especially the numerous people who have taken part in workshops and events in the preparation of this plan.

The report deals with the various themes in turn.

Footpaths and access

Rickerby Park has numerous public rights of way throughout the site. Some have been tarmaced and others are earth-trod paths. In various locations the tarmac paths are in need of repair due to flood damage and damage from vehicles, as well as general wear and tear.

The footpaths in the park are extremely well used with Hadrian's Wall Heritage Ltd. estimating in excess of 15,000 walkers per year using the Hadrian's Wall National Trail route through the park. Additional users include day to day recreational walkers, dog walkers and those walking to and from work.

Unfortunately at present walkers are having to negotiate uneven surfacing, washed out revetment and after wet weather, large sections of footpath under water.

Recommendation

Significant repairs are needed to various sections of footpath around the park including resurfacing, and raising the levels in low spots to avoid sitting water after wet weather or flooding.

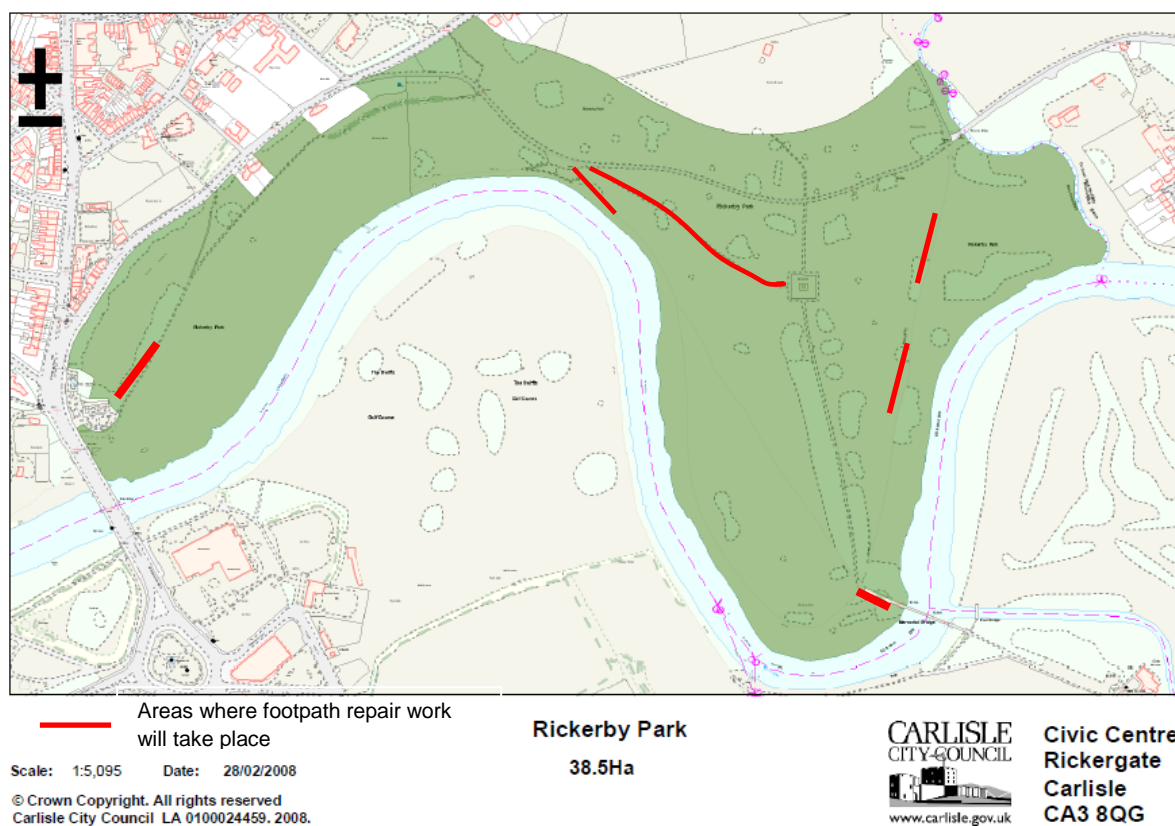
Figure 1. Examples of footpath problems in the park



Drainage issues on Hadrians Wall National trail Resurfacing needed on footpath to cenotaph Flood damage on riverside footpath

The map below shows the extent of footpaths in the park where work needs to be undertaken as a priority:

Map 1. Footpaths to be repaired



Car parking

Rickerby Park has two main car parking areas; one is the tarmaced riverside car park and the larger of the two is at the Linstock end. Unfortunately this second car park is not tarmaced but has a crushed stone surface. The area has problems with drainage, potholes, standing water, litter and is used as an access point for illegal driving onto the park. This car park is in a prominent position as you enter the park and also has to be crossed over by walkers using the Hadrian's Wall National Trail. As a gateway into the city at present it does not create a favourable first impression for motorists entering from Linstock or people using the trail.

Recommendation

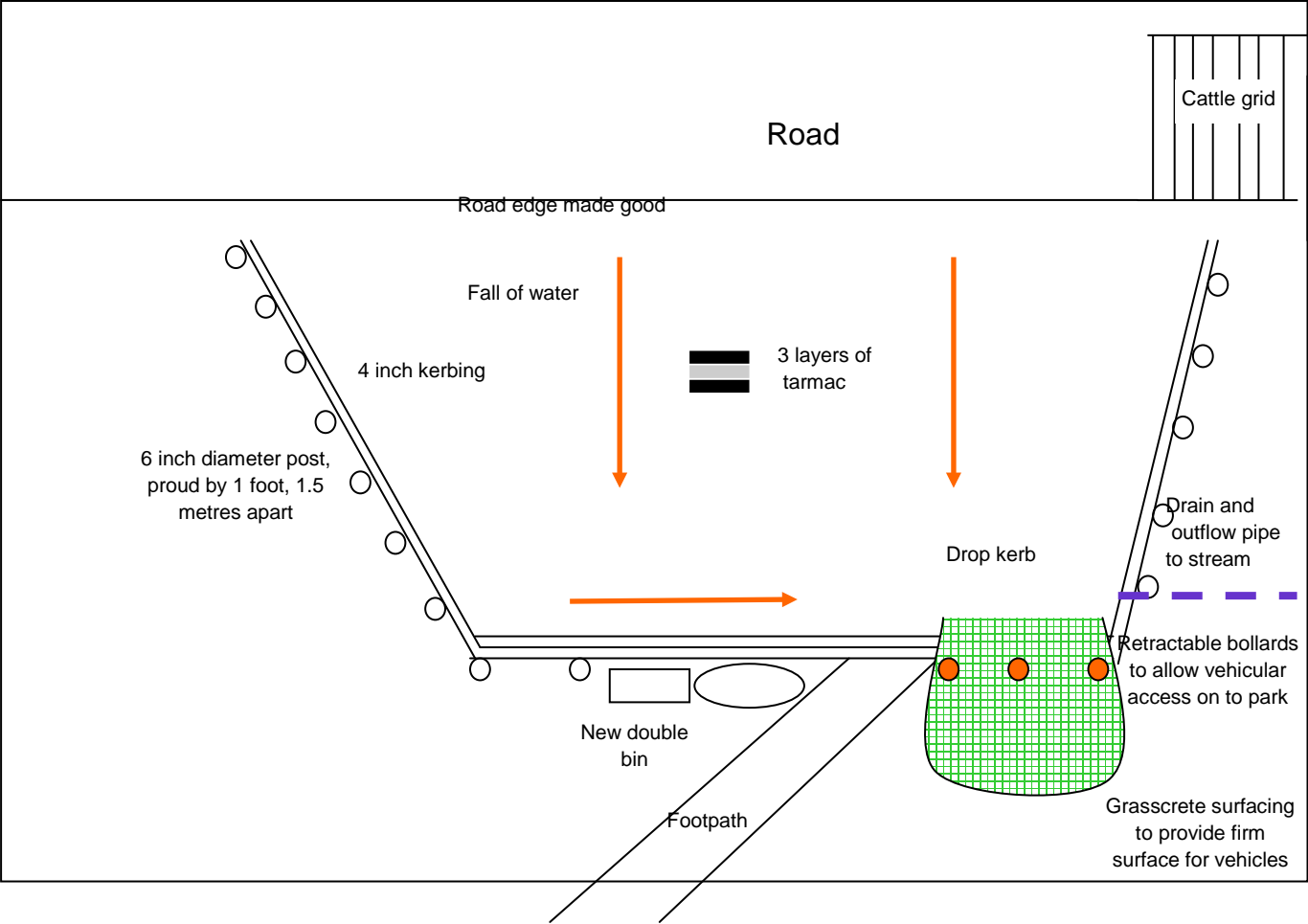
The Linstock car park needs to be formalised. The surface needs to be tarmaced and drainage installed. There needs to be formal kerbing and bollards around the car park to demarcate the parking area and stop people driving onto the park illegally. Retractable bollards will also be installed to allow maintenance vehicles and legitimate users on to the park when necessary. Parking bays will also be marked out to increase the number of parking spaces , and therefore reduce the number of cars parking on the grass at peak periods e.g. during home matches played by Carlisle United, when large numbers of spectators park here and cross the Memorial Bridge to access Brunton Park. The car park will also have a new double bin to help reduce the litter problem in this area.

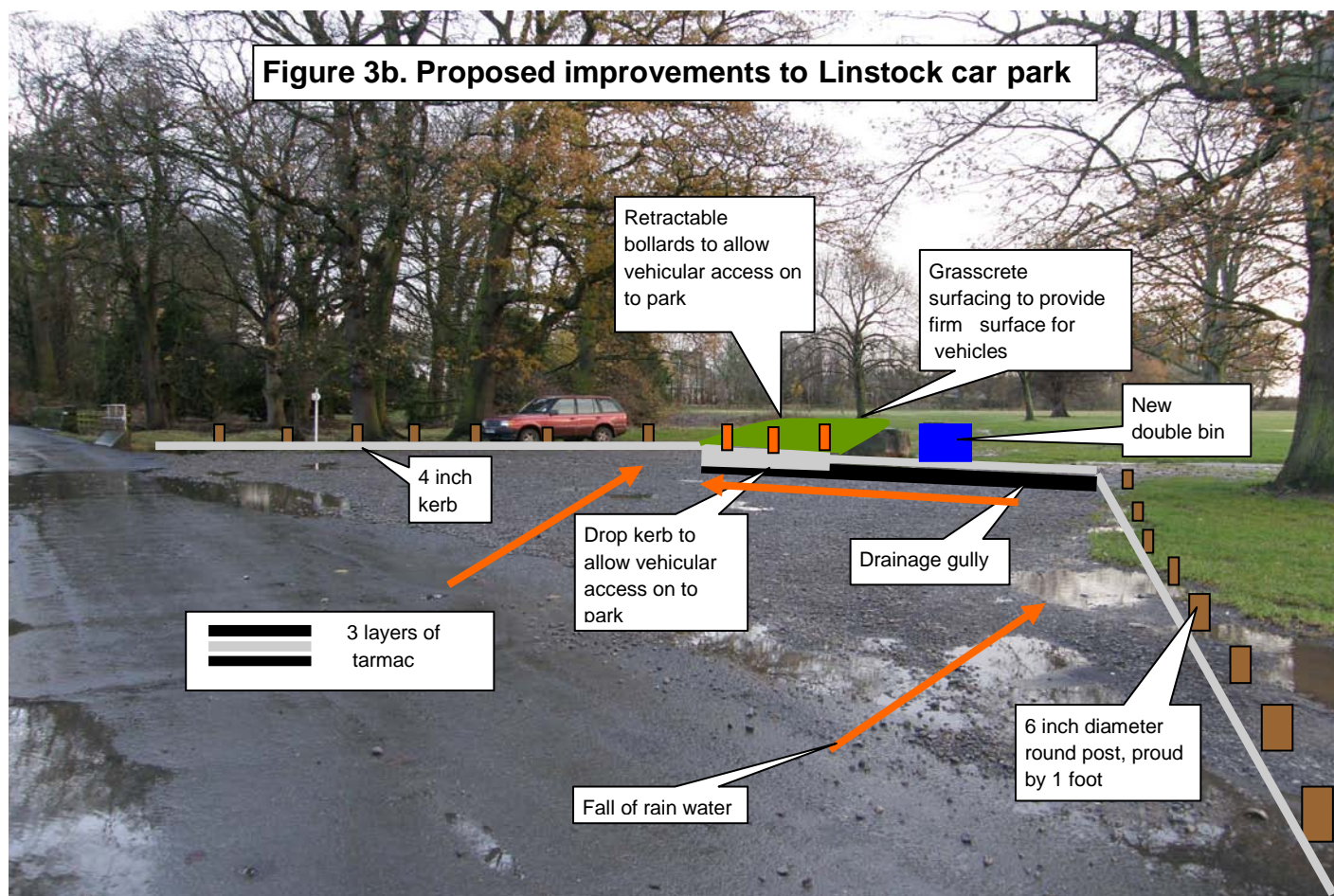
The plan below shows the specification and an annotated view of the new car park.

Figure 2. Linstock Car Park at present.



Figure 3a. Proposed Improvements to Linstock Car Park

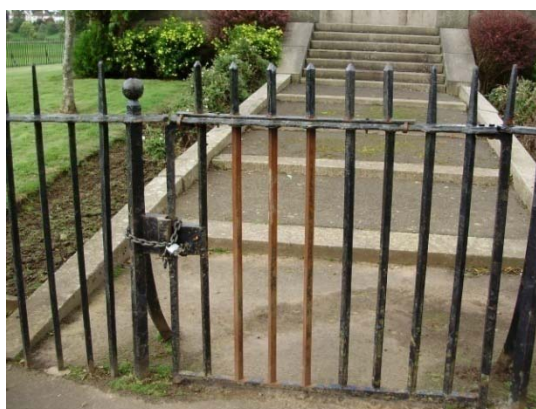




The Cenotaph

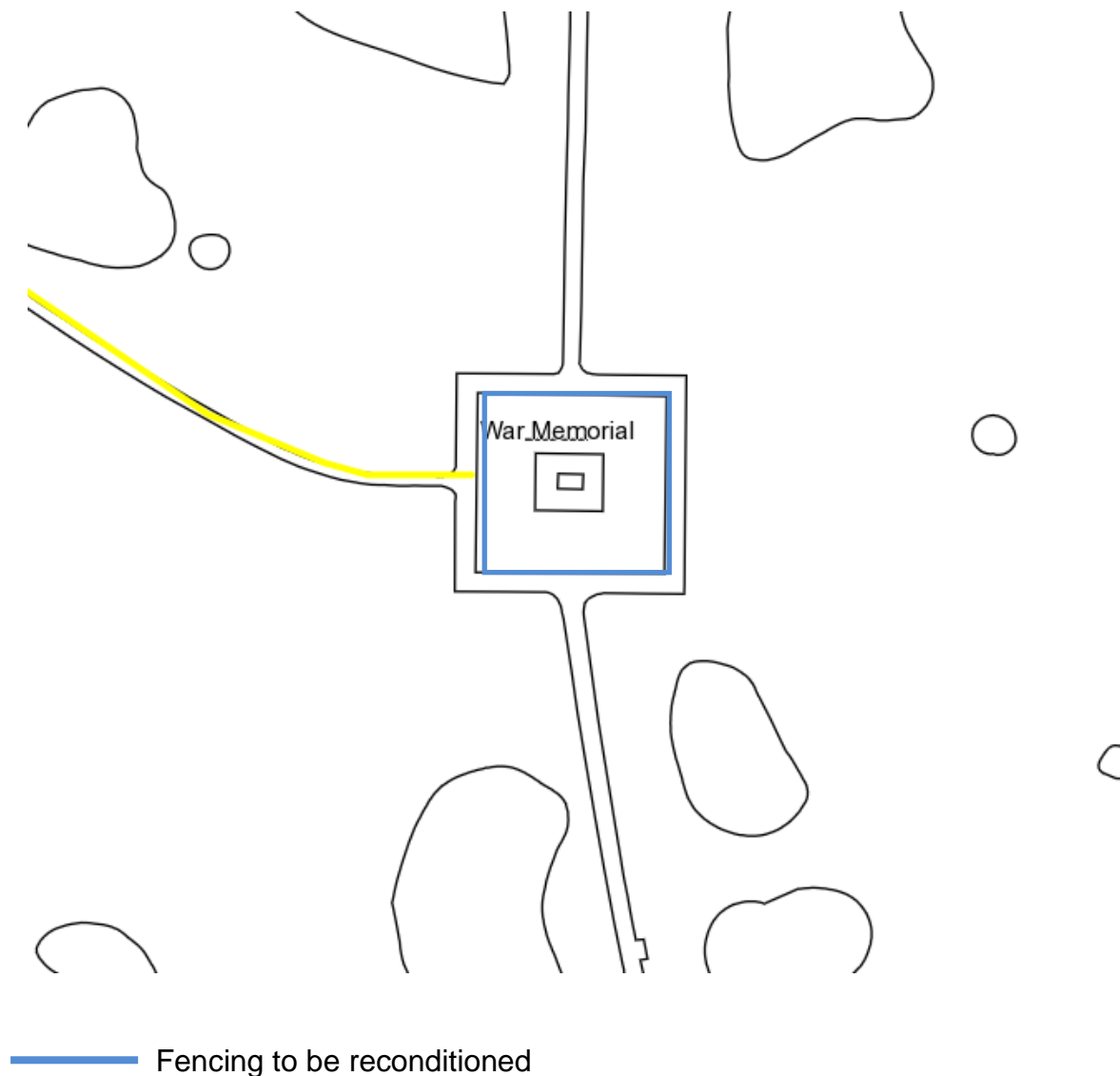
The cast iron fencing that surrounds the cenotaph has been in place since the monument was built in the 1920s and the style reflects its heritage value. The fencing is still vital to prevent the stock from grazing the formal planting, to protect the monument from antisocial behaviour, but also demarcates a suitably imposing boundary for a monument of such commemorative importance. However it is currently in poor condition.

Figure 4. Cenotaph fencing.



After seeking advice from specialist engineers, it has been their recommendation that the existing fencing is not replaced, but reconditioned. This is due to its heritage value and the fact that the metalwork is still in good condition. After reconditioning, the life span of the cast iron would be similar to that of a new powder coated metal fence. The commemorative benches that surround the cenotaph are also in need of replacement, it is hoped that these would be replaced as part of the project. It is felt that this work needs to be undertaken before the centenary of the start of World War 1 in 2014 when the cenotaph will be the focus of public commemoration.

Figure 5. Plan of Cenotaph and fencing



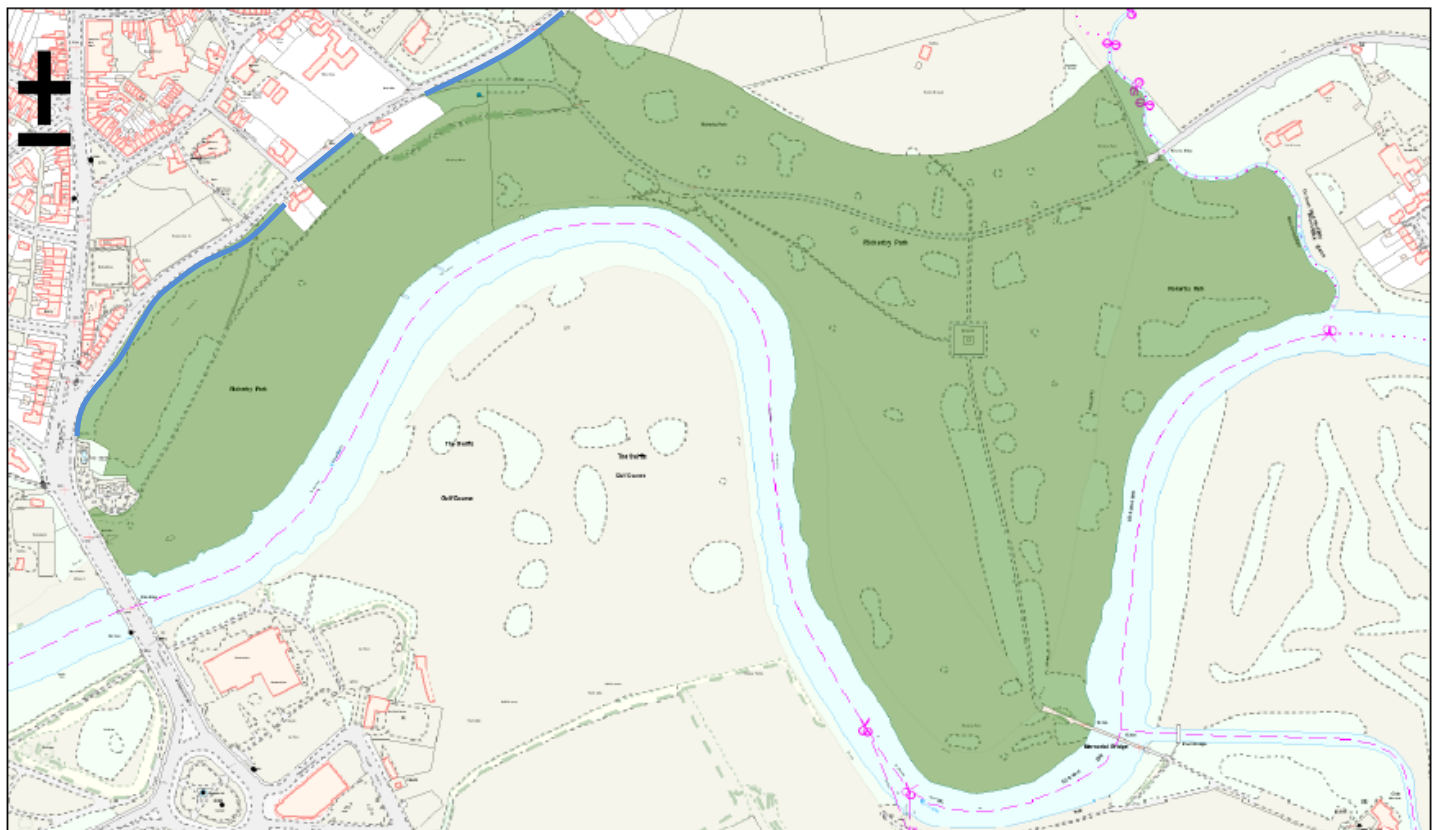
Brampton Road Boundary Fencing

The condition of the 550 metres of boundary fence that runs along the Brampton Road has also been surveyed by metalwork specialists. The report found that although the fence is still functional at present, sections are beginning to fail due to corrosion.

Figure 6. Brampton Road fence.



Map 2. Boundary fencing to be repaired.



 Fencing to be replaced

Scale: 1:5,095 Date: 28/02/2008

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Rickerby Park

38.5Ha

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Future Investment

Infrastructure

So far all the issues dealt with in this report have dealt with essential maintenance issues that are needed to bring the park up to a safe standard and address the public's concerns as identified in the petition presented to the council.

However the petition also made a point about a general lack of maintenance and the poor condition of the park. It is important that the City Council is seen to be keeping on top of maintenance but also seen to be investing in the park's infrastructure for the future.

This next section of the report concentrates on investment that is needed in the park's infrastructure to ensure that Rickerby Park continues to be a natural asset to the city, to be cherished and appreciated by many generations to come.

Tree planting scheme

Rickerby Park has some beautiful specimen trees, however many are of a similar age. Therefore a tree planting scheme is needed to maintain a healthy tree stock for future generations to enjoy. This scheme will involve the planting of up to 90 standard trees with suitable measures taken to avoid damage from grazing stock. The planting scheme will involve the planting of species that will succeed the specimen parkland trees such as oak and lime. There will also be riverside planting for wildlife habitat conservation and erosion control.



Figure 7. Mature trees, Rickerby Park

Tree Hazard Survey

Local Authorities have a liability for damage to property, injury and /or death caused by trees in their ownership, therefore trees need to be surveyed on a regular basis to assess any potential risk to the public and identify preventative action.

The trees on the park were last surveyed in 2000. Therefore a detailed tree hazard survey for all of the parks trees is overdue.

The annotations of the map below show the extent of the proposed planting scheme.

Figure 8 – Proposed tree planting scheme



Scale: 1:3,814

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Rickerby Park

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- | | |
|---------------------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| A. 3 x weeping willow | H. 5 x lime and 5 x oak |
| B. Willow strikes for erosion control | I. 5 x oak |
| C. 6 x oaks | J. 2 x weeping willow and 5 x oak |
| D. 6 x lime | K. 15 x lime and 10 x oak |
| E. 10 x oaks | L. 5 x oak |
| F. 5 x oak and 5 lime | M. 1 x beech |
| G. 5 x oak | |

Entrance features

Rickerby Park has numerous entry points into the park, the main ones being from the Brampton Road, Linstock and the pedestrian footbridge over the Memorial Bridge. At these locations the entrance furniture is in poor condition and is either broken, currently not stockproof or unsightly. These are not only entrances into the park but also gateways into the city and therefore need to be functional and attractive.

New kissing gates were installed in 2008 at entry points off Brampton Road, and have received a lot of positive feedback from members of the community. It is proposed to replace all old gates with a similar design, helping to create a 'sense of place' for Rickerby Park and to provide simple visual interpretation of its special features.

Figure 9. Brampton Road Kissing Gate Design



Figure 10. Linstock Entrance – The pedestrian gate and access gate to the right hand side of the cattle grid will be replaced with a design following the same theme as the kissing gate and incorporating the words 'Rickerby Park'



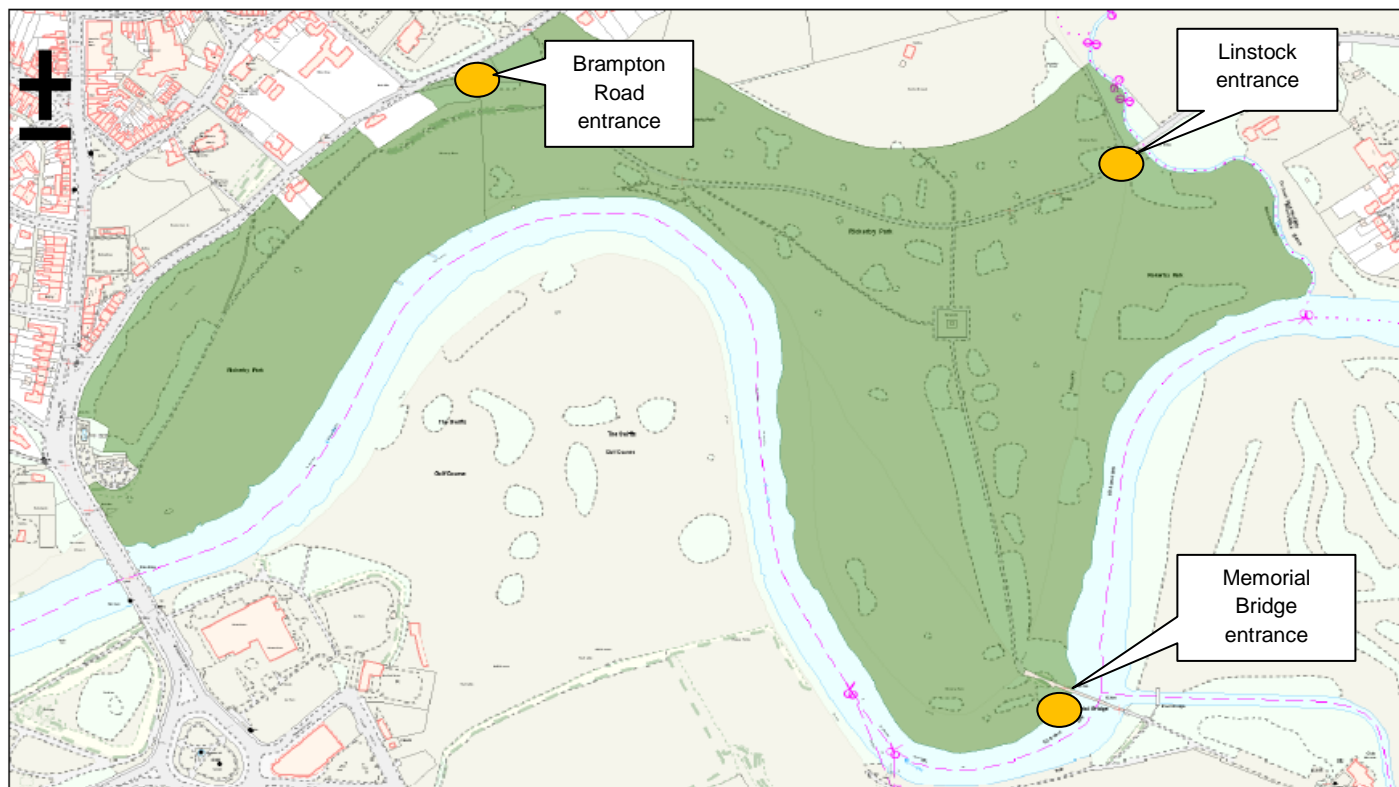
Figure 11. Memorial Bridge – The gates will be replaced with the new kissing gate design, fitted with a ‘Radar’ locking device to allow easy access for people with a disability or with a disability scooter.




Figure 12. Brampton Road – The field gate and pedestrian swing gate will again follow the same design and promote the park from this well-used vehicular route.



Map 3. Entrance features to be installed:



 Entrance features to be replaced

Scale:
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Rickerby Park
38.5Ha

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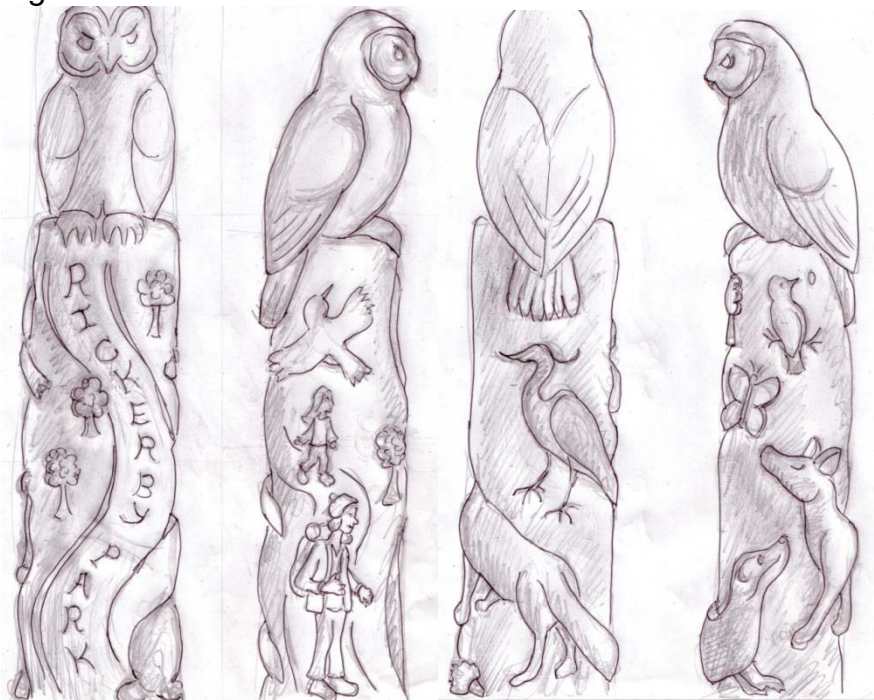
Chainsaw Sculptures

At the Linstock entrance to the park a very large beech tree has recently been taken down due to disease (pictured below). The tree is in a very prominent position as you enter the park from the Linstock entrance. Therefore in order to soften the blow of the loss of the tree we hope to use the remaining trunk to create a chainsaw sculpture reflecting the natural history of the park and promote Hadrian's Wall National Trail that runs next to the trees location. This would be a striking piece of public art right at the entrance to the park. The life span of the chainsaw sculpture would be approximately 10 years. This would be enough time for a replacement tree planted next to the sculpture to become well established to grow up to take its place in future years.

Figure 13. Beech tree before felling.



Figure 14. Sketches for carved feature:



Interpretation

At present there is very little on-site interpretation at Rickerby Park, which has a fascinating story dating back to Roman times, as well as today's natural history. With plentiful wildlife and the riverbank being designated as a Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) there are many themes which would be of interest to the visiting public. The intention would be to seek funding for an interpretive project to present this information using a range of media. The example below is from Kingmoor Nature Reserve where this project was received very well by site users.

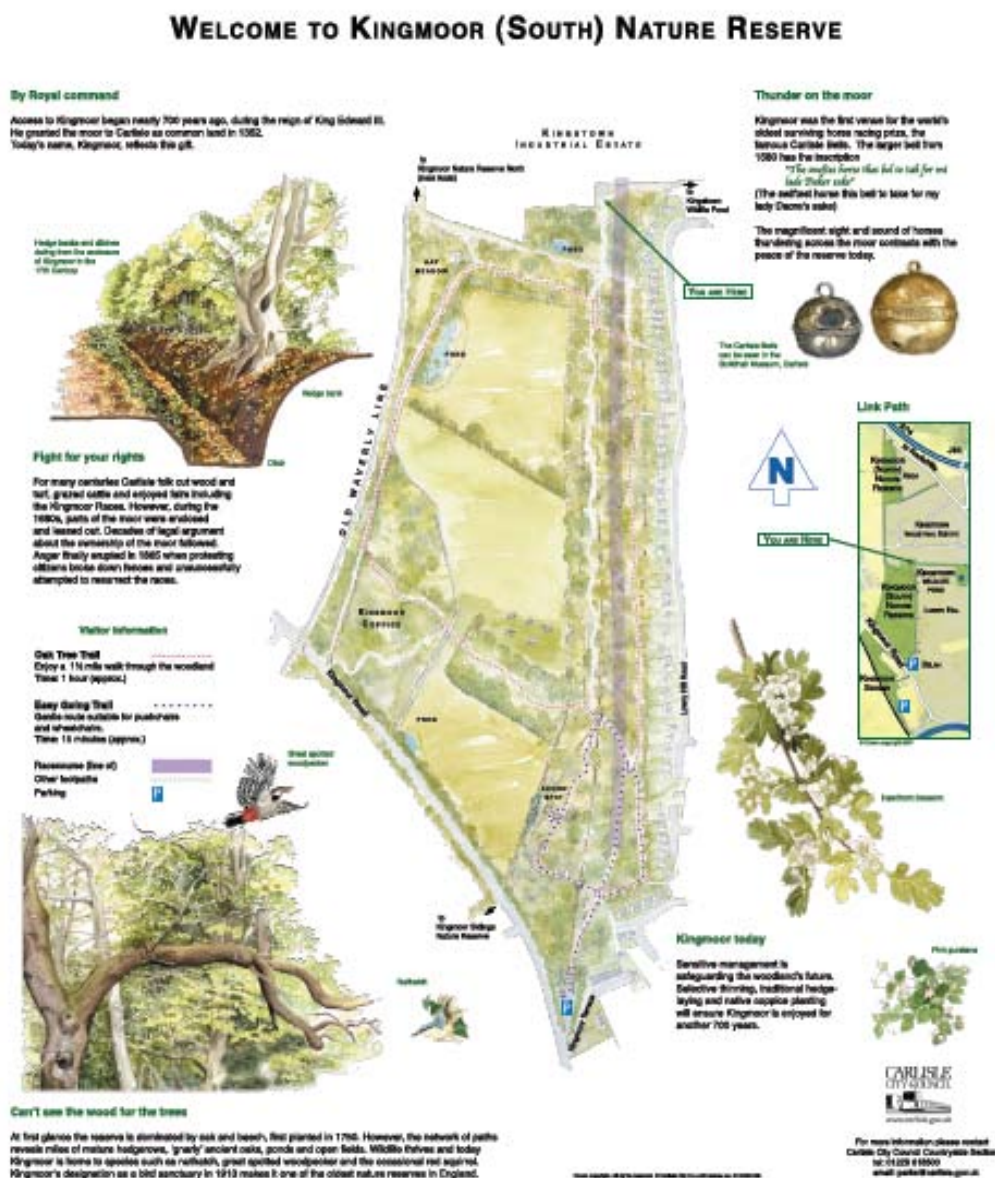


Figure 15. Information board, Kingmoor Nature Reserve.

Roadside Bollards

Illegal driving on the park has historically been a long term problem with joyriders churning up the grass and even running down stock in stolen vehicles.

In order to combat illegal driving onto the park the intention would be to place roadside bollards similar to those pictured above along each side of the highway each marked with a reflective disk. Retractable bollards will be placed where legitimate access is needed.



Figure 16. Wooden bollards, access to Newlaithes football pitch, Rickerby park

To ease the two-way movement of traffic on Rickerby Lane it would be necessary to install a number of passing places (short sections of wider carriageway). By encouraging drivers to use these passing places, it may be possible to prevent encroachment on to the grass by vehicles attempting to pass one another on the narrow road.

Costings: Rickerby Park 5-year Action Plan

| Project Aim | Year 1 | Year 2 | Year 3 | Year 4 | Year 5 |
|--|-----------------|----------------|-----------------|----------------|----------------|
| Brampton Road Boundary fence refurbishment | | | | £ 48,126 | £ 48,126 |
| Cenotaph fencing refurbishment with new memorial benches | | £22,000 | | | |
| Formalizing Linstock end Car Park | £18,111 | | | | |
| Park interpretation | | | £5,000 | | |
| Entrance feature gates at 3 main entrances | | | £3,800 | | |
| Footpath repairs | £60,000 | | | | |
| Linstock Chainsaw sculpture | | | £3,380 | | |
| Tree planting scheme and fencing off from stock | | | £6,500 | | |
| Tree Survey | | | £3,380 | | |
| Roadside Bollards | | £13,000 | | | |
| Annual Totals | £ 78,111 | £ 35,000 | £ 22,060 | £48,126 | £ 48,126 |
| Annual costing with 10% contingency | £85,922 | £38,500 | £ 24,266 | £52,939 | £52,939 |
| Total costing after 5 years with 10% Contingency | £254,566 | | | | |

Additional information

Rickerby Park – highways issues.

The state of the highway verges and the number of potholes on the highway through the park was another one of the major concerns as brought up in the petition.

Highway improvements have not formed part of this action plan as it is not a Green Spaces issue. However in January 2010 the responsibility for the maintenance of the highway was handed over from Cumbria County Council to Carlisle City Council's Highways team.

This will enable the problems related to highways management to be addressed by a single work-group from the City Council.

Further work specifically on improving the condition of the highway will be required at a later date but this has not been included in the current action plan for reasons of clarity.