
TITLE: Draft Ely Riverside Improvement Plan 2017-19

Committee: Commercial Services

Date: 17th January 2017

Author: Communities and Partnerships Manager

[R175]

1.0 ISSUE

1.1 To seek approval for the Ely Riverside Improvement Plan 2017-19.

2.0 RECOMMENDATION

2.1 Members are requested to:

- (i) Approve the Ely Riverside Improvement Plan 2017-19 set out in Appendix 1; and
- (ii) Delegate authority to the Director, Commercial, in consultation with the Chairman of Commercial Services Committee, in accordance with 5.2 of this report.

3.0 BACKGROUND

3.1 On 7th September 2015, the Council launched a new mooring management scheme to encourage more boaters to visit Ely and ensure that moorings are available when boaters arrive.

3.2 During 2015-16, numerous improvement works were carried out at the riverside to enable maximum usage of the Council managed moorings and to enhance visitor's experience, works included:

- Installation of new fendering along Willow Walk
- Landscaping of the Slipway
- Fendering installation and dredging works at Annesdale
- Installation of mooring signage

3.3 A stakeholder meeting took place in March 2016 to gather feedback on the first six months of the new enforcement scheme. At the meeting, a number of priority areas for potential improvement were identified. It was agreed that a consultation would be carried out during summer 2016 to gather feedback from river users on the priority areas. The findings of the consultation have been used to inform the Draft Ely Riverside Improvement Plan 2017-19.

4.0 ARGUMENTS/OPTIONS

4.1 The Council needs to continue to build on the success of the new enforcement scheme and recent improvements to ensure that the following objectives are achieved:

- Ensure that Ely Riverside appeals to a wide range of visitor groups
- Ensure a high quality visitor experience
- Ely Riverside is recognised as a key destination for visitors as part of Ely's tourism product
- The riverside maintains high standards as it links the award winning Jubilee Gardens and Ely Country Park

4.2 Ely Riverside is one of the city's main tourist areas and a key gateway for visitors. It is essential that any developments are in keeping with the surrounding area and complement existing infrastructure.

4.3 Development of the riverside is being carried out using a phased approach so that proposals can be influenced through consultation with users and local interest groups.

4.4 Ely Riverside Improvement Plan 2017-19

The Draft Ely Country Park Improvement Plan 2017-19 has been developed following feedback from site users, stakeholders and the local community. The Plan proposes three priority areas for improvement: fishing signage, fender installation and improved visitor signage.

Below are the options available to the Council for addressing the priorities identified during consultation.

4.4.1 Commercial mooring

The Council invited expressions of interest for a vacant commercial mooring berth in Ely in March 2015. No interest was received therefore the berth was incorporated into visitor mooring space in advance of the new mooring enforcement scheme launched in September 2015.

Having reviewed the level of interest received regarding commercial mooring opportunities, since the start of the new enforcement scheme in September 2015, and taking into consideration the reduction in visitor mooring provision in Ely (following the termination of the Environment Agency's lease in October 2015), any additional commercial mooring space would result in less visitor mooring provision.

The Council wishes to encourage visitors to Ely by boat and provide sufficient provision to enable a regular flow of vessels to visit the city and surrounding area.

For these reasons it is not recommended that commercial mooring opportunities are pursued. Officers will review this position annually.

4.4.2 Fender replacement

The Council's Open Spaces team has identified that the existing fendering between Annesdale and Jubilee Gardens is in need of repair and the works will improve the safety and appearance of the riverbank. Existing fendering is timber and is no longer fit for purpose however a natural-looking recycled plastic product would be much more sustainable and last indefinitely.

4.4.3 Visitor signage

Much of the existing visitor signage at the riverside is no longer fit for purpose and is out of date. It does not include information about Ely Country Park which is now established as one of the city's key visitor destinations. A multi agency approach to review existing signage and identify improvements is proposed.

4.4.4 Fishing signage

The Council's aspirations for the river is for it to be enjoyed by everyone and does not currently give preferential treatment to either boaters or anglers.

The Council has been advised on various occasions over the past 3 years that it is not clear which party has right of use, if any. This has resulted in incidents of anti social behaviour involving the Police.

Consultation has identified that signage would help clarify the fact that no party has preferential right of use and that consideration is encouraged amongst all river users.

4.5 The work proposals included in the Ely Riverside Improvement Plan 2017-19 are outlined in Appendix 1.

5.0 CONCLUSIONS

5.1 Members are asked to consider and approve the improvements set out in the Draft Ely Riverside Improvement Plan 2017-19 (Appendix 1) and instruct officers to proceed with undertaking the works within the estimated budget specified.

5.2 The estimated costs (set out in Appendix 1 and 6.1 below), may increase depending on any changes to work specification, the passage of time between

the writing of this report and the purchase of goods and services. Therefore it is proposed that authority is delegated to the Director, Commercial, in consultation with the Chairman of Commercial Services Committee, to agree additional funding, up to a maximum of 20%.

6.0 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS/EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT

6.1 A total project budget of £22,000 is required to deliver the Ely Riverside Improvement Plan 2017-19 (based on estimated costs) which can be met from Section 106 contributions.

7.0 APPENDICES

Appendix 1 – Draft Ely Riverside Improvement Plan 2017-19

<u>Background Documents</u>	<u>Location</u>	<u>Contact Officer</u>
None	Room F008 The Grange Ely	Lewis Bage Communities and Partnerships Manager (01353) 665555 Email: lewis.bage@eastcambs.gov.uk