

AYOT GREENWAY GREENSPACE ACTION PLAN 2020-25 ENGAGEMENT RESPONSE DOCUMENT

Below is a summary of the main themes of comments received from the two stages of engagement on the Ayot Greenway Greenspace Action Plan 2020-25, carried out in September/October 2019 and February/March 2020.

Theme of comments	Response and outcome
<i>General support.</i> The majority of comments received were strongly supportive of the aim and objectives of the plan.	NA
<i>Surfacing.</i> General agreement that the surface is in need of improvement. Accumulation of leaves and mud on the surface during winter months was identified as the main reason for surface degradation. Many responses agreed that previous resurfacing along the route was ideal for all users and has worn well over the years. There was a strong preference for an unbound surface to discourage cyclists speeding and maintain safety.	The objective here will be to restore the surface to the same standard that was achieved the last time the route was resurfaced. Although there is no budget available to clear leaves and mud from the surface on an annual basis, the final GAP includes an additional action to remove accumulated mud every five years.
<i>Vegetation management.</i> Support for small scale management in areas that are currently heavily shaded and dark, particularly at the Welwyn Garden City end. Concern was expressed about felling trees in relation to the climate emergency and assumptions were made about loss of habitats and sale of felled timber. Vegetation management to establish views across the countryside was seen as unnecessary.	<p>We recognise that the woodlands along the Ayot Greenway are a valuable habitat, and the main purpose of woodland management is to enhance this habitat and benefit biodiversity. Secondary woodland along the route will benefit from respacing for its future maturity, both providing mature trees the space to grow into and allowing natural regeneration to diversify age and species structure. In the long term, this work will improve the resilience and habitat value of the woodland. Woodland management will be carefully planned and carried out sensitively.</p> <p>The sale of timber will only be used to subsidise the cost of woodland management, there is no expectation of felling trees where the value of timber exceeds the cost of felling. The action to establish views across the countryside has been removed from the final plan.</p>
<i>Signage and furniture.</i> All signage proposals in the draft GAP supported. Further support for replacement of benches was received with several people suggesting the benches should be in keeping with the landscape using sawn timber. Robinson's Wood picnic area is used by many and should not be removed.	New benches will match the rural nature of their location. Actions to remove Robinson's Wood picnic area have been taken out of the plan, the fence line will still be removed to help open the area up as a glade. Installation of new picnic benches has been added to the plan.
<i>Code of conduct.</i> Plenty of support for shared use signage from all user groups. Several people mentioned 'share with care' signs that they had seen used on other similar routes that they would like to see used on the Ayot Greenway.	Shared use signs that include the 'share with care' message added to the plan to emphasise the shared use nature of the route.
<i>Road safety.</i> Concerns expressed about user safety when using the on-road link through Ayot village and across the A1(M) bridge to Sherrardspark Wood.	Year 1 action added to the final plan to investigate issue with Highways and discuss whether any improvements can be made to road safety here.
<i>Ayot station car park.</i> People would not like to see extensive management of the former station and goods yard here to improve sight lines and expose heritage features. Concerns were raised about	Actions to remove the rear fence and manage vegetation to expose heritage features removed from the plan. A meeting with Ayot St Peter Parish

<p>removing the fence line as this may encourage unwanted behaviour and vehicle access beyond the designated car parking area. Installation of an interpretation panel here that describes the station's history is very welcome.</p>	<p>Council will be arranged to discuss management options at a later date.</p>
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