

Footpath 62 Marple Update

Report of the Director for Place Management

1. MATTER FOR CONSIDERATION

- 1.1 This report will update the committee on the bank collapse on footpath 62 Marple near Dale Farm.

2. INFORMATION

- 2.1 In December 2019 a section of bank collapsed into the river Goyt near Dale Farm. Footpath 62 Marple which runs along this section in a narrow area between the farm (protected by an embankment) and the river. (Map attached as Enclosure 1)
- 2.2 The potential cause of this was the deposition into the river of material including trees, near the development work at Oakwood Hall on the opposite bank. This had the effect of changing the flow of the river, directing it at the bank which was washed away.
- 2.3 A closure was applied and extended into 2020 while initial feasibility work was commissioned. At this point about 20m of bank was affected.
- 2.4 The bank remained stable for most of this year, the closure lapsed while the feasibility work continued but this was not considered to be an issue at that time.
- 2.5 Further material entered the river, affecting the flow once more. This combined with heavy rain caused further damage to the site.
- 2.6 A special inspection by one of our engineers in January 2021 found that the affected length was now 50m, and that the estimated cost for repair would be more than £100k.
- 2.7 The Feasibility Team produced a timeline for work, which extended to nearly a year (48 weeks). The Environment Agency would only allow us to proceed with this programme after a fluvial study was completed and a design agreed. We would still need to apply for permits at this point.
- 2.8 At this point the PRow Officer entered discussions with the main landowners about a possible temporary diversion while the route was closed. This proved to be not attainable due to the requirements of the landowner.
- 2.9 In February 2022 five named storms in three weeks caused more erosion, and altered the riverbed again, with further erosion starting downstream. The narrowest section of path is now approximately 20cm wide and is severely undercut. It can be seen that the shale ledge at the foot of the bank is also now being undercut by the river. Sample pictures showing the progression of damage can be seen in enclosure 2 with this report.

- 2.10 Concern for the safety of the public who continue to try and use the route despite the signed closure caused us to install steel palisade fencing at either end of the affected section of the bank in an attempt to ensure public safety. Members of the public do continue to access the route at some risk to themselves despite the fencing and the legal orders.
- 2.11 JBA Consulting were commissioned to deliver a Fluvial Geomorphological Assessment as a necessary precondition to works identified by the environment agency.
- 2.12 Informal discussions with engineers lead us to believe that repair of this path may cost in excess of £1 million as the options include structural works.

3. Next Steps

- 3.1 Identify funding for further feasibility and detailed design for a repair to the path, this could include upgrading the path in order to access external funding. Management have been approached regarding the need to identify this funding.

4. RECOMMENDATION

- 4.1 That the contents of this report be noted and the Councillors be assured that we are still looking in to the options / opportunities to repair/ replace the path.
- 4.2 That Councillors note that by using this route the public are endangering themselves and that the path is closed for public safety.

BACKGROUND PAPERS

There are none.

Anyone wishing to inspect the above background papers or requiring further information should contact Nicholas Robinson on email rightsofway@stockport.gov.uk