



# Petitions Committee

24 April 2015

<b>Report title</b>	Fencing off Woodcross open space	
<b>Cabinet member with lead responsibility</b>	Councillor John Reynolds Resources	
	Councillor Elias Mattu Leisure and Communities	
<b>Wards affected</b>	Springvale	
<b>Accountable director</b>	Nick Alderman, City Environment	
<b>Originating service</b>	Public Realm	
<b>Accountable employee(s)</b>	Steve Woodward	Head of Service
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<b>Report to be/has been considered by</b>	N/A	

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## Recommendation(s) for action or decision:

The Committee is recommended:

1. To consider the issues raised in the petition in respect of fencing off Woodcross open space.
2. To support the decision not to extend the fencing around the perimeter of Woodcross open space.
3. Advise concerned residents that they make contact with the Police and Wolverhampton's Anti-social Behaviour Team to report any issues raised or identified on Woodcross open space and, if appropriate, the Police and Wolverhampton's Anti-social Behaviour Team to exercise their powers to obtain identities of and disperse groups of individuals that are causing nuisance or offending behaviour.

## **1.0 Purpose**

- 1.1 To consider the petition received regarding the request to fence off the perimeter of Woodcross open space.

## **2.0 Background**

- 2.1 On 13 January 2014, Mr Tom Stokes contacted City Direct and raised concerns about vandalism, including health and safety concerns of the public relating to vehicles on Woodcross open space. The request was to fence off the perimeter of Woodcross open space which came through City Direct to Public Realm.
- 2.2 It was communicated to Mr Stokes by a representative from Public Realm on 14 January 2014, that fencing could not be provided to Woodcross open space (see appendix 1) for the following reasons:-
- Wolverhampton City Council does not fence off many of its open spaces only some of the formal parks in the City;
  - Wolverhampton City Council does not have the available financial resources to be able to fence off such large open space areas. This includes Woodcross open space.
- 2.3 Woodcross open space is approximately 4.5 hectares with the perimeter being around 655 linear meters of which the majority is accessible from the roadside. The open space is maintained by the Council (Public Realm) and services provided include grass cutting, litter picking, playground inspections and waste bin emptying.
- 2.4 Play provision on Woodcross open space includes a trim trail, natural play area, traditional play area and green space for ball games.
- 2.5 There is currently some barrier type fencing on the open space that was fitted many years ago as part of a Parks and Open Spaces initiative to deter vehicle access. The sites identified were deemed the most vulnerable and funding was then available.
- 2.6 Joanne Mason, Anti-Social Behaviour Team (ASB) Manager, has confirmed that there are no reports (either recent or historic) to the ASB Team about Woodcross open space. Similarly, Lisa Parmar, Neighbourhood Safety Co-ordinator, has confirmed that the last complaint raised about the open space was at a Partners and Communities Together (PACT) meeting a number of years ago. The issue raised was regarding young people gathering in the park. There have been no reports since then either at PACT, through Tasking or from the Neighbourhood Wardens. Consequently, there has been no liaison with the Police on this matter.
- 2.7 The ASB Team Manager has corresponded to Sergeant Simon Bott, who is the neighbourhood Sergeant for the Woodcross area regarding reports to the Police about ASB. No feedback has been received.

- 2.8 Historically, open spaces such as at Woodcross Lane are not considered for fencing because they are open spaces and not formal parks areas. There are many open spaces across the City that do not have fences around them.
- 2.9 There is no dedicated budget set aside each year to be able to deal with large scale improvements such as fencing and gating. In addition the revenue resources for maintaining the Council's parks and open spaces are constantly under pressure with increases in repairs and maintenance to land holdings (including open spaces) demands on the service. The cost attributed to the fitting of fencing, including on-going maintenance liabilities (repair/painting), cannot be accommodated within Public Realm's current revenue budgets which are used for repairs and maintenance of parks and open spaces.
- 2.10 Therefore any capital works and associated revenue implications for improvements to these sites would need to be fully thought through and additional funds secured. The cost of fencing off an additional 559 linear meters using the same type of barrier system that is partly in place on the open space is estimated to be in region of £35,000.
- 2.11 Should any Section 106 public open space contributions derived from future developments in the area become available this could provide for some fencing of Woodcross open space together with improvements to the open space itself which would have added value for local people. In this instance the Council would engage with the local community on how best to use externally funded monies as part of formal consultation.

### **3.0 Details of the petition**

- 3.1 On 3 February 2015, a 132 signature petition was received from local residents requesting the installation of fencing around Woodcross Park to prevent vehicle access.

### **4.0 Financial implications**

- 4.1 Due to the Council's current financial position and the amount of savings required within the Medium Term Financial Strategy, the provision of additional fencing around Woodcross Open Space cannot be met from existing revenue budgets. [CH/27032015/C]

### **5.0 Legal implications**

- 5.1 There are no direct legal implications arising from this report. [TS/250132015/P]

### **6.0 Equalities implications**

- 6.1 There are no equalities implications arising from this report

### **7.0 Environmental implications**

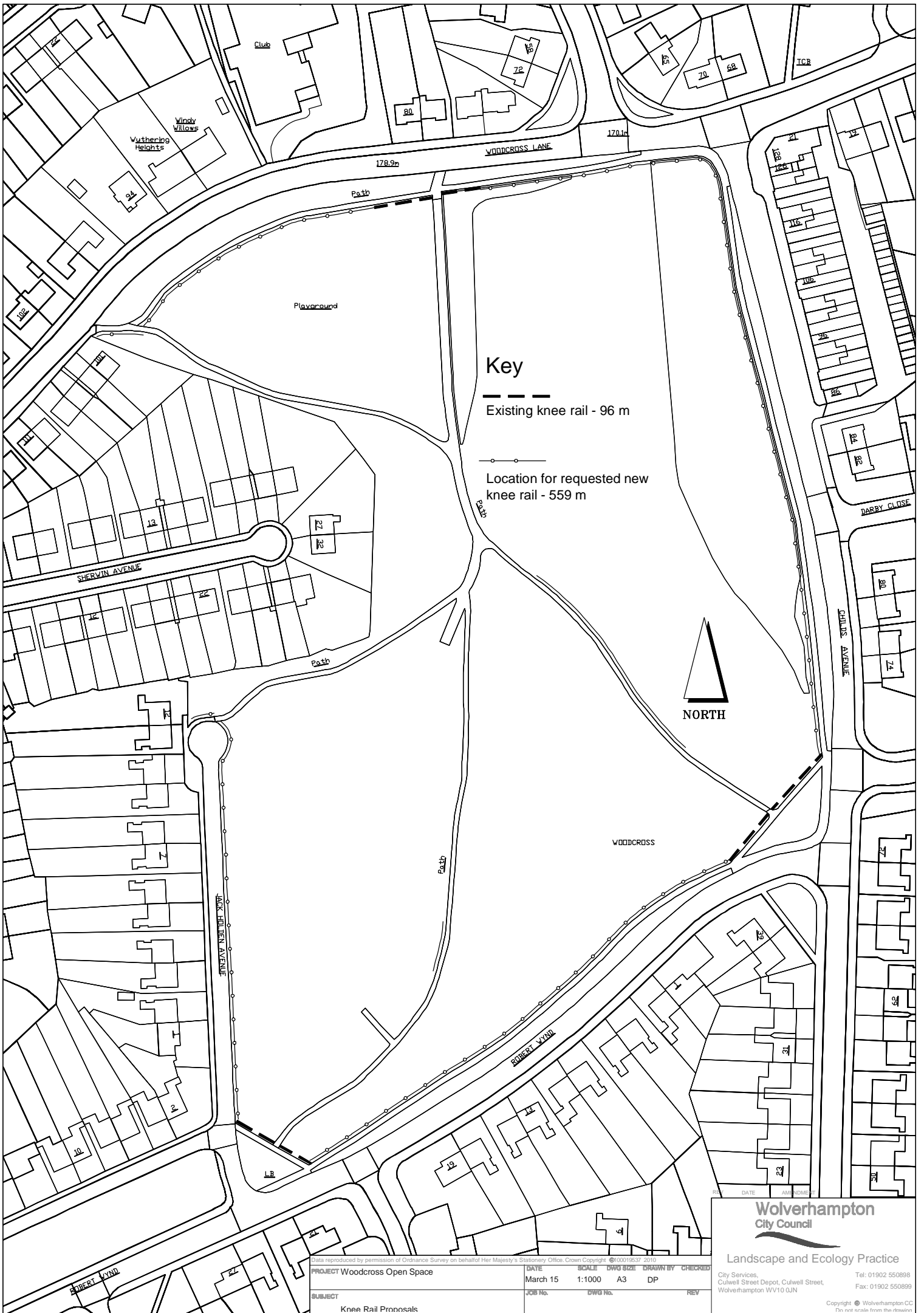
- 7.1 There would be environmental implications to consider with the erection of any type of fencing around the open space therefore an Environmental Impact Assessment would need to be undertaken should fencing be erected around this site in future.

## **8.0 Corporate landlord implications**

- 8.1 As stated above open spaces such as Woodcross Lane have not historically been considered for fencing programmes due to the extent and financial cost of fencing and gating required on large open space areas.
- 8.2 In the event of an incident, residents to be advised to make contact with the Police and Wolverhampton's ASB Team.

## **9.0 Schedule of background papers**

None



### Key

--- Existing knee rail - 96 m

--- Location for requested new knee rail - 559 m



NORTH

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<b>PROJECT</b> Woodcross Open Space	
<b>DATE</b> March 15	<b>SCALE</b> 1:1000
<b>DWG SIZE</b> A3	<b>DRAWN BY</b> DP
<b>SUBJECT</b> Knee Rail Proposals	<b>REV</b>

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