

Title of Report:	MINOR UPGRADE TO RIVERSIDE PARK 'WETLANDS AREA'
Committee Report Submitted To:	ENVIRONMENTAL SERVICES COMMITTEE
Date of Meeting:	9TH FEBRUARY 2021
For Decision or For Information	FOR DECISION

Linkage to Council Strategy (2019-23)	
Strategic Theme	Protecting and enhancing our natural environment
Outcome	Our natural assets will be carefully managed
Lead Officer	Head of Estates

Budgetary Considerations	
Cost of Proposal	£5,000
Included in Current Year Estimates	No
Capital/Revenue	Revenue
Code	
Staffing Costs	

Screening Requirements	Required for new or revised Policies, Plans, Strategies or Service Delivery Proposals.		
Section 75 Screening	Screening Completed:	No	Date:
	EQIA Required and Completed:	No	Date:
Rural Needs Assessment (RNA)	Screening Completed	No	Date:
	RNA Required and Completed:	No	Date:
Data Protection Impact Assessment (DPIA)	Screening Completed:	No	Date:
	DPIA Required and Completed:	No	Date:

1.0 Purpose of Report

Members have requested that a report with options be brought to Council outlining some cost effective measures that can be implemented to enhance the appearance of the wetlands area (also known as the duckpond) in Riverside Park, Ballymoney.

2.0 Background

In 2013 Council were faced with significant cost to dredge and remove the river silt which had filled the duckpond. After discussions with the Rivers Agency it was decided that a more cost effective and ecologically sound solution was to realign the river at this location back to its' original course leaving the silt in situ as a nutrient rich bedding for water loving plants and a flood alleviation zone. The resulting partnership also included the stocking of the river with trout and salmon fry. As an area designed to accommodate river flooding it would only be suitable for wetland flora. The success of this work can be seen in the number and types of flora and fauna now inhabiting this area. This includes wild garlic, meadowsweet, yellow flag iris, wood anemones, bluebells, cuckoo flower, ragged robin and willowherb. This in turn attracts a wide variety of insect and bird life.

However, members wish to see the area further enhanced so the following options are presented for consideration.

1. Existing path through the wetlands area to be widened and stoned to attract greater use
2. Boardwalk to be installed to provide access to pond (to observe aquatic life and feed ducks) and provide a point of interest.
3. Benches to be located on the high spot to provide a vantage point overlooking the river and pond (again to attract greater use)
4. The high ground (island) encompassed by the stone path to be cut back in height to reduce scrub allowing it to be maintained as rough grassland to improve aesthetics
5. Secondary overflow 'scrape' to be enlarged and extended to the promenade to bring ducks closer to the public
6. Vegetation to be trimmed regularly along railings to prevent encroachment onto the promenade
7. Wildflowers to be planted on embankment between car park and promenade. (Note that the pond area would not be suitable for wildflowers given that it is nutrient rich)

These proposals are plotted on the attached plan. Most of the work can be completed in-house out of the grounds maintenance budget with the additional cost being the Boardwalk at £5,000.

3.0 Recommendation

The Environmental Services Committee are asked to consider this proposal and make a recommendation to Council.

