John Ray Park Consultation

CONSULTATION REPORT SPRING 2016

Portfolio Area: Place
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Executive Summary:

Braintree District Council intends to continue the project to surface new routes across the open space known as John Ray Park in Braintree, and undertook a consultation exercise to learn the public’s thoughts on some proposed routes.

The public were asked for their thoughts on a choice of five routes to improve access across the park and beyond to the town centre, the station, the National Cycle Network and other parts of Braintree. These routes are shown below in the proposals map.

Local people were consulted through various channels from the 22nd February – 29th March 2016, the consultation officially closed on the 29th March with a total of 174 responses received.

This consultation has illustrated that there is a strong support for surfacing one or more paths at John Ray Park, and recommends that Braintree District Council proceeds with the surfacing using the responses and comments received to inform design.
Consultation Aim:
The consultation was undertaken to acquire an understanding of the local use of John Ray Park, and the demand for the proposed routes. This will inform the Council of which routes the public feels are most important to be surfaced, and whether doing so will be likely to have any impact on the amount that people choose to use the park, or the new routes through it to travel elsewhere.

To refine the Council’s approach to improving the open space by listening to the public, recording their comments and referring to them to guide the final design-work.

To ensure that the Council has an accurate reading of public opinion so that it can provide the most effective service to the public in relation to John Ray Park and the proposed routes.

Consultation Process:
The consultation ran from 22nd February – 29th March with the intention of giving everyone who uses John Ray Park or the surrounding locations an opportunity to give their thoughts and opinions on potential improvements. The below list represents the components of the process:

Media – how could people find the questionnaire and give their feedback?
- A dedicated page on the Braintree District Council webpage from the 22nd February to 29th March.
- A letter with the consultation information posted to 5,800 addresses at the launch of the consultation.
- An online questionnaire on the Council webpage.
- Consultation event at John Ray Park – held on the 13th of March.
- Six signs erected at all entrances/exits at John Ray Park that pointed people to the website and the event that was held on the 13th March.

Advertising – how did people know about the consultation?
- An A4 consultation questionnaire was sent to 5,800 addresses, in the surrounding areas of John Ray Park.
- An advisory letter from Braintree District Council informing residents who live near John Ray Park of future works and forthcoming consultation.
- Displayed on BDC front page carousel throughout the duration of consultation
- An article in the Braintree and Witham Times in the 5th of February edition.
- An article was printed in the Daily Telegraph on the 6th of February.
- Online articles from the Daily Telegraph and Metro on the 6th of February.
- Coverage from the Essex Chronicle, Colchester Gazette and Pulse 102 radio.
- Posts on Facebook inviting residents to choose a path – 19th of February.
- Posts on Facebook and Twitter encouraging residents to have their say – March

The consultation formally closed to responses on the 29th of March 2016, allowing the feedback to be analysed and this report of the findings to be produced.
Consultation Findings:
The consultation generated 174 responses during the open period. People responding were given the opportunity to answer on behalf of a family or group of people. Consequently the 174 responses represent the views of 411 people.

Detail on the main responses is given on the following pages, along with a summary of the comments received. The full detail of these can be found in the comment register towards the end of the report.

Tables to detail the responses to the John Ray Park consultation:

Discrepancies in the totals for the numbers of people who responded can be explained, as not everyone responded to every question.

Table A: How often people visit John Ray Park

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>How often?</th>
<th>Number of people</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Daily</td>
<td>57</td>
<td>14.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Almost daily</td>
<td>75</td>
<td>18.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A few times a week</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>24.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fortnightly</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>6.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Only at weekends</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>6.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A few times a month</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>9.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A few times a year</td>
<td>65</td>
<td>16.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Never</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>4.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>405</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The table illustrates that:
- More than half of people who responded use the park a few times a week or more
- Only a small percentage of people never use John Ray Park.

85% of the people who use John Ray Park less than a few times a week, said would use it more if the routes were surfaced
Table B: How people use John Ray Park

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Uses</th>
<th>Number of residents</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>For walking</td>
<td>275</td>
<td>25%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>For getting to the town</td>
<td>243</td>
<td>22.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>For cycling</td>
<td>150</td>
<td>13.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>For walking the dog</td>
<td>131</td>
<td>11.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To spend time with family and friends</td>
<td>115</td>
<td>10.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>For getting to the train station</td>
<td>52</td>
<td>4.75%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>For running</td>
<td>49</td>
<td>4.47%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>For getting to work</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>3.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I don’t use the park</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>1.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>For the play area</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>1.27%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>For getting to Freeport</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>0.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>For engaging with wildlife</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>For getting to our allotment</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>1094</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Residents were given the option to tick all of the suggested options we provided and offer some of their own, these are highlighted in grey.

**Comments made about other reasons why people use John Ray Park**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Reason</th>
<th>Number</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>To access the Flitch Way</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To access the Town</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To access Freeport</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**This table illustrates that:**
- The total number of responses shows the park as being a multi-functional space with most people giving more than one reason for using the park.
- More than 66% of people use the park to walk and 60% use it to get to town.
- The main reason people use John Ray Park is for walking.
Table C: Total score for each pathway surface option

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Rank</th>
<th>Path</th>
<th>Total weighted score</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1st</td>
<td>A</td>
<td>1644</td>
<td>31%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2nd</td>
<td>B</td>
<td>938</td>
<td>17.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3rd</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>881</td>
<td>16.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4th</td>
<td>C</td>
<td>686</td>
<td>12.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5th</td>
<td>D</td>
<td>679</td>
<td>12.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6th</td>
<td>E</td>
<td>480</td>
<td>9.0%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

People were asked to rank the routes in order of importance to them, choosing a route as first priority would score 6 points and last priority, 1 point. The scores above reflect this scoring process.

Table D: Total amount of first choice selections per pathway option

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Rank</th>
<th>Path</th>
<th>No. of people who selected as first choice</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1st</td>
<td>A</td>
<td>158</td>
<td>54.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2nd</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>71</td>
<td>24.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3rd</td>
<td>E</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>8.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4th</td>
<td>B</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>7.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5th</td>
<td>C</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>4.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6th</td>
<td>D</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>1.4%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: The colours indicate a movement in table D from Table C above. Dark grey indicates an increase; light grey is equal to moving down.

These tables illustrate that:

- Path A is selected by more than half of all people who responded as a first choice
- Path F finishes about 50 points (1%) behind Path B, however it has received almost 25% of first choice votes.

Table E: Would surfacing the routes make you use the park more?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Answer</th>
<th>Number of residents</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>345</td>
<td>86.03%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>56</td>
<td>13.97%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>401</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

This table illustrates that:
- The majority of people would use the park more if the paths were surfaced.
Comment analysis

Total number of people who commented: 121 on behalf of 294 people

Comments made about how people would use John Ray Park if new paths were surfaced

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Activity</th>
<th>Number</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>For walking</td>
<td>54</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I would use John Ray Park more</td>
<td>31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>For cycling</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To spend time with family</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>For running</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>For getting to work</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To get closer to nature</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I would not change my use of</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>John Ray Park</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

This table illustrates that:
- People who would use the park more outnumber people who would not change their use by 10 to 1

Further changes residents would like to see

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Change</th>
<th>Number</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Creating a weather resistant surface</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adding lighting</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Increasing disabled access</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adding litter bins</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A surfaced connection to Ridgeway</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Improved appearance of John Ray Park</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Additional benches/seating</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

This table illustrates that:
- People feel that the weather restricts their use of John Ray Park (i.e. wet surfaces/mud)

Recommendation:

This consultation has illustrated that there is strong local support for surfacing routes at John Ray Park. The recommendation of this report is to recognise the majority of respondents who are in favour of creating new routes and to progress with the project prioritising the most popular routes first. Where project funds allow, adding the additional elements the Public have suggested a need for (seating for example).
A register of comments which respondents have given permission to be made public is available overleaf.

Comments Register:

All comments received have been recorded verbatim.

Comments about how people use John Ray Park:
- I use a mobility scooter as I can't walk very far
- When I was working with the charity Mencap we used the park for recreation purposes for the children and young adults. Having tarmac paths will make the park accessible for all. This park will be enjoyed further with these accessible paths
- Access to perimeter of our property on boundaries to Park and on area at top of driveway down to
- Walking to Freeport from London Rd if ground dry using proposed route F
- Our property is on the border of the park
- The next phase of the cycleway down to Skitts Hill
- I work at Freeport and surfacing the route through to Rose Hill would enable me to walk to work all year round - it's currently really muddy in the winter.
- Getting to our allotment
- I use it to cycle in summer months to get to my gym but it is too wet and muddy during the winter.
- TO WALK TO FREEPORT
- NB It is a valued asset for a peaceful walk, enjoying the wildlife and bird watching. We do NOT want cyclists zooming past us as always happens when you get split paths as proposed!
- With the children for playing
- Please consider access for horse riders in your proposals for, as you state, ALL USERS. Provision should be made for these vulnerable users. Thank you.
- Mobility scooter
- To visit my daughter who lives near John Ray Park

Comments about which routes that people feel shouldn't be surfaced:
- Route D
- A,B,C
- If money is from outside of Council budge! Then all routes would be nice. (But if A,B to tarmac land 2015 & steps down to tarmac over bridge, would be sufficient) D, A part of near river would be waste of money.
- Route E is not too bad at least its not muddy. Route D only needs tidying up and shingle or stones. Route B is only for walkers it doesn't actually go anywhere except in a half circle, so most walkers would have proper boots.
- D
- A/C
- All routes should be surfaced as son doing not only increases the possible options for people walking and cycling from simply 'adventurous' leisure to include family and elderly access. Also surfacing tends to better keep people from straying onto more sensitive habitats
- D
- Route A should remain as an informal & leafy, rural path.
- I can't access the information, but my preference if only one can be done is for the steps to the river to be made safer. Please don't surface any of them particularly
where anything joins our garage site at the end of Appletree Walk. We would however welcome the steps down to the river being improved. Thank you.

- A&F
- Questionably why you need steps C if you have path A.
- All equally important
- "A" definitely needs resurfacing in my opinion
- Route D
- D
- No least important, in my opinion there all important
- Don't see the need for route D and B
- THE BOTTOM END OF FLITCH WAY IT IS NOT POSSIBLE TO USE A MOBILITY SCOOTER ON THIS SECTION
- D - I think the existing paths are sufficient in that area of the park.
- If F route was done, we would probably use the other proposed routes
- River end of A , F D
- B,D,F
- D - think the connection across the park should be only the continuation of the path already started. A- parts of A from Skitts Hill to path B should be done, but not the sections of A that loop below it towards the river among the bushes - keep that area natural
- B & D
- A
- Route A
- D
- D as it will be the same route as there is currently just further down the field
- D seems to be unnecessary given the alternative route part built last year.
- B and D, no need for multiple paths
- A only between existing new path and river crossing D, B, A apart from section mentioned above
- Better for my mobility scooter
- Although I have listed F as the most important (as this is the route I use to access the park), I believe that careful consideration should be given to how this is done, so as not to detract from the natural feel of the route. In the winter, the path, as it is, does become very muddy and quite slippery, but I would rather that than a great lump of tarmac, as I think this would take something away from the feeling of the area
- d - is already surfaced? Instead couldn't you run a surface around the back of the field behind the houses from the end of the Ridgeway? Or from the corner of the Ridgeway to the tarmac path laid last year?
- Route B seem an excess

How people would use the park if the paths were surfaced:

- Do more interesting circular walks
- Bike with kids
- I would be able to get out and about more, I have a muscle condition so some of the routes at the moment are quite challenging with the un even surfaces, if the routes at skitts hill and rose hill were done it would make me use the park and the flitch way much more.
- Walk to Freeport - more likely
- Vary my way to town
- If route D was resurfaced I believe that the Hoppit Mead LNR should be extended through to Rose Hill. A, to make the River Area more attractive also as so many locals hate the development in St John Rd this may take the focus off of the development.
- Use the cycle routes on a regular basis
- Take less confident cyclists as part of a cycle project
- Go for a walk, picnic when weather is nice. Take photos, enjoy nature, draw a picture, valuable recreation time with family and friends.
- Possibly take up cycling again
- Walk to Freeport more comfortably in all weathers on route F.
- Having the route surfaced would mean we can take the kids on a round trip on their bikes and walk the dog without having to get muddy and without doubling back on ourselves at some point
- This would make no difference to our use of the space
- I would have to wash my dogs’ feet less. :-)
- I AM AT PRESENT UNAWARE OF THE ROUTES! CANNOT FIND PROPOSALS AT TOP OF PAGE! THIS IS EXTREMELY UPSETTING AS I USE THE PARK QUITE FREQUENTLY AND WOULD LIKE TO SEE SOME IMPROVEMENTS!
- Walk Dog Walk Walk to Town
- Connecting to the cycle route at Godlings Way would remover large parts of the road network which are narrow and dangerous to cyclists such as Orchard Drive, Rifle Hill and Hillside Gardens
- MORE CYCLING, RUNNING AND BIRDWATCHING AND GETTING TO SKITTS HILL
- Walk to town would the most important change
- Walking
- None - you are still not helping people from The Ridgeway, Apple Tree Walk and Peartree Close.
- WALK THE FLITCH WAY & INTO TOWN
- Visit the ducks and explore the environment with our children
- If Mill cut path no longer muddy we would always use it to get to town.
- This would link south and the cycle paths of east Braintree to the Flitch Way, NCN16 and Notley Country Park providing a much safer and quieter way to walk, cycle or use a wheelchair to access these areas.
- Walk along the River and possibly use it to walk to Freeport
- More walking and observing nature in spare time
- I use the park to run through to get to flitch way, I can't do in the Winer
- We did not know this park existed but we are excited at the prospect of it becoming more accessible and used. We feel that with these improvements we would use the park regularly for walks and as a route to town and the flitch.
- Cycling and walking
- encourage my 6 yr old to cycle
- We would definitely walk and cycle from skits hill to flitch way more often if route A was surfaced. The muddy path puts us off especially when walking to work
- Take my children to the park more all year round
- I would walk or cycle the route from Tortoiseshell Way through to Rose Hill/Megs Way to get to my gym or to Freeport.
- If the routes were lit I would use them all year round. I currently follow approximately Path A during summer months to get to work at Warners Mill. A paved and lit path would enable me to do this all year around. It is currently too dark and muddy for me to do this except during BST.
- As the field and steps are so wet, muddy and the steps are dangerous it is difficult to use the steps in the winter
- Walk and cycle along Flitch Way more. Take grandchildren to the park as access would be easier.
- NOT WALK on THEM!! Drive to station car park to walk Flitch Way
- Visit the town more frequently
• Use this as an alternative route when cycling.
• Using play equipment with Grandchildren - and more likely to walk the area when the ground is wet.
• I like to do a circular walk from my home in Station Approach. This would be easier if the path by the mill cut had a more robust surface (it is often muddy).
• I THINK A PATH FROM THE ALLEY AT APPLETREE WALK TO THE STEPS (C) WOULD BE VERY USEFUL AS MORE PEOPLE USE THIS CUT THROUGH THAT THE ONE FROM SKITTS HILL TO STEPS (C) AS YOU CAN SEE FROM THE PATH THAT BEEN MADE BY PEOPLE WALKING THIS ROUTE ALREADY.
• None, I wear footwear according to the conditions
• would be able to take children on their bikes more and walk into town on a safer route (away from main roads) without getting wet & muddy
• Use all year round
• TAKE THE GRANDCHILDREN FOR A WALK ON WET DAYS
• walk, enjoy nature, feed the ducks, pick blackberries, take photographs.
• At the moment during the winter we have to walk the long way round to walk to town or to the flitch as we get very muddy using the field. Surfacing the routes would make things much easier. Also my children like to go to the play area on their scooters but can’t ‘scoot’ on the grass.
• Run, visit the play park and cycle more.
• WALKING FOR LEISURE
• Use the routes for dog walking in wet weather and perhaps winter
• Taking my children to the park via Skitts Hill
• Running & walking more in wet winter months
• Cycle along Fitch Way. Walk around entire park. Picnics during the summer.
• I walk my dog every evening, during winter months the route through the John Ray Park is muddy so I tend to use alternative routes. A good path system would encourage me to this area and away from more built up areas
• Walking as it would be less muddy
• Cycling Running
• Visit the park to walk / take friends with children there
• Walk in wet weather and cycle
• Would be able to cycle along to the flitch way. If it was lit, it would make the walk to the station more pleasant and more likely
• cycle to work
• Horse riding. More provision needs to be made for ALL vulnerable users. You have stated that the paths are for ALL USERS, so please make appropriate provision. Thank you.
• Cycle the whole of the flitch way
• Mobility scooter
• Currently I take the dog for a run along Flitch Way, but drive to the station car park so that I can avoid running with the dog along the road. I would be much more likely to run via John Ray Park if it were better surfaced. My wife would also use it more with the children when walking the dog during the day, as you would not have the problem of the kids getting very muddy boots and then wanting to be carried!!
• Walking and riding with grandchildren
• More walking - Using play equipment with family
• Walk to town more even if weather was bad.
• Walking
• Cycling and running
Further comments:

- There is a lot of rubbish in the park particularly after weekends and around play area, there are no bins to put rubbish in! Also more dog poo bins as still a lot on grass. Some seats/benches would be nice placed at regular intervals in the park - not all near play area as can get quite noisy, adults smoking and older children playing football. Also some form of lighting would be good, as especially in winter it’s very difficult to see path and other walkers and bikes without lights. The walk from station/bus park is quite long around roads compared with the park route. Width of new path is good much better! You now do not have to walk in mud to avoid buggies and mobility scooters

- We would like to see a new path from the steps leading up to the existing path between the houses in Appletree Walk. This is widely used by dog walkers children, it is also a short cut to the train station + town. We also think the steps leading to the river could be improved, as in wet weather they are quite muddy & slippery & are quite dangerous. They are also of uneven heights & uneven spread. If it’s not possible to make a path from Appletree Walk to the steps how about an alternative one from the corner of The Ridgeway to join Route A.

- 1. The steps need sorting out. They are uneven - different widths and heights. Need to be wider. 2. Would it be possible to put seats near and around the outside of the playground? Look forward to seeing the project completed. Thank you for asking locals what they would like.

- As a couple we walk daily to and from the town for work, shopping, railway station, bus station and more. The only route being resurfaced, to benefit us would be E a continuation of the path already done. A large amount of people of all ages use the path from Rifle Hill to the river bridge and onwards to town. Cyclists riding down the hill start with a smooth path then suddenly it deteriorates half way down. The Flitch Way is a great place to walk and cycle but we feel the John Ray Park should be left to be enjoyed by families for other recreational activities. Could the goal post areas be looked at as they are unsafe to use due to deep holes. Thank you.

- My property is the closest to Route A, (approx 10ft) from my garden & garage. I am very much in favour of this new tarmac, it will make better access to town. My only concerns are about future benches & play grounds coming this way closer to nearby houses (Route A). Mainly benches on Route A (close to my property & going along to meet Route B. I feel that if benches were placed along this route it would make hang out for youth & adults (drink and drug) and noise that would affect our area adversely. As seen in other areas of park e.g tarmac area near allotments and tree area other end of Appletree Walk. I am not in favour of benches on this Route A field side. Also some warning sign about cars that use road/path from Skitts Hill to Appletree Walk. Garage block near my property & garage. Which is not a foot path, but a private area for residents of garages, how much extra footfall/cycle traffic would be created this is area. A danger area for people that just ride fast. My car out off my garage, off people not looking. PS would like some feedback on this issues please.

- Scrubby vegetation is a waste of time just have trees, otherwise it's just somewhere people throw rubbish. Could do with rubbish bins. Nice to have some seating. Some lighting from Rifle Hill to St. Johns Avenue.

- If Route F was resurfaced like we were promised in 2011. We would use it more in the winter, but you can’t get on a train or walk round the shops in muddy shoes. This year it has been fairly good weather so it is better than most years. Route A can be wet but it's not too muddy so it could do with a proper surface. The new tarmac route is a waste of money unless you wish to push a pram around in a circle! People from Rifle Hill & Hillside Gardens would ony use the direct route on "E" to get to town & station. People from Goldingham & Mill Park Drive only use "A&F" the other routes only get used in Summer when people don't need footpaths at all as its not muddy. If
you want to spend some money put some benches at various points for the older people who just want to come out for a walk and need a rest now and then or shoppers who have to carry shopping home and would like to stop for a few mins like you have on the new section. From the station Route A. If Mill Park Drive is expanding at the size its going more & more people need a good path to route F.

- A combination of routes A & F would give much greater access to Rose Hill, the current path is very wet & muddy in the winter. If this route is improved it will give a route for both cyclists & walkers from the junction of Tortoiseshell Way & London Road to Rose Hill. From Rose Hill a safe route to the east of town can then be gained via Mill Park Drive & the footbridge over the railway to Freeport, Millennium Way and beyond.

- I choose to walk from Park Drive to work or to the town or Flitch Way, most days. I find the amount of litter is quite appalling. There are cans, bottles (plastic & glass) and other litter strewn in the hedges & pathways. Perhaps a converted sweep, before the vegetation gets to full leaf, might be suggested, possibly a volunteer/community activity. I like to walk along the Mill Cut and feel the wildlife would benefit if the litter was cleared and the waterway improved. Drinking of alcohol and use of drugs is becoming a problem. Not only from the litter but the groups using the seating areas along the cycle path, can be intimidating I have also noticed people drinking, smoking and dogs in the children's play area. People do not heed the signs.

- some lighting along these paths would be a good idea as a woman with small children I will not cross the fields in the pitch black resorting to walking around the road way in the evenings and winter for access to the town and dog walking.

- Route F is important to link to the Cycleway, Freeport and the housing estates to the east.

- I am involved with taking less confident people and improved routes will help cyclists avoid the busy and difficult road network into town from the south of town. As I am less regular user I would suggest that the views of residents in the Goldingham Hinterland be actively sought as they are likely to be the most regular users. Mention is made of 2.5m wide shared use paths. This is at the low end of acceptable width and could lead to conflicts for space & people passing each other. A preferable width would allow two prams and children alongside to path comfortably. Measures should be included to prevent unauthorised access by motor vehicles but design should avoid barriers which involve difficult manoeuvres for prams, cycles and wheelchairs. Bollards are preferred options and barriers should be avoided. Quality of surfacing should be smooth and durable with rolled tarmac on a significant, well-drained base as essential. Essex County Council as highways authority responsible for the transport network should be engaged as partners in the on-going maintenance and management of his valuable transport route in the town.

- riding unicycles, flying kites, bird

- Without route D there is a problem of steps. To go from Skitts Hill to the Station and then on to town used to use a path adjacent to the river Brain and join the lower path at the weir. As that route is now disused people who cannot use steps must go via A,B & D.

- The paths will enable people with lesser mobility to access routes that were not previously accessed by foot or mobility scooter/wheelchair. This will give freedom to residents and visitors to Braintree to explore and enjoy their town further.

- Would improve the overall access to all age groups

- If the route is going to be surfaced, it would also be really useful to have some sort of lighting to make the path accessible during the evenings. This would enable me to use it as a running path.

- We generally support these proposals, especially the links from Skitts Hill to Station & St Johns Ave plus Mill Cut improvements. As a general remark, these works should be accompanied by more litter & dog waste bins as this is a current
requirement in the area. Once complete, staff should patrol area to guard against littering. The existing Hillside Gardens - St Johns Avenue path alongside the playground currently needs improvement/re-surfacing in preference to the proposed new section, D.

- We would prefer that nothing changes. Surfacing might increase use of the park, but we already suffer from increasing noise and would prefer not to have to listen to people shouting and using noisy equipment nearby. Over the summer months teenagers camp out and we have had to go out to them at 3am and ask them to respect our need for sleep. We are particularly keen that we suffer no light pollution.
- Yes, my sons would be able to walk to town in their trainers, and not get caked in mud.
- YES GET A BETTER CODING TEAM TO MAKE THE SITE FUNCTION WELL!
- Would not have to use car to get to town
- The path must link with Skitts Hill in order to provide a complete through path across John Ray Park and providing access to the river bridge avoiding steps provides further and better access to the station, town and Flitch Way on a traffic free or nearly traffic free route. Not linking up with Skitts Hill would represent a giant opportunity missed.
- Walking around the area in the winter and using the park to get to town in the winter, as currently the park is not very pram friendly during this season.
- Having lived on the Ridgeway for 30 something years I would like to see a path from where your 1st effort has finished for the time being to the cut through at the bottom of the Ridgeway. This would allow everyone on this estate to walk to the playgrounds, station, town, dogwalking etc., in the winter without getting muddy. I think you might find that it is from this estate where the majority of people that use the park are from other than the Hillside Gardens/Rifle Hill area. The tendency in the winter is not to use the Park and to walk around the roads.
- THIS WOULD BE A VERY POSITIVE STEP FOR BRAINTREE AND HELP APPRECIATE THE RIVER SIDE
- My family and I use the park regularly to walk into town & walk the dog. We would still use the park if this work wasn't done but by resurfacing these paths it would make access easier & less muddy in the Winter months. My fear was that it would take up too much of the park & we would lose what was there, however Route A by going behind that tree at the end doesn't 'cut' the path in half as feared. I use the steps regularly as an access onto the Flitch Way & by re-building them would hopefully make them safer.
- There are a couple of areas between the allotments that are used for anti-social behaviour. Originally I believe were supposed to be exercise areas for joggers and children plus seating, but now are very often frequented by drug taking and alcoholic drinking. These gatherings in groups are intimidating, noisy and ugly to hear and see. These areas were a mistake as they are misused and I think should be removed to remove the problem
- I already use the Flitch Way a great deal and extending the usable path down to Rose Hill would be extremely useful for me and my family
- Can something please be done about the drunks/junkies that gather near the path by the allotments.
- What is going to happen to the allotments at the Skitts Hill and Mill Drive roundabout? Will natural habitats be protected?
- Yes - I am 82, have lived in The Ridgeway since 1974. I am fed up with having to walk through mud whenever it rains. We badly need a proper path!
- The paths should be made safer by providing lighting; this will encourage people use the railway station and trains more often.
- For safety reason I think this a great idea. More people will use the paths rather than lone walkers feeling vulnerable
• How much longer will the Mill Cut be ignored?
• I am the Sustrans route ranger for NCN 16 and the co-ordinator for the Braintree area and am very aware of how difficult it is to safely get from NCN16 and the Station across to south east Braintree especially on bicycle. I hope there is enough funding to build most of these routes.
• As residents of Megs Way, we would like you to consider a zebra crossing over Skitts Hill by the allotments to create a safe route to the park. We feel this especially important for children of Megs Way, Saxon Bank and Mill Park as they have no playgrounds on those estates. We also would like you to consider within your budget, resurfacing the pathways that run alongside Megs Way and the River Brain as they would provide our access to John Ray park and are currently uneven and unlit.
• resurface and repair existing paths and steps also you could put some up lighting light in the paths on the edges of the paths
• re-introduce allotments adjacent to F to reduce the waiting time for allotments. for the area the benefits outweigh any other option for the local environment.
• We have lived on the Fenlands estate for 16 years and have been wishing for the shortcut from skits hill to the station to be tarmacked for a very long time. My husband has been diagnosed with Parkinson's and it would be fantastic to be able to take him for long walks along the surfaced paths from skits hill to the Flitch way. At the moment it is too muddy and unsafe to do this.
• Really looking forward to using the new paths!
• I AM PARTLY DISSABLED AND IT WOULD HELP ME TO SEE MORE OF THE COUNTRYSIDE.
• Work was started on a bridge near to the weir some years ago but this was abruptly stopped. it would be really useful if this could be widened and then the remaining footpath towards Rose Hill either terraced or covered with compacted gravel or similar substance suitable for cycling over.
• In the winter months, the existing route is too muddy to walk through.
• Does this Council not have anything better to do than waste rate payers money on such frivolous vanity projects that destroy the peacefulness of riverside walks and are to the detriment of flora and fauna!!
• The main route used by 95% of users is Riffle Hill to the Train station (E). This should be lit and resurfaced at the bottom of the hill (proposed as E) as this is very uneven and dangerous. The walk way around the new flats which was lit by lamp posts (when the pool was in use) has not been lit for a few years now and lots of people avoid it due to the darkness. The other routes that are proposed (D,B,F and possibly A) are a waste of public money in my opinion and the recent work to build the path east has been a total waste of money and I have only seen a handful of people use this. As previously stated 95% of people use the route from Riffle hill to the train station and this should be the top priority for both paving works as well as lighting.
• Although I agree that the mill cut needs tidying up, please would you take care to preserve the slightly ‘wild’ feel so that the wildlife (ducks, other birds, voles etc) are not disturbed. They are one of the great pleasures of walking there. Thank you.
• If the Surface of the park was made to the rubber flooring we would be able to use it all season as in the winter it is too muddy.
• it would be nice if wheelchair users were accommodated a little better.
• I think this is a great idea to improve an area that is used by lots of families. This would also make the area more accessible by wheelchair users, ie elderly relatives.
• Lighting should be provided specially from station to Hillside Gardens for safe night time walking in winter months at present most existing light between station and river bridge not working
• THE PATH FROM RIFLE HILL TO ST JOHN AVENUE WOULD BENEFIT FROM SOME FORM OF LIGHTING AS IT IS USED BY DOZENS OF PEOPLE AS A
ROUTE TO WORK/SCHOOL/TOWN/STATION AND IS NOT A GOOD PLACE TO BE WALKING AFTER DARK OR IN THE EARLY WINTER MORNINGS

- 'C' steps get quite muddy in wet weather making them difficult/dangerous to use, limiting access to the main field. 'A' being surfaced would enable walking the dog in wet weather as there is still a permanent surface to walk on, whilst allowing access to the main field from existing tarmac section from station/end of Flitch Way to current bridge over river, at the bottom of steps 'C'. Having a permanent path to walk on would enable a 'circular' walk round the site.
- I prefer to walk on made paths in wet weather.
- i would not use this area due to severe mobility problems.
- If F is built, this together with the existing path up to the station requires lighting as it is all but unusable Autumn and Winter evenings. Doesn't even have to be lamp posts if there is concern about cost and light pollution - just some pillar lights along the pathway. Also needs litter bins along these paths and end benches/seating areas along the route.
- Please do route F even if bridge isn't replaced, anything will be better than nothing.
- Easier to push the push chair.
- The potential route F opens up the station to commuters who cycle from east Braintree and also continue the west - east link from Flitch Way. Whilst the further surfacing of such as route A would make the park a more attractive place to cycle.
- All improvements to the park will be a significant improvement for its use and for the local community. Making it more user friendly and providing short cuts to the Town and station will encourage walking and cycling and reduce traffic and encourage exercise. Path F needs improvement as it gets waterlogged!
- This scheme will be convenient for me, but I can see it being very beneficial to those wishing to walk to town and the station for work in pleasant and peaceful surroundings.
- Whatever is done, please look after it not like before with the lovely deck and the park space. It was vandalised as nobody monitored it, wasting lots of good work,
- Don't forget about lighting, definitely required, particularly around the bridge.
- There is no reason for cyclists and horse riders to share facilities. There are not nearly enough bridleways around Braintree. All vulnerable users deserve equal consideration and provision. We are all tax payers. Thank you.
- It would be nice to tidy up route F if any other was taken as it needs it.
- Please don't turn too much of the green space into new paths! I like running on the grass but not on the muddy route F.
- I would like to see by the river made good.
- With regards to the steps, they only want power washing and are just muddy because there is no current tarmac from the park.
- It would be really useful to have a path from the end of the Ridgeway across the field as this is the way a lot of people walk to town or the station from the houses in The Ridgeway/Strawberry/Orchard Drive/Appletree/Peartree Close. I think this would encourage lots more people to walk instead of driv