

CLIMATE, BIODIVERSITY & PLANNING COMMITTEE

Date: Tuesday, 15 February 2022

Title: Lake & Country Park – Review of Watercourses

Contact Officer: Maintenance & Environmental Services Officer - Angus Whitburn

Background

The following was agreed at full council on the 6th of December 2021;

‘Complete a full review of watercourses of riparian ownership and set a program of works to ensure they are cleared and maintained’.

It was also agreed by Council to complete multiple small management statements for the lake and country park to feed these into the overall management plan of the area. The program of works for the watercourse would be one of those smaller statements.

Current Situation

The audit of Witney Town Council watercourses of riparian ownership is now completed. The watercourse has been neglected for a long time and multiple points in the river have substantially built up with fallen branches and debris. Each area has been grouped into manageable stages based on the logistics of transporting equipment and completing the task.

This is a rolling program that would take approximately 4-6 years to complete and once finished it would be an ongoing system of works to keep watercourses clear.

There is still work to be done on the watercourses that run through Witney Town Councils land. Landowners on the opposite side have substantial tree’s falling into the river which is not the responsibility of Witney Town Council to remove. The council are not in a position to request a trees removal from another landowner.

Environmental impact

Having declared a Climate Change Emergency at its Council meeting on 26 June 2019 – with this in mind Councillors should have due regard to the environmental impact of any decisions they make with regard to its facilities and services it operates.

Risk

In decision making Councillors should give consideration to any risks to the Council and any action it can take to limit or negate its liability.

If continually left unmanaged these sections of the river will continue to accumulate branches and debris further obstructing the flow of the river.

Financial implications

Described here or as stated in the report above.

- An increased budget for equipment hire has been requested for next financial year to cover the need of forestry equipment.

Recommendations

Members are invited to note the report and progress to date.