

Public Petition - Save the Promenade in Crosby Coastal Park

We the undersigned petition the council to save the Promenade in Crosby Coastal Park and the Multi-use Path on top of it by clearing the sand from its top surface, removing the sand from the beach side of the revetment, and restoring its surface, railings and signage.

It is the official policy of Sefton MBC's Cabinet and of Green Sefton to keep the promenade clear of sand, but Green Sefton struggle to do so within their budget and resources of manpower and machinery. There is therefore a kind of unofficial policy of neglect which has intensified over recent years. Sand dunes have built up on both sides of the seawall/promenade. Sand covers the existing Multi-use Path for pedestrians, cyclists, wheelchair users, etc. on top of the promenade, in particular between the point on the prom where it is joined by the access path from Blucher Street car park past the water treatment works, and a point opposite Crosby Leisure Centre at Mariners Road.

The Council's 'Vision' for the future of Crosby Coastal Park up to 2030 included proposals for a new inland Multi-use Path in the Marine Park between Mariners Road and Cambridge Road ('Zones D and E'). The Seafront Residents' Action Group (SRAG) and others have long campaigned for the Council to keep the promenade in good repair, and its existing Path open, and free from sand.

SRAG has opposed the new proposed inland Multi-use Path, which is billed as an alternative to the one on the prom, but in the prevailing circumstances is almost certainly going to be a substitute for it. The Council are about to launch an application for planning permission for the new Path, which if allowed would run through the Park between Blundellsands Road West and Cambridge Road, with a section along Endsleigh Road. They consulted on most of it being 3m (10') wide, but their planning application will ask for permission for it to be 4m (13') wide, and as such it would look like a road bisecting and attacking the green space of the Park. The existing Path on the prom is actually wider and potentially safer for multiple use, and is further away from residences, but its true dimensions are partially concealed by sand.

A retired engineer whose company used to contract with the Council to keep the sand away from the seawall by moving it to the mean low tideline has proposed that a reputable firm or firms could remove the dune from the beach and clear the dunes from the top of the prom for free or at little cost, provided they could retain the sand themselves for recycling. It could be done in a manner that would create minimal disruption to the general public, though it would require planning for the necessary logistics and contractual arrangements.

In August 2021 SRAG alerted the Council and suggested meetings between Councillors and Officials with representatives from the company or companies potentially involved. Green Sefton have said that this proposal is not feasible and is undesirable. SRAG are continuing to press for its feasibility to be properly considered. It is clearly desirable in the short term, though there would be heavy machinery working on the beach and lorries removing the sand for a period.

Undertaking this work would remove the dangers now posed by hidden hazards such as wire at ankle level, half-buried signage and broken fencing. It would potentially reduce the sand blow into the Marine Lakes, obviating or mitigating the need to dredge it from time to time.

The existing promenade route is scenic and preferable to an inland alternative route, whether for leisure or commuting. It runs alongside the iconic statues of Antony Gormley's 'Another Place'. It has recently been adopted by the Secretary of State for the Environment as part of the new National Trail, the England Coast Path. It needs to be kept open, not least to prevent roll back of the Trail towards seafront residences.

Green Sefton say that in advance of any formal discussion with sand winning companies that an Environmental Impact Assessment would be required to address the impact on coastal habitats and species in the wider Liverpool Bay, River Mersey and Sefton Coast; and it would need to be assessed by Natural England as the site has multiple local, national and international scientific and nature designations. So be it. The Park was created before the designations were made. Where there is a will there is a way.

They also say that a Feasibility Study by an external consultant would be required which has cost implications.

The offer is of free or low cost sand removal. We ask the Council to consider whether to undertake and fund the necessary Environmental Impact Assessment and Feasibility Study.

The dunes in front of Waterloo and Brighton-le-Sands have formed relatively recently in front of a densely populated residential area. They have at least in part been made by human intervention, including fencing, planting and the deposit of used Christmas trees. The considerations that apply should take into account all the other benefits of a scenic route for walking and cycling along the coast and through an amenity park which has become a hybrid of amenity and natural enclave, before dismissing an idea whose time has come through a chain of circumstances. These beachside sandhills of the Marine Park are hardly a genuine part of the much more important and valuable dunescape of the Sefton coast, which is the largest in England and runs for 12 miles to their north. They are a recently formed small adjunct to it.

The promenade was created between February 1969 and July 1973 as part of the 'seaside improvements' which created the Marine Park part of Crosby Coastal Park. It was funded at considerable expense by Crosby Borough out of local funds and it is a key asset of green infrastructure which should be cherished. No part of it ought to be buried and abandoned by its successor Local Authority.

We petition the Council to SAVE THE PROM!