



**SURREY COUNTY COUNCIL'S
LOCAL COMMITTEE IN
EPSOM & EWELL**

**SAFE ROUTES TO SCHOOLS
PUBLIC FOOTPATH 14
IMPROVEMENT**

18th JULY 2005

KEY ISSUE:

The dedication of Epsom and Ewell High School land to alternate sides of PF 14, for the purposes of widening the path to improve pupil safety and self confidence on the journey to both Epsom and Ewell High and Danetree Junior School, in support of Epsom and Ewell SRtS Strategy.

SUMMARY:

This report seeks approval to undertake a deed of dedication of Epsom and Ewell High School land, running alongside public footpath 14, between Scotts Farm Road and Ruxley Lane. This scheme will allow for the footway to be widened (see ANNEXE 1) which will improve sight lines, and in doing so, will hopefully reduce the level of anti-social behaviour towards both school pupils and members of the public.

OFFICER RECOMMENDATIONS:

The Committee is asked to agree that:

- i. approval is given for Epsom and Ewell Local Transportation Service to progress the deed of dedication for Epsom and Ewell High School land, running alongside PF 14, between Scotts Farm Road and Ruxley Lane as shown in ANNEXE 1.

1. INTRODUCTION and BACKGROUND

- 1.1 PF 14, between Scotts Farm Road and Ruxley Lane is a heavily used route for pupils from Epsom and Ewell High School, which forms the boundaries of the path, and for Danetree Junior pupils, travelling from the Watersedge estate.
- 1.2 PF 14's sight lines are not ideal. Two bends in the path, combined with high, narrow fences and overgrown vegetation, create a tunnel effect, which can be intimidating to pedestrians. Width restrictions also make cycling down the path dangerous and with a secondary school so close by, some cyclists will use this footway despite the restriction.
- 1.3 There is also a history of antisocial behaviour on PF 14 with vandalism of private and school fences, and street lighting. Trespass into school grounds and subsequent vandalism and theft of school property occurs with access gained from the path and CCTV has proven ineffective. A high level of litter dropping and dog fouling are a problem in this area and, with so narrow a path, is difficult to avoid.
- 1.4 In July 2004, Epsom and Ewell High School pupils were surveyed for their perception of danger points on the school journey. Of all responses, 65% mentioned alleyways, describing them as '*Dark, secluded and overgrown*'. Pupils also expressed a 'Fear of assault'.
- 1.5 In response to this overwhelming result, discussions were opened with the school regarding the long 'alleyway' that ran between school grounds. Mr Hutchinson, the school head teacher expressed an interest in donating school land to widen PF 14, not only to accommodate cyclists, but also to improve sightlines and hopefully reduce anti-social behaviour.
- 1.6 Subsequent to this meeting, Epsom and Ewell High School has developed a school travel plan and had planning permission for the installation of a 150-cycle compound. The school is committed to the promotion of pupils' safety on the journey to school, and to the promotion of cycling.

2. CONSULTATIONS

- 2.1 The head teacher of Epsom and Ewell High School has been met with on several occasions and the plans have been walked through with the school's property manager. Pupils have been consulted through surveys and the school's school council have been involved in both developing the school travel plan and plans for the PF 14 scheme. School governors have been consulted by the head teacher and the school travel group at Danetree Primary

School have been made aware of the scheme. All parties felt that PF 14 was an area in need of improvement.

3. PROPOSED SOLUTIONS

- 3.1 It is proposed that a deed of dedication for Epsom and Ewell High School land, running alongside public footpath 14, between Scotts Farm Road and Ruxley Lane will supply width enough to construct a 3m wide footway. This will increase sight lines and allow for pedestrians and parents with pushchairs to flow comfortably in both directions, and allow for any cyclist should they choose to take this route.
- 3.2 Lighting will also be upgraded as a part of this scheme and with columns running down the middle of the footway, fold-down columns will be installed to assist with maintenance and repairs.
- 3.3 A new fence will be put in place in conjunction with this scheme, using funds gained through the development of a school travel plan. This will deter trespassing and subsequent theft and vandalism of school property.

4. POTENTIAL PROBLEMS

- 4.2 By widening PF 14, it is possible that it will become a more desirable route for motorised two wheelers. Barriers at either end are not an ideal solution, due to their restriction on double buggies, however police are already aware of motorcycle issues in the area and will continue to monitor the situation.

5. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 Design and construction costs will be met by the SRtS devolved capital allocation for 2005/2006. The construction of the new fence will be paid for by Epsom and Ewell High School through their school travel plan grant of approximately £12,000.

6. SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT IMPLICATIONS

- 6.1 This scheme will promote the use of sustainable travel, through increased access and safety for pedestrians and cyclists.

7. CONCLUSION AND REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

- 7.1 With over 1000 pupils at Epsom and Ewell High School and almost 500 attending Danetree Junior School, PF 14 is a popular cut through for both pedestrians and cyclists. However, the path also attracts negative attention with high levels of vandalism and littering and many pupils feeling vulnerable when using this route.
- 7.2 With Epsom and Ewell High School prepared to give a deed of dedication for the land to either side of the path, this is an ideal opportunity to widen it, creating improved pedestrian flows and sightlines. These improved sightlines, coupled with a higher level of use and improved lighting, it is hoped will deter anti-social behaviour.

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BACKGROUND PAPERS: November 2003 Local Committee Report

ANNEXE 1

Public Footpath 14 Widening Scheme

