



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

**STONES ROAD TUNNEL
STRENGTHENING**

27th FEBRUARY 2006

KEY ISSUE:

Approval is sought to enter into a works agreement with Network Rail to carry out strengthening works at Stones Road tunnel to facilitate its use as an alternative to the adjacent footbridge at a later date. The agreement would follow the nationally agreed format for local authority railway bridges. It covers the conditions under which the works can be carried out and the future ownership and maintenance liability arrangements.

SUMMARY:

Linton Lane is a subway under the railway line adjacent to the footbridge, which carries Footpath 82 between Stones Road and Miles Road.

The subway was filled with earth when the footbridge was first installed.

Surrey County Council's Structures Group has been investigating the feasibility of using the subway to accommodate the footpath as the footbridge is deteriorating and has a limited life.

During the feasibility investigations, it was noted that the subway was cracking and, as a result, it was propped and weight restricted by Network Rail, who own the structure.

Network Rail need to lift the weight restriction by the 3rd of June in order to take heavy loads over the bridge for some track renewal work.

Without any input from Surrey County Council, Network Rail would infill the subway with concrete as the easiest and most economical method of strengthening it.

To avoid this happening, it is proposed to fund a strengthening scheme for the subway that will facilitate its future use as an alternative to the footbridge, which could then be removed at a later date.

OFFICER RECOMMENDATIONS:

It is recommended that approval is given to enter into a works agreement with Network Rail to carry out the works.

1. INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

- 1.1 Footpath 82 crossed underneath the railway line in a brick arch, built in 1859 when the railway line opened.
- 1.2 In 1911, the land at each side of the railway line was in different ownership and, as the subway was no longer needed, it was partially infilled with soil.
- 1.3 In 1934, Epsom Urban District Council, who owned the land at the west of the subway considered re-opening the subway as they were considering purchasing land at the east side.
- 1.4 Due to the costs involved, they later decided not to pursue this and in 1937 they erected a footbridge adjacent to the subway on the north side.
- 1.5 In 2001, WS Atkins were commissioned by Epsom and Ewell Borough Council to consider the viability of using the subway to provide improved public access.
- 1.6 Railtrack were sent a copy of the report which included details of structural defects and decided to remove the fill from the subway in 2002 order to inspect it fully.
- 1.7 It was subsequently decided that the scheme would be too expensive for Epsom and Ewell to pursue from their budget.
- 1.8 Surrey County Council's Structures Group, however, who would eventually be responsible for replacing the adjacent footbridge, got involved at this stage and were interested in pursuing the scheme effectively as a bridge replacement.
- 1.9 It was during the course of site investigation needed for the feasibility design that the structure was observed to have deteriorated significantly over a relatively short period and Network Rail propped it.
- 1.10 This has had a dramatic effect on the timescales for this project and works to the subway now need to take place before the 3rd of June 2006, as Network Rail require it to be up to strength by that date to carry the heavy loads associated with planned track renewal works.

2. ANALYSIS

- 2.1 It is not practicable to replace the existing footbridge with a new footbridge as the ramps would be unfeasibly long (in excess of 100m).
- 2.2 If SCC does not pursue this scheme, Network Rail will infill the structure with concrete. This would leave SCC in a very difficult position as the footbridge reaches the end of its useful life and an alternative is needed.

3. CONSULTATIONS

- 3.1 As you would expect, the scheme is well supported. It offers improvements to all parties affected.
- 3.2 This scheme is supported by Network Rail. The timescale is very short for all their approval processes but they have been very co-operative.
- 3.3 It is well supported locally, as evidenced by the previous study commissioned by Epsom and Ewell Borough Council.
- 3.4 It has been one of the top priorities of the Cycle Forum for many years. (The new route will not be a cycleway as the width and approach alignments are not suitable but dismantled access will be improved by the elimination of steps.)

4. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 4.1 The scheme would be funded by the capital bridge strengthening budget as it is essentially a replacement for the adjacent footbridge, which is owned by Surrey County Council. There is always a level of risk associated with the works under a railway line but these are considered manageable.

5. SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 This scheme will facilitate the use of an existing structure and so be much more sustainable than a new structure would be.

6 CRIME & DISORDER IMPLICATIONS

- 6.1 There will be significant benefits in this area, as the bridge attracts vandalism. Supermarket trolleys and other missiles are thrown down onto the railway and this is a safety concern for Network Rail. With the subway forming the footpath route, the line will be more secure as there will be no access from overhead.

7 EQUALITIES IMPLICATIONS

- 7.1 The new pedestrian route will have no steps and gentle gradients and so will be accessible to all users in contrast to the existing bridge which is 50 steps high.

8 CONCLUSION AND REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

- 8.1 The route will provide an improved facility for all users and will be accessible to all.
- 8.2 It provides a solution to the replacement of the deteriorating footbridge while also offering a considerable improvement for all users of the footpath. It is likely to encourage greater use of the route as mobility impaired users and cyclists will have access.

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BACKGROUND PAPERS: None