



**MILLBROOK, GUILDFORD
PROPOSED PEDESTRIAN &
ENVIRONMENTAL IMPROVEMENTS**

**SURREY COUNTY COUNCIL
LOCAL COMMITTEE (GUILDFORD)**

27th SEPTEMBER 2007

KEY ISSUE

This report recommends approval of an improvement in pedestrian facilities and associated environmental measures in Millbrook, Guildford.

SUMMARY

The project is designed to address problems of crime and the fear of crime and high maintenance costs while improving provision for pedestrians and enhancing the environment. It proposes widening of the existing pedestrian crossing, filling in of the subway under Millbrook and creation of a new public open space.

Report by

LOCAL HIGHWAYS MANAGER

Surrey Atlas Ref.

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GUILDFORD B.C. WARD(S)

HOLY TRINITY

COUNTY ELECTORAL DIVISION(S)

GUILDFORD SOUTHEAST

OFFICER RECOMMENDATIONS

The Committee is asked to agree:

- (i) that, subject to the necessary funding being secured, the scheme as described in this report and the associated drawing be approved in principle.
- (ii) that officers be authorised to proceed with any necessary actions including traffic orders, advertisements, notices of intent and any necessary legal agreements in order to deliver this project.

INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

- 1 The Pedestrian Subways Working Group was established as a partnership project group of officers from Guildford Borough Council (GBC), Surrey County Council (SCC) and Surrey Police under the auspices of the Guildford Community Plan in 2003. It surveys all subways in the Borough and prepares an ongoing action programme for projects with works prioritised, primarily based on identified crime and anti-social behaviour levels and assessments of condition.
- 2 Works have been completed to date at:
 - Shawfield Road railway embankment subway, Ash
 - Pirbright Arch
 - Friary Passage, Guildford
 - York Road subway, Guildford
- 3 Funding has been obtained from various sources for these projects, including GBC's Minor Capital Schemes programme, SCC Structures maintenance budgets and developer contributions through Section 106 Agreements on planning permissions.
- 4 The next project to be progressed is the subway under the A281 Millbrook. This has the highest recorded level of crime of all town centre subways and features high on the list of problem sites in the periodic Fear of Crime Surveys undertaken by the Safer Guildford Partnership. It also suffers ongoing maintenance issues, including (in common with many subways) lighting and graffiti problems, but also problems of drainage and flooding reflecting its low-lying position close to the River Wey.
- 5 A pelican crossing was installed across Millbrook some 7 years ago. This duplicates the subway, but provides for use by disabled users who have difficulty with the subway ramps as well as avoiding the problems of crime and fear of crime referred to above. The crossing is very heavily used, and in order to avoid traffic congestion on this key radial route close to the gyratory system the pedestrian phase cannot be allowed to operate as frequently as might be possible on a more lightly trafficked road.

- 6 As part of the proposed Friary Extension off-site highway works, it is planned to move the bus station temporarily to the Portsmouth Road car park site. This will substantially increase the number of pedestrians crossing Millbrook at this point. Widening of the pedestrian crossing, allowing more pedestrians to cross during each 'green man' phase, has already been identified for funding under the Friary Section 278 Agreement.
- 7 The area of the existing pelican crossing is cluttered with subway ramps and railings, street furniture including guard rails, lighting columns and traffic signal equipment. In the past, criticism has been received in written questions to the Committee seeking improvements to the townscape in this area.

OBJECTIVES

- 8 The objectives of the proposed package of measures are therefore as follows:
- Removal of the source of the highest crime levels of all the town subways as identified by Surrey Police statistics
 - Addressing ongoing problems of flooding and maintenance of the subway
 - Widening of the existing Millbrook pedestrian crossing to provide a safer crossing with greater pedestrian capacity and therefore improved linkages to the commercial / business centre of Guildford
 - Creation of environmental improvements with new public open space on both sides of Millbrook at the foot of the High Street.

PROPOSALS

- 9 An illustrative sketch proposal drawing of the proposals, as used for the consultation currently under way (see below), will be on display at the meeting of the Committee

Closure of the Subway

- 10 The crossing cannot be widened while the subway remains in place as the stairways, ramps and other structural elements effectively obstruct this. SCC's structure group has approved the closure of the subway and will fill the void with concrete and remove the ramps and other obstructions above ground level. Budgetary provision has been made for this as part of the SCC structures group capital funds for 2007/08. This element of the project is estimated to cost £215,000.

Widening of the Pedestrian Crossing

- 11 The existing pelican crossing has a width of 2.8 metres. It is proposed to extend this to 6.5 metres thereby increasing the numbers of pedestrians which can cross during the 'green man' phase. It is also recommended that the pelican be upgraded to a 'puffin' crossing. This will provide microwave detectors which can extend the green time for pedestrians in the event of heavy pedestrian flows, or where an elderly or infirm pedestrian is crossing slowly.
- 12 Pedestrian counts were conducted in the subway and across the pedestrian crossing in early September to inform the detailed design.
- 13 In view of the close proximity of a second pelican crossing across the High Street, it is recommended that this crossing, too, be upgraded to 'puffin' control. The indicators on pelican and puffin crossings are different, and it would be confusing and therefore possibly have safety implications to have two different forms of crossing in such close proximity.
- 14 This element of the project is estimated to cost some £70,000, including the cost of repositioning the CCTV camera in this location. As noted above, this element of the project was to have been funded by the Friary development under a S106 agreement. The Friary project, however, has not come forward to the timescales originally predicted, and therefore the S106 funding for the widening of the pedestrian crossing is not yet available. The subway cannot be closed unless the widening of the crossing can be achieved at broadly the same time. GBC officers therefore intend to report to GBC's Executive Committee in November seeking Minor Capital Schemes funding.

Environmental Improvements

- 15 Removal of the subway ramps etc. creates an opportunity for a comprehensive review of paving material, street furniture (including relocation of the existing CCTV camera) and hard and soft landscaping in the area, effectively creating a new public open space. GBC officers are preparing illustrative sketch proposals for improvements to the area to follow on from the subway closure and crossing widening. These will be on display at the meeting.
- 16 At present there is no funding for the full environmental improvement scheme. £150,000 for these works has been secured under the S106 Agreement for the Station View development, approved in 2006. This is not triggered until the development commences. Failing this GBC will seek other S106 funds as a fallback position.
- 17 In the interim, it is proposed to carry out temporary improvement works at low cost utilising existing funds available to GBC, with items that can be reused in the final scheme when implemented.

CONSULTATIONS

- 18 Debenhams are part of the project team and are fully supportive of the proposals in principle. Their continued participation will ensure that Debenhams' specific needs are considered as the detailed design develops. Both GBC and SCC legal services have been consulted and have confirmed that there are no legal restrictions on the closure of the subway.
- 19 Public consultation on the project is being carried out as this report was in preparation. A letter and sketch drawings have been sent to a range of local organisations, including:
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|-----------------------------------|-------------------------|
| The Guildford Environmental Forum | Arriva |
| Friary Ward Residents Association | National Trust |
| Affected Town Centre businesses | Legal and General |
| Town Centre Management Group | The Guildford Society |
| Holy Trinity Amenity Group | Guildford Tour Guides |
| Guildford Business Forum | Guildford Access Group |
| Guildford Farmers Market | Guildford Walking Forum |
- 20 In addition a press release will be issued for information and on site notices will be displayed in September to inform the passing public. The appropriate GBC ward and SCC division Members will also be informed.
- 21 A form has been provided for comments. The proposals are also shown on the GBC web pages, and comments can also be submitted online. The closing date for comments was 17 September 2007. The outcome of this will be verbally reported at the meeting of the Committee.
- 22 In addition the project will be subject to the normal statutory requirements for advertising of alterations to pedestrian crossings, as well as independent Safety Audit.

VALUE FOR MONEY & FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 23 Closure and filling of the subway together with associated removal of ramps and walls above ground level is estimated to cost some £215,000. This will be met from funds allocated for maintenance of highway structures. Closure of the subway will result in savings in future revenue maintenance costs for the subway.
- 24 Funding for the pedestrian crossing works and repositioning of the CCTV camera (together estimated at some £70,000) and the environmental improvements will be sought by GBC, using minor capital schemes funding, developer contributions or other external funding sources.

EQUALITIES & DIVERSITY IMPLICATIONS

- 25 This project will benefit people with mobility impairments by providing greatly improved crossing facilities at ground level across Millbrook. There are no adverse implications for other groups.

CRIME & DISORDER IMPLICATIONS

- 26 This project will address both actual and perceived problems of crime and disorder.

SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT IMPLICATIONS

- 27 This project will improve pedestrian accessibility and support the local economy

CONCLUSIONS & REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

- 28 This scheme will meet the objectives of improved pedestrian accessibility and reducing crime and the fear of crime. It will also better link the two sides of the A281 Millbrook, to the benefit of the local economy, while providing a greatly improved environment and reducing street clutter. Appropriate budget provision has been made by SCC for the structural elements of the project, while GBC officers are seeking funding for the remaining elements. The scheme is therefore recommended for approval.

WHAT HAPPENS NEXT

- 29 Consultation will be completed in September 2007. Subject to the approval of this Committee and of the GBC Executive the detailed design will be completed in autumn 2007. SCC intends to commence work on the subway closure in February 2008 with the pedestrian crossing widening works following on immediately thereafter, subject to GBC securing the necessary funding. GBC will then carry out the temporary environmental improvements. The full environmental scheme is subject to funding being secured, and will not take place before 2008/09 at the earliest. This provisional sequence of events should be taken as indicative only at this stage. It will be confirmed once detailed project planning has taken place. It will be important to maintain continuity of this important crossing point while minimising disruption due to the construction activities.

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BACKGROUND PAPERS

None