



**A324 PIRBRIGHT ARCH, PIRBRIGHT
PROPOSED PEDESTRIAN IMPROVEMENTS**

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

10th DECEMBER 2008

KEY ISSUE

This report seeks approval for a minor improvement scheme to benefit pedestrians walking through Pirbright Arch.

SUMMARY

The report sets out details of the history of requests for improvement in this area, and the options which were considered. Details of the proposed scheme are described, and the report recommends that implementation of the scheme be approved.

Report by

LOCAL HIGHWAYS MANAGER

Surrey Atlas Ref.

Page 87, E6

GUILDFORD B.C. WARD (S)

PIRBRIGHT

COUNTY ELECTORAL DIVISION (S)

WORPLESDON

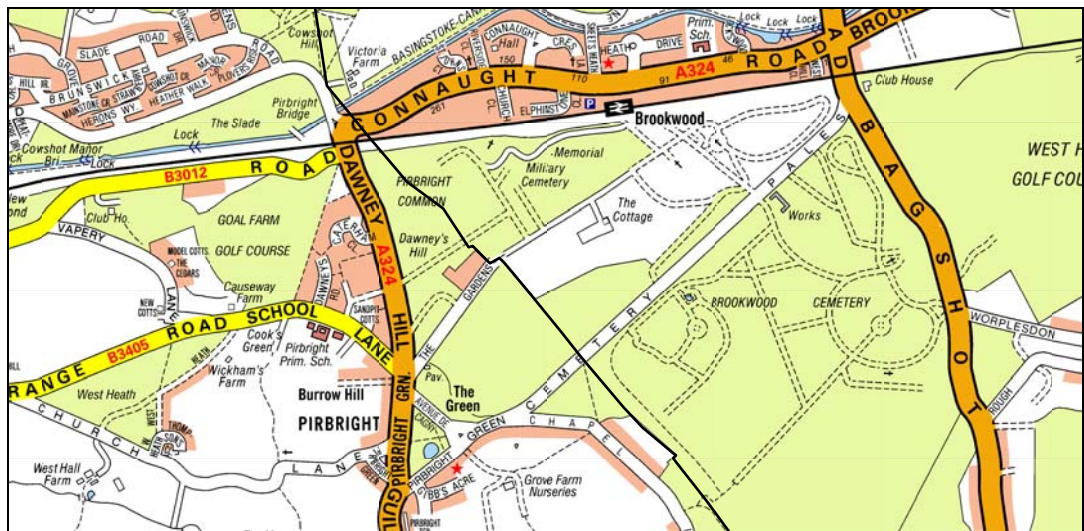
OFFICER RECOMMENDATIONS

The Committee is asked to agree:

- (i) that the scheme shown on the drawing attached as **ANNEXE A** be approved for implementation, and that this be funded as set out in paragraphs 13 and 14.

INTRODUCTION and BACKGROUND

- 1 Pirbright Arch lies on the A324 to the north of Pirbright Village Centre, and connects Pirbright with Brookwood and beyond to West End, Bisley and Woking. The brick arch is owned by Railtrack and carries the main rail line from Hampshire into Waterloo over the A324. The Guildford / Woking borough boundary runs diagonally across the area, with Pirbright, Cemetery Pales and the area up to and including the bridge in Guildford borough, and Connaught Road and Brookwood Crossroads in Woking borough. The bridge has an 11 foot 6 inch height restriction, which is unusually low, particularly for a principal ('A') road. A location plan is shown below. It is not heavily used by pedestrians, but parents and children from the Brookwood area and the Pirbright Army camp use the arch to reach Pirbright School. The arch is narrow and dark and has no footways. The junctions on either side of the arch are traffic signals controlled.



- 2 In 2004 two petitions were received from parents of children attending Pirbright School, and from Pirbright Parish Council and the Brookwood Village Association. These expressed concern at danger to pedestrians, and requested a pedestrian traffic signal phase in order that pedestrians could use the bridge safely. They also requested improved maintenance, e.g. painting and sweeping and improved lighting. Following this SCC and GBC carried out a number of improvements, including cleansing the road, jetting of the drainage system, painting the sidewalls of the arch and installing improved lighting. The Committee agreed that the longer term measures requested be investigated and included in phase 2 of the Pirbright Village Safety Study.

- 3 Following a meeting in September 2005 attended by a number of Councillors and officers, it was agreed that a study into pedestrian safety through Pirbright Arch should be carried out, funded by contributions from the Member Revenue Allocations of Cllr. Mike Nevins and Cllr. Mrs. Elizabeth Compton. The study was duly completed and reported to both the Woking and Guildford Local Committees, on 28 February and 22 March 2007 respectively.
- 4 The report identified 2 options. The first proposed the introduction of a signalled pedestrian phasing through the arch, together with construction of footways through the arch and on either side. To permit pedestrians to go through the arch in safety, an 'all red' phase to vehicles on all arms was proposed. The provision of a Variable Message Sign activated by the signal controller to advise drivers that the pedestrian stage is operating was a possible addition to this option. While beneficial to pedestrians, this would have resulted in considerable additional delays on all three traffic signalled arms predicted as up to 22 minutes in the am peak period. This would have caused traffic to use other less suitable roads such as Church Lane, School Lane and Cemetery Pales, undermining the effects of the traffic calming works recently completed there.
- 5 The second option 2 was the same as Option 1 in all respects except without the signalised pedestrian phase, and therefore would have no material effect on vehicle delays.
- 6 Following consideration of the report, the Woking Local Committee resolved that the final decision on any proposals lay with the Local Committee (Guildford), but agreed inter alia to contribute up to £30,000 towards the cost of Option 2. The Guildford Local Committee resolved that Option 2 be included in the Minor Improvements list for future funding, and welcomed and accepted the part funding of the scheme by the Woking Local Committee.

PROPOSED MAJOR MAINTENANCE

- 7 The A324 Dawney Hill through the arch is included in the programme of major maintenance for 2007/08, including the traffic signal junctions on either side of the bridge. This will involve planing off the existing surfacing and laying new bituminous materials. The road will be closed while these works are carried out. As part of the preparation for this project, officers have re-examined the feasibility study referred to above, and it should be possible to carry out substantial improvements at the same time as the major maintenance, and at a lower estimated cost than if the improvement were carried out as a separate project.
- 9 The proposed scheme is shown on the plan attached as **ANNEXE A**. It comprises construction of footways on each side of the road through the arch. These will have widths of 1.0 metre on the west side, and 0.88 metres on the east. While it would be preferable for pedestrians to have a wider footway on one side of the road only, this would shift the centreline for vehicle movements, and the height restriction, already low, would need to be reduced further. It would increase the likelihood of 'bridge bashing' incidents, and would almost certainly be opposed by Network Rail.

- 10 As this scheme is unusual, officers organised a trial on 24 November 2008 to identify any possible disadvantages. The footway widths were marked out using spray paint, and then cones were placed to guide vehicles through the arch. A Pegasus bus was used to undertake every possible combination of bus movements through the arch, and the trial was completely successful. The only observation was that some larger vehicles negotiated the arch at speeds slower than those currently experienced. This may not be replicated in the permanent scheme but if it did this could be a further advantage in road safety terms. However this may require need minor signal adjustments to accommodate the greater times required to negotiate the arch.
- 11 Subject to approval of the Committee, the scheme will be designed in detail in time to be constructed during the major maintenance works in February 2009. Officers are looking into the possibility of further lighting improvements and / or painting of the arch.

CONSULTATIONS

- 12 No public consultation has been carried out due to the timescales involved, but the scheme has been brought forward in response to public concerns as noted earlier in this report. Surrey Police took part in the trial described above, and support the proposed scheme.

FINANCIAL AND VALUE FOR MONEY IMPLICATIONS

- 13 The scheme cost (over and above the major maintenance works) is estimated at some £25,000. The cost has not been allowed for as part of the Local Transport Plan devolved funding for 2008/09. In practice, however, slipping other schemes in the programme can accommodate this modest cost. The York Road / London Road junction, for example, has an estimated cost of £220,000 and is expected to straddle the financial year-end. A small delay in its completion would easily release the funds necessary to enable the works at Pirbright Arch.
- 14 Due to the short notice, Woking Local Committee will not be able to contribute to the costs in this financial year. Officers are working with the Woking Member Task Group with a view to their contributing £15,000, from their budget for 2009/10.

SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT IMPLICATIONS

- 15 The proposed scheme is intended to address highway safety issues both actual and perceived, and by encouraging walking also has benefits through reduction in congestion and pollution.

EQUALITIES AND DIVERSITY IMPLICATIONS

- 16 This report has no implications for equality and diversity.

CRIME AND DISORDER IMPLICATIONS

17 This report has no implications for crime and disorder.

CONCLUSIONS AND REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

18 This scheme will address a clearly identified need, and is expected to be popular with parents of children living north of the railway line and traveling to Pirbright School. The proposed footway does not meet normal standards, but this is impossible to achieve without reducing the height restriction on the bridge and/or causing considerable traffic congestion. The scheme is considered to be the best that is achievable, and represents very good value for money as a result of being combined with the major maintenance project.

WHAT HAPPENS NEXT

19 Assuming that the recommendation is approved, the scheme will be designed in detail and implemented during the current financial year.

LEAD OFFICER

DEREK LAKE,
LOCAL HIGHWAY MANAGER, (GUILDFORD)
01483 517501

TELEPHONE**BACKGROUND PAPERS**

Guildford Local Committee Reports and Minutes:
❖ 21 October 2004
❖ 22 March 2007

Woking Local Committee Report and Minutes:
❖ 28 February 2007