



**ENVIRONMENTAL IMPROVEMENT  
LADYMEAD AND JOSEPHS ROAD**

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

**10<sup>th</sup> MARCH 2010**

**KEY ISSUE**

This report seeks approval of a proposed environmental improvement at the above location.

**SUMMARY**

This scheme is one of a series of environmental improvements funded by development through negotiated Section 106 agreements. It includes the creation of a small or 'pocket' park within the existing highway and replanting of the roadside verges along the A25 at Ladymead.

**Report by**

GBC HEAD OF PLANNING SERVICES

**Surrey Atlas Ref.**

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**GUILDFORD B.C. WARD (S)**

FRIARY AND ST NICHOLAS

**COUNTY ELECTORAL DIVISION (S)**

GUILDFORD (SOUTH-WEST)

## OFFICER RECOMMENDATIONS

The Committee is asked to agree:

- (i) that the proposed environmental improvement as shown in the plans attached at **ANNEXE 1** be approved for implementation by Guildford Borough Council.

## INTRODUCTION and BACKGROUND

- 1 The Government strategy for improving quality of place is detailed within its 'World Class Places' strategy 2009. This strategy lays out the importance of high quality places where we live, work, and visit, and how quality of place can be a major factor that affects quality of life.
- 2 It is recognised that a high quality public urban environment which provides green space and accessibility has the following benefits:
  - Stimulating and improving the local economy
  - Helps improve physical and mental health
  - Encourages opportunities for social interaction for local communities
  - Reduces crime and fear of crime
  - Encourages walking and cycling
  - Reduces vehicle speeds or use
  - Brings environmental benefits to areas including cooling of air and absorption of atmospheric pollutants
  - Provides the opportunity for people to be closer to nature
- 3 Guildford Borough Council's Environmental Projects team are responsible for delivering a programme of environmental improvements throughout the Borough and Section 106 funding was identified, negotiated and secured from local developments for this project.
- 4 This project supports a range of Guildford Borough Council adopted strategies to improve the quality of our environment including it's the 'Greening the Approaches' Strategy and Cycling and Walking Strategies.
- 5 The A25 Ladymead is a heavily trafficked principal road linking the northern approaches to Guildford town centre with the A3 trunk road. The dominant land uses in the area are offices, superstores and other commercial properties. There are however residential properties in immediately adjacent roads such as Josephs Road. Ladymead also provides for more sustainable transport modes such as walking and cycling, and has been identified as being a route with the potential to encourage cycling and walking, reducing dependence upon the car and promoting healthy living.
- 6 Currently the space at Josephs Road has no function, is becoming degraded and falling into disrepair. As a consequence it is suffering from abuse by drivers illegally using it as a shortcut to the A25. The current layout precludes any positive improvement or use.

## THE PROPOSED IMPROVEMENT

- 3 The overall principle of the proposed improvement of Ladymead is to provide more physically and visually segregating elements between pedestrians and cyclists and vehicular traffic. The introduction of low maintenance, drought tolerant meadow planting along the full length of the verges will also provide a colourful and vibrant entrance into Guildford whilst contributing to the Surrey Road Verge Habitat Action Plan 2008-2013 adopted by the Surrey Biodiversity Partnership by providing opportunities for wildlife to re-colonise and flourish. These improvements have been designed so that its management will meet road safety requirements, provides cost efficiency but favours biodiversity and landscape.
- 4 The creation of the Josephs Road park will provide a rejuvenated public space which contributes positively to the location and the needs of the local community for a healthier and safer environment. Higher quality public realm is widely acknowledged as encouraging a stronger local economy and a feeling of community and pride in the local surroundings. It also returns the space to a human scale, where the cars become less dominant and restores the local character in this small residential street where it has been lost. The introduction of trees and shrubs plays a vital role in the absorption of pollutants, noise and dust particles improving the quality of life for those that live, work, or pass through the area.
- 5 The new pocket park will be designed and constructed using similar paving materials and planting patterns to that recently used in an environmental improvement at Woodbridge Meadows, ensuring a cohesive and integrated approach to the design of open spaces in this area. The planting will comprise of 2 Small leaved lime trees (*Tilia cordata*), 6 multi stemmed Snowy mespilus trees (*Amelanchier lamarkii*), Sweet box shrubs (*Sarcococca confusa*), *Skimmia japonica* Rubella shrubs and mixed Spring, Summer and Autumn flowering herbaceous perennials and shrubs. The grass will be a combination of drought and shade tolerant turf with areas of wildflower turf. The redirected footpath / cycle path will be a buff coloured tarmac and granite setts will be used at footpath junctions to add decorative interest. Square timber bollards will be used to prevent vehicle entry into the park and new crossing points with tactile paving will be introduced to facilitate pedestrian use.

## OPTIONS

- 6 Initial feasibility studies concluded that the planting of street trees within the verges would have been the preferred option to provide maximum environmental benefit, however, surveys have proven that the verges are presently vastly populated with underground services, and that the present project budget is not sufficient to relocate them. However, this remains a long-term objective for this road.

## CONSULTATIONS

- 7 Presently this space has no identifiable user group, however it is a space which is passed through by pedestrians and cyclists or viewed by drivers, and the closest residents and workers of overlooking buildings. Therefore although no active public and wider community engagement has been undertaken to formulate the design, opportunities to engage the public and local residents will be developed throughout the implementation process. This scheme has been developed in consultation with officers from Surrey Highways and publicised through the Borough Council's website. The scheme has been through Stage 1 & 2 Safety Audits. Borough Councillors have been informed at all stages of the design process.

## FINANCIAL AND VALUE FOR MONEY IMPLICATIONS

- 8 This scheme has an allocation of £59,500 from funding secured through Section 106 negotiations. There are no resource implications for Surrey County Council.

## SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT IMPLICATIONS

- 9 This scheme has been designed to improve the public realm and make more of Guildford's Green Infrastructure. It will help manage surface water runoff and regulate temperature in the local area, facilitate walking and cycling to support healthier lifestyles and create important new habitats where wildlife can re-colonise and flourish.

Sustainable development benefits from environmental improvements of this type are as follows:

- Reintroduction of character where it has been lost encourages pride in local communities
- Enhancement of local biodiversity through the introduction of several new habitats
- Introduction of trees in the urban areas - a vital part of climate change adaptation and mitigation in addition to tackling pollution, noise and dust particles
- Creation of a high quality public realm encourages a strong local economy
- An improved environment encourages walking and cycling
- Increase in permeable surfaces encourages local dissipation of rainwater reducing surface water runoff into the drainage system.
- Re-use or recycling of onsite materials reduces the need for transportation on and offsite
- Reduction in maintenance requirements of the meadow areas means less mowing, less machinery usage and therefore less emissions.

## CRIME & DISORDER IMPLICATIONS

- 10 Physical improvements to, and the better management of, public space can help reduce crime and the fear of crime. The introduction of bollards and mounding will provide physical barriers to discourage the current practice, by some drivers, of the potentially hazardous entry onto the A25 over the existing grass in Josephs Road.

## EQUALITIES AND DIVERSITY IMPLICATIONS

- 11 There are believed to be no equalities implications arising from this report.

## CONCLUSION AND REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

- 12 The implementation of this environmental improvement project will provide benefits derived from the visual enhancement and general improvement of the road environment in the area for local residents and businesses. It will create improvements for pedestrians and cyclists, and may encourage greater use of non-car modes of transport, supporting the aims of both Councils' adopted Walking and Cycling Strategies.
- 13 The creation of this green space, whose features echo that of the recently constructed award winning Woodbridge Meadows park, will provide a clearer, more attractive and unified landscape for both the local community and visitors to the area. It accords with Guildford Borough Councils Strategic Priority to protect and enhance the quality of Guildford's natural and built environment.
- 14 This scheme also provides positive biodiversity and environmental benefits to the wider landscape and its inhabitants and is therefore recommended for approval.

## WHAT HAPPENS NEXT

- 15 Subject to the approval of the Committee, it is anticipated that the scheme will be implemented by Guildford Borough Council in 2010. GBC will take on the ongoing maintenance of this site, initially through a maintenance contract linked to the construction contract. All local residents and businesses will be informed in advance of the commencement of works and steps taken to minimise disruption.

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### LEAD OFFICER

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### BACKGROUND PAPERS

World Class Places: The Government's strategy for improving quality of place  
The Value of Public Space: CABE Space  
Does Money Grow on Trees: CABE Space  
GBC's Cycling, Walking and 'Greening the Approaches' Strategies

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