



**LINDEN PIT PATH  
PROPOSED HIGHWAY RAMP**

**Local Committee for Mole Valley**

**15 DECEMBER 2005**

**KEY ISSUE:**

Approval is sought to allow Millgate Homes to construct a new highway ramp on the approach to the footbridge over the A243 Leatherhead By-Pass, that carries Linden Pitt Path in Leatherhead. The facility is intended for shared cycle and pedestrian use and it is suggested that the proposal is progressed independently from Millgate's planning application, for an adjoining housing development.

**SUMMARY:**

This report sets out the reasons for providing a new ramp, serving the existing footbridge over Leatherhead By-pass. It gives background details of the draft Section 106 Agreement between Millgate Homes and Surrey County Council and gives the reasoning behind why a proposal has been made to separate construction of the ramp from the planning application for the new housing development.

**OFFICER RECOMMENDATIONS**

The Committee is asked to agree that:

- (i) The ramp, as set out in **Annexe A**, is constructed without inclusion in the planning consent for the housing development.
- (ii) The ramp be constructed by Millgate homes, at their expense, for subsequent inclusion in the highway structure portfolio.
- (iii) Any necessary land negotiations and subsequent acquisitions are delegated to the Area Transportation Director.

## **1.0 INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND**

- 1.1 An approach was made by Millgate Homes to Surrey County Council (SCC) in 2003 to purchase the plot of land along the western side of Leatherhead By-pass to the rear of Linden Gardens. The proposal included a significant number of affordable housing units and was deemed by Mole Valley District Council (MVDC) planning officers as of worth to the community.
- 1.2 As with all developments, the impact upon the local highway infrastructure was assessed and it was determined a suitable improvement to the highway infrastructure would be a new ramp to the existing footbridge over Leatherhead By-pass. The ramp was to be suitable for both cyclists and pedestrians and including disabled users.
- 1.3 The ramp is intended as the first step towards developing a user friendly cycle path to link Ashted and Leatherhead, avoiding the busy Knoll Roundabout and the provision of this route accords with the strategic aims of the Council to promote sustainable forms of transport and is enthusiastically supported by the Mole Valley Cycle Forum as well as Mole Valley Access Group.
- 1.4 The gradients of the ramp will comply with current standards for use by disabled persons unlike the existing ramp that comprises a series of steps and is thus entirely unsuitable for wheelchair users.
- 1.5 Conditions for cyclists to the west along Linden Gardens and Linden Pit Path are good with ready access to Leatherhead town centre. To the east, bridges over Leatherhead By-pass and the M25 are wide enough for a shared, unsegregated cycle path although amendments to the parapets serving the Leatherhead By-pass bridge may be needed for cycling to be permitted across the bridge. Further east, a footpath running between St Andrew's and St Peter's schools carries the route to Ottways Lane which is a relatively quiet road leading through Ashted.
- 1.6 There is a likelihood that the site at St Andrew's School is to be further developed, presenting the opportunity of widening and upgrading the path between Grange Road and the eastern end of the footbridge.

## **2.0 ANALYSIS AND COMMENTARY**

- 2.1 There has been extensive discussion between SCC transportation officers, MVDC planning officers and Millgate Homes' consultants regarding the design and scope of the ramp. An outline design has been developed (**Annexe A**) and financial agreement has been reached between Millgate Homes and the Council's Assets Management Group. This balances the purchase costs of Council land and construction costs for the ramp with potential sale values for the new dwellings whilst allowing Millgate sufficient scope for profit. The ramp design shown will require land presently owned by housing trust to be dedicated as highway. Local support for the proposed measures would indicate that this should not prove to be a problem.
- 2.2 The initial planning application submitted by Millgate Homes was withdrawn in April 2005 because of concerns expressed by MVDC regarding the layout of the development and the appearance of the ramp. The design of both aspects have been reconsidered but MVDC continue to have reservations about the ramp's compliance with planning objectives. Because of the possibility of the second planning application being rejected, Millgate are reluctant to risk the substantial cost of submitting it.
- 2.3 If the ramp were not included within the planning application, it may be considered as a highway development, which would not require planning consent but does need formal approval at a relevant Committee. MVDC planning staff agree with this approach, as it would obviate the need for them to consider the design of the ramp. Despite this, if Members approve the proposal outlined in this report, SCC transportation staff are keen to work with MVDC to achieve the best possible compromise to optimise the appearance of the ramp.

## **3.0 CONSULTATIONS**

- 3.1 For many years the Mole Valley Cycle Forum have campaigned for cycle facilities to be developed along this route. Although they would prefer to see the ramp built on a grander scale, they are very much in favour of the concept.
- 3.2 Mole Valley Access Group are very keen for the construction of the ramp to take place as are the school's in Grange Road / Ottways Lane.

3.3A local consultation with residents is envisaged prior to construction of the ramp. Although just a few homes will be within view of the ramp, its visual impact will undoubtedly attract comment.

#### **4.0 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

4.1 There will be no impact upon transportation budgets as the full cost of the ramp (estimated £240,000) will be funded by Millgate Homes.

#### **5.0 SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT IMPLICATIONS**

5.1 The scheme will make possible a safe and more easily negotiated route for cyclists and is likely to be used extensively by children cycling to local schools.

5.2 The ramp will make available to wheelchair and buggy users, a quiet and appealing alternative to crossing the A243 at grade.

#### **6.0 CRIME AND DISORDER IMPLICATIONS**

6.1 The ramp is of a spiral type design (see **Annexe A**) and therefore in places, the path is covered by the deck above. The detailed design will incorporate suitable lighting to address this issue.

#### **7.0 EQUALITIES IMPLICATIONS**

7.1 The facility will include provision for wheelchair users.

## **CONCLUSIONS AND REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS**

For a number of years complaints have been received regarding the dangers of crossing Knoll Roundabout. With complimentary signs, the ramp will provide a viable and safe alternative route. With the improvements provided for pedestrians, cyclists and disabled users, the ramp will represent a valuable addition to the highway network. Separating the ramp from the planning consent for the housing development may represent the only opportunity there is of providing both new housing for local people and a valuable highway improvement.

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**BACKGROUND PAPERS: None**

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