



OFFICER REPORT TO LOCAL COMMITTEE MOLE VALLEY

Westcott to Dorking cycling/pedestrian route proposals

9 December 2009

KEY ISSUE

To create a new cycling/pedestrian route between the northern end of St. John's Road, Westcott and Vincent Lane, Dorking. The route would form a missing link of National Cycle Route 22 (NCR22) that currently stops in Westcott, restarting in Dorking.

SUMMARY

Over the past few years negotiations have been taking place between S.C.C. and local landowners in order that a new cycling/pedestrian route could be created as an alternative to walking or cycling along the A25. Agreement with the landowners has been reached and the project is now at a stage where, subject to consultation, the resolution of some outstanding issues and the formal agreement from the Local Committee, the project team would like to commence procedures leading to route construction. The main proposals are:

- To construct an off-road route across the fields to the north of the A25 between St. John's Road and the entrance to Unum (the Lodge).
- Improving the surface of the bridleway that runs along Milton Court Lane between the entrance to Unum and the Westcott Road (A25).
- Widening the Westcott Road footway on its north side so that it can become shared use.

OFFICER RECOMMENDATIONS

The Local Committee Mole Valley is asked to agree that:

- (i) Further consultation be carried out with local residents and the emergency services regarding the part diversion of public footpath 111, its upgrade to a public bridleway with legal width of 5 metres and a surfaced width of 2.5 metres in order that it can be used throughout the year by walkers, cyclists, the disabled and horse riders.

- (ii) Subject to consultation and detailed design, commence legal proceedings to divert and upgrade public footpath 111 to a bridleway and to have its surface improved.
- (iii) Consultation is carried out with local residents and the emergency services regarding the widening and conversion of the Westcott Road footway between Milton Court Lane and Vincent Lane.
- (iv) Subject to consultation, detailed design and safety approval, the shared footway along Westcott Road, dropped kerbs and associated signing be approved for construction.
- (v) Subject to gaining landowners permission and budgetary constraints, works are carried out to reduce the incidence of flooding on the proposed cycle route.

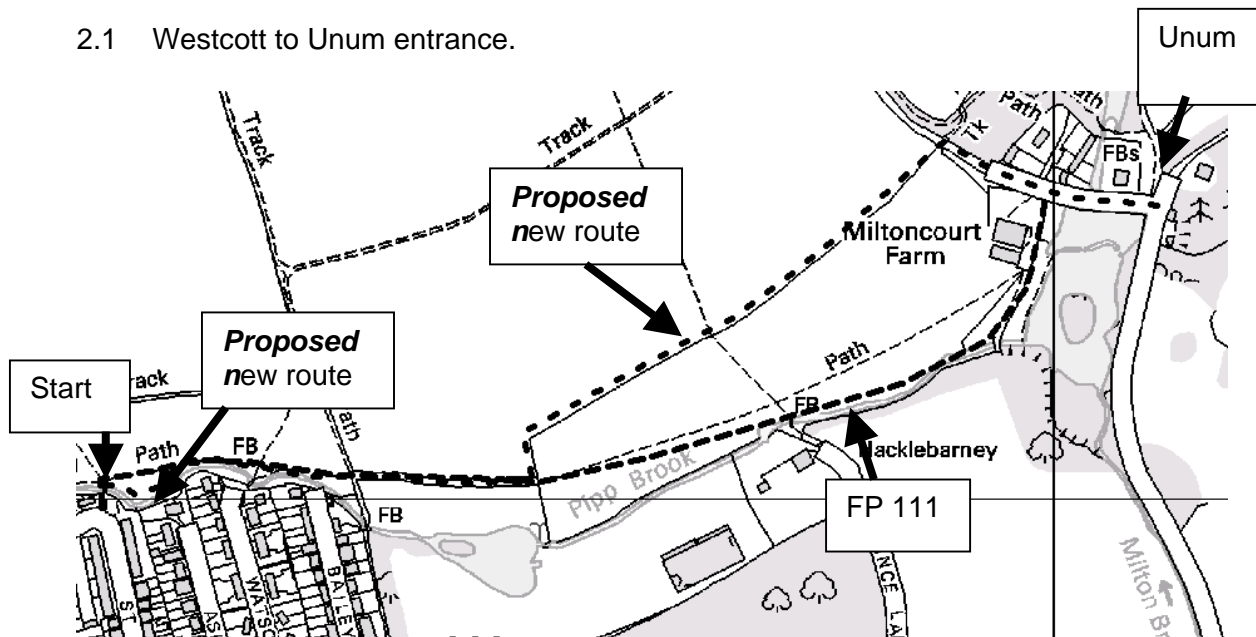
1 INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

- 1.1 Sustrans (who work closely with local authorities on the development and promotion of the National Cycle Network) included a route (no. 22) that goes between London and Portsmouth. Part of this route goes through Surrey (between Woodmansterne and Farnham).
- 1.2 In 2002 officers from Surrey County Council conducted a feasibility study for the Surrey section that included a potential route between Westcott and Dorking. The study concluded that the only available route at the time that could be used by cyclists was along the A25. This was deemed totally unsuitable for a national cycle route and the study identified a possible alternative across fields to the north of the A25.
- 1.3 Since 2002 SCC has completed the NCR22 in Surrey apart from the Westcott to Doking and Shere to Abinger Hammer sections. Local Committee approvals were obtained in order to undertake the work.
- 1.4 SCC has consulted with the Mole Valley Cycle Forum, Mole Valley District Council, Dorking Needs Action (formally Dorking Healthcheck), local residents and councillors in order to identify a route between Westcott and Dorking that could potentially be constructed. It was agreed that such a route should be constructed in order that it would benefit all non-vehicular users.
- 1.5 During the informal consultation with local residents, several issues of concern were raised:
 - Flooding – Part of the proposed route runs over agricultural land that has been subject to regular flooding during winter periods when the Pippbrook overflows its northern bank. This is an existing problem for local walkers and concerns have been raised that a newly constructed cycle route would be compromised by the flooding. Officers have been working with consultants to identify the exact nature of the problem and identify measures that can be implemented to reduce incidents of flooding and any negative effects on the path surface.
 - Path specification – Residents expressed concerns that the surfaced path would be constructed from ‘Tarmac’ which would not be appropriate in a rural location. The proposed surface is a ‘softer’ specification, consisting of a compacted aggregate base, sealed with a flexible surface dressing and finished with a bluff-coloured stone. This specification has been used extensively on other rural routes with minimal visual impact and high level of local support. Residents were also concerned that the path would be excessively wide, allowing vehicles to gain access. The proposal includes anti-vehicle measures that will physically prevent vehicular access, other than essential maintenance. Residents were concerned that there may be conflict between different users. There is no evidence to support this view that multi-user routes lead to greater conflict between users, particularly where the route is sufficiently wide to accommodate it.
 - Fencing – Residents expressed concerns about fencing sections of the route, which are currently unfenced facilitating unofficial access across the fields adjacent to the Pippbrook. There is no public right of access beyond the existing statutory rights of way and as part of the negotiations with the landowner, fencing was identified as necessary, so that the land can be managed effectively from an agricultural point of view.
- 1.6 A report went to the Mole Valley Local Committee on 15 December 2005 in connection with a proposal for a shared use footway alongside the A25 (part of the Westcott to Dorking route). The Local Committee approved its creation subject to consultation and road safety audit. This was delayed waiting for allocation of funding.

2 ANALYSIS

The following maps show the route in three distinct sections:

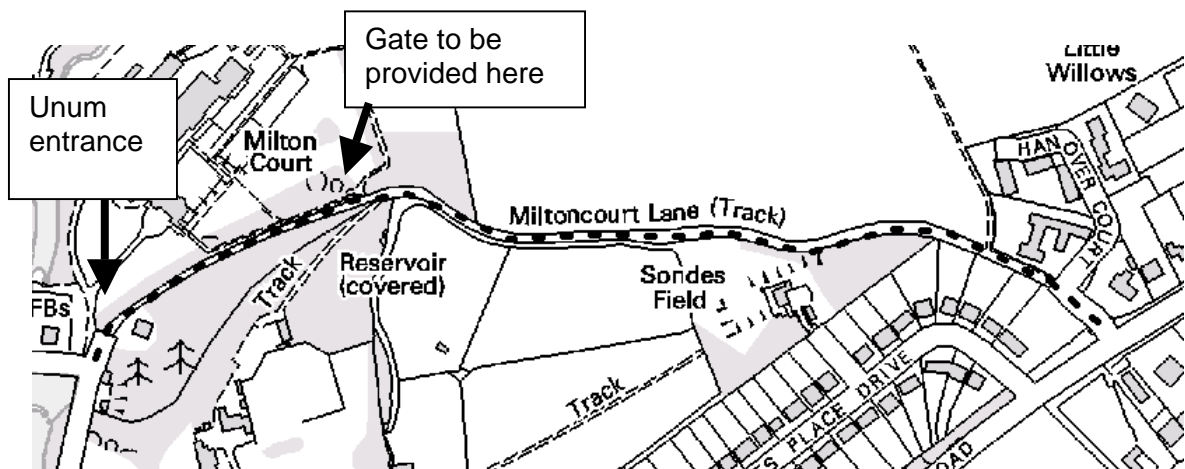
2.1 Westcott to Unum entrance.



The proposals for this section are:

- To divert FP111 from its current route (between St. John's Road and Unum) to the new route as indicated.
- To upgrade the new route for FP 111 to a bridleway
- To widen the new bridleway and provide it with a new surface that can be used by pedestrians, cyclists, the disabled and horse riders. A 5m legal dedication will be sought within which the new surface will be constructed.
- Fencing to be provided to segregate the new bridleway from adjacent land (due to the possible presence of grazing livestock). A fence will also reduce the need for gates.

2.2 Unum entrance to Westcott Road (A25)

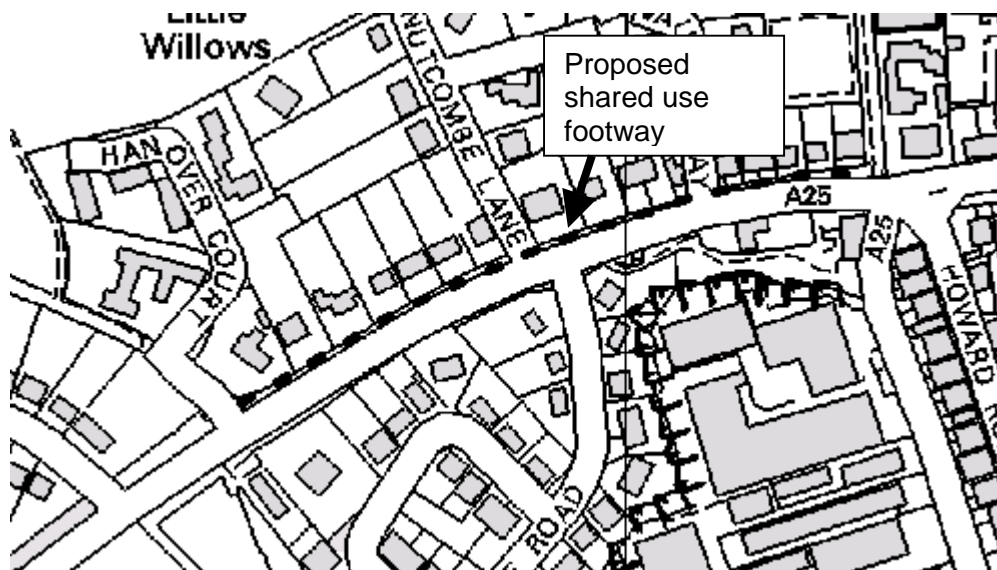


Public bridleway 110 runs along part of this section whilst the remainder is a public highway D road.

The proposals for this section are:

- To improve the surface in order that the lane can be used in safety and comfort throughout the year. It is currently uneven with much loose sand.
- To provide a lockable gate (as indicated) with by-pass for non-vehicle uses. Keys would be provided for those who need vehicular access. This would prevent the lane being used as a rat-run.
- To provide clear route directions for cyclists at the Unum entrance.
- To provide appropriate route signing.

2.3 A25 from Milton Court Lane/Hanover Court to Vincent Lane



The proposal for this section is to convert the footway (approximately 325 metres) to shared use by:

- Wherever possible, widening it to 3 metres. There are a few trees that will reduce the potential widths at these points. (Trees would not be affected in any way).
- Providing safe crossing points at Nutcombe Way and Vaughan Way.
- Undertaking modifications at the Vincent Lane junction to enable cyclists to join/leave the proposed shared use footway safely.
- Erecting appropriate shared use signing.

3 OPTIONS

- 3.1 Currently, the only legitimate route for cyclists to travel between Westcott and Dorking is to use the A25. This is a narrow, bendy road with high volumes of traffic that create frequent long queues of traffic going into Dorking. This makes it particularly unpleasant for cyclists to use and is a major barrier to anyone wanting to cycle between these two places. This includes over 100 pupils that currently live in Westcott and go to The Ashcombe and St Martins School.
- 3.2 For pedestrians wishing to walk between Westcott and Dorking there are two options: (1) to use the footway alongside the A25 that is very narrow in places making it quite unpleasant to use due to the heavy traffic (2) to use public

footpaths that cross fields to the north of the A25 that at times become very difficult to use at times due to flooding.

- 3.3 There are currently no options for the disabled or families with young children to walk between Dorking and Westcott.

4 CONSULTATIONS

- 4.1 Full consultation will be carried out prior to any detailed design of the new bridleway and shared use footway in order that the views of consultees can be taken into account.
- 4.2 The views of the District Members, the local parish councils for the area and the emergency services will also be sought.

5 FINANCIAL AND VALUE FOR MONEY IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 Anticipated project costs are in the region of £180,000. This will enable all the work described in paragraphs 2.1 to 2.3 to be undertaken.
- 5.2 A grant application has been made to Sustrans for half of this money (£90,000). A formal response to this allocation has yet to be received. However, early indications from Sustrans are that it will be granted. This leaves £90,000 to be found from other sources.
- 5.3 £35,000 has been allocated from the 2009/10 central LTP allocations towards construction of NCR22. This can be used for improvements on Milton Court Lane as described in 2.2. to be undertaken early in 2010.
- 5.4 A bid from the 2010/11 LTP allocations for the remaining £55,000 will be made as part of the centrally funded cycling budget.

6 EQUALITIES AND DIVERSITY IMPLICATIONS

- 6.1 The shared footway alongside the A25 will be designed in the consideration of the safety of all highway users.
- 6.2 New and improved surfaces will be able to be used by all non-motorised users including the disabled.

7 CRIME AND DISORDER IMPLICATIONS

- 7.1 There are no perceived crime and disorder implications.

8 CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

- 8.1 The proposal for a new route, supported by Dorking Needs Action in their 2007 Health Check report projects list, will be a major benefit to residents of Westcott in that it will provide a safe cycling/pedestrian route for travelling to Dorking.
- 8.2 It is recommended that consultation on the proposals be carried out with local residents, parish councils and emergency services. The locally elected Member will be contacted in order to resolve any issues arising from this. Providing any issues arising from the consultation are successfully resolved, it is recommended that detailed design and implementation be carried out. A further report will be submitted for Local Committee approval on the detailed design.

9 REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

- 9.1 To facilitate Westcott to be better connected to Dorking.
- 9.2 To facilitate residents of Westcott to travel more sustainably.
- 9.3 To facilitate pupils from Westcott to cycle to school.
- 9.4 To provide cyclists following NCR22 with a safe route between Westcott and Dorking.

10 WHAT HAPPENS NEXT

- 10.1 If the Local Committee approves the recommendations, consultation will be carried out with local residents, Members and the emergency services. Providing any issues arising from the consultation are successfully resolved, detailed design will then be undertaken, a further report taken to Local Committee and the scheme implemented during 2010/2011.

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BACKGROUND PAPERS:

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