



OFFICER REPORT TO LOCAL COMMITTEE (MOLE VALLEY)

WESTCOTT TO DORKING CYCLE/PEDESTRIAN ROUTE PROPOSAL

03 MARCH 2011

KEY ISSUE

This report seeks the agreement to make an order to divert Public Footpaths No. 111 and 114 Dorking under section 119 of the Highways Act 1980 in order to progress the proposed Westcott to Dorking Cycleway as agreed by Committee.

SUMMARY

In the December 2010 Committee the proposed amendment was carried to adopt the landowners agreed route for the Westcott to Dorking cycle/pedestrian way. In order to progress this it will be necessary to divert Public Footpaths 111 and 114 Dorking.

OFFICER RECOMMENDATIONS

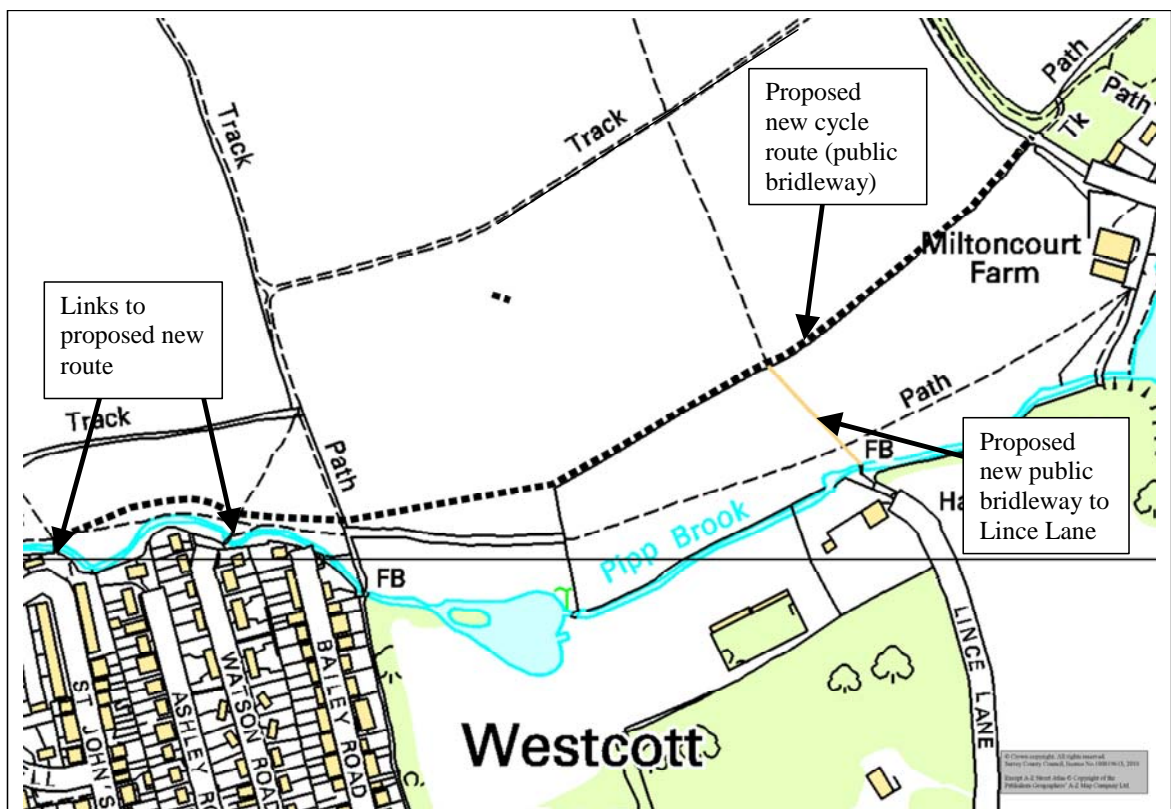
The Local Committee (Mole Valley) is asked to agree that:

- (i) The Surrey County Council Footpath Nos. 111 and 114 (Dorking) Public Path Diversion Order 2011 as shown on (Drawing No. 3/1/50/H50) is made and, if one or more objections are received and maintained, the order be submitted to the Secretary of the State for the Environment, Food and Rural Affairs for determination.
- (ii) Note the update of the report

1 INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

- 1.1 This is an update on the reports that were taken to this Committee in December 2009 and 2010. The National Cycle Network (NCN22) route London to Portsmouth in part runs from Westcott to Dorking. As such it is possible to obtain a grant from Sustrans for the construction of this route.
- 1.2 At present there is no alternative to using the busy A25 for cyclists and horses between Westcott and Dorking. Pedestrians have to use a narrow footway close to the carriageway. The proposed alternative provides a safe route alternative for vulnerable users of the highway, benefiting pedestrians, cyclists, less abled users and horse riders.
- 1.3 At the Committee held in December 2010 it was agreed to carry an amendment that put forward the 'hedgerow route' as the preferred route, to welcome the drainage works as a solution to the flood risk and to seek funding from Sustrans and other possible sources.

This map shows the alignment of the route that was carried as an amendment at the Committee in December 2010



2 ANALYSIS

- 2.1 Drainage work on Westcott House Lake to reduce the incidence of flooding in the area is progressing. It is intended that work will be completed by March 2011. We have consulted with the Environment Agency who are satisfied that we progress this scheme.
- 2.2 It is intended to remove the brick arch culvert on Public Footpath 114, Bailey Road and replace it with a standard design wooden footbridge. This will reduce the incidence of flooding on FP 114. It is intended that this work will be completed by the end of April 2011.
- 2.3 We have received an application to divert the public rights of way as shown on drawing no. 3/1/50/H50 at Annexe A. It is expected that there will be a significant increase of users of the route. For Health and Safety reasons the landowner wishes to divert the route away from the barns and yard area. The diversion will also facilitate the upgrading of Public Footpath 113 to Public Bridleway. This provides a continuation for what was a cul-de-sac bridleway and will be a significant improvement to the rights of way network benefiting cyclists, less-abled users and horse riders, by providing a link to Leith Hill and a local link to the Milton Street cricket field.
- 2.4 The hedgerow route will avoid a section of Public Footpath 111 that takes water from the Pippbrook when it is in spate. The proposed route is further to the north and away from this section of the flood plain.
- 2.5 It will be necessary to remove a 30-metre section of hedgerow. An additional 140 metres of new hedge will be planted to match the surrounding species. A Hedgerow Removal Notice was registered by Mole Valley District Council under the Environment Act 1995 and Hedgerow Regulations 1997 on 11 January 2011 and expires on 22 February 2011. The hedge can be removed after the bird nesting season. New hedges should be planted between November and February.
- 2.6 Fibredec has been chosen as the surfacing material for this route due to its resilience to flooding. It is a flexible sealed stone surface suitable for all users. The material has been laid in other locations in Surrey that are regularly flooded such as Riverside Walk in Leatherhead. The design of the fencing allows for the number of gates to be opened on the route down to two. These are for the security of stock. The gates will have handles suitable for all users including equestrians and less-abled users who may be using the route in mobility buggies.

3 OPTIONS

- 3.1 The Committee is being asked to agree to continue with the diversion order if objections are received. If agreement were to be sought at the June Committee, due to the legal process it would be unlikely that the surface work could be carried out until late spring 2012 at the earliest.
- 3.2 Once the route has been legally diverted as a public footpath the landowners will enter into a dedication agreement to upgrade Public Footpaths 113 and 111 to public bridleway. The confirmation of the diversion order will be reliant on the dedication agreement being in place.

See Drawing No. 3/1/50/H50 at Annexe A

4 CONSULTATIONS

- 4.1 The community was consulted about the NCN Westcott to Dorking route in July 2006 and many of the comments that were made at that time have been included in the proposal.
- 4.2 New consultation notices were put on site on 3 February 2011 with the final date of 23rd February 2011. Local members, Mole Valley District Council, Westcott Residents Association, users groups and other local interested residents were written to directly. The notices and letter invited users to a public display.
- 4.3 The public display was held at The Hut in Furlong Road, Westcott on 17 February 2011. There were plans showing the proposed route, photos of similar surfacing projects, position of gates and fencing and ecological issues. Officers were there to answer queries from the public.
- 4.4 A public walk was held on 11 February 2011 for anyone to join with officers to look at the route on the ground and for the officers to answer any queries about the scheme and listen to suggestions and comments.

5 FINANCIAL AND VALUE FOR MONEY IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 The works to accommodate the construction of the off road section of the cycle/pedestrian route is estimated in the region of £90,000. As stated in the December 2010 Committee Report funding for the scheme is no longer available from the Local Transportation Plan Cycling allocation. Grant funding from Sustrans previously secured is no longer available as the work was not completed within the required timescale.

5.2 Sustrans has recently announced that they are now able to accept applications for grant funding. Alan Fordham of the Safer Travel Strategy Team is putting together a case for funding.

5.3 Money is also being sought from section 106 funds.

5.4 Advertising costs for a diversion order will be in the region of £1200 and will be met from the Countryside Access Budget. The county council is required to meet the costs of a Public Inquiry where objections to the diversion order are received. This is estimated to be in the region of £1000 and would be met from the same budget.

6 EQUALITIES AND DIVERSITY IMPLICATIONS

6.1 The improvements will benefit users with mobility problems providing a safe link for mobility buggies between Westcott and Dorking avoiding the narrow footway beside the A25. It will also allow for community access to the cricket ground.

7 CRIME AND DISORDER IMPLICATIONS

7.1 None perceived

8 CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

8.1 This proposal provides a safe alternative to the A25 and narrow footway between Westcott and Dorking for the less abled, pedestrians, cyclists and horses. The additional upgrading to public bridleway of public footpath 113 will provide a link for the residents of Westcott to the cricket ground in Milton Street, the Nower and Leith Hill.

8.2 The Committee is being asked for approval to make the diversion order if objections are received. This will allow for the possibility of carrying out the works in 2011 if funding is available and the diversion has been confirmed.

9 REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

9.1 The surfacing material is usually laid late spring, summer and early autumn.

9.2 Once the diversion order is made there will be a statutory 4- week objection period. If no objections are received the works can be undertaken and the order confirmed. If objections are received and maintained it may potentially take 9 months or longer to hold a public inquiry and receive the planning inspectors decision.

10 WHAT HAPPENS NEXT

- 10.1 If agreed the diversion order will be sealed and advertised. All interested parties will be informed of the decision.
- 10.2 The dedication documents will be drawn up in preparation.
- 10.3 Drainage work to Westcott House Lake will continue.
- 10.4 Once work to the lake has been completed the Bailey Road culvert will be removed and replaced with a standard wooden footbridge.
- 10.5 Specification for the proposed works to be drawn up and prices sought from contractors.
- 10.6 Grant funding will be sought from Sustrans once they are open to applications.
- 10.7 The possibility of funding from section 106 money available for highway and access improvements will be investigated and applied for if possible.

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BACKGROUND PAPERS:

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