



## OFFICER REPORT TO LOCAL COMMITTEE (MOLE VALLEY)

### EPSOM ROAD, LEATHERHEAD – CONSULTATION

08 JUNE 2011

#### KEY ISSUE

To report the outcome of an informal consultation carried out to determine the level of support for a number of options to improve pedestrian/cycle links along the Epsom Road corridor to Leatherhead town centre.

#### SUMMARY

A shared cycle and pedestrian link was introduced on the northern side of Epsom Road, Leatherhead in 2009. Following problems with the scheme, the facility was removed shortly after implementation. An internal audit report carried out into schemes in the Leatherhead area funded by s106 contributions recommended that the future use of Epsom Road be considered at a forthcoming meeting of the Local Committee. An informal consultation was carried out with local residents, the emergency services, the County Cycling Officer and other interested parties. This report provides the results of the consultation and suggests a way forward for the Epsom Road pedestrian/cycle link in the wider context of cycling in Mole Valley.

#### OFFICER RECOMMENDATIONS

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

- (i) No further consideration be given to the provision of a shared pedestrian and cycle path on the northern side of Epsom Road, Leatherhead:
- (ii) No further consideration be given to the provision of advisory cycle lanes in Epsom Road, Leatherhead; and
- (iii) The Chairman, Vice-Chairman, Divisional Member, Area Team Manager and County Cycling Officer develop a prioritised list of cycling schemes for Mole Valley, to include improvements to the Linden Pit Path/St John's Close advisory cycle route.

## 1 INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

- 1.1 In June 2009, Mole Valley Local Committee approved a scheme for cycle and pedestrian links from Leatherhead Road to Leatherhead town centre, including a shared pedestrian/cycle path on the northern side of Epsom Road. The northern footway was resurfaced and a segregated pedestrian/cycle facility was implemented, funded from s106 contributions. There were problems with the scheme and after many complaints and difficulties, the decision was taken to remove the segregated facility shortly after implementation.
- 1.2 Following concerns voiced by the Local Committee when the final costs were reported, an internal audit was carried out on the schemes in the Leatherhead area funded by s106 contributions, including the Epsom Road pedestrian/cycle facility. The findings of the internal audit were reported to Local Committee in December 2010 and Members agreed the audit recommendation that the future use of Epsom Road be considered at a forthcoming meeting.
- 1.3 To help Members to make an informed decision regarding the future of the Epsom Road, a consultation was carried out in March 2011 giving respondents the opportunity to indicate their support for a number of options to improve pedestrian/cycle links along the Epsom Road corridor to Leatherhead town centre.

## 2 CONSULTATION

- 2.1 The consultation letter and questionnaire is attached as **Annexe A**. The letter was delivered to all residents of Epsom Road, including St John's School and Downsend School, and the cul-de-sacs leading from it, 253 letters in total. The emergency services, Mole Valley Cycle Forum, Mole Valley Access Forum, the County Cycling Officer, the County's passenger transport group and District Councillors were also consulted.
- 2.2 Of the letters delivered to residents, 96 questionnaires were completed, a response rate of 38%.
- 2.3 **Epsom Road – Shared pedestrian/cycle path**  
**Question 1:** Would you support the provision of a cycle facility along the northern side of Epsom Road, Leatherhead between St John's School and The Knoll roundabout, using the existing footway?  
Yes: 32 (33%)      No: 63 (66%)      No response: 1 (1%)
- 2.4 If Yes, would you prefer the facility to be segregated (ie. pedestrians and cyclists physically separated, for example by a white line) or shared (where pedestrians and cyclists share the full width of the footway)?  
Segregated: 21 (66%)      Shared: 10 (31%)      No response: 1 (3%)
- 2.5 **Linden Pit Path/St John's Close – Improvement of existing route**  
**Question 2:** Would you support the improvement of the existing signed advisory cycle route along Linden Pit Path and St John's Close?  
Yes: 50 (52%)      No: 37 (38%)      No response: 10 (10%)  
(nb. 1 respondent answered both yes and no)

**2.6 Epsom Road – Advisory cycle lanes**

**Question 3:** Would you support the introduction of advisory cycle lanes along Epsom Road?

Yes: 34 (34%)      No: 60 (60%)      No response 5 (5%)

(nb. 5 respondents answered both yes and no)

2.7 Residents' responses to the individual questions is given below in section 3 of this report. Respondents were also given the opportunity to make comments/suggestions. There were a number of common themes, which are given below and a summary of all the comments made is attached as **Annexe B**.

- chaos/danger
- high use of Epsom Road by elderly and children
- conflict between pedestrians/cyclists
- insufficient use by cyclists to justify facility
- speeding cars
- footway is too narrow
- a waste of money/use funds elsewhere (potholes)
- cycle lanes much needed
- congestion/parked cars
- surprised this scheme is being considered again, after having removed it before

2.8 Responses were received from Surrey Police, Surrey Fire and Rescue, Surrey Ambulance, Mole Valley Cycle Forum and the County's Cycling Officer. A letter was also received from the Leatherhead Residents' Association.

2.9 Surrey Police support the safe provision of shared facilities on the condition that the safety of pedestrians, wheelchair users, visually impaired and other disabled persons is accorded the same priority as that given to cyclists. They also support the improvement of the Linden Pit Path route and the provision of advisory cycle lanes in Epsom Road. The Ambulance Service support the shared path and Linden Pit Path options but comment that encouraging young cyclists onto the main carriageway by means of a cycle lane should be avoided as the potential for cycle/vehicle road traffic collisions would increase. Surrey Fire and Rescue support the principle of all three options.

2.10 Mole Valley Cycle Forum submitted the following comments.

- Shared path – The route is only used for access to schools. It is unsuitable as a route to the town centre or to Ashted as it narrows at both ends. Street furniture creates too many obstacles for a successful segregated path. Would encourage cycling to schools but only likely to be successful if implemented in conjunction with the other proposals.
- Linden Pit Path route – Provides good access towards Leatherhead. A number of areas which would require improvement were identified and the suggestion made to link the facility to Barnet Wood Lane. The route would be particularly useful if adjacent schools were to provide rear entrances.
- Advisory cycle lanes – Remind motorists to consider cyclists, work well elsewhere and are a low cost measure. Consideration should be given to continuing the cycle lanes around Knoll Roundabout and onwards to Ashted and linking them in to Church Street and Dorking Road.

2.11 The County Cycling Officer comments that there are too many issues in connection with the footway for a segregated route. Shared use would be the

only feasible option. The Linden Pit Path route is considered to be a really useful route. The cycling officer does not support the introduction of advisory cycle lanes as there is insufficient carriageway width.

- 2.12 The Leatherhead Residents' Association is concerned that the removal of the grass verges has left Epsom Road with a hard, asphalted area. Development of the Linden Pit Path route is seen as a preferable option to a cycle way along Epsom Road leading into the Knoll Roundabout.

### **3 ANALYSIS**

#### **3.1 Epsom Road – Shared pedestrian/cycle path**

A segregated path is not considered feasible due to the number of obstacles along Epsom Road, in particular bus shelters, the pelican crossing and street furniture. A shared path would overcome many of these issues but cyclists would still be faced with the prospect of negotiating Knoll roundabout or dismounting to use the pedestrian crossing points. At the western end, the shared path could not be extended beyond St John's School as the footway is too narrow, leaving cyclists with the option of either rejoining the carriageway or continuing to illegally cycle along the footway, conflicting with pedestrians.

- 3.2 The consultation shows that there is little public support for the provision of a shared facility on the northern side of Epsom Road to be considered again.

#### **3.3 Linden Pit Path route**

The existing advisory cycle route along Linden Pit Path and St John's Close is a signed route using quiet residential roads but at present does not connect to the wider network. A number of improvements have been put forward by the Mole Valley Cycle Forum, including improved access from Leret Way to the west and Grange Road to the east.

- 3.4 At its western end, the route leads to the existing footbridge across the A24 Leatherhead by-pass, providing a link towards Ashted. However, the ramp to the footbridge is relatively steep and is stepped and the height of the footbridge parapet at 1.0m complies with standards only for pedestrians. A parapet height of 1.4m is required for cyclists. To bring the footbridge to a standard that could be safely used by cyclists, a new ramp and a raised parapet would need to be provided. This would be key to making the Linden Pit Path a viable alternative route to Epsom Road and encouraging more people to cycle, in particular children attending schools in both Leatherhead and Ashted. Assuming that a provision of a new ramp is feasible, the cost is estimated to be in the region of £400,000. The cost of raising the parapet is being investigated with the Structures Group.

- 3.5 Just over half of the respondents to the consultation supported the improvement of the Linden Pit Path route. However, this improvement has to be viewed in the wider context of cycling in Mole Valley and other improvements that could be made to the cycle network. The Mole Valley Cycle Forum has been asked to provide a prioritised wish list of improvements, including the improvement to the Linden Pit Path route, that they consider would assist existing cyclists and encourage more people to cycle in the future. It is anticipated that this list will be available to table at the meeting. It is proposed that this scheme list will form the basis of discussions between the Local Committee Chairman, Vice-Chairman, Divisional Member, Area Team

Manager and the County Cycling Officer to agree priorities for future cycling schemes in Mole Valley.

### **3.6 Epsom Road – Advisory cycle lanes**

Advisory cycle lanes help increase drivers' awareness of cyclists and encourage drivers to leave space for cyclists. The cycle lanes should be a minimum width of 1.5metres and made conspicuous across side road junctions. As with the shared path option, cyclists would be directed to the Knoll Roundabout and then either negotiate this busy junction or dismount to use the pedestrian crossing points.

- 3.7 The consultation shows that there is little public support for the provision of advisory cycle lanes on Epsom Road. The County Cycling Officer has indicated that there is insufficient road width to introduce even the minimum width cycle lanes.

## **4 FINANCIAL AND VALUE FOR MONEY IMPLICATIONS**

- 4.1 The cost of improving the footbridge across the A24 Leatherhead by-pass to provide a link between Leatherhead and Ashted using the Linden Pit is estimated to be over approximately £400,000. This proposal needs to be considered in the wider context of cycling in Mole Valley and included in a prioritised list of proposed cycling schemes. These schemes would be considered for future allocation of funding together with all other highway improvement schemes.

## **5 EQUALITIES AND DIVERSITY IMPLICATIONS**

- 5.1 Cycling provides the opportunity for increased mobility for those who do not have access to a car or do not wish to use the car for a particular journey. Cycling also offers proven health benefits.

## **6 CRIME AND DISORDER IMPLICATIONS**

- 6.1 There are no crime and disorder implications arising from this report.

## **7 CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

- 7.1 Consultation was carried out with local residents, the emergency services and other interested parties to determine support for a number of options to improve pedestrian/cycle links along the Epsom Road corridor to Leatherhead town centre.
- 7.2 The consultation has shown that there is little public support for providing either a shared cycle/pedestrian path on the northern side of Epsom Road or advisory cycle lanes on the carriageway in Epsom Road. It is therefore recommended that no further consideration is given to these options.
- 7.3 There is support for improving the existing signed advisory cycle route along Linden Pit Path and St John's Close. However, to link this route into the wider network to provide a safe cycle route between Ashted and Leatherhead, it

would be necessary to improve the existing footbridge over the A24 Leatherhead by-pass, at a cost of over £400,000 approximately. This improvement needs to be viewed in the wider context of cycling in Mole Valley and prioritised against other schemes to improve the cycle network and encourage cycling. It is therefore proposed that the Local Committee Chairman, Vice-Chairman, Divisional Member, Area Team Manager and the County Cycling Officer agree priorities for future cycling schemes in Mole Valley, subject to funding being made available.

## 8 REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

- 8.1 To determine the future use of Epsom Road, as recommended by the internal audit report.
- 8.2 To enable the development of a prioritised list of future schemes to improve the cycle network and encourage cycling in Mole Valley, including improvements to the Linden Pit Path/St John's Close advisory cycle route.

## 9 WHAT HAPPENS NEXT

- 9.1 Subject to Local Committee approval, the Chairman, Vice-Chairman, Divisional Member, Area Team Manager and County Cycling Officer will develop a prioritised list of future cycling schemes in Mole Valley.

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**BACKGROUND PAPERS:** Mole Valley Local Committee Reports:  
24<sup>th</sup> June 2009  
7<sup>th</sup> December 2010  
Consultation questionnaires

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