



**OLD WOKING ROAD**

**LOCAL COMMITTEE FOR WOKING**

**14 OCTOBER 2004**

**KEY ISSUE:**

To review the feasibility of improving safety for all road users in the area by providing a footway along the B382 Old Woking Road between Roundhill and Hockering Road.

**SUMMARY:**

The Committee was petitioned in January 2004 to provide a footway along Old Woking Road between Roundhill and Hockering Road. Previously the petitioner had put public questions to the Committee about the same topic.

The Local Transportation Service has established with Woking for Pedestrians, that the final solution is a continuous footway on the western side of Old Woking Road. However, to achieve the footway width necessary also necessitates a realignment of the carriageway to the east.

The Old Woking Road between Roundhill and Hockering Road is severely constrained by a steeply sided cutting of significant depth and an uphill gradient from Roundhill towards Hockering Road. The civil

engineering work required to realign the road, retain the sides of the cutting and construct the footway are significant with substantial costs.

The report considers alternate solutions but concludes there are no practical alternatives to the continuous footway that will enable all people access to the facility in compliance with the Disability Discrimination Act 1995.

However, short term measures are proposed to seek to mitigate the existing situation and relieve the stress on pedestrians, cyclists and drivers referred to by the petitioner.

### **CONSULTATIONS:**

The petitioner,

Woking for Pedestrians,

Surrey Structures Group, & Materials Group,

SERCO

### **OFFICER RECOMMENDATIONS:**

**The Committee is asked to agree**

- (i) that the short term measures described in paragraph 20 of this report be progressed;**
- (ii) that although the County Council seeks to encourage more people to walk and cycle the County Council is constrained by its financial resources; and**
- (iii) that on balance the provision of a new facility along Old Woking Road between Roundhill and Hockering Road, costing several millions of pounds, is not a viable proposition judged against the County Council's other priorities and Local Transport Plan targets.**

## INTRODUCTION and BACKGROUND

1. The Committee received a petition at its meeting on 28 January 2004 requesting improvements to Old Woking Road between Roundhill and Hockering Road. In particular a footway that would allow pedestrians and possibly cyclists, stress free passage along this stretch of road where the petition states there is insufficient room for two large lorries to pass (Plan 'A').
2. The petitioner, Mr Johns, had previously put public questions before the Committee and had written to the Local Transportation Director.
3. A representative from the Local Transportation Service met the petitioner on 17 July 2003, and walked the length of Old Woking Road, between Hockering Road and Roundhill, with him.
4. On 10 September 2003, the Local Transportation Service undertook a survey of pedestrian, cycle and vehicle movements just south of Hockering Road. Although it may not reflect latent need the survey revealed that:
 

Morning Peak 08.00 to 09.00 (Combined totals north and southbound)	
Peds/Cyclists	11
Vehicle movements	1380
Vehicle speed 85%	37 mph
Evening Peak 17.00 to 18.00 (Combined totals north and southbound)	
Peds/Cyclists	11
Vehicle movements	1332
Vehicle speed 85%	37 mph
5. The petitioner was made aware when he attended the Committee in July 2003 that making provision for pedestrians and cyclists along the 330 metre length of Old Woking Road would require the construction of significant structural retaining walls to hold up the side slopes supporting the adjacent private gardens and golf course.
6. At its meeting on 22 October 2003 the Committee agreed, as part of the Local Transportation Service work programme, that having investigated the provision of a footway at this location no action be taken.
7. Notwithstanding the above, the Committee agreed in January 2004 to review the situation and consider the outcome at a future meeting.

## ANALYSIS AND COMMENTARY

8. Following a discussion with the County Council's Structures Group, it is evident that the financial cost of constructing the retaining walls necessary to provide a footway would be several millions of pounds, excluding the land cost of acquiring about 150 metres of private garden and or a similar amount of golf course.
9. To evaluate alternate methods of achieving a footway between Roundhill and

Hockering Road a detailed topographical survey of Old Woking Road is required. However, due to the characteristics of this stretch of road the quotation received for a survey was several thousands of pounds for which there is no budget. In consultation with the Chairman, there has been no survey.

10. However, the Local Transportation Service continued to develop ideas that might provide the objective of a footway whilst reducing the overall cost. Woking for Pedestrians has assisted the Local Transportation Service in this iterative process.

#### Existing Situation

11. Between Roundhill and Hockering Road, the B382 Old Woking Road is in cutting for approximately 320 metres with private residential properties (Hockering Estate) on the west and golf course (Hoe Bridge) on the east. It is estimated that the depth of the cutting varies from 2 to 3 metres over a third the distance from Hockering Road and approximately 8 to 9 metres over the remainder.
12. Each side slope contains a number of trees of varying size, type and age, stumps and other vegetation, the collective root system acts as natural reinforcement that supports or retains the moderately hard dry sandy soil in the side slopes. The tree canopy closes over the road restricting natural light, there is a system of streetlights and the speed limit is 30 mph.
13. The side slopes could be susceptible to storm damage if trees were blown over. Similarly, significant amounts of rainfall could soften the sandy soil.
14. The carriageway rises significantly from Roundhill to Hockering Road; forward visibility is restricted in places by the cutting as the road bends, particularly near the narrowest section (approximately 5.3 metres wide) between Roundhill Drive and Hockering Road. The carriageway width is limited by the cutting and is less than desirable for a 'B' class road carrying a number of large lorries.

#### Objective

15. The petitioner seeks to improve the safety for all road users in the area by having a footway constructed linking Maybury Hill to the existing footway at Roundhill. It is agreed that if a footway is provided it should be on the west side of Old Woking Road to assist walkers and cyclists pushing their cycles up the gradient to Maybury Hill.
16. To meet this aim the ideal is a continuous footway of 2.0 metres minimum width that enables 2 wheelchairs to pass and a minimum acceptable carriageway width of 6.5 metres. The absolute minimum acceptable solution is a 1.4 metre continuous footway with passing places and no alteration to the carriageway. Both solutions require considerable expenditure and would require prioritisation within the Committee's forward Local Transport Plan programme.

## Alternate Solutions

17. In an attempt to find an alternate less conventional method of providing for pedestrians and cyclists between Roundhill and Hockering Road, the Local Transportation Service, with Woking for Pedestrians, developed a list ranging from 'Do-nothing' to a 'Ski-lift', including closing the road to vehicles, this is included as Annex 'A'.
18. However, there seems very little practical alternative to the construction of a continuous footway on the west side that does not also require realignment of the carriageway eastwards.
19. The partial encroachment into the western side slope superficially appears the most reasonable solution. However, it would not provided a continuous footway unless the carriageway is relocated eastwards between Roundhill Drive and Hockering Road. It would also be of limited width, about 1.0 metre, unless substantial civil engineering work took place to retain the cutting side slope. Whilst moderately acceptable to the able bodied it would not readily facilitate use by those with mobility difficulties, wheelchairs, buggies, etc. When providing new facilities the County Council must consider the implications of the Disability Discrimination Act 1995 and ensure all people have equal access to facilities.

## The Short Term

20. To mitigate the problems encountered and reduce the stress referred to by the petitioner the following short term measures are proposed:

### Maybury Hill to Hockering Road

Clear vegetation encroachment and widen existing footway. Provide signs warning pedestrians the footway ends at Hockering Road.

### Hockering Road to Roundhill Drive

Without significantly realigning the carriageway, no action is proposed other than vegetation control.

### Roundhill Drive to Roundhill

Provide a wider informal pedestrian surface (currently estimated at 450 mm), where feasible, without endangering the unrestrained western side slope. Provide signs warning pedestrians the footway ends at Roundhill.

### Trees

Systematic phased thinning of the tree canopy and removal of trees likely to endanger the cutting during severe storms, together with planting of replacement specimens to preserve the root network.

### Street lighting

Ensure the tree canopy does not interfere with the efficient distribution of light from lamp columns, and reassess the potential for additional lighting units.

#### Pedestrian awareness

Ensure appropriate signage is in place to warn pedestrians, cyclists and drivers that care is required whilst travelling along this section of the public highway network.

Investigate with the Department for Transport the potential for enhancing the existing standard highway signing with pedestrian activated or self-timing hazard warning lights (Wig-Wags).

### **FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

21. Notwithstanding the County Council's desire to encourage more people to walk and cycle, the County Council is constrained by its financial resources. On balance the provision of a new facility along Old Woking Road, between Roundhill and Hockering Road, costing several millions of pounds is not a viable proposition judged against the County Council's other priorities and Local Transport Plan targets.
22. By comparison, the Committee's forward programme already contains a scheme to provide a pedestrian/cycle tunnel adjacent to A320 Victoria Arch in Woking town centre at an estimated £3.5 million. This proposal also contributes appreciably towards the County Council's Local Transport Plan targets.
23. The measures proposed for the short term could be financed from general revenue maintenance budgets.

### **SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT IMPLICATIONS**

24. Historically Old Woking Road between Maybury Hill and White Rose Lane has remained largely unimproved. A section of footway from White Rose Lane to Roundhill was constructed in association with development. Provision of a footway should encourage more people to walk and cycle in keeping with the County Council's Local Transport Plan aims and objectives.

### **CRIME & DISORDER IMPLICATIONS**

25. The provision of a footway between Roundhill and Hockering Road would reduce the potential for conflict between pedestrians/cyclist and drivers.

### **EQUALITIES IMPLICATIONS**

26. The current situation in Old Woking Road has prevailed for a significant period. Whilst some able bodied pedestrians and cyclists might consider using this stretch of road it is unlikely to be the first choice for those with mobility difficulties, wheelchairs, buggies, etc. A continuous footway on the

west side would overcome this equality issue.

## **CONCLUSIONS AND REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS**

27. The B382 Old Woking Road between Roundhill and Hockering Road is historically a narrow section of the public highway with no specific segregated provision for walkers and cyclists. The road is constrained in a steeply sided cutting as it rises from Roundhill to Hockering Road.
28. To provide for pedestrians and cyclists pushing their cycles up the gradient a continuous footway is required on the western side of Old Woking Road.
29. The provision of the footway on the west cannot be achieved without also realigning the carriageway to the east. The resultant civil engineering work would involve substantial costs and the County Council is constrained by its financial resources. On balance the provision of a continuous footway is not a viable proposition when judged against the County Council's other priorities and Local Transport Plan targets.
30. However, measures are proposed to assist in reducing the stress referred to by the petitioner, these are set out in paragraph 20 above and could be financed from general revenue maintenance budgets.

**Report by: Stephen Child, Local Transportation Director, Woking**

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<b>BACKGROUND PAPERS:</b>	<b>Petition 28 January 2004</b>

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**ANNEX A****Alternate Solutions to Assist Pedestrians  
Old Woking Road between Roundhill and Hockering Road**

- a. Do nothing: No cost option but does not assist pedestrians or cyclists.
- b. Do something: Low cost option to enhance the existing characteristics of the road without significantly altering its layout or function.
- c. Shared surface: Relatively inexpensive but only suitable for quiet residential roads with few vehicle movements; speed, volume and type of traffic precludes this option.
- d. New footway within existing carriageway: Reduction of available road width restricts two-way traffic, limits on type of vehicle and creates greater risk of pedestrians and cyclists being at risk from door mirrors, etc.
- e. Tunnel: Very expensive segregates vehicle from pedestrians could be intimidating for pedestrians.
- f. Close the road to vehicles: Relatively inexpensive provides traffic-free environment for pedestrians and cyclists. However, likely to attract significant objection to a closure order and where does the traffic go?
- g. Shuttle working: Construct the footway within the road space and restrict traffic movements to alternate one-way controlled by traffic signals, relatively inexpensive. However, long delays to traffic on the highway network against Local Transport Plan objectives.
- h. Close half the road and make it one-way: Construct the footway within the road space relatively inexpensive and traffic moving in the one-way direction is not delayed. However, traffic in the opposing direction has to divert. Where does it go? Variation: Alternate one-way traffic depending on peak traffic demand.
- i. Raise level of carriageway: Expensive, provides more width for footway, maintains carriageway width, increases vertical gradient for vehicles, requires new retaining wall support for cutting slopes, visually and noise intrusive.
- j. Build retaining wall on west Hockering side: Very expensive provides for footway but land acquisition required and or carriageway realignment to the east.
- k. Realign carriageway to the east golf course side: Very expensive provides for footway width but land acquisition required and retaining structures for the cutting slopes.
- l. Construct footway on top of cutting side slopes: Requires land acquisition on west side; on east requires two road crossings to give continuous footway



provision. Restricted site access would make construction difficult.

- m. Build footway through the golf course: Not on the desire line for many pedestrians and cyclist using the Old Woking Road, acquisition of rights for new right of way. Two crossings required to give a continuous footway provision.
- n. Operate a town centre shuttle buggy: Unknown operational costs of buggy, where should it wait and likely to be long periods of in operation.
- o. Ski-lift: Opposite of the tunnel proposal, very expensive, visually intrusive.
- p. Direct pedestrians to an alternate route: There is no alternate route on the public highway to which pedestrians can be directed.
- q. Enhance existing signing: Provide additional pedestrian controlled hazard warning lights at Roundhill and Hockering Road to indicate pedestrians on the road. If possible would need special authorisation from Department for Transport.
- r. Reduce speed limit: The speed limit is currently 30 mph. Survey data indicates 85% during peak times is 37 mph. Traffic claming required to influence driver speed, reduction unlikely to be supported by the Police.