



**OFFICER REPORT TO LOCAL COMMITTEE  
(WOKING)**

**RESPONSE TO PETITION REGARDING CYCLE SIGNS  
LOCATED ON THE BASINGSTOKE CANAL THROUGH  
BROOKWOOD AND INCLUDING BROOKWOOD COUNTRY  
PARK**

**7 JULY 2010**

**KEY ISSUE**

To advise the Committee of the response to a petition received at the 7 July 2010 meeting.

**SUMMARY**

**Petition urging Surrey County Council to remove the cycle signs on the Basingstoke Canal through Brookwood and including Brookwood Park.**

The petition has in excess of 200 signatures.

**Wording of Petition**

**PETITION AGAINST THE SUSTRAN CYCLE SIGNS THAT HAVE APPEARED ALONG THE LENGTH OF THE BASINGSTOKE CANAL THROUGH BROOKWOOD AND INCLUDING BROOKWOOD PARK.**

“We, the undersigned, wish to express our opposition to the above signs. We believe that these signs are totally out of keeping in this area of nature reserve and SSSI.

We furthermore believe the signs to be overly large, are in the wrong colour and furthermore in having times to the next waypoint encourage cyclists to speed in an area where cyclists are expected to dismount when the encounter pedestrians.

We therefore respectfully request that they be removed as soon as possible to restore the canal path and SSSI to it’s previous condition.”

## OFFICER RECOMMENDATIONS

### The Local Committee (Woking) is asked to:

- i. Agree that the cycle signs located on the Basingstoke Canal through Brookwood including Brookwood Country Park should remain, but the set of signs located at the Basingstoke Canal / Sheets Heath junction should be replaced with smaller size signs (non-reflective).

## INTRODUCTION and BACKGROUND

1. The rebranding of the cycle network formed part of the successful Cycle Woking bid to Cycling England in 2008.
2. The original cycle network developed during 2004 was numbered 1 to 10A, but as the network was being improved throughout Woking with extensions, bridging of gaps and new routes the cycle network required a 'new look' with revised signing and maps.
3. The revised signs were based on the *Gem Stones* routes in Aylesbury a Cycle Demonstration Town and a number of other towns have now followed with similar layouts. Cycle Woking adopted the *Planet Trails* using the nine planets, with Uranus replaced by Ceres, with the main links named after that planets moon, therefore the *Saturn Trail* has links named as *Pandora*, *Mimas*, *Titon* etc. In addition, there is a colour banding on the signs assigned to a particular planet and its moons, for example *Saturn* is yellow.
4. It was always the intention to use timings instead of distance on the signs, as demonstrated by some Cycle Demonstration Towns based on 9mph.
5. Cycle Woking held an exhibition in September and December 2008 indicating the type of sign that would be used as part of the rebranding of the cycle network with no adverse comments.

## ANALYSIS AND OPTIONS

### Towpath

6. The *Saturn Trail* forms one of the major cycle routes through the district being 12.9km long commencing at Pirbright Bridge in the west to the Wey Navigation in the east. This route also forms part of the National Cycle Route 223 and the red square on the signs indicates this route.
7. As the *Saturn Trail* is a significant route it also has many routes joining it and at the western end one of the key destinations is Brookwood railway station. The Knaphill area now links to the Basingstoke Canal which in turn links to Brookwood railway station via Sheets Heath. It is planned to link to the off road routes created within Bisley between 2011/12 and 2013/14 if Cycle Woking is successful at being awarded an extension to Cycling Town status, and therefore there is the potential to open up the cycle

network to even more people. To encourage people to use the network and provide confidence clear comprehensive signage and maps are required. The use of times instead of distances highlights to potential cyclists (particularly motorists) that cycling is a convenient, quick, reliable and cheap alternative.

8. In addition, several books and guides have been written that include the Basingstoke Canal as a 'Good Cycle Route' with a start/finish point at Brookwood railway station. These guides are aimed at leisure users and these people are normally new to an area and require good signing and maps.
9. Cycle Woking have offered to reduce the size of the signs located at the Basingstoke Canal / Sheets Heath junction and make them 'non-reflective' but this has to date not been accepted by the local resident who complained.

### **Basingstoke Canal / Brookwood Country Park**

10. The cycle routes signs commence at the western end at Pirbright Bridge and moving in an easterly direction the only signs on the canal towpath are located at the Sheets Heath junction as described in paragraph 9 above, the Percheron Drive link (*Rhea Trail*) and the junction with the Brookwood Country Park (*Hyperion Trail*). These are all key links to important destinations and therefore connect people with places and purpose. All other signs in this area are located on the public highway.

### **CONSULTATIONS**

14. Although the County Council policy does not require consultation on cycle signing, Cycle Woking did carry out consultation at two public exhibitions during September and December 2008 at which no adverse comments on the signing were received.
15. The new signing has been installed in phases with the first phase (Hermitage Bridge to Monument Bridge) installed on the Basingstoke Canal during May/June 2009. Since then the 'Cycle Woking' logo has been changed from coloured green/silver to black as the green/silver appeared to 'fade'.

### **FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

17. A small sum of money has been set aside to amend the signs at the Basingstoke Canal/Sheets Heath junction if the smaller size signs are accepted. However, no allocation is available for the removal of the signs and associated posts.
18. In addition, Cycle Woking has put forward the offer to place '9mph' signs attached to the existing small wooden posts that carry the 'cycle considerably' signs, to remind cyclists of the maximum desired speed and a useful assistance for other users of the towpath. These types of

signs have been used with some success on National Cycle Route 4 through Laleham (Spelthorne).

## **SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT IMPLICATIONS**

19. The signing assists people to use the network by sustainable means of transport, especially for short journeys (walking up to 2 km and cycling up to 5 km). Without these signs the network would be incomplete, people would lose confidence and would not attract potential cyclists.

## **COMMUNITY SAFETY IMPLICATIONS**

20. There are no direct crime and disorder implications.

## **EQUALITIES IMPLICATIONS**

21. There are no direct equalities implications.

## **CONCLUSIONS AND REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS**

22. The recommendation is to replace the existing signs at the Basingstoke Canal junction with Sheets Heath with smaller non-reflective signs.

## **WHAT HAPPENS NEXT**

23. The suggested amendments to the signs would be undertaken during August 2010.

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**BACKGROUND PAPERS:** None

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