



# **D6284 Towpath, Dockett Eddy Lane & D6285 Ferry Lane Safety Improvements**

## **Feasibility Report**

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# 1. INTRODUCTION:

This report is to investigate the options to improve safety for all users of Dockett Eddy Lane, Towpath and Ferry Lane. The main focus of the report will be on pedestrian safety in and around the car park area near the lock, a review of parking around the lock and along Ferry Lane and review of existing signs and lines along all the roads.

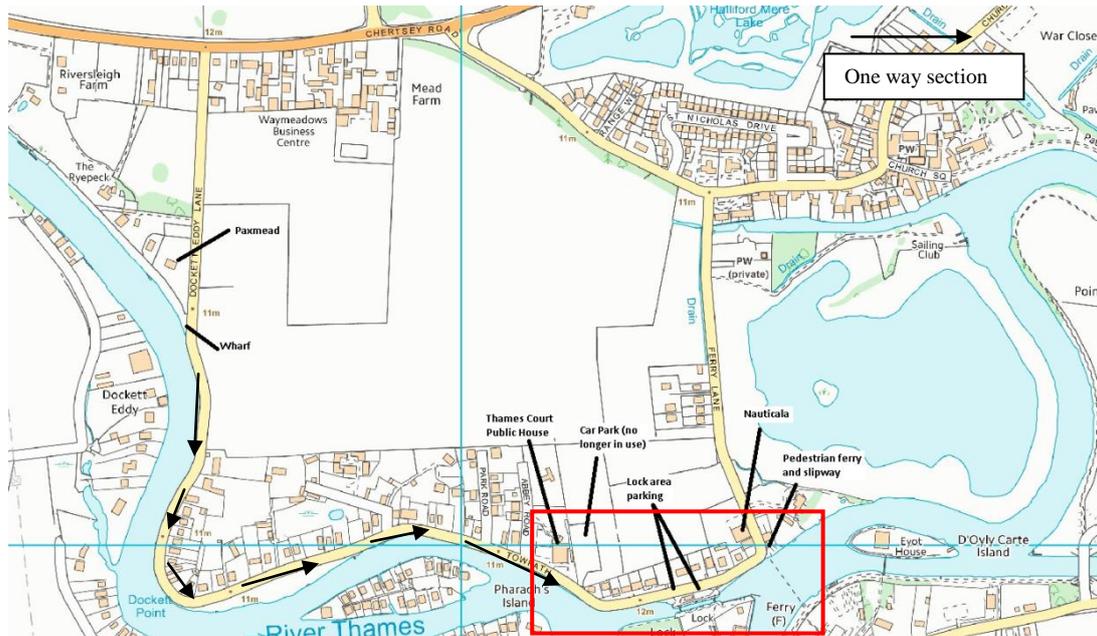


Figure 1: Map showing key locations



Figure 2: Map showing close up on Shepperton Lock area

## **2. SITE ANALYSIS:**

The site under investigation is made up of three roads, being; Dockett Eddy Lane, Towpath and Ferry Lane. These roads lead to, from and along the River Thames, and runs at a length of 2.38km (1.48 miles). Towpath has a partial one way system that operates eastbound only between its continuation of Dockett Eddy Lane, near the wharf on the river, to its junction with Abbey Road. All three roads are unclassified, and are narrow with widths in places down to approximately 3.5m wide.

Dockett Eddy Lane is relatively straight and is predominately fronted by fields, with a few residential properties as well as Paxmead, a Girlguiding activity venue. In the lane there is only a small section of parking restrictions at the southern end, in the form of double yellow lines. There is no pedestrian provision along the lane, with pedestrians having to walk on the carriageway. This lane does not have any street lights.



Figure 3: Southern end of Dockett Eddy Lane with the Wharf to right of photograph

Towpath meanders as it follows the River Thames to its south. Its northern frontage is predominately to residential properties, but also Thames Court public house. The northern side of the road has parking restriction along its entire length, in the form of double yellow lines, whereas the southern side has them in places along its length, allowing for informal vehicle parking where they are absent. At the eastern end of the road near the lock there is an informal car park on both sides of the road, on land owned by the borough council. There is only a short section of pedestrian footway to the east of the lane, however, for the majority of the road, pedestrians have to either walk on the carriageway or on the verge that is owned by the

Environment Agency. This road only has a couple of street lights in the vicinity of the lock.



Figure 4: Towpath

Ferry Lane is relatively straight and predominately fronted by fields on both sides, but with some residential and business properties, including Nauticalia. At the southern end of the lane there is a landing for boats to access the river, as well as a water ferry. There is parking restriction in the form of single yellow lines, for the vast majority of both sides of the lane. These restrictions prevent vehicles parking between 8am and 8pm on Mondays to Saturdays, between the months of May and October. A shared pedestrian and cycle facility runs along the western side of the carriageway. The majority of the lane is unlit.



Figure 5: Ferry Lane

### 3. DATA COLLECTION:

#### 3.1 Traffic Surveys

Automatic traffic count surveys using tubes were conducted at four locations along the three roads of Dockett Eddy Lane, Towpath and Ferry Lane for seven days in June 2016. The plan below shows the locations of the surveys.

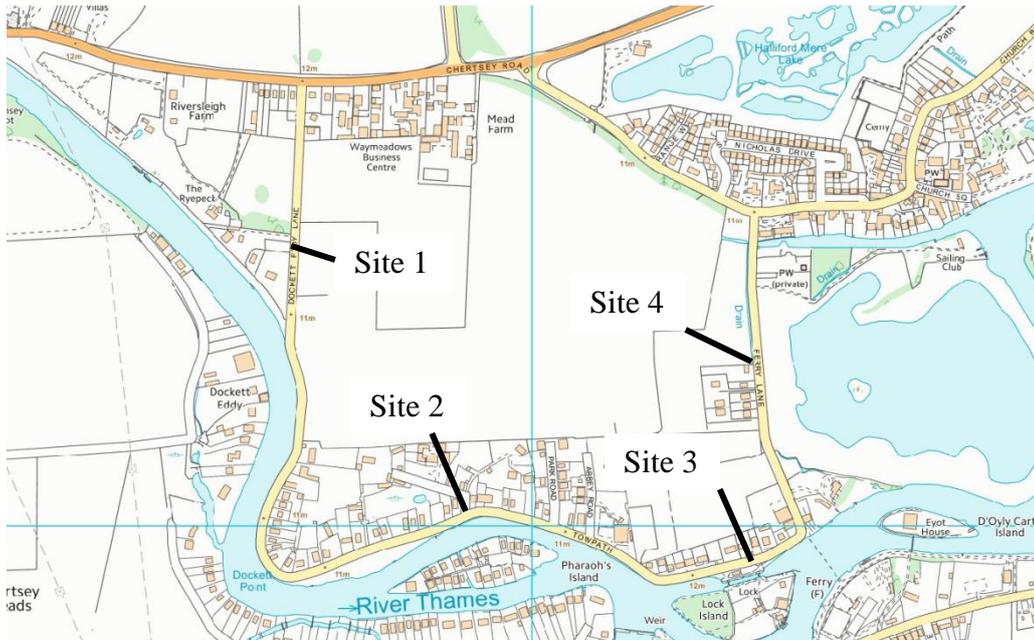


Figure 6: Map showing vehicle survey locations

The table below shows the key results of these surveys.

Location	Direction of travel	Daily average of vehicle numbers	Daily average 85%ile (mph)	7 day average mean (mph)
Site 1	South	481	33.9	26.8
Site 2	East	462	20.8	16.3
Site 3	East	568*	22.8*	17.3*
	West	247*	21.2*	15.6*
Site 4	North	1029	38.0	30.7
	South	585	37.5	30.6

Figure 7: Table showing key data from vehicle surveys

\*Vehicles were parked on the measuring loops for much of the weekend meaning the averages would be affected as data could not be collected for these periods. Despite this, it is not envisioned that this would have dramatic effects on the average speeds.

The 85<sup>th</sup> percentile is a measurement that reflects the speed that 15% of drivers are exceeding, and is used by Highway engineers when evaluating speeds.

The results of the speed survey indicate that on most roads motorists are adhering to the 30mph speed limit, with speeds around 20mph near the parking area along Towpath. It is also noted that speeding appears to be an issue along Ferry Lane, with 15% of drivers travelling North at speeds in excess of 38mph. If there is a will to do so, a separate speed limit review should be carried out.

### **3.2 Personal injury collisions**

A review has taken place of the recorded personal injury collisions during the last three years along all the roads in the study. This review has shown that there have not been any personal injury collisions along this road over this period. Looking further back there has been 5 personal injury collisions in the period between 1<sup>st</sup> January 2000 and 30<sup>th</sup> June 2016, with the last of which occurring in 2011. All these injuries had their severity recorded as 'slight'. A review of these collisions showed two resulted from vehicles travelling the wrong way up the one-way section of road, one dazzled by sun, one impaired by alcohol, and one as a result of a falling tree. None of these collisions had speed or road conditions/alignment as a contributory factor. Also none of the collisions involved a pedestrian.

### **3.3 Highway ownership**

A request has been made to the Highways Information Team to establish the extent of land that is deemed public highway, and therefore falls under the ownership of the Local Highways Authority, which is Surrey County Council.

It has been identified that the land deemed public highway is predominately limited to the carriageway, with only some sections of verge to the northern side of Towpath, and the footways in Ferry lane and Towpath (see Appendix 6.1).

## **4. DISCUSSION AND OPTIONS:**

### **4.1 Pedestrian safety in and around the car parking area adjacent to the lock**

Concern has been expressed about the safety of pedestrians, in particular from speeding vehicles. The personal injury collision data shows that this section of road does not have a history of collisions

resulting in personal injury. This of course does not account for any near misses that may have occurred, as these would be unrecorded. The combined average mean speed in this area is 16.5mph, suggesting that the vast majority of motorists are driving slowly due to the nature of the environment. It is recognized that not all motorists drive sensibly and in accordance to their surroundings, as in this location one motorist during the survey week, between 5pm and 6pm on the Friday, was recorded travelling between 46-51mph, which is clearly dangerous considering the potential for pedestrians in the carriageway and vehicles conducting parking maneuvers. However, a balanced approach should be adopted and consideration given to whether funding and restrictions be implemented due to the actions of the extremely small minority. Due to the limited amount of land that is public highway, this puts limitations on options available for improvements, unless third party land owners are involved and in agreement.



Figure 8: Parking area near Shepperton Lock

#### 4.1.1 Reduce the speed limit

There has been a request to reduce the speed limit to 20mph in the section of Towpath immediately adjacent to the car parking area. Reduction of the speed limit alone generally has little effect on motorists speed, and in this instance with the average mean speed in this section of road under 20mph, there would seem little requirement to do so. Additionally, Surrey's speed limit policy requires a section of road with a different speed limit to be at least 600m in length, to ensure motorists do not have to adjust their speed too frequently. It is not possible to use advisory speed limit signs as the Traffic Signs Regulations and General Directions 2016 does not allow their use in these situations.

As average speed are below 20mph, driver behavior is generally suitable for the environment and it is not recommended that the introduction of a formal 20mph speed limit be progressed.

#### 4.1.2 Gateways

Gateways are usually used at the entrance to an area to highlight to motorists that the environment they will be driving through may be different. It is noted that recently gateway signs have been introduced on non-public highway land that fulfill this option.

As some gateway signs have already been installed, it would be recommended to not progress this option any further.



Figure 9: Photograph of gateway sign

#### 4.1.3 Traffic calming

To further promote slower driving and increase the awareness of entering a location that is different to that of adjacent roads, speed reducing features could be used on each approach. These features would most likely be taper edged road tables, due to the absence of kerbs and the width of the carriageway. These features also have the benefit of affecting all vehicles including motorcycles, as well as not affecting drainage. If these features were positioned adjacent to the gateway signs they would have added benefit. Ideally it would be useful to have a traffic calming feature in Ferry Lane to reduce speeds on the approach to the 90 degree bend, but due to the movements of boats in and out of the water at the landing slipway, this would most likely be

unpopular. Additional street lighting might also be necessary to ensure the features are visible during the hours of darkness.

As the average speeds are below 20mph and even the 85 percentile under 23mph, it is considered that this option would have little reduction of speed on the majority of traffic. On this basis, the traffic calming option is not recommended at this time.

Budget estimate: £20,000

#### 4.1.4 Virtual footway along parking area.

It has been requested that a virtual footway, using road markings, be placed along the southern side of the carriageway through the car parking area, to help raise driver awareness of pedestrian. This is a technique that has been adopted in other locations in Surrey and is viewed favorably. To ensure this works as effectively as possible, its termination locations would have to be carefully considered. Ideally this footway should allow pedestrians to walk from the car parking area eastwards and then directly cross over onto the formal footway that runs on the northern side of the road. In doing so this would result in the loss of space where currently up to four cars can park along the carriageway.

The majority of this option has safety benefits in highlighting space where pedestrians are likely to be walking, however due to a reduction in the number of parking spaces this option is not recommended.

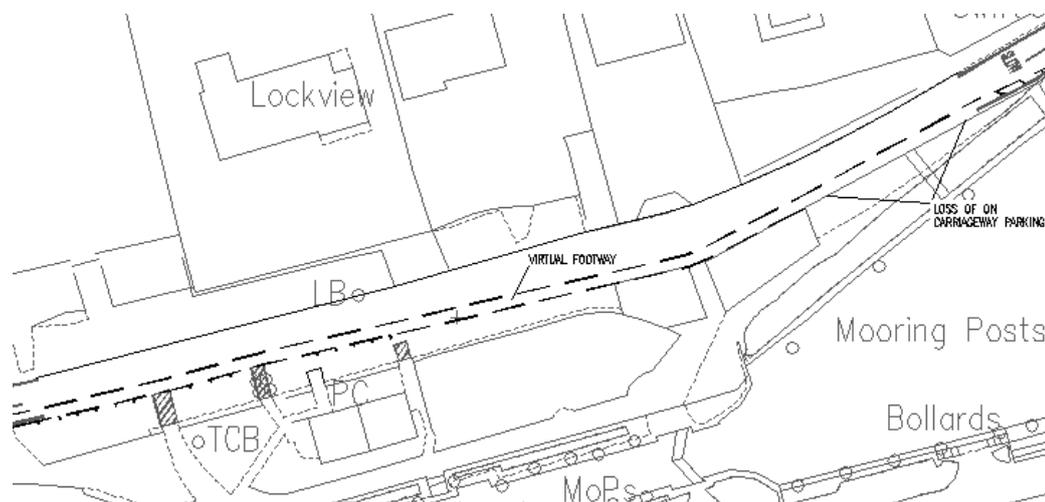


Figure 10: Sketch showing virtual footway

Budget estimate: £5,000

#### 4.1.5 New footpath

The safest situation for pedestrians is to keep them physically separated from traffic. This option looks at providing a footpath away from the carriageway, but would require permission from third party landowners as the verges are not public highway.

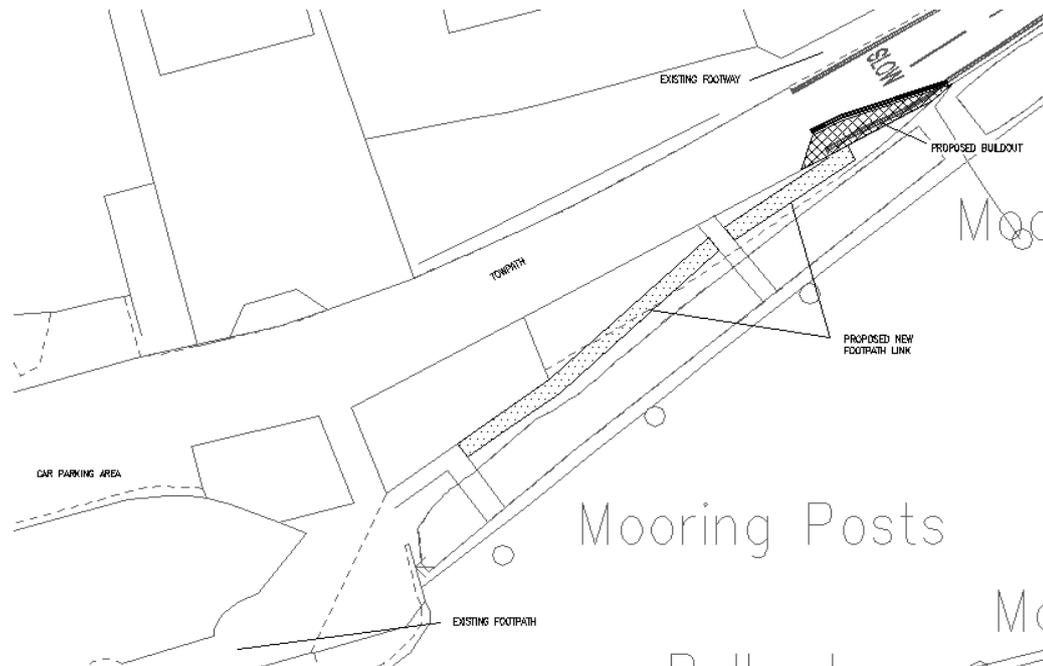


Figure 11: Sketch showing new footpath

To ensure not too much of the on carriageway parking is lost as well as maintaining clear visibility for the pedestrians, a buildout would be required in Towpath, at the northern end of the footpath link.

This option would be of benefit to improving pedestrian safety, but as it does not directly benefit those pedestrians within the main parking area, it is not recommended.

Budget estimate: £20,000 (excluding land purchase & legal costs if necessary)

#### 4.1.6 Hybrid of the virtual footway and new footpath

A combination of the two footway/footpath options would provide the most complete and potentially safest option. In this option the virtual footway would run until an access to the existing footpath, and then would link with the new footpath across third party owned land.

This option combines all the benefits of the virtual footway and new footway options, and at the same time as providing a continuous

pedestrian facility, and retaining the existing level of car parking space, and is therefore recommended. However, this option would require permission from third party landowners as the verges are not public highway.

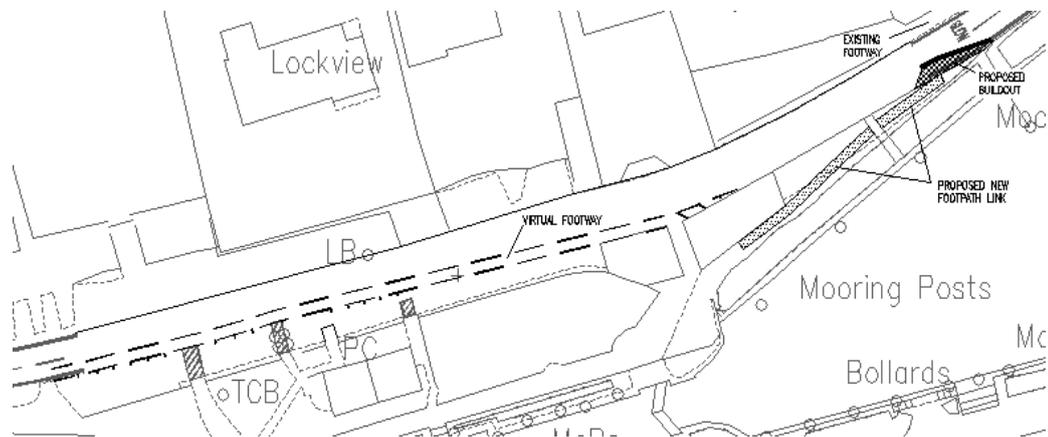


Figure 12: Sketch showing hybrid of the virtual footway and new footpath

Budget estimate: £22,500 (excluding land purchase & legal costs if necessary)

#### 4.1.7 Marking bays in the parking area

Requests have been made for the individual parking bays to be marked, therefore ensuring the maximum number of vehicles could park within this area at all times. The parking bays are not part of the public highway and are the responsibility of the borough council who owns the land. Unfortunately the surface of the parking area is poor, with a loose material. Lining the bays with traditional road marking material would not be a long term solution as the surface material would move, and could result in the area becoming unattractive. It is recommended that a solution for the parking bays would need to be assessed by the land owners.

#### 4.2 Additional Parking within Ferry Lane

Issues of lack of parking in the area have been reported. This demand has been escalated by the closure of the former car park adjacent to Thames Court public house. A separate review of the parking restrictions within Ferry Lane and Towpath has been conducted by the Surrey County Council's Parking Team. The results of this review were presented in a separate report to the September 2016 Spelthorne Local Committee.

### 4.3 Review of signs and lines

The existing signs and road markings have been identified (see Appendix 6.2). Many of the existing lines could benefit from being refreshed. There are some places where vegetation growth is masking the markings, and should therefore be cut back. Additional 'SLOW' road marking could be considered at particular locations where their use would be of benefit such as on the eastbound approach to the parking area in Towpath.

To the side of the roads some of the signs are old/faded and could benefit from being replaced, as well as some of the posts which have become rusted or knocked over. The existing 30mph speed limit repeater signs, although ensure the limit is legal, fail to comply with current guidance that states a maximum spacing of 250m when displayed on alternative sides of the carriageway, and as a result should be rectified.

The roads could benefit from 'pedestrians in road ahead' warning signs (Diag: 544.1 TSRGD) to highlight the lack of footway in places where there is a no such facility.

An information sign at the wharf alerting motorists of its presence and not to park there would also be of benefit. Currently there is a lack of understanding of its use, which regularly results in the area being parked in. This thereby restricts those who need access to the wharf to allow goods to be transferred to a boat for their onward journey to properties on the islands.

Ensuring that all signage and lines are visible, in good condition, correctly sited, and appropriate is an essential part of any improvement scheme and is therefore recommended.

Budget estimate: £7,500

### 4.4 Do nothing

The option to do nothing should always be examined. Currently all the regulatory signs comply with legal requirements, and the speeds in the area of concern, the parking area near the locks on Towpath are well below the limit. Also there is no record of a personal injury collision issue in the immediate vicinity. Based on recorded data alone, it would suggest there are no problems to be addressed. This said, resident feedback should not be ignored, and there is real passion within the local community for action to prevent a possible collision and improve the environment for all users.

## **5. RECOMMENDATION:**

There is clearly concern from the local community about the safety of pedestrians within the car parking area near to the locks, and as such this should be addressed. It is therefore recommended that action is taken to ensure all signs and road markings are visible and correct, with additions included where necessary. Also the hybrid of the virtual footway and the new footpath should be investigated further, in particular with the relevant third party land owners, to establish if this could be achieved.

## 6: APPENDIX:

### 6.1 – Highway extent



## 6.2 - Existing signs

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