

SURREY COUNTY COUNCIL

LOCAL COMMITTEE (SURREY HEATH)



DATE: 30 NOVEMBER 2017

LEAD OFFICER: ANDREW MILNE, AREA TEAM MANAGER (NW)

SUBJECT: CHOBHAM TO WOKING PEDESTRIAN AND CYCLE FACILITY - PETITION RESPONSE

AREA: BAGSHOT, WINDLESHAM AND CHOBHAM

SUMMARY OF ISSUE:

A petition has been received by the Woking Joint Committee and the Surrey Heath Local Committee asking for a safe route to be provided for pedestrians and cyclists between Chobham and Woking. The wording of the petition is;

“Currently there is no safe route for pedestrians and cyclists between Chobham and Woking, the speed and volume of traffic along the A3046 Station Road is a barrier to all but motor vehicle users. This petition is for a family friendly pedestrian and cycle route to link the two towns. The proposed route uses the footway along the A3046 between Chobham High Street and Horsell Common Road, then continues along Horsell Common Road - South Road - Morton Road - Ridgeway from where foot and cycle paths complete the route to the Brewery Road Car park in central Woking. Although the route currently exists the footway adjacent to the A3046 is of variable quality and a section of it is currently unpaved.”

At the time of writing this response, the online petition contained 228 signatures.

This response is being reported to both committees.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

The Local Committee (Surrey Heath) is asked to note:

- (i) The contents of the report and conclusion that no pedestrian and cycle facility could be provided over the entire length of the route due to the various physical constraints and financial implications,
- (ii) That part of the existing footway will have maintenance work carried out to restore the original width.

REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS:

Although the provision of a continuous route for pedestrians and cyclists between Chobham and Woking would be ideal, financial and physical constraints do not make this possible. A shared foot / cycleway of sufficient width could be achieved over some of the route but due to limited highway extents and land ownership issues, it would not be possible to make this a continuous route. Consequently, it is recommended that the provision of such a route is not progressed.

1. INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND:

- 1.1 The direct road route between Chobham and Woking is the A3046, which is known as Chobham Road, Kettlewell Hill and Station Road. This is a busy road and in places is quite narrow, particularly the Kettlewell Hill section, and there is no continuous footway along its length.
- 1.2 Alternative routes are available within Woking Borough that allow pedestrians and cyclists to avoid using the A3046. This route uses Horsell Common Road, South Road and Morton Road before using Footpath 19 to Brewery Road. Part of Footpath 19 passes over Ridgeway, which is a private road that joins Morton Road near Woking High School.
- 1.3 The direct route using the A3046 and the route via Footpath 19 are shown on the plan at Annex A.
- 1.4 The route via Footpath 19 was previously investigated by Surrey County Council in 2004/5, when Sustrans was commissioned to carry out a feasibility study. It was looked at again in 2009 during the start of the Woking Cycle Town project, when it was planned to be known as Planet Trail Jupiter. This did not proceed due to cost and the relatively short period during which Cycle Woking funding was available.

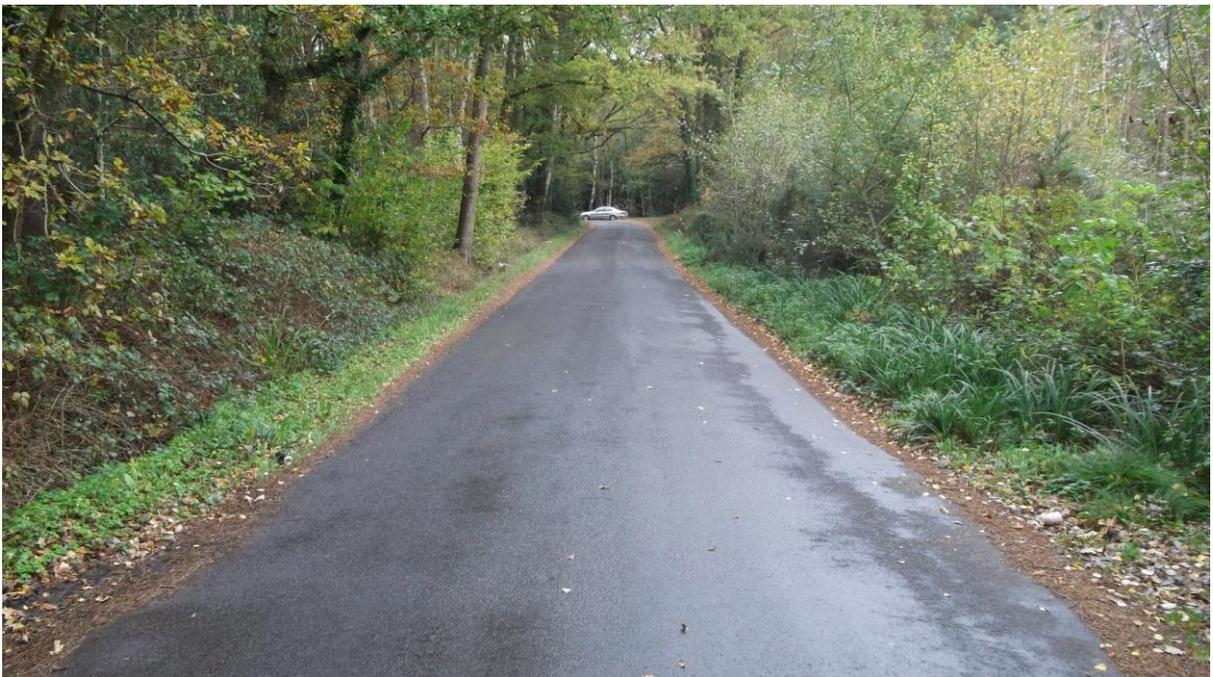
2. ANALYSIS:

- 2.1 Although it is not clear from the wording of the petition exactly where in Chobham the route is intended to start, in 2004/5 and 2009 the proposed route started in Cannon Crescent, to the east of Chobham High Street, continued around the cricket ground before emerging on to the footway on the north side of the A3046 Station Road adjacent to The Park Gallery (which is the end property, next to Tesco).
- 2.2 The route would have used this footway as far as Sandpit Hall Road. There is a narrow verge between the footway and the road over the first 30m or so from The Park Gallery that could be used to widen the surface. However, over the majority of the rest of the length there is little scope to widen the footway due to the adjacent ditch. This footway does not continue on the Woking side of Sandpit Hall Road. Instead, it continues on the south side of the A3046 and so some crossing facility would be required, most likely a Toucan crossing that would be located on the Chobham side of the junction. There are existing dropped kerbs at the end of each footway to allow people to cross from one to the other but these are too close to the junction with Sandpit Hall Road for a Toucan crossing to replace them. The footway on the south side of the A3046 would therefore need to be extended to link in with the crossing located slightly further from the junction.
- 2.3 The footway on the south side of the A3046 continues to the Mimbridge Garden Centre. It is of variable width but is generally relatively narrow, as the following photograph shows. Some additional width could be obtained by "siding out" the footway and clearing away any encroachment of soil and grass etc. but a considerable length of footway would need to be treated for any real benefit.



Pic 1. From entrance to Border Farm looking towards Chobham.

- 2.4 South of Mimbridge Garden Centre, there is no footway on either side of the road. The bridge over the River Bourne is too narrow to accommodate a shared use facility, although this might not cause too many issues in reality as it over a relatively short length with good visibility. However, beyond the bridge, the narrow verge runs adjacent to a ditch and a retaining structure and barrier are likely to be required if a surface was constructed. The remaining verge appears to present few issues, but when Horsell Common Road is reached, there is no verge on which to construct a shared surface.



Pic 2. Northern most part of Horsell Common Road – vehicle in distance is on the A3046.

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- 2.5 Horsell Common Road is less than 5.5m wide, even though it carries two-way traffic and is subject to the national speed limit. There is minimal verge along either side of the road before there is a ditch and as such, there is no way of accommodating a cycle/footway on or off of the carriageway. The road is also bisected by Littlewick Road, which can be busy and fast, as it is also subject to the national speed limit. Whilst there are gaps in the traffic to allow people to cross, it could still present issues for some users. The physical constraints on Horsell Common Road are the same to the south of the crossroads.
- 2.6 The short section of South Road presents no real issues but Woking High School is on Morton Road and so the footways and carriageway become extremely busy at certain times. On street parking is present in many places for most of the day. Widening either of the footways is likely to only be possible if some or all of this on-street parking was removed, otherwise two-way traffic flow would be difficult to maintain. Ideally, anyone using the Chobham to Woking route would be on the school side of Morton Road in order to avoid having to cross the road to Ridgeway at, or near, the bend into Meadway Drive, where visibility is poor.
- 2.7 Ridgeway is a private road and for the first 180 metres or so, Footpath 19 passes along it, delineated from the unmade road by a line of posts. It is unlikely that residents of Ridgeway would want this footpath to be widened.
- 2.8 Footpath 19 continues between St Andrew's School and the boundaries of properties on Ridgeway, Southcote, Church Close and Hopfield and Churchfields. Generally, the vegetation to each side of the footpath is cut back and well maintained but it is still only 1.5m or so in places. As part of the Cycle Woking initiative, an attempt was made to open up access to Woking High School, which included an application to widen this length of footpath by using land adjacent to it that is in the ownership of St Andrew's School but this, not unsurprisingly, was met with objections from the school.
- 2.9 Between Horsell Park and Brewery Road, Footpath 19 was upgraded as part of the Cycle Woking work to improve access to Woking High School. Consequently, this section of footpath needs no improvement. The route from Brewery Road to Woking Town Centre is direct and easy to use.



Pic 3. Footpath 19 alongside St Andrew's School

3. OPTIONS:

- 3.1 The Department for Transport's Local Transport Note 1/12, "Shared Use Routes for Pedestrians and Cyclists" suggests a minimum *effective* width of 3m for an unsegregated route. Where the route is bounded by vertical features such as walls, fences and hedges, the actual width should be wider in order to achieve this "effective" dimension because cyclists in particular do not like to cycle too close to such features.
- 3.2 There are significant lengths of this route where even 3m *actual* width is unachievable due to physical constraints. Elsewhere, this width could be achieved but only at significant cost and on Horsell Common Road, there is no scope at all to provide a route of any width that is separated from the carriageway.
- 3.3 The width of the existing footway between Sandpit Hall Road and Mimbridge Garden Centre has been reduced by the encroachment of soil and vegetation and it could be restored by "siding out" and trimming some vegetation. This work has been ordered.

4. CONSULTATIONS:

- 4.1 No consultation has taken place.

5. FINANCIAL AND VALUE FOR MONEY IMPLICATIONS:

- 5.1 The "siding out" of the footway between Sandpit Hall Road and Mimbridge Garden Centre is being undertaken as routine maintenance from the 2017/18

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revenue budget. If no further action is taken, there will be no financial implications.

- 5.2 The length of this route is approximately 4.5km and it is not known how many pedestrians are likely to walk this far but numbers are likely to be very low. Potentially more cyclists are likely to make a journey of this length but the number is still unknown.
- 5.3 The cost of physically widening the existing footway between Chobham and Mimbridge (which would create a wider surface than the routine maintenance), plus the construction of a new surface between Mimbridge and Horsell Common Road is likely to be in the region of £224,000. This figure does not include for any retaining structure or barrier where the surface would run close to a ditch (para 2.4).
- 5.4 No cost estimate can be given for widening the narrow footpath that runs alongside St Andrew's School etc, as referred to in paragraph 2.8, where third party land would be required.
- 5.5 It is clear that the provision of a sufficiently wide shared surface, where this is possible, would be an expensive undertaking. It is unknown how many pedestrians and cyclists would use it and there would still be long lengths of the route where a shared surface could not be provided either at all or at the required width. Consequently, such a scheme would represent poor value for money.

6. RISK MANAGEMENT:

- 6.1 Pedestrians and cyclists are considered to be "vulnerable road users" and can be at risk from motorised highway users. Consequently, whenever possible, measures are introduced to improve facilities and safety for these groups of highway users. However, physical and financial constraints sometimes mean that it is not always possible to do so and to provide a sub-standard facility could make an existing situation worse.

7. LOCALISM:

- 7.1 Through the views and needs expressed by local communities, and accommodating where possible the involvement of local communities in looking after the public highway, localism is routinely considered as part of the consultation and bidding processes for highway-related works.
- 7.2 This report responds to concerns raised by members of the local community who wish to travel between Chobham and Woking.

8. EQUALITIES AND DIVERSITY IMPLICATIONS:

- 8.1 There are no equalities and diversity implications.

9. OTHER IMPLICATIONS:

Area assessed:	Direct Implications:
Crime and Disorder	No significant implications arising from this report.
Sustainability (including Climate	No significant implications arising from this

Change and Carbon Emissions)	report.
Corporate Parenting/Looked After Children	No significant implications arising from this report.
Safeguarding responsibilities for vulnerable children and adults	No significant implications arising from this report.
Public Health	No significant implications arising from this report.
Human Resource/Training and Development	No significant implications arising from this report.

10. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS:

- 10.1 There is not a continuous off-road route for pedestrians and cyclists between Chobham and Woking. The footway alongside the busy A3046 changes from one side of the road to the other and ends completely at the Mimbridge Garden Centre; there is no continuation of the route towards Woking. Users can use a combination of verge and carriageway to continue to Horsell and then use a footpath to get to the edge of Woking town centre.
- 10.2 Providing a continuous off-road route would be ideal but physical and financial constraints do not make this possible. Maintenance work to “side out” the existing footway between Sandpit Hall Road and Mimbridge Garden Centre has been ordered and this will restore the original width of this section of the route.
- 10.3 Even if there was sufficient funding to construct a route of sufficient width to be used as a shared foot / cycleway, physical constraints and land ownership issues mean that this could not be continuous. Consequently, it is recommended that the provision of such a route is not progressed.

11. WHAT HAPPENS NEXT:

- 11.1 The petitioner will be advised.
- 11.2 Work will be undertaken to side out the footway between Sandpit Hall Road and Mimbridge Garden Centre.

Contact Officer:

Peter Orchard (Assistant Engineer) – 0300 2001003

Consulted:

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Annexes:

Annex A – map showing Chobham to Woking via A3046 and via Footpath 19 through Horsell

Sources/background papers:

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