

Grotto Road D3920 (Path), Weybridge

**Pedestrian and cycle improvements
Feasibility Report**

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Prepared By: Jonathan Wilkinson

Authorised By: Jamie Daly

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1. INTRODUCTION:

This report looks at improving the Grotto Road path between Marlborough Drive and Oatlands Drive for both cyclists and pedestrians.

The path is currently not a designated shared cycle/ pedestrian route, but is signed as a link to a National Cycle Network route along the Thames Path. Although cyclists use this path, it is unsuitable for both pedestrians and cyclists to use in a safe and comfortable way.

The Surrey Cycling Strategy forms part of the Surrey Transport Plan. The strategy sets out Surrey County Council's aim for cycling in Surrey and the approach to achieving the aim. The aim is "**more people in Surrey cycling, more safely**". The strategy set out twelve objectives to achieve the aim. One of the objectives is to produce local cycling plans, to be developed by the Local Committee and its partners, which reflect local priorities. In 2016 Elmbridge Local Committee approved their Cycle Plan.

Elmbridge Local Committee, identified this path as a priority for improvement to be included within the local area Integrated Transport Schemes prioritisation list.

In this report, two options have been identified for converting this path to a designated shared cycle and pedestrian route.

2. SITE ANALYSIS

Grotto Road path is a local access footway linking Oatlands Drive to the south and Marlborough Drive to the North. The path is currently signed as a link to route 4 of the National Cycle Network.

The National Cycle Network is a series of traffic-free paths and quiet, on-road cycling and walking routes that connect to every major town and city. Route 4 runs along the River Thames, Thames Path, and cyclists can use this route to access Weybridge, Walton on Thames, and Hampton to the east or as a link to other cycle routes to the west of Weybridge.

The map below shows the cycle infrastructure surrounding the Grotto Road path.



KEY

- | | |
|--|---|
|  Advisory cycle route |  Signalled road crossing |
|  Cycle lane (a cycle lane is painted on the road) |  Planned signalled road crossing |
|  Cycle path (a cycle path is next to the road) |  Zebra crossing |
|  Thames Path |  Cycle park and number of parking spaces |
|  National Cycle Route |  Covered cycle park and number of parking spaces |

The footpath serves as a means for the local community to access St James C of E Primary School, St Georges College Junior School, and local shops, and amenities to the north west and Oatlands Park Recreation Ground to the south east. See Fig 1 below. Photos 1 and 2 show the ends of the path from Oatlands Drive and Marlborough Drive respectively.

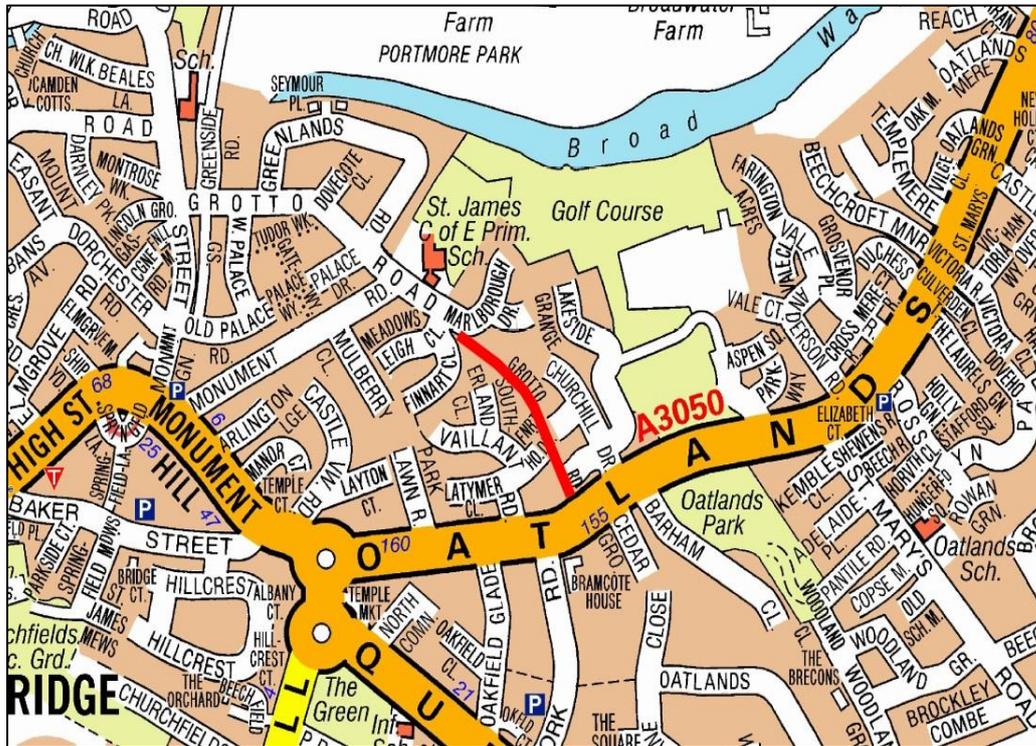


Fig 1. Location Plan



Photo 1. Path viewed from Oatlands Drive



Photo 2. Path viewed from Marlborough Drive

The path is approximately 300m in length and appears to be approximately 2.4m wide for the majority of the length. The path has a layer of asphalt throughout and the surface is in generally good condition. However there are

areas where tree roots have raised the level of the path, which could be an obstruction for pedestrians using mobility scooters, wheelchair and pushchairs.

There are several obstructions along the length of the path including trees and bollards which reduce the width to 0.6m at the narrowest point (see photos 3 and 4). The adjacent verge is growing over the path in places making it difficult to ascertain the exact width without invasive investigation. Vegetation narrows the path in places and requires clearing to increase usable width.

The verge adjacent to the path is not Publicly Maintainable Highway, the title is registered to Elmbridge Borough Council. Initial negotiations between Surrey Highways and Elmbridge Borough Council have indicated that Elmbridge Borough Council would be aggregable for the land to be used as part of this scheme.



Photo 3. Trees narrowing path



Photo 4. Trees narrowing path and verge belonging to Elmbridge Borough Council

A large amount of utility apparatus are contained within the path and adjacent verge including a large water main, telecoms, a large gas main and electricity.

Street lighting is in place along the length of the path.

The current path appears to have no restraining feature in places along the rear edge by the fence line which has resulted in some small areas failing (see photo 5).



Photo 5. Rear edge of path failing due to lack of restraint.

See drawing *PC1030-01 Existing* for a plan of the existing layout

3. DATA COLLECTION:

3.1 Highway Extents

The Highway extents (see Fig 2) on Grotto Road path and surrounding roads were obtained to understand what areas could be improved without having to acquire land.

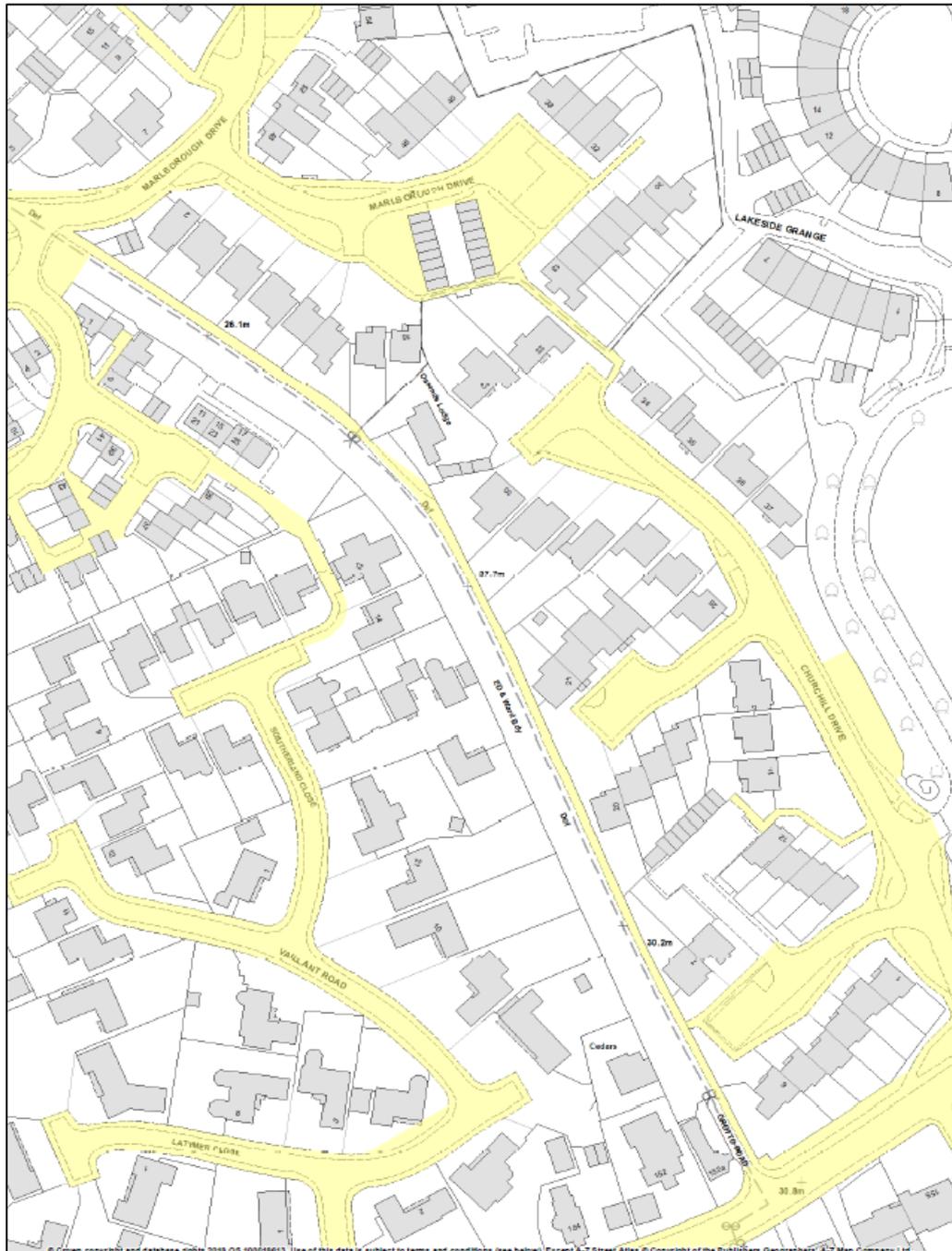


Fig 2. Extent of Publicly Maintainable Highway

4 DISCUSSION AND OPTIONS:

Design options have been prepared to achieve the main objective:

- A designated shared cycle/pedestrian route

Shared use schemes are often implemented to improve conditions for cyclists, but it is essential that they are designed to take into account the needs of everyone expected to use the facility. Both of the options have been designed to accommodate the movement of pedestrians and cyclists.

4.1 Option 1 – Isolated widening (see drawing PC1030-01 Option 1)

This option provides areas of isolated widening at narrow points and obstructions such as trees to provide a consistent width of 2.4m which could be used by both pedestrians. This option would also remove unnecessary obstructions such as 2 bollards which serve no purpose, reposition a barrier at the Marlborough Drive end so not to obstruct the path and cut back vegetation to maximise the path width.

New dropped kerbs would be introduced at the Oatlands Drive end of the path to allow cyclists to join the carriageway, dropped kerbs are already in place at the Marlborough Drive end. Signs and markings would be provided to identify this as a shared use (cycle/pedestrian) facility.

Conclusion

This option would provide a 2.4m wide shared use (cycle/pedestrian) facility which is the minimum width in the draft Surrey Cycle Design Guidance. It would remove any unnecessary narrow sections making it easier to use for wheelchair and pushchair users.

This option would encroach on land which is not currently Publicly Maintainable Highway.

The presence and potential diversion or protection of utility apparatus could increase the cost of this option significantly.

Budget price: £29,000

4.2 Option 2 – Widened Path (see drawing PC1030-01 Option 2)

This option is to remove the existing path and provide a new 4m wide path in its place. This option would also remove unnecessary obstructions such as 2 bollards which serve no purpose and reposition a barrier at the Marlborough Drive end so not to obstruct the path. Street lighting would also be repositioned to the edge of the widened path so not to obstruct.

New dropped kerbs would be introduced at the Oatlands Drive end of the path to allow cyclists to join carriageway, dropped kerbs are already in place at the Marlborough Drive end. Signs and markings would be provided to identify this as a shared use (cycle/pedestrian) facility.

Conclusion

This option would provide a 4m wide shared use (cycle/pedestrian) facility which is an optimum width in the draft Surrey Cycle Design Guidance. There would be no narrow sections making it easier to use for wheelchair and pushchair users. The path reconstruction would remove any areas of failure such as those along the rear of the path.

This option would encroach on land which is not currently Publicly Maintainable Highway.

The presence of utility apparatus could increase the cost of this option significantly.

Budget price: £123,000

5. RECOMMENDATION

Before proceeding with either option it would be advisable to carry out trial holes to see if the presence of utility apparatus would impact on the cost of either option. It would also be advisable to carry out vegetation cutting and siding out of the verge to determine accurate widths and condition of the existing path which would allow the options to be more accurately estimated. The estimated budget cost for carrying out trial holes and vegetation cutting is £7,500.

Before proceeding with either option the land required for the improved facilities would need to be adopted as Publicly Maintainable Highway.

Of the two options the second would be preferable as this provides a better optimum width facility. The width of option could be decreased to reduce costs if necessary and provide a good width facility (2.6 – 3.9m (draft Surrey Cycle Design Guidance)).

However if the funding is not available the first option would provide a cheaper alternative and an improved facility for both cyclists and pedestrians.

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