

SURREY COUNTY COUNCIL

LOCAL COMMITTEE (ELMBRIDGE)

DATE: 16 NOVEMBER 2020



LEAD OFFICER: Tim Vickers, Transport Planner

SUBJECT: Brooklands Business Park Accessibility Project: Improvements for safer cycling between Heath Road / Brookland Lane junction and Weybridge town centre

DIVISION: Weybridge Riverside

SUMMARY OF ISSUE:

The Brooklands Business Park Accessibility Project is a major transport project which plans to establish a formal and safer route for cycling between Brooklands and Weybridge town centre. Provision of the route between Brooklands and Brooklands Lane on Heath Road, north of Weybridge Railway Station, is now substantially completed.

Further improvements are now planned to complete the safer route for cycling north of Brooklands Lane through to Weybridge town centre through the following:

- Constructing a road table on Heath Road around the junction with Brooklands Lane, and extending double yellow lines on the south side of Brooklands Lane by 7.5m and on both sides of Waverley Road by 12m. These changes are shown on the plan in Annex A. They are planned to provide a safer location for on-road cyclists to join/leave the completed shared cyclist/pedestrian path along Heath Road via a new entrance on Brooklands Lane, and connect with an on-road signed 'quiet roads' route along Waverley Road and Melrose Road, which would join Weybridge town centre via the town paths adjacent to Churchfields Recreation Ground. This route is shown in Annex B.
- Improve sections of the town paths adjacent to Churchfields Recreation Ground and make a Cycle Track Order to formalise these sections for use by cyclists. These town paths currently have Public Footpath (FP) status however are well used by cyclists as well as pedestrians. Specifically, the Cycle Track Order would cover the western arm of FP 21, and the full length of FP 22, as shown in Annex B. Only part of the footpaths' width will be converted to cycle track leaving the remainder as public footpath on the Definitive Map.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

The Local Committee (Elmbridge) is asked:

1. To approve the advertisement of a notice under Section 90 of the Highways Act 1980 for the construction of a road table on Heath Road around the junction with Brooklands Lane, as detailed in the drawing shown in Annex A.
2. To agree that the County Council's intentions to introduce double yellow line extensions on Brooklands Lane as shown in Annex A should be formally advertised and subject to statutory consultation. Also to agree that if objections are received, the Area Highways Manager and Project Sponsor are authorised to try and resolve them. If any objections cannot be resolved, the Area Highways Manager and Project Sponsor, in consultation with the Chairman/Vice Chairman of this committee and the Divisional Member, decides whether or not they should be acceded to and therefore whether the order should be made, with or without modifications.
3. To agree that the County Council's intentions to introduce double yellow line extensions on Waverley Road as shown in Annex A should be formally advertised and subject to statutory consultation. Also to agree that if objections are received, the Area Highways Manager and Project Sponsor are authorised to try and resolve them. If any objections cannot be resolved, the Area Highways Manager and Project Sponsor, in consultation with the Chairman/Vice Chairman of this committee and the Divisional Member, decides whether or not they should be acceded to and therefore whether the order should be made, with or without modifications.
4. To authorise the making of the Cycle Track Order. Also to authorise the Project Sponsor, in consultation with the Chairman/Vice Chairman and Divisional Member to resolve any objections to the Cycle Track Order if possible. Objections should be considered as resolved if they are contradicted by the reasoning provided in section 2 of this Report. Also, if necessary, to authorise the Project Sponsor to submit any unresolved objections to the Secretary of State for determining whether the Order can be confirmed, or whether a Local Inquiry is required.

REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS:

- To provide a safer route for cyclists from the completed shared cyclist/pedestrian facility along Heath Road into Weybridge town centre, to complete the route between Brooklands and Weybridge town centre. Completing this key missing link in the route would help to meet the project's strategic aims to encourage sustainable, safe and healthy forms of travel. The proposed road table will also provide an improved environment for pedestrians.
- The Cycle Track Order specifically would formalise the town paths adjacent to Chuchfields Recreation Ground as cycle route options. Count data evidences that these paths are already very well used by cyclists, particularly younger users attending Heathside School and Brooklands College. Accident data shows that the route using these paths offers a safer cycling route to Weybridge town centre. There are plans to undertake improvements to these paths.
- Full details of the reasoning are provided in Section 2.

1. INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND:
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- 1.1 The Brooklands Business Park Accessibility Project is a major transport project which plans to establish a formal and safer route for cyclists between Brooklands and Weybridge town centre. A route between the Brooklands Business Park and Weybridge Railway Station has been substantially completed and earlier in 2020 a facility for cyclists and pedestrians was constructed north of the Station along Heath Road as far as Brooklands Lane. Further improvements are now planned along the key missing link between Brooklands Lane and Weybridge town centre.
- 1.2 The improvements planned are to provide a safer cycling route and include construction of a road table on Heath Road around the junction with Brooklands Lane (see Annex A); extending double yellow lines on the south side of Brooklands Lane by 7.5m and on both sides of Waverley Road by 12m (see Annex A); and improvements to sections of the town paths by Churchfields Recreation Ground and the making of a Cycle Track Order to formalise these sections for use by cyclists. Specifically, the Cycle Track Order would cover the western arm of Public Footpath 21, and the full length of Public Footpath 22 (see Annex B) and only part of the footpaths' width would be converted to cycle track leaving the remainder as public footpath on the Definitive Map.
- 1.3 This item is seeking 4 separate recommendations. Collectively they would enable to Project Team to continue with the scheme as planned.
- 1.4 The recommendations would allow the necessary advertisements and orders to be made and for the statutory consultation processes related to the double yellow line extensions and Cycle Track Order to be carried out.
- 1.5 Under the Cycle Tracks Act 1984, the County Council has the power to convert public footpaths into cycle tracks. For information, the process for making Cycle Tracks Orders is summarised as follows (as summarised from the Cycle Track Regulations 1984):
- Carry out initial consultation (with one or more organisations representing persons who use the footpath, local authority within whose area the footpath is situated, statutory undertakers, chief of police).
 - Highway Authority makes the Order. On making the Order further consultation is carried out. A public notice of the Order is advertised on site, on a public noticeboard, in a local newspaper, and notices are sent to consultees.
 - There is a period of time (not less than 28 days) for objections to be raised to the Order.
 - Unopposed Orders are confirmed by the Highway Authority. The Order would come into operation on the first publication of the notice confirming the date it takes effect.
 - Opposed Orders are submitted to the Secretary of State for Transport for determining whether the Order can be confirmed or a Local Inquiry is required.

2. ANALYSIS:

- 2.1 The plans are needed to complete the missing safer cycling link between Brooklands and Weybridge town centre. The remaining route between the Brooklands Business Park / Heritage area and Brooklands Lane on Heath Road is now substantially completed.
- 2.2 Specifically, the changes are planned to provide a safer location for on-road cyclists to join / leave the completed facility Heath Road facility at Brooklands Lane via a new entrance on Brooklands Lane, and connect with a 'quiet roads' signed route along Waverley Road and Melrose Road, which would join Weybridge town centre via the town paths by Churchfields Recreation Ground. The road table will slow vehicle speeds and improve the environment and safety for all users in this busy location. The design has been safety audited and includes the removal of guard railing to open up space on the footways.
- 2.3 The double yellow line extension on Brooklands Lane is needed in order to provide an unobstructed entrance with unrestricted visibility to the new shared path along Heath Road from Brooklands Lane. At present it is difficult for cyclists travelling from Weybridge town centre to turn right and join the facility on the western side of Heath Road, however, the road table and entrance on Brooklands Lane would support this but extended double yellow lines as shown in Annex A are required. Double yellow line extensions are also needed on Waverley Road to improve visibility into and mitigate conflict with oncoming vehicles as cyclists enter Waverley Road from the junction with Heath Road. It is recognised that there is relatively high demand for on street parking in this area, however the double yellow line extensions are required to provide a safer route in a location well used by cyclists, as evidenced by count data.
- 2.4 The town paths by Churchfields Recreation Ground would complete the route to Weybridge town centre, with two different path arms catering for different destinations in Weybridge (see Annex B). A Cycle Track Order to formalise sections of the paths for use by cyclists is therefore planned, alongside improvements to the paths. Specifically, the Cycle Track Order would cover the western arm FP21, and the full length of FP22, as shown in Annex B. The full extent of improvements to the paths would depend on the outcome of the Cycle Track Order but are set to include resurfacing, siding out vegetation/material that has encroached the path widths, widening the hard surfacing, tree works, fencing including removal of a 90 degree bend on FP21, installation of lighting on the western arm of FP21, constructing a path to directly join FP21 with Weybridge Library car park, and ensuring some calming measures are retained.
- 2.5 Reasons for converting the paths to cycle track:
- A lot of cyclists already use these paths. Some counts were recently undertaken which showed 80 cyclists used these paths on a Thursday between 07:30 – 13:30, over 10% of all users. On a Wednesday between 13:00 – 19:00 124 cyclists used these paths, 15% of all users. Over half of cyclists were considered under 18 and it is presumed most of these were travelling to Heathside School or Brooklands College. It is also important to acknowledge that these counts are also representative of a time where travel patterns are very different due to Covid-19: for example, very few people are cycling to Weybridge Station evidenced by relatively empty racks which were previously crowded.

- Observational data collected shows that generally cyclists use these paths sensibly and ride to the conditions and width available: they ride slowly and many users were seen to dismount at the junction of FP21 and FP22 particularly at busy times.
 - The paths are on unregistered land and as such there is no enforcement. Cyclists will continue to use these routes and on balance it is considered more beneficial to make improvements, formalise, and appropriately sign these paths rather than take no action. If there was any desire to stop cycling, it would be a Surrey Police power to enforce and it is unlikely that they would give any priority to this, when there is no significant evidence or history of safety or anti-social behavioural problems, and young people are relying on cycling on these paths to get to school or college, without having to use busy main roads.
 - If the Order is made, it provides the opportunity for Surrey County Council and Elmbridge Borough Council to introduce appropriate signage and other measures to better provide for cyclists. The signage could highlight the need to share the paths with consideration for other users.
 - The project funding is only available until March 2021 to make any improvements.
 - A cycle route would not be signed along the eastern arm of Footpath 21 as this is very narrow and Churchfields Avenue provides a nearby and parallel alternative.
 - The alternative route for cyclists which would continue north along Heath Road from Brooklands Lane is less direct for most locations in Weybridge, has high volumes of motor traffic and space to provide specific provision for cyclists is very restricted, particularly due to high levels of parking along Heath Road. Accident data shows routing cyclists along Heath Road is less safe: over the last 5 years there have been more accidents along this route, including one resulting in injury to a cyclist, and data collected shows that many cyclists including Heathside pupils avoid this and use the town paths.
- 2.6 A Weybridge Society committee member has indicated a willingness to establish a local town paths partnership. The remit of this partnership could be to help facilitate any changes to FP21 and FP22 including recommending calming measures and signage, and to develop local user guidelines and communications to influence, review and develop the paths and behaviours. Regarding calming measures, it is important to acknowledge a need for the paths to be accessible for all non-motorised users and mobility scooters. The Project Team are currently working with the Weybridge Society Committee Member and will continue to do so during the remaining life of the project.
- 2.7 Overall, this scheme is important to support a key objective of the Brooklands Business Park Accessibility Project to increase cycling in the area. The scheme would support The Community Vision for Surrey in 2030 through making journeys easier and safer, and by promoting healthier lifestyles through active travel. This is particularly important given the scheme is on a well-used route to Heathside School and Brooklands College.

3. OPTIONS:

- 3.1 The preferred option has been described in this report. The 4 recommendations have been set out to achieve this preferred option. If these recommendations are agreed by the Local Committee, public advertisements/consultation would still be carried out and if there was strong opposition to an aspect(s) of this option that could not be resolved, modifications to this option would be looked at.
- 3.2 The only other option for a route from Brooklands Lane to Weybridge town centre would be a route continuing north along Heath Road, however this has high volumes of motor traffic that, as defined in the Department for Transport's Cycle Infrastructure Design Guidance (LTN1/20), makes it unsuitable as an on-road route. Space to provide specific provision for cyclists along this route within the highway is very restricted, particularly due to high levels of on-road parking along Heath Road. Accident data shows routing cyclists along Heath Road is less safe: over the last 5 years there have been more accidents along this route, including one resulting in injury to a cyclist. Cycle infrastructure provision along this route would likely require a major intervention: parking restrictions over a long distance and extensive traffic calming to reduce speeds, however this would not directly address the issue of high traffic volumes and would not be deliverable within this funded project if supported.
- 3.3 The preferred option plans to convert sections of FP21 and FP22 to cycle track. It is important to note that these sections are currently well used by cyclists and there is no prohibition of cycling enforced and this is very unlikely to come forwards as the paths are unregistered on Land Registry. Therefore, an alternative option would be to leave the status of these paths unchanged, however on balance it is considered more beneficial to make improvements as far as is feasible, formalise, and appropriately sign these paths rather than take no action. If there was any desire to stop cycling, if it were deemed unlawful, it would be a Surrey Police function to enforce and it is unlikely that they would give priority to this, when there is no significant evidence or history of safety or anti-social behavioural problems, and young people are relying on cycling on these paths to get to school or college, without having to use busy main roads.

4. CONSULTATIONS:

- 4.1 A notice would be publicly advertised for the construction of the road table.
- 4.2 Formal public advertisements and statutory consultation would be carried out for the extensions to double yellow lines.
- 4.3 Regarding the plans to make a Cycle Track Order to convert sections of FP21 and FP22 to cycle track, the Project Sponsor has raised this directly with the Weybridge Park Residents' Association and the Weybridge Charity which have boundaries with the paths. Further public consultation would be carried out as part of the process to make a Cycle Track Order set out in the Cycle Track Regulations 1984. The consultation process is summarised in section 1.5 of this report.
- 4.4 Officers are currently working with a committee member of the Weybridge Society who is keen to develop a local town paths partnership to help facilitate any changes to this network, and collectively develop local user

guidelines, and communications to influence, review and develop paths and behaviours.

5. FINANCIAL AND VALUE FOR MONEY IMPLICATIONS:

- 5.1 The work to achieve this will be funded through the Brooklands Business Park Accessibility Project. There is budget allocated within this major transport scheme, for which funding has already been awarded following approval of a Business Case that demonstrated high value for money. The project is being funded mainly by the Enterprise M3 Local Enterprise Partnership with Elmbridge Borough Council providing local contribution funding.

6. EQUALITIES AND DIVERSITY IMPLICATIONS:

- 6.1 An Equalities Impacts Assessment has previously been undertaken for the Brooklands Business Park Accessibility project, in which this section of planned cycle route is one part of. Overall this assessment concluded that the creation of the route would be beneficial to people with protected characteristics. The establishment of the route was assessed to improve safety, accessibility, increase independence particularly for those who do not drive, and promote health benefits through active travel. Potential conflict between pedestrians and cyclists due to the shared nature of the routes across FP21 and FP22 was identified however feasible options to mitigate risk will be looked at including calming measures, signing and wider communications.

7. LOCALISM:

- 7.1 The decision will impact people who travel through the route which is shown in Annex B. This route is well used across a wide range including local residents and students of Heathside School and Brooklands College.

8. OTHER IMPLICATIONS:

- 8.1 Sustainability implications:

The scheme would support an objective of the Brooklands Business Park Accessibility Project to increase cycling in the area. Incentivising people to cycle instead of travelling by motor vehicle would have carbon reduction benefits.

- 8.2 Public Health implications:

The scheme would support an objective of the Brooklands Business Park Accessibility Project to increase cycling in the area. This would have public health benefits through promoting active travel.

9. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS:

- 9.1 Please see Recommendations listed towards the top of this report.

10. WHAT HAPPENS NEXT:

10.1 The next steps are subject to the Recommendations of this report being agreed by the Local Committee. If agreed:

- The public advertisements and statutory consultation as described in section 4 of this report would be carried out.
- As set out in the recommendations, if there are objections raised to these proposals, these would be resolved where possible.
- Where double yellow lines extensions have been proposed, if any objections cannot be resolved, the Area Highways Manager and Project Sponsor, in consultation with the Chairman/Vice Chairman of this committee and the Divisional Member, will decide whether or not they should be acceded to and therefore whether the order should be made, with or without modifications.
- If objections to the Cycle Track Order cannot be resolved, in consultation with the Chairman/Vice Chairman and Divisional Member, these will be raised to the Secretary of State for determining whether the Order can be confirmed or a Local Inquiry is required.

10.2 Updates will be provided on the www.surreycc.gov.uk/brooklandsaccessibility

Contact Officer:

Tim Vickers, Transport Planner, tim.vickers@surreycc.gov.uk, 03456 009 009 (Major Transport Schemes Team phone number).

Consulted:

Public advertisements will be made and statutory consultation will be carried out as identified in section 4 of this report.

Annexes:

Annex A: Heath Road / Brooklands Lane / Waverley Road – Proposed road table and double yellow line extensions

Annex B: Proposed cycle route between Brooklands Lane and Weybridge town centre and location of Cycle Track Order

Sources/background papers:

- None.
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