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1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 Report Background and Structure

This report has been put together by members of the *Mole Valley Cycle Forum* and is based on their wide experience of cycling throughout the area. Early drafts were distributed to friends and colleagues for comment and also to Leatherhead and Ashted postal sorting offices and to local bike shop owners. Comments received were considered and the report amended as thought appropriate.

In this first introductory chapter, we describe the four principal routes that we hope will form the basis of the Leatherhead cycle network (section 1.2), we refer to the other subsidiary cycle routes and problem areas (section 1.3), we detail those routes which fall within the “Safer Routes to School” category (section 1.4) and finally we list some general matters of concern to our members (section 1.5).

Then in the following Chapters 2 to 6 we detail the problems area by area and give our suggested solutions.

In Appendix B, we include the comments received from Surrey County Council Highways Department on the individual suggestions and a priority rating prepared by Forum members.

1.2 Principal Cycle Routes

Figure 1 shows the four principal routes that we believe should form the basis of the Leatherhead cycle network. These are:

- i) **From Kingston** – Perhaps the least used of the routes, this runs from the MVDC border near the Star P.H., along a newly constructed path next to the northern part of Kingston Road, across the motorway, along the southern part of Kingston Road to the Dilston Road mini-roundabout and then along the recently constructed pedestrian/cyclist path to Leatherhead Station.

Details of improvements that we consider are required to bring this route up to standard are given in paragraphs 10 & 11.

- ii) **From Epsom** – This route is much used, particularly by Therfield and Rosebery (Epsom) school children and by commuters cycling between Epsom, Ashted and Leatherhead.

It runs along the A24 footway from The Wells Road, along Craddocks Avenue and Barnett Wood Lane and then via the Plough Roundabout to join the Kingston Route at the Dilston Road mini-roundabout.

It has two “missing links”:

- The first is along the A24 footway which cyclists are not legally permitted to use (although many do); this could be easily put right. *Our suggestions for completing this link are given in paragraph 1.*
- The second is between the M25 motorway bridge and Dilston Road where the existing route is along congested and unsafe roads. This is the section of the route that is most heavily used, mainly, but not entirely, by Therfield School pupils. *Our suggestions for completing this link are given in paragraphs 7 to 10.*

However, the remainder of the route also has safety problems and details of improvements that we consider are required to bring this route up to standard are given in paragraphs 2,4 & 5.

iii) From Effingham – This is also a much used route, at its west end by Howard of Effingham School pupils and at its east end by commuters from the Bookham and Fetcham areas.

It runs from Howard of Effingham School along Lower Road, then along the Mill Pond shared use path and Mill Lane to the Guildford Road/Waterway Road/Bridge Street Junction where it abruptly ends.

Its “missing link” is:

- The section from the above junction to Leatherhead Station, where it should connect with both the Kingston and Epsom routes. *Our suggestions for completing this link are given in paragraphs 17 to 20.*

However, the remainder of the route also has safety problems and details of other improvements that we consider are required to bring this route up to standard are given in paragraph 24.

iv) From Dorking – This includes the pre-war cycle track alongside the A24 which is used not only by commuters between the two towns, but also by recreational cyclists at weekends.

From the A24 track, it crosses Young Street and runs along the newly constructed path alongside Dorking Road and along Thorncroft Drive to the Leisure Centre.

Its “missing link” is:

- The section through the Leisure Centre grounds and out to the Guildford Road/Waterway Road/Bridge Street Junction, where it should connect to the other three routes. *Our suggestions for completing this link are given in paragraphs 21 & 23.*

These four routes, when completed, will provide an excellent network of safe cycle routes, connecting Leatherhead with its neighbouring villages of Ashted, Fetcham and Bookham and with its neighbouring towns of Epsom, Kingston and Dorking. It

will also provide direct routes for cyclists to its two secular state secondary schools, to Ashtead and Leatherhead Stations and to the Leisure Centre.

1.3 Other Cycle Routes

Completion of these principal routes is not the end of the story. There are also many other subsidiary routes and localised problem areas that we consider need to be improved. These are shown on Figure 2.

In particular, the four principal routes skirt around Leatherhead Town Centre. Connecting routes are therefore needed. *Our suggestions for these are given in paragraphs 12 to 14 (from the Ashtead direction), 18 and 19 (from the Kingston and Effingham directions), 21 and 19 (from the Bookham and Fetcham direction) and 22 (from the Dorking direction).*

Finally, there are some localised problem areas. *Our suggestions for these are given in the remaining paragraphs.*

1.4 Safer Routes to School

The Local Transport Plan emphasises the importance of the Safe(r) Routes to School (SRtS) campaign. In this area the children who cycle to school are generally those going to the secondary schools. We consider that there are just three routes, as shown on Figure 3, that can be considered under the SRtS banner:

- **The entire Epsom Route**, which is used by Therfield and Rosebery (state) School pupils.

Studies by Therfield parents has shown that 70% of all those that cycle to the school do so via Barnett Wood Lane, making the section of the Epsom Route between Harriotts Lane and the school one of the most used routes in the area. Further north along the route the numbers obviously drop off, but even at its beginning, where it crosses the MVDC boundary into Epsom, it is still used by 25% of all Therfield cyclists. Additionally, this end the route is used by a number of girls (eight were recently counted) going to Rosebery School, just across the boundary into Epsom. We therefore consider the entire route to be a SRtS route

- **The Western and Middle Sections of the Effingham Route**, which are used by Howard of Effingham (state) School pupils.

There are no recent figures for this route known to the Forum, but it is recognised that Lower Road is used by most Howard of Effingham cyclists, with numbers increasing from east to west. The east end is also used by some Therfield pupils, but as that school takes few children from the Fetcham and Bookham areas (approx 10% of its overall numbers), the number is small (just four in a recent count). The middle part of Lower Road is also understood to be used by some pupils from Eastwick (state) Primary School. Therefore only

that part of the Effingham Route from Howard of Effingham School to perhaps the Ridgeway roundabout can be included as a SRtS.

- **Linden Pit Footpath**, which is believed to be used by pupils from the area's other four secondary schools, namely St Andrew's RC (state), Downsend (private), St. John's College (private) and Parsons Mead (private) schools.

Because of the types of schools that these four are, their catchment areas are wider than those of Therfield and Howard of Effingham, and it is therefore thought that the number of their pupils that cycle to them will be smaller. However, for those that do cycle, Linden Pit Footpath provides a safe link both to the three schools north of the motorway from Leatherhead and the one to the south of the motorway from Ashted. It should therefore be included as a SRtS.

Improving these SRtS so that both the pupils and their parents accept them as safe, will not only provide the children with a healthier way of getting to school, it should also help reduce the traffic congestion that occurs around all seven of the schools.

1.5 General Matters

As we prepared this report certain general matters arose time and again. These include:

- The need to properly maintain the existing cycle routes. Particular concern was expressed about cutting back overhanging trees along the Fetcham to Mill Lane shared use path and on the A24 path from Dorking.
- The need for SCC to quickly repair potholes and sunken drain inlets on the narrower roads used regularly by cyclists. Particular examples are Lower Road, Oxshott Road (west), Oaklawn Road, Cobham Road, Randalls Road, Barnett Wood Lane and Woodfield Lane.
- Additionally, the need to replace broken or polished manhole and drainage covers on such roads.
- The need to make sure that all drop kerbs that cyclists have to cross are flush (as recommended by DETR). This is particularly necessary where the kerbs have to be crossed at an angle. Examples where members have experienced problems are at the south approach to the new Young Street crossing and throughout the Craddocks Avenue chicane bypasses.
- The need to properly consider the design of entrances to cycle paths from the roadway and, more importantly the merges back on to the roadway.
- The need for adequate and properly located cycle parking. Particular concern was expressed about Leatherhead Town Centre. It is hoped that

cycle parking facilities will be prominent in the improvement proposals in hand.

- The Forum did not believe it absolutely necessary to sign all of the cycle routes, as they have generally been chosen because they follow natural desire lines for cyclists. Lower Road, Kingston Road, Craddocks Avenue/Barnett Wood Lane and the A24 track from Dorking would gain little from direction signing. But there are sections which are less obvious and therefore we have referred to the need for signing as part of our “suggestions” in Chapters 2 to 6.