

Feedback on the Leatherhead-Ashted cycle route

The route provides a direct and much-needed path for all types of cyclists and will be especially attractive to families, children and the elderly. The path is mostly quite wide (as is needed for a busy shared-use route) and has a smooth consistent surface.

Separation from motorised traffic enhances safety and also provides a reasonable degree of subjective safety, especially where there is a physical barrier such as a grass border between the path and the road. Several of the junctions however still feel intimidating to negotiate and there are many side roads and entrances to cross.

The route as it currently stands does not provide a continuous route between Leatherhead and Ashted since the path stops short at both ends. To fulfil the full potential of the route the path needs to be continued into the town centres so as to provide a genuinely safe route from the centre of Leatherhead all the way to Ashted High Street.

There are good sight lines where the path crosses entrances and roads, both for people on bikes and for drivers approaching the path.

The raised platforms across most of the side roads and entrances are a welcome improvement. Where there are dropped kerbs they are flush with the road. Both of these features make using the path much safer and more convenient.

Whilst generally of a high standard there are several issues which should be addressed.

These can be broken down as follows:

- Bollards
- Street furniture
- Signage
- Unnecessary segregated path section
- Knoll roundabout crossing
- Grange Road crossing
- Ottways Lane junction
- Maintenance
- Access to the town centres

Many of the comments made here reflect changes which could be made easily to the existing path resulting in tangible improvements whilst others are changes which should be considered where similar paths are built in the future.

Bollards

Where they have been well positioned, the bollards are highly functional in protecting users of the cycle path and in delineating the route. In particular, the practice of having a bollard on either side of a side road or entrance clearly indicates to turning vehicles that they are about to cross the cycle path, and this gives a degree of protection to people on bikes crossing the entrance.

For this to work well though the bollards need to be positioned close to the edge of the road where they are not obstructing the cycle path. There are many good examples on the route such as the entrance to St John's School (see picture on right).



There are however several bollards which are poorly positioned, and in some cases dangerously so.

At Garlands Road, travelling north the first bollard is positioned to the left of the path and the other bollard is in the middle of the path. These should be repositioned at the edge of the road.

Poorly positioned bollards (Garlands Road)



Continuing north, there are several bollards in the middle of the path (see also [Unnecessary segregated path section](#) below). These bollards are particularly dangerous since they force the different path users into conflict. There is also the potential danger for people on bikes colliding with these bollards, especially at night.

The bollards at the Fortyfoot Road crossing are particularly dangerous since this is a busy area with large numbers of school children both crossing the road and using the path.

Bollards in the middle of the path (crossing opposite Fortyfoot Road)



Bollards in the middle of the path (entrance to Homelands)



Bollards in the middle of the path (entrance to Melvinshaw)



Street furniture

There are several places where the path is narrower than it should be. For a shared-use path to work well the width must be as wide as possible (3m minimum) and that width must be maintained along the entire route. It is precisely where there are bottlenecks and obstructions that conflicts occur. There is some street furniture which is dangerous and should be removed altogether or moved away from the path.

On the start of the bridge over the motorway there is a short grey post in a dangerous position in the middle of the path.

Post in the middle of the path (crossing the M25)



By the bus stop north of Grange Road the gap between the new shelter and the hedge is too narrow. At just over 1.5m this is well under the guidance of 3m for busy shared-used paths.

Narrow section of path by bus shelter (north of Grange Road)



At Uplands, the path is very narrow where it diverts past a tree. There are clear indications that people are already having to cut across the edge of the grass.

Narrow path (entrance to Uplands)



At the entrance to Old Court, the path is obstructed where it passes a telecoms circuit box.

**Obstructed path
(entrance to Old
Court)**



Opposite the entrance to Ashted Hospital there is a telegraph pole in the middle of the path. This is particularly hazardous and there is a high risk of people colliding with it, especially since it is partially shaded under the trees.

**Telegraph pole in the
middle of the path
(opposite Ashted
Hospital)**



The white markings (“chevrons”) around lampposts and other obstructions are inconsistently applied.

Some posts have markings whereas many do not. The lamppost in the middle of the path on the southern approach to Knoll roundabout is a particular example in need of markings.

Some posts have markings on only one side. There are also some markings on the path for posts which are no longer there (see picture on right).



Signage

The signage along the route is generally very good, being both informative and discreet as well as delineating the route.

There are however no signs on the side roads and entrances telling other road users that they are about to cross a cycle path.

Unnecessary segregated path section

Between Uplands and Melvinshaw the route becomes a segregated path rather than shared-use. There is no obvious reason why this is the case and the change is confusing for all path users. The available space is insufficiently wide to safely accommodate a segregated path.

This has in addition resulted in the bollards being dangerously positioned in the middle of the path (see [Bollards](#) above) presumably to indicate the segregated parts of the path, but they serve no purpose and should be positioned to the edge of the road in consistency with the rest of the path.

The dropped kerbs and give way markings are in any case not lined up with the “bicycle” side of the segregated path (see photo of entrance to Melvinshaw on page 4). This section of the path should be made shared-use like the rest of the route.

Knoll roundabout crossing

The Toucan crossing is obviously a significant improvement since it provides an essential link between the two sections of the cycle path. The siting of the crossing however is too far down the Leatherhead Bypass Road and this consequently takes path users a long way away from their desired course.

The waiting time between pressing the button and starting to cross the road takes well over 30 seconds. This is far too long and encourages people to attempt to cross without waiting for the lights.

Conversely, the time available for actually crossing the road is far too short. The beep lasts for about 3 seconds and then there is about another 5 seconds before the orange lights start flashing. This is not sufficient time to allow families - who may need to muster several young children before

crossing, young children on their own or the elderly to cross the road safely. All of these people need sufficient time to cross the road safely and without feeling intimidated.

The buttons for activating the crossing are positioned on a pole facing inwards towards the crossing point. This is inconvenient for people on bikes, further delaying their crossing of the road. If the buttons were positioned facing towards the path (away from the road) this would make it easier for anyone on a bike to press the button as they approach the crossing.

There are no railings on the crossing or round the high kerb area on the roundabout.

Grange Road crossing

Crossing Grange Road is still both dangerous and unpleasant. This is a busy crossing used by many school children.

The central reservation is too narrow to stop half way across. Waiting on the side of the road can feel unsafe since vehicles turning in pass very close. It is not uncommon for vehicles to mount the kerb at this point.

It is not obvious when you are meant to cross. This can lead to people taking chances.

There are no signs for road users indicating that vehicles are crossing a busy cycle path (other than a temporary "New road layout ahead" sign).



The waiting time for crossing Leatherhead Road is 60 seconds. This is far too long.

Ottways Lane junction

Where the route crosses Ottways Lane the gap in the path is very wide (since the road junction is splayed unnecessarily wide at this point) and this leaves people very exposed. The central refuge is too narrow to wait on a bike, requiring you to cross the road in one stage. The road is very wide and could be narrowed to accommodate a larger central refuge and the pavement/cycle path could possibly be extended into the road, giving greater safety to people on the cycle path.

Maintenance

To ensure the safety of all path users and make best use of the good quality surface the path must be regularly maintained.

In places the path has already become coated with soil and fallen leaves. The full width of the path will need to be regularly cleared to maintain the path width and to keep the surface from becoming slippery. At night and after rain this is a particularly important. In places over half the width of the path has been obscured.

**Fallen leaves
obscuring the path
(opposite The Warren)**



Trees and hedges will need to be kept cut back, and in one or two places there are overhanging branches which will need to be regularly trimmed. Low hanging branches present a particular danger since people on bikes typically need more height than when on foot.

Although we believe that MVDC are responsible for the management of the grass verges, at the time of writing it is not clear who is responsible for the maintenance of the path and what arrangements if any will be made to take account of the change to a shared-use path. MVDC do have a contract for the regular maintenance of the cycle path alongside the A24 at Mickleham and this path will need a similar arrangement if the route is to be maintained to a high standard.

[Access to the town centres](#)

The amenity value of the path is seriously undermined by poor access to both town centres. The route as currently designed does not provide a continuous route from centre to centre.

Approaching Ashted the route stops several hundred metres from the village. This is precisely at the most dangerous and unpleasant point on the route where the road narrows and bends and there is a hill on the exit from the village. Few people will choose to ride on the road at this point. There is effectively no access to Ashted for the types of cyclists (families, children and the elderly) this route is designed to attract.

Northern end of the route (500 metres south of Ashtead)



The access to Leatherhead is confusing and uninviting. The route ends at the top of the High Street and there is no obvious way of accessing the town centre.

Southern end of the route (top of Leatherhead High Street)

