

ITEM: CYCLE ROUTE TO CHARTERS SCHOOL

Report Author: Gordon Oliver **Position:** Principal Transport Policy Officer
Telephone: 01628 796097 **Email:** gordon.oliver@rbwm.gov.uk

1. Purpose of the Report

1.1 This report highlights the feasibility work that has been done to look at achieving a cycle route to Charters School in Sunningdale.

2. Supporting Information**Background**

- 2.1 Charters School is the borough's largest secondary school, with over 1,600 pupils. However, only a handful of pupils and staff currently cycle due to the lack of cycle routes from nearby residential areas and the high traffic volumes on local roads.
- 2.2 The Transport Sub-Group of the Ascot and Sunnings Neighbourhood Planning Group has identified a number of proposals for possible cycle routes, which were developed in consultation with local residents and other stakeholders with the aim of connecting the various communities in the south of the borough and providing safe cycling routes to Charters School. The proposed routes are shown in the Figure 1 overleaf.
- 2.3 The proposed routes were assessed by the Council's Highways, Engineering and Transport Unit in terms of their feasibility and a series of recommendations were put to the group in April 2013.
- 2.4 The most logical approach would be to start at the school and work outwards. This report concentrates on routes that would link the school to Sunninghill village. Coincidentally, this is where some of the most challenging traffic conditions and road layouts exist.
- 2.5 **Devenish Road** - The school has two entrances – one on Devenish Road and the other on Charters Road. Devenish Road is a busy A-road carrying 8,000 vehicles per day. It has a 30mph speed limit with an advisory 20mph limit near the school. The carriageway is too narrow to consider cycle lanes and the footways are too narrow to convert to shared use, so provision of cycle facilities is not considered feasible and alternative routes should be considered.
- 2.6 **Charters Road** - This is subject to a 30 mph speed limit and is lightly trafficked for most of the day, except at school start and finish times, when it becomes congested with school traffic. UK design guidance suggests a road with speeds and flows similar to Charters Road should not require any cycle routes. However, it is clear that peak time conditions are such that measures should be considered.
- 2.7 The carriageway is very narrow (approximately 5.0m) between Devenish Road and Dry Arch Road, with narrow footways and limited scope for widening into the verge. It is too

narrow for cycle lanes to be provided, whilst maintaining two vehicular lanes. Similarly, the footway and verge are too narrow to consider an off-carriageway solution.

- 2.8 After discussion with Cllr Comber and the Neighbourhood Plan Transport Group, it was agreed to adopt an approach used in the Netherlands for roads where there is insufficient space for segregated facilities or mandatory cycle lanes.
- 2.9 This involves provision of advisory cycle lanes in each direction with a single central lane for vehicles (see Figures 2-4). This arrangement ensures the best use possible use of the available road width by directing cars down the central area while allowing lanes for cyclists to pass on either side. The cycle lanes are advisory, which means that cars can legally enter them. When two cars travelling in opposing directions meet, they should give way to passing cyclists and then use the advisory cycle lanes to pass each other.
- 2.10 In the Netherlands, roads with advisory cycle lanes are usually distributor roads that collect traffic from small local roads and direct it to a main road. They normally have low to moderate volume traffic traveling at speeds of 30 - 50 km/hr in urban areas and up to 60 km/hr in rural areas.
- 2.11 It should be noted that the width of Charters Road is actually below that which is normally recommended for Dutch style advisory cycle lanes alongside a single vehicular lane. However, there are examples of where this approach has been used in the Netherlands in similar circumstances, so it is recommended that this layout be tried here on the section between Devenish Road and Dry Arch Road. However, a safety audit by a Dutch cycling expert is recommended.
- 2.12 **Dry Arch Road** - This connects Rise Road with Charters Road and is used as a cut-through between the B383 and the A330 / A30 as well as serving Charters School and neighbouring residential areas. Although quiet for most of the day, it is used extensively at the start and end of the school day.
- 2.13 It is subject to a 30mph speed limit and has a carriageway width of around 6.0m narrowing to an effective width of just 2.65m through the rail bridge near the southern end. There is a narrow footway that runs along the eastern side, which has sections that are less than 1.0m wide, with no verge to permit widening. There is a missing section of footway beneath the rail bridge, placing pedestrians and cyclists into direct conflict with vehicles.
- 2.14 The only way to significantly improve safety for pedestrians and cyclists along Dry Arch Road would be to close the road to through traffic at the bridge, maintaining a through-route for cyclists and pedestrians only. This would introduce a significant detour for through-traffic and so would require consultation to evaluate the impacts of the scheme before it could be considered further. This will therefore be progressed as part of a separate phase.

- 2.15 **Rise Road / King's Road** – These roads provide a link between Sunningdale and Sunninghill villages, offering a quieter alternative to the A329 London Road to the north and A330 Devenish Road to the south.
- 2.16 Rise Road is subject to a 30mph speed limit between Broomhall Lane and Park Crescent, rising to 40mph as it goes up the hill to join King's Road. The 40mph speed limit drops to 30mph just before the road enters Sunninghill Village and drops again to 20mph around 30m east of the Queen's Road junction. Beyond this point, dedicated provision for cyclists is not considered to be necessary.
- 2.17 Although slightly wider than Charters Road, there is still insufficient carriageway width available to consider cycle lanes alongside two vehicular lanes, and there is insufficient footway / verge width for an off-carriageway cycle track.
- 2.18 As with Charters Road, it is recommended that advisory cycle lanes be introduced alongside a single lane for motor vehicles. While traffic flows are higher on Rise Road / King's Road than on Charters Road, this is mostly local traffic and the character of the road is considered to be appropriate for this type of facility. The width of the carriageway is mostly above the minimum recommended by the Dutch Design Manual for Bicycle Traffic.
- 2.19 A design is currently being worked up for the advisory cycle lanes on Charters Road, Rise Road and King's Road. This will be circulated to members of the Cycle Forum for comment in due course. It is hoped to implement the scheme as part of the 2013/14 capital programme. Funding of £45,000 has been allocated to cycle routes in the area and the above measures can be delivered from this budget.

Conclusion

- 2.20 The roads around Charters School are not suited to traditional forms of cycle infrastructure. The use of Dutch style advisory cycle lanes with a single central lane for vehicles represents an innovative and viable option for improving cycle access to Charters School.
- 2.21 Given the innovative nature of the new road layout, it is proposed to get specialist advice at the safety audit stage. It is also proposed to closely monitor use of the routes over the first year of implementation, with a view to reviewing the scheme after this period and reporting back to the Cycle Forum.
- 2.22 Proposals for Dry Arch Road will be progressed separately from the cycle lanes.

3. Recommendation

- 3.1 Members of the Cycle Forum are advised to note the contents of the report and are encouraged to comment upon the proposed approach before making a recommendation to the Lead Member for Highways and Transport.**

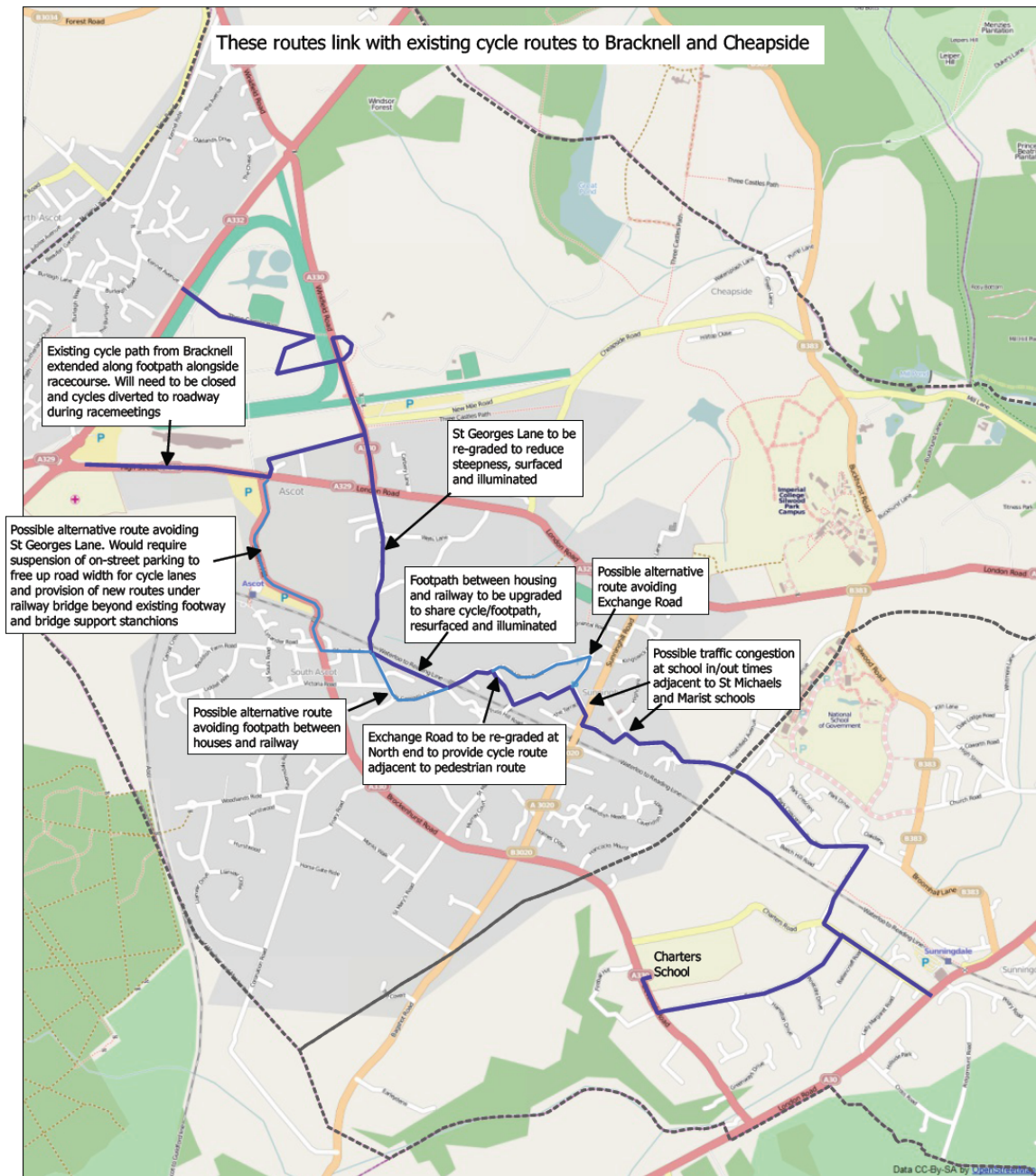


Figure 1: Cycle Routes proposed by the Transport Sub-Group of the Ascot and Sunnings Neighbourhood Planning Group



Figures 2-4: Example of Dutch style advisory cycle lanes with single vehicular lane



Figures 5-6: Charters Road and Dry Arch Road



Figures 7-8: Rise Road



Figures 9-10: King's Road