

Report for: Decision
Item Number: 4



<b>Contains Confidential or Exempt Information</b>	No
<b>Title</b>	Cookham Bridleway 19 surfacing project
<b>Responsible Officer(s)</b>	Anthony Hurst, Principal Rights of Way Officer Ben Smith, Strategic Assets, Service Lead
<b>Contact officer, job title and phone number</b>	Anthony Hurst, Principal Rights of Way Officer 01628 796180
<b>For Consideration By</b>	Rights of Way and Highway Licensing Panel
<b>Date to be Considered</b>	20 <sup>th</sup> July
<b>Implementation Date if Not Called In</b>	2015/16
<b>Affected Wards</b>	Bisham and Cookham
<b>Keywords/Index</b>	Bridleway

<p><b>Report Summary</b></p> <p>This report seeks the Panels approval to undertake surface improvement works at Cookham Bridleway 19, to enable year-round access for all users. The northern part of the bridleway is currently an unsurfaced track; the southern part was surfaced with recycled road plantings in 2012 by the landowner, the Copas Partnership. The report sets out three options for the northern part of the bridleway: surface the bridleway with limestone scalplings, surface the bridleway with road plantings, or leave the northern part of the track unsurfaced as at present.</p>
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<b>If recommendations are adopted, how will residents benefit?</b>	
<b>Benefits to residents and reasons why they will benefit</b>	<b>Dates by which residents can expect to notice a difference</b>
An improved surface will enable year-round access along this bridleway for all users.	August 2015

## 1. Details of Recommendations

### RECOMMENDATION:

That the Council proceeds with surfacing works along the northern section of Cookham Bridleway 19, as set out in Option 1 below and shown on the site plan at Annexe 1.

**2. Reason for Recommendation(s) and Options Considered**

- 2.1 Cookham Bridleway 19 runs from Malders Lane to Long Lane (see site plan at Annexe 1). The bridleway forms a link in various circular walks and horse riding routes, and is well used both by walkers and horse riders. The bridleway, known locally as “The Pig Track”, or “Petos’ Path”, is easily accessible on foot from Furze Platt and Pinkneys Green, and on horseback from Cookham Dean and further afield. The bridleway is also well known for its association with Sir Stanley Spencer as it is the subject of his 1938 painting “*The Bridle Path.*”
- 2.2 The northern section of the bridleway is currently unsurfaced and becomes very muddy and cut-up up in winter months, or after heavy rain. When surface conditions are particularly muddy or waterlogged this can result in some walkers, horse riders or cyclists straying from the path in search of firmer ground along the edges of the field. The southern section of the bridleway was surfaced with recycled road plannings in 2012 by the landowner, and was subsequently topped with a layer of wood-chippings, although the wood chippings have now largely dispersed.
- 2.3 Since 2012, various discussions and consultations have been held with the landowner, local horse riders and Cookham Parish Council, and a number of options have been considered for surface improvements along the northern part of the bridleway.
- 2.4 Following a further review of surface conditions over the winter months of 2014/15, and consultations with Cookham Parish Council a decision was taken in March 2015 to proceed with surfacing the northern part of the bridleway with limestone scalplings and limestone dust (this is the material the Council usually uses for surfacing bridleways), the works to be carried out in July/August 2015.
- 2.5 However, the landowner has subsequently requested that this decision is reviewed and and that the surface should instead be recycled road-plannings topped with a layer of woodchips, (i.e. similar to the surface laid along the southern part of the bridleway in 2012).
- 2.6 The Council has also recently been contacted by a local horse rider requesting that the earlier decision is reconsidered, and that the northern part of the bridleway is left unsurfaced as at present.

<b>Option</b>	<b>Comments</b>
<p><b>1.</b> Undertake surface improvement works at Cookham Bridleway 19 using the Council's usual bridleway surface (limestone scalplings and limestone dust) over a chalk sub-base, as per the decision taken in March 2015.</p>	<p>This would provide improved conditions for walkers, enabling year-round use of the full length of the bridleway, with onward connection to linking footpaths. This surface would also allow for easier use by cyclists, and by people with mobility buggies, wheelchairs, pushchairs etc.</p>
<p><b>2.</b> Undertake surface improvement works at Cookham Bridleway 19 using the alternative surface proposed by the landowner</p>	<p>This is the landowners preferred option.</p>

(recycled road plannings and woodchips) over a chalk sub-base.	
<b>3.</b> Do nothing and leave the northern part of the bridleway unsurfaced, as at present.	This option is favoured by most horse riders who have commented in response to consultations carried out in 2013 and 2014.

### 3. Key Implications

Defined Outcomes	Unmet	Met	Exceeded	Significantly Exceeded	Date they should be delivered by
Surface improvement works completed	Works not completed by end of August 2015	Works completed by end of August 2015	n/a	n/a	End of August 2015

### 4. Financial Details

#### Financial impact on the budget

Provision has been made in the 2015/16 capital programme for funding this project (*cost centre CD 24*) based on Option 1 set out below. The costs of constructing the bridleway surface to this specification will be **£17,100**. Although the surface will need ongoing maintenance/repairs as required, it is not expected that any works will be required within the first 3 years. Ongoing maintenance works will be reactive and will in part be dependent on level of use and weather conditions.

The capital cost of the alternative surface option put forward by the landowner (Option 2 below) is **£9,900**: this initial cost would include the laying of a surface of woodchips over the road plannings. However, ongoing maintenance costs for this option would be significantly higher, as the woodchips will need to be replenished on an annual basis at an estimated cost of **£2,000** per year.

#### Option 1 (Limestone surface over chalk sub-base)

	<b>Year1 (2015/16)</b>	<b>Year2 (2016/17)</b>	<b>Year3 (2017/18)</b>
	Capital	Capital	Capital
	<b>£17,100</b>	Nil	Nil

	<b>Year1 (2015/16)</b>	<b>Year2 (2016/17)</b>	<b>Year3 (2017/18)</b>
	Revenue	Revenue	Revenue
	Nil	Nil	Nil

#### Option 2 (Woodchips and road plannings surface over chalk sub-base)

	<b>Year1 (2015/16)</b>	<b>Year2 (2016/17)</b>	<b>Year3 (2017/18)</b>
	Capital £000	Capital £000	Capital £000
	<b>£9,900</b>	Nil	Nil

	<b>Year1 (2015/16)</b>	<b>Year2 (2016/17)</b>	<b>Year3 (2017/18)</b>
	Revenue	Revenue	Revenue
<b>Addition</b>	Nil	<b>£2,000</b>	<b>£2,000</b>

## 5. Legal Implications

The Borough Council, as local highway authority, has a duty under Section 41 of the Highways Act 1980 to “*maintain highways maintainable at public expense*” (this includes public bridleways and other public rights of way). Additionally, under Section 62 of the Highways Act 1980 the Borough Council has a general power of improvement to carry out works on the public highway (including public bridleways and other public rights of way).

## 6. Value For Money

A tender has been carried out for the proposed works in order to ensure value for money is achieved.

## 7. Sustainability Impact Appraisal

Effective management and improvement of the public rights of way network has a positive impact on sustainable transport by encouraging alternative forms of transport to the car.

## 8. Risk Management

Risks	Uncontrolled Risk	Controls	Controlled Risk
Weather conditions may delay works on site.	Medium	Contingency plan in place for rescheduling works to be completed at a later date.	Low

## 9. Links to Strategic Objectives

If the recommended option is approved the links to our strategic objectives will be

- ‘Encourage healthy people and lifestyles’
- ‘Improve the environment, economy and transport’

## 10. Equalities, Human Rights and Community Cohesion

The proposed surface improvements will enable year-round access along the bridleway for all users, including people using mobility buggies, pushchairs etc.

## 11. Staffing/Workforce and Accommodation implications:

n/a

## 12. Property and Assets

This project will contribute to the maintenance and improvement of the borough’s public rights of way assets.

## 13. Any other implications:

n/a

## 14. Consultation

### Ward Councillors:

Cllr MJ Saunders- supports Option 1.

### Cookham Parish Council:

“Cookham Parish Council would like to see this section of Bridleway 19 surfaced so that it is more accessible to the wide range of users who could benefit from it. It appreciates Mr Copas’s proposal for an option which, in his considerable experience, would be less costly initially, but notes that RBWM has concerns about the longer term maintenance costs. Cookham Parish Council does not have the more specialist knowledge of the relevant materials and cost implications that are held at RBWM. Cookham Parish Council therefore feels it would be best for RBWM to make the decision on appropriate surfacing materials based on an assessment of all of the cost implications including installation and ongoing maintenance”.

### Landowner:

The landowner supports Option 2.

### Local horse riders:

See comments received at Annexe 2.

**Comments in response to site notice:** Telephone calls were received from seven people supporting surface improvements, in response to a notice placed on site asking path users to contact the Council if they wish to see improvements to the northern section of the bridleway.

## 15. Timetable for Implementation

If a decision is taken to proceed with the surface improvements, works can be completed in August 2015.

## 16. Appendices

Annexe 1: Site plan

Annexe 2: Consultation responses from horse riders.

## 17. Consultation

Name of consultee	Post held and Department	Date sent	Date received	See comments in paragraph:
<b>Internal</b>				
Cllr Hunt	Panel Chairman	19/06/15	Briefing 25 <sup>th</sup> June	
Cllr Ilyas	Panel Vice-Chair	19/06/15	Briefing 25 <sup>th</sup> June	
Ben Smith	Service Lead, Highways & Transport	19/06/15		
Mark Lampard	Finance Partner	19/06/15	24/06/15	4
<b>External</b>				
As set out in para 14 of the report				

### Report History

Decision type:	Urgency item? no
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Key decision	No
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Full name of report author(s)	Job title	Full contact no:
Anthony Hurst	Principal Officer – Rights of Way	01628 796180

**Schedule for writing and reviewing report**

<b>Stages in the life of the report (not all will apply)</b>	<b>Date to complete</b>
1. Officer writes report (in consultation with Lead Member)	19/06/15
2. Report goes for review to head of service or DMT	19/06/15
3. To specialist departments: eg, legal, finance, HR (in parallel)	19/06/15
4. To Chairman's briefing	25/06/15
5. To Panel	20/07/15