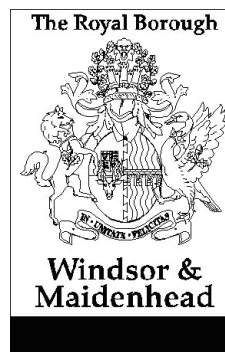


Report for: INFORMATION



Contains Confidential or Exempt Information	No - Part I
Title	Providing Safer Routes to Charters School
Responsible Officer(s)	Ben Smith, Head of Highways and Transport
Contact officer, job title and phone number	Gordon Oliver, Principal Transport Policy Officer, 01628 796097
Member reporting	Cllr Phillip Bicknell, Cabinet Member for Highways and Transport
For Consideration By	Cabinet
Date to be Considered	15 December 2016
Implementation Date if Not Called In	Immediately
Affected Wards	Ascot and Cheapside, Sunningdale, Sunninghill and South Ascot

REPORT SUMMARY

1. This report responds to requests from pupils of Charters School to consider how walking and cycling to school safely can be improved.
2. The report proposes that four actions are implemented, at a cost of £120,000, to improve walking and cycle routes.
3. These recommendations will be over a two year period.

If recommendations are adopted, how will residents benefit?

Benefits to residents and reasons why they will benefit	Dates by which residents can expect to notice a difference
1. Residents will benefit from safer walking routes to Charters School.	31 March 2019
2. Safer routes will encourage more pupils to walk to school and will therefore help to reduce traffic levels.	31 March 2019

1. DETAILS OF RECOMMENDATIONS

RECOMMENDATION: That Cabinet:

- i. Approves through the Local Transport Plan capital programme:
 - Installation of traffic signals at Dry Arch Road rail bridge incorporating a pedestrian phase.
 - Construction of a new footbridge on the western side of Devenish Road to the north of Elm Park.
 - Discussion with Heathermount School to explore options for improving the narrow footway across their frontage.
 - A strip of land to the rear of the existing footway across the front of properties on Devenish Road that come forward for planning permission.
- ii. Approves allocation of £50,000 from the 2017/18 Safer Routes to Schools budget and £70,000 from the 2018/19 budget for the four pieces of work.

2. REASON FOR RECOMMENDATION(S) AND OPTIONS CONSIDERED

- 2.1 On 29 September Cabinet considered a number of questions relating to walking, cycling and road safety on roads around Charters School, including:
 - The narrowness of the footways on roads around the school.
 - The need for a safe cycle route from Sunninghill to the school.
 - The need to protect pupils walking along Dry Arch Road.
 - Excessive traffic speed on Charters Road.
- 2.2 The Lead Member again to consider the pupils' questions and make proposals to Cabinet to address the issues of speed, pedestrian and cycle access.
- 2.3 **Background** Charters School is located in Sunningdale near the junction between A330 Devenish Road and Charters Road. The school is a secondary academy serving students aged 11-18. It is the largest school in the borough, with around 1,750 pupils on roll and employs nearly 300 members of staff. The school catchment area includes all of the main settlements in the south of the borough together with parts of Bracknell Forest.
- 2.4 The council has been actively working with the school and other stakeholders to review options for managing travel to and from the site. The school travel plan is regularly updated and sets out a comprehensive approach for promoting travel by sustainable forms of transport. The council, in supporting the school, has introduced a number of infrastructure improvements including:
 - 30 mph speed limit on Charters Road and Devenish Road.
 - Advisory 20mph speed limit on Charters Road and Devenish Road at the start and end of the school day.
 - Zebra crossing on Charters Road to the school playing fields and car park.
 - Zebra crossing at the Bagshot Road / Devenish Road roundabout.
- 2.5 In addition, speed indicators are regularly deployed at sites around the school to help ensure compliance with the speed limits, while community wardens and civil

enforcement officers regularly visit the school to liaise with parents and pupils and ensure that parking restrictions and school keep clear markings are enforced.

2.6 A range of options have been considered, see table 1.

Table 1: Option	Comments
1. Install traffic signals at Dry Arch Road rail bridge with a pedestrian facility triggered via a push button unit similar to a Puffin crossing.	This would improve pedestrian and walking route from Sunninghill. It may require Department for Transport dispensation, since it is not a standard design. Recommended option.
2. Construct a new footbridge on the western side of Devenish Road to the north of Elm Park.	This would fill a missing link in the eastern footway and can be constructed without any requirement for land purchase. Recommended option.
3. Approach Heathermount School to discuss options for improving the narrow footway across their frontage.	If the route can be improved, this would address one of the narrowest sections of footway on the approaches to Charters School. Recommended option.
4. Seek to secure a strip of land to the rear of the existing footway across the front of properties on Devenish Road that come forward for planning permission.	This would provide a long-term strategy for widening the footway. It should be noted that there is no obligation on landowners to do this, and not all properties will come forward for planning permission. Also there may still be an issue with protected trees. Recommended option.
5. Remove the western footway on Devenish Road to the north of Charters Road, move the carriageway across and widen the eastern footway.	This would allow the eastern footway to be widened into the carriageway. However, protecting / diverting utility companies' equipment on the western side would be extremely costly. Not recommended.
6. Remove the trees covered by Tree Preservation Orders from the highway verge on the eastern side of Devenish Road between Heathermount School and Hancocks Mount, and widen the footway into the verge.	This would permit widening of the footway and would improve the safety of students walking to school. However, progressing this as an isolated scheme would deliver minimal benefit, while having a significant adverse impact on the character of the area and adjacent properties. Not recommended.
7. Remove the mature tree near the junction of Jersey Place and Devenish Road.	This would tackle the worst pinch point on Devenish Road and would improve visibility for motorists exiting Jersey Place. However, there are other pinch points on the route, so removing one tree would be of limited benefit. Not recommended
8. Widen the footway into the verge on the eastern side of Devenish Road between Hancocks Mount and Bagshot Road.	This would provide up to 0.5m of additional width, but it would be within the root protection area for trees in private property that are covered by a area-wide Tree Preservation Order.

Table 1: Option	Comments
	Not recommended.
9. Convert Sunningdale Public Footpath 13 to a cycle track.	This would provide a cycle link to Sunningdale Station. However, the path is too narrow at the station end and cannot be widened without taking land from the front gardens of the adjacent properties. Not recommended.
10. Construct a cycle route between Dry Arch Road and Sunninghill via a path alongside the railway line.	This would provide a traffic-free route to Sunninghill. However, Sunningdale Public Footpath 13 is too narrow at its western end and there is no potential to extend the route westwards without compulsory purchase of private land and construction of a ramp up a steep railway embankment. Not recommended.
11. Construct a cycle route from Sunninghill via Kings Road and Rise Road.	This would provide a traffic-free route to Sunninghill. However, there is insufficient width for an on-carriageway solution and there are too many private accesses with high hedges or walls, which would lead to conflict between cyclists and vehicles. Not recommended.
12. Construct a cycle route from Sunninghill via Bridge Road, the gasholder development site and around the Charters estate.	This would provide a traffic-free route to Sunninghill.. However, the owners of the Charters development have indicated that they would not be prepared to allow such a route to be constructed, since residents of the development are concerned about the impact on their privacy. Not recommended.
13. Introduce traffic calming on Charters Road.	This would address residents' concerns about traffic speeds on Charters Road. <u>However, existing traffic speeds around the school are low at the start and end of the school day, so traffic calming is not considered necessary.</u> Not recommended.

3. KEY IMPLICATIONS

- 3.1 If the recommended schemes are delivered, then there should be an increase in the percentage of pupils walking to school.

Defined Outcomes	Unmet	Met	Exceeded	Significantly Exceeded	Date they should be delivered by
Increase the percentage of pupils walking to school from	2% or below	3-5%	6-9%	10% or above	1 April 2019

Defined Outcomes	Unmet	Met	Exceeded	Significantly Exceeded	Date they should be delivered by
a baseline of 19.1% in 2015 by					

4. FINANCIAL DETAILS

Financial impact on the budget

- 4.1 There would be a small increase in on-going revenue expenditure due to increased maintenance liabilities after the schemes are constructed, but this would be funded from existing highway maintenance budgets.
- 4.2 The capital construction cost of the schemes could be funded from prospective 2017/18 and 2018/19 Safer Routes to School budgets (CB002173, £75,000). It is proposed to construct the bridge and remove the tree in 2017/18, construct the signal scheme in 2018/19. This will utilise most of the available budget for Safer Routes to School for the next two years. However, Charters is the largest school in the borough and student numbers are set to expand from 2017, making this a priority for expenditure.

	2017/18	2018/19	2019/20
	Revenue £	Revenue £	Revenue £
Addition	£0	£0	£0
Reduction	£0	£0	£0

	2017/18	2018/19	2019/20
	Capital £	Capital £	Capital £
Addition	£50,000	£70,000	£0
Reduction	£0	£0	£0

5. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 The Royal Borough is the local Highway Authority as defined in the Highways Act 1980. As such, the council can carry out, in relation to a highway maintainable at the public expense by them, work for the improvement of that highway. All recommended options can be carried out within existing public highway.
- 5.2 The new bridge proposed for Devenish Road crosses a small watercourse. This is not classified as a 'main river', so Environment Agency approval is not required.
- 5.3 The Town and Country Planning (Tree Preservation) (England) Regulations 2012 introduced a single set of procedures for all trees covered by tree preservation orders. Any footway widening in the vicinity of trees covered by an existing Tree Preservation Order would require a formal application to the local planning authority before works could be carried out.

6. VALUE FOR MONEY

- 6.1 Works would be undertaken under the new term contracts. These will be let upon the conclusion of a competitive tendering exercise carried out in 2016/17.

7. SUSTAINABILITY IMPACT APPRAISAL

- 7.1 The proposed schemes will help encourage more students to walk to Charters School rather than travel by car. This will help reduce congestion and associated air pollution and noise, as well as helping to reduce reliance on fossil fuels.

8. RISK MANAGEMENT

- 8.1 Risks associated with the recommendation are shown below:

Risks	Uncontrolled Risk	Controls	Controlled Risk
The Dry Arch Road traffic signals do not receive DfT approval	Medium	Early engagement of DfT representatives	Low
Construction costs are higher than the estimate	Medium	The cost estimate includes a contingency to cover unforeseen items.	Low
Additional congestion caused by works	Medium	Works will be programmed to take place during off-peak periods and during school holidays where appropriate.	Low
Safety risk to road users due to a lack of a safe alternative route.	Medium	Works will be programmed to take place during off-peak periods and during school holidays where appropriate.	Low

9. LINKS TO STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES

- 9.1 If adopted, the recommended schemes would support the council's strategic objectives of: putting residents' first; value for money; and equipping ourselves for the future. The schemes would improve safety for residents, while delivering value for money through competitive tendering and supporting the future expansion of Charters School and the associated Leisure Centre.

10. EQUALITIES, HUMAN RIGHTS AND COMMUNITY COHESION

- 10.1 All highway construction and improvement schemes are designed in accordance with government guidance and regulations and with reference to industry best

practice. Any departures from standards are agreed with the Department for Transport. As such, provision is made for all users, including people with mobility and / or sensory impairments.

11. STAFFING/WORKFORCE AND ACCOMMODATION IMPLICATIONS

11.1 None

12. PROPERTY AND ASSETS

12.1 In many places, the existing footways are constructed up to the maximum extent of the highway boundary. Therefore, widening could only be achieved with the benefit of private land. If the recommendations are adopted, the council will seek to secure additional land for footway widening as planning applications come forward for development of individual properties. This would become public highway maintainable at the public expense.

13. ANY OTHER IMPLICATIONS

13.1 None

14. CONSULTATION

14.1 Consultation has taken place with:

- The Cabinet Member for Highways and Transport
- Affected local ward members
- Charters School

15. TIMETABLE FOR IMPLEMENTATION

Date	Details
2017/18	Design and construct pedestrian footbridge on Devenish Road and remove the highway tree at Jersey Place.
2018/19	Design and construct the traffic signal scheme on Dry Arch Road.

16. APPENDICES

- Appendix 1 – Map of Tree Preservation Orders
- Appendix 2 – Photographs
- Appendix 3 – Map of Options for Safer Routes to Charters School

17. BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Road Safety and Travel to School

17.1 An analysis of road traffic casualty records show that there has been one slight casualty, no serious casualties and no fatalities involving Charters pupils on roads around the school (approximately 0.5 mile radius) in the three year period to 31/08/2016, which is the latest period for which data is available.

- 17.2 The only recorded incident occurred on Devenish Road close to the junction with Hancocks Mount and involved a student stepping out from between queuing traffic into the path of an oncoming vehicle.
- 17.3 There is some evidence of other crashes involving students in preceding years, mostly focused on Devenish Road between Bagshot Road and Devenish Road. There is also anecdotal evidence from the school of additional minor incidents and near misses.
- 17.4 The roads around the school are narrow (5.0 - 5.5m wide), with significant traffic volumes (circa 4,200 vehicles per day on Devenish Road). The roads in the immediate vicinity of the school are covered by a 30 mph speed limit with an advisory 20mph speed limit at the start and end of the school day.
- 17.5 Around 19% of students walk to school, while an additional 1% walk from Sunningdale train station, located approximately 1 mile to the east. Although most roads have footways, these are typically 1.0-1.2m wide, which is significantly below the 2m standard width. This means that:
- There is insufficient capacity to accommodate the number of students using the footways at the start and end of the school day, particularly on paths closest to the school and students are frequently observed to spill over onto the carriageway; and
 - Students are forced to walk near the edge of the footway and are therefore at risk of being clipped by passing vehicles.
- 17.6 There are no designated cycle routes in the area. The narrowness of the roads and level of traffic makes for hostile traffic conditions. As a result, just 0.5% of students currently cycle to school. However, Charters is one of the first schools in the borough to be offered Level 3 Bikeability training, and the school has recently introduced a new cycle shelter.
- 17.7 Just over 20% of students travel by school bus. The school is served by two public bus services – White Buses provide a route from Windsor and Old Windsor, while Dicksons Travel provides a service from Camberley, Lightwater and Windlesham.
- 17.8 Approximately 56% of pupils always or usually travel by car. This adds significantly to the traffic problems around the school. Approximately 5% regularly car share.

Safer Routes to School Options

- 17.9 The council has looked at a number of options for improving walking and cycling routes to and from the school. Options considered include:
- Addressing missing links in the existing network
 - Widening existing footways
 - Constructing new / improved walking and cycling routes
- The council has also looked at options for reducing traffic speeds on Charters Road, including Traffic calming
- 17.10 **Missing links** - There are two missing links that have been identified on walking routes to the school.

- 17.11 On Dry Arch Road, the carriageway narrows to a single lane under the railway bridge and the footway is discontinuous. This creates conflict between pedestrians and motor vehicles. The road is a popular walking route for students who live in Sunninghill and northern parts of Sunningdale. It also serves Sunningdale School and a number of residential properties and is a popular through-route for vehicles.
- 17.12 One option proposed was to close the road to through traffic, but this was discounted due to the impact on the local community and the fact that it would be difficult for vehicles to turn round, particularly refuse vehicles.
- 17.13 An alternative solution would be to introduce traffic signals with push button units to trigger a pedestrian phase that would present a red signal to traffic on both approaches while permitting pedestrians to walk from one side to the other. Although this would incur additional delays for motor vehicles, it would create a safe route for pedestrians. It should be noted that this layout is not prescribed in existing highway design guidance and so it is possible that special dispensation may be required from the Department for Transport. It is estimated that the scheme would cost around £70,000.
- 17.14 There is also a missing section of footway on both sides of A330 Devenish Road near the junction with Elm Park. This could be addressed by constructing a pedestrian bridge alongside the existing vehicular bridge on the west side of Devenish Road. The bridge could be constructed without the need for additional land purchase. The cost of constructing a fibre reinforced plastic bridge is estimated to be around £50,000.
- 17.15 **Footway widening** – The option of widening existing footways into the adjacent carriageways was quickly discounted, since the carriageways are already narrow and this would result in insufficient space for safe, two-way movement of vehicles.
- 17.16 For the section of Devenish Road to the north of Charters Road, the option of removing the western footway was considered in order to allow the widening of the eastern footway into the carriageway. However, this was discounted as the costs associated with protecting / diverting utility companies' apparatus would be prohibitive.
- 17.17 Widening footways to the rear is also challenging. The footways on Devenish Road are constructed up to the boundaries of adjacent private properties, so it is not possible to undertake widening without securing additional land.
- 17.18 Between Jersey Place and Hancocks Mount, an existing highway verge could potentially be utilised for footway widening. This verge contains six mature trees and one immature oak. Removal of the trees would be required in order to widen the path from circa 1.1m to 2.0m, but these trees are covered by an existing Tree Preservation Order.
- 17.19 The trees have been assessed by the council's Arboricultural Coordinator, who has advised that any widening of the footway would be within the root protection area of the trees, and the works would be likely to sever primary roots, rendering the trees unstable, so they would probably need to be removed entirely. The replacement value of the trees has been estimated at £120,000.

- 17.20 There are no trees in the front garden of Charters Mount, so loss of the highway trees would open up views of this property. This would also alter the character and appearance of this section of the road. Trees are a key feature of this area, which is described in the Council's Townscape Assessment as 'Villas in a woodland setting'. Also, damage to the trees or their removal would be contrary to adopted policy contained in the Council's 'Tree and Woodland Strategy 2010-2020'.
- 17.21 It is recommended that this option should only be considered if it is to be delivered as part of a wider scheme, since otherwise it would only improve an isolated section of the route and so the benefits would be minimal. The cost of this scheme is estimated to be in the region of £20,000 to £25,000.
- 17.22 There would be some road safety benefit from removing the single, large oak tree near the junction with Jersey Place. This reduces the footway width to less than 700mm, which is insufficient for a single wheelchair, mobility scooter or even some pushchairs. It is also obscuring the sight line for vehicles exiting Jersey Place. However, it is not the only pinch point along the route and so the benefit gained by losing the tree would be relatively minor. It is estimated that removing the tree would cost in the region of £2,500, since it would involve a road closure.
- 17.23 There is potential to widen the eastern path between Hancocks Mount and Bagshot Road, since there is an existing verge to the rear. However, this would be in the root protection area for trees within the established area-wide Tree Preservation Order, but this time affecting trees on private property rather than in the highway verge. Therefore this option is not recommended. A cost estimate for the scheme cannot be prepared without being able to access the properties to undertake a survey.
- 17.24 It has been proposed that key landowners such as Heathermount School be approached to explore options for improving the narrow footway across their frontage, which is between 0.9 m and 1.2 m wide. Again, the site is covered by an area-wide Tree Preservation Order.
- 17.25 Where properties on Devenish Road have come up for planning permission, members of the development control panel have asked landowners to dedicate a strip of land to the rear of the existing footway as public highway. This gives the option for the council to widen the footway at a later date, should they get a continuous strip. However, there is no obligation on landowners to do this, and not all properties will come forward for planning permission. Also, even where land is secured for this purpose, there are often trees covered by Tree Preservation Orders that would be affected. Nevertheless, this is a low-risk strategy and a possible long-term option for improving walking routes to the school. Landowners could even be approached without waiting for them to come forward for planning.
- 17.26 **New / improved routes** - A number of options have been considered for new and improved walking and cycling routes, including improved links to Sunningdale Station and to Sunninghill.

- 17.27 Sunningdale public footpath 13 runs parallel to the railway line and connects Sunningdale station to Dry Arch Road. It has been investigated as a potential cycle route to Charters School. However, the width at the station end is insufficient for it to become a cycle route and there is no scope for widening, since it would require land from the front gardens of the adjacent properties. Routeing cyclists through the station would not be viable, since it would bring them into conflict with passengers.
- 17.28 Public footpath 13 runs west from Dry Arch Road towards Sunninghill, but terminates at Beech Hill Road. It gets very narrow at the western end and there is no potential to extend the route westwards without compulsory purchase of private land and construction of a ramp up a steep railway embankment. A cost estimate cannot be prepared, since council officers are unable to access railway land.
- 17.29 Officers have looked at trying to construct a cycle route to Sunninghill along Kings Road and Rise Road, but there is insufficient width for an on-carriageway solution and there are too many private accesses with high hedges or walls, which would lead to conflict between cyclists and vehicles. Therefore, this is not recommended.
- 17.30 Alternative routes have been considered, including construction of a new route via Bridge Road, through the proposed gasholder development site, and around the edge of the Charters development between Kings Corner and the Charters School playing fields. However, the owners of the Charters development have indicated that they would not be prepared to allow such a route to be constructed, since residents of the development are concerned about the impact on their privacy.
- 17.31 No viable cycle route to Charters school has been identified.
- 17.32 **Traffic calming** – A number of schemes have already been put in place to reduce traffic speed on Charters Road and Devenish Road. The speed limit has been reduced to 30 mph with an advisory 20 mph speed limit on Charters Road and Devenish Road in the vicinity of the school. This applies at the start and end of the school day and electronic signs are used to highlight the reduced speed limit to passing motorists.
- 17.33 Speed surveys undertaken on Charters Road suggest that further reductions in the speed limit would require physical traffic calming with associated signing and lining to ensure compliance at all times of day. This would have a detrimental impact on the visual appearance of the area. The geographical layout of the road, the presence of on-street parking around the school and the volume of traffic at the start and end of the school day all act to keep traffic speeds low. It is therefore considered that traffic calming is not necessary at this location
- 17.34 **Background papers** – The following background papers are relevant to this report:
- Cabinet Minutes, September 2016
 - Charters School Travel Plan

18. CONSULTATION (MANDATORY)

Name of consultee	Post held and Department	Date sent	Date received	See comments in paragraph:
Cllr Phill Bicknell	Lead Member	16/11/16	17/11/16	Recommendation, table in Section 2, 17.24
Russell O'Keefe	Strategic Director Corporate and Community Services	16/11/16		
Alison Alexander	Managing Director/ Strategic Director Adults, Children and Health	16/11/16	1/12/16	Comments
Terry Baldwin	Head of HR	16/11/16	28/11/16	Section 2
Simon Fletcher	Strategic Director Operations and Customer Services	15/11/16	16/11/16	-
Anna Trott	Strategy and Performance Manager	16/11/16	17/11/16	Section 17
Mark Lampard	Finance Partner	10/11/16	17/11/16	Summary, Recommendation, Section 4, 17.13, 17.14
Karen Shepherd	Cabinet Policy Officer			
Jenifer Jackson	Borough Planning Manager	16/11/16		
Ben Smith	Head of Highways and Transport	09/11/16	10/11/16	Summary, Recommendation, 2.7, 2.11, 2.16, 2.28, Section 3, Section 4, 14.1
Tony Carr	Traffic Management and Road Safety Team Leader	07/11/16	08/11/16	2.34
Anthony Hurst	Countryside and Parks Team Leader	07/11/16	09/11/16	-
Helen Leonard	Arboriculture Coordinator	07/11/16	08/11/16	2.26
Lynne Penn	Access and	07/11/16	09/11/16	-

Name of consultee	Post held and Department	Date sent	Date received	See comments in paragraph:
	Transport Team Leader			
Russell Bell	Principal Traffic Engineer	07/11/16	09/11/16	Summary, 2.20, 2.32, 2.35, 4.2, 8.1

REPORT HISTORY

Decision type:	Urgency item?
Non-key decision	No

Full name of report author	Job title	Full contact no:
Gordon Oliver	Principal Transport Policy Officer	01628 796097

Appendix 1: Map of Tree Preservation Orders



Map of Tree preservation Orders on Devenish Road Near Charters School

Legend

- ★ TPO Points
- TPO Areas

Appendix 2: Photographs



Figure A2.1 – Discontinuous Pedestrian Route at Dry Arch Road Rail Bridge



Figure A2.2 – Proposed Location of New Footway at Elm Park



Figure A2.3 – Charters Road



Figure A2.4 – Devenish Road Outside Heathermount School



Figure A2.5 – Pinch Point Caused by Mature Oak Tree at Jersey Place



Figure A2.6 – Devenish Road Between Jersey Place & Hancocks Mount

Appendix 3: Plan of Options Considered

