

RECOMMENDATION FOR CRITICAL WALKING INFRASTRUCTURE IMPROVEMENT

Sunninghill and Ascot Parish

August 2023

This document illustrates the recommended improvements to the walking infrastructure in the Parish of Sunninghill and Ascot that would complete the route North West – South East, between the Heatherwood roundabout and the Sunningdale train station.

Background

1. Current network of connections

- a. There is an existing network of Public Right of Way (PROW) connections in RBWM. On the RBWM website at (<https://www.rbwm.gov.uk/home/transport-and-streets/rights-way/definitive-maps-public-rights-way>) it is possible to find all the maps (the 3 key ones are in the appendix of this document) and the Definitive map statement where all current connections are listed and described.
- b. The borough regularly maintains the network via their 'Parks and countryside team' in which 1.7 FTE are dedicated to the PROW management. The current budget for regular maintenance is £ 60'000 to cover vegetation clearance, emergency interventions, surface repairs, signage replacement, fly-tipping removal, etc. This budget must cover approx. 311 km of PROW in the borough, of which SAPC and Sunningdale represent 21 km (ca. 7%).
- c. The SAPC wants to find the most effective way to provide feedback to RBWM about the maintenance of the current network as a number of routes are in poor state.

2. Improvements to the network

- a. RBWM has issued an Improvement Plan for the period 2016-2026, illustrating their policies for the enhancement of the PROW network and listing a number of specific improvement proposals grouped by parish. This document can also be found on the RBWM website at (<https://www.rbwm.gov.uk/home/transport-and-streets/rights-way/rights-way-policies-plans-and-progress-reports>) together with a map illustrating the proposed improvements (the one for our parish is in the appendix).
- b. RBWM issues every year a Milestones Statement indicating the objectives and the targets for the management and the improvements for the coming year, which refers to the broader document of the 2016/26 plan. The Milestones statement for 2023-24 was sent to us recently. It does not indicate any particular improvement from the 2016-2026 list for our Parish as being planned for the year 23-24.
- c. RBWM does not have a capital budget for the improvements and relies on 'external funding'.

3. Work from the Cycling and Walking Joint Working Group

- a. In July 2021 the working group jointly created between SAPC and Sunningdale Parish Council has issued a document illustrating the critical walking and cycling infrastructure needed across the two parishes. The priority intervention suggested at the time by the working group (illustrated in the Appendix) was the creation of a continuous route connecting the Heatherwood Hospital in the NW to the Sunningdale train station in the SE.

Work done recently

On Saturday Jul 29th and Sunday Aug 6th, we (Cllr Sanders and Cllr Tavoletti) have inspected the areas around the Heatherwood hospital, South Ascot, Sunninghill and Sunningdale in order to assess the situation and cross reference the recommended routes from the Joint Working Group (3.a above) and the improvements included in the RBWM plan (2.a and 2.b above), and be able to make a recommendation to RBWM as to which of the improvements in their plan should be prioritized. The focus has been on assessing the interventions needed to create *walking* path.

Findings and recommendations

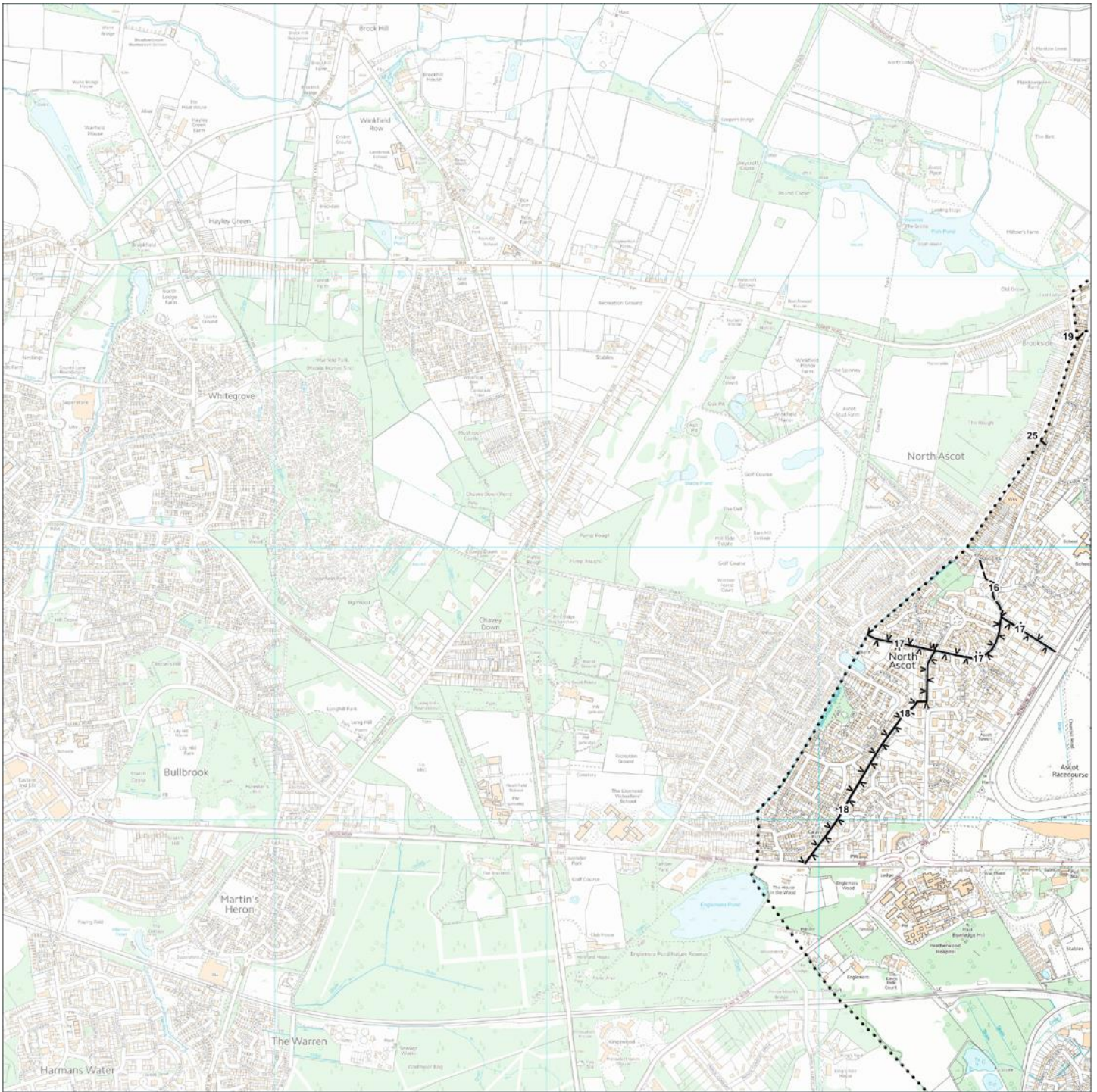
- A. Ascot high street at former Heatherwood hospital → Ascot station. We have walked from the parking on the high street through the racecourse land to the stables and the vast green at the bottom. Despite it gets very close to exit of the underpass of the Ascot station there is no connection to it. We do not see this as a focus area as the alternative route along the high street and down the footpath to the underpass is a very good alternative already existing, safe and illuminated. **Recommendation: do not pursue this for now. Once the Heatherwood housing site will be built there might be enough reasons for RBWM to open this - tbc.**
- B. Kings ride court (to the side of the new Heatherwood hospital) → South Ascot. The footpath on Kings ride Ct crosses the rails onto the south bank but then stops at the entrance of private estates. There is a passageway that points east towards South Ascot but it is unclear if it could lead to the bridge over the north-south railway branch close to Kinross Avenue in South Ascot. **Recommendation: check with RBWM if there is a chance to create a PROW from Kings ride to the bridge.**
- C. Prince Albert drive → South Ascot. There is an old footpath that connects the drive to the end of Kings ride court but it passes through land marked as private - but it should be checked (C-1 on the map). **Recommendation: Check if this land is really private.** There is also a usable path from the end of Prince Albert Drive through Buttersteep forest down to the bridge at the entrance of the forest in South Ascot at the end of Woodlands ride (C-2 on the map).
- D. Sunningdale station → Beech Hill road. This is an existing footpath (#13 in the maps) but is poorly maintained. **Recommendation: we should flag, together with Sunningdale Parish Council, to RBWM that it should be cleaned, the grounds levelled, and the vegetation cleared.**
- E. Beech Hill road → bridge close to Kings Road surgery. There appears to be a way to extend the footpath that terminates at Beech Hill Rd along the north bank of the railway up to the bridge at Kings Road surgery. **Recommendation: engage with RBWM representatives to discuss this further in person + include this in our list of 23-24 priorities for RBWM - this is the improvement #72 in their 2016-2026 plan.**
- F. From bridge at Kings road → Cavendish meads and / or Bridge road. This would be on the South bank of the railway and would complete the connection to Sunninghill High street. There seems to be space and technical feasibility to make these connections. **Recommendation: engage with RBWM in person to discuss how to make these parts happen + engage with the developers of Sunninghill Square to see how they can support. These two potential connections are also listed in the 2016-2026 RBWM PROW improvement plan as # 55 and # 56.**
- G. Overall we also recommend to increase the amount of signage on poles/walls/grounds/fences to help walkers discover about the existing paths.

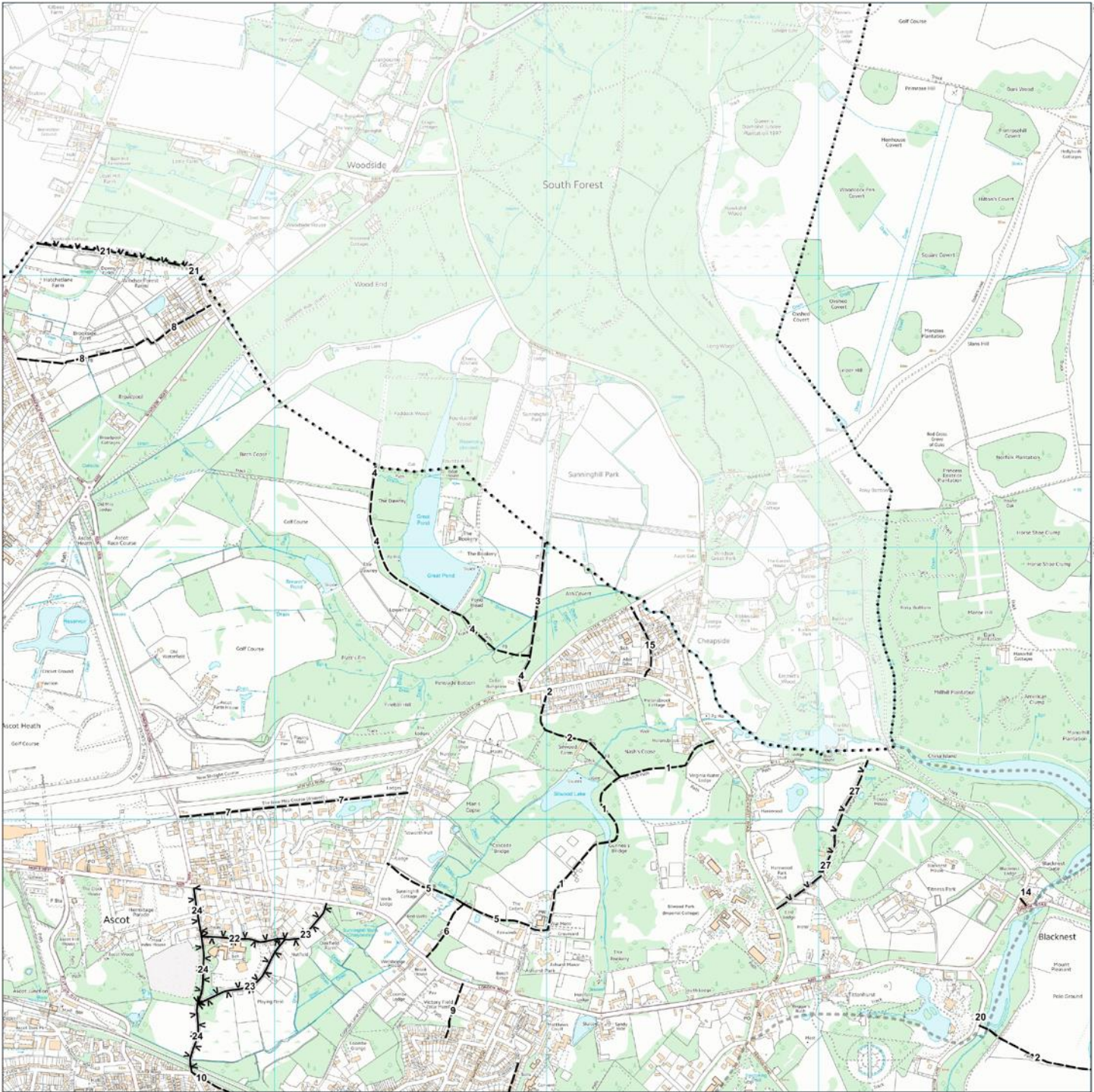
Riccardo Tavoletti
David Sanders

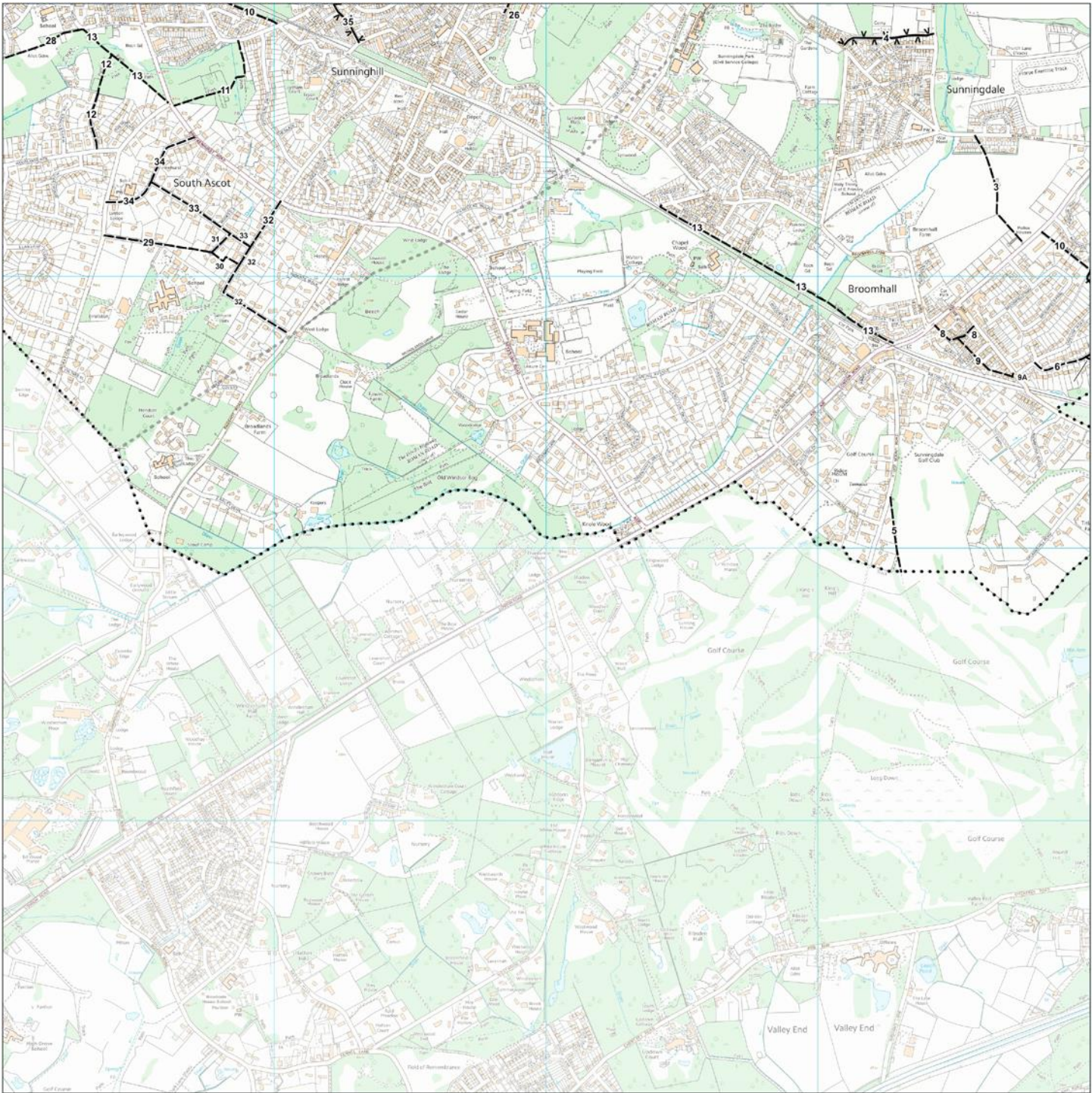
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APPENDIX

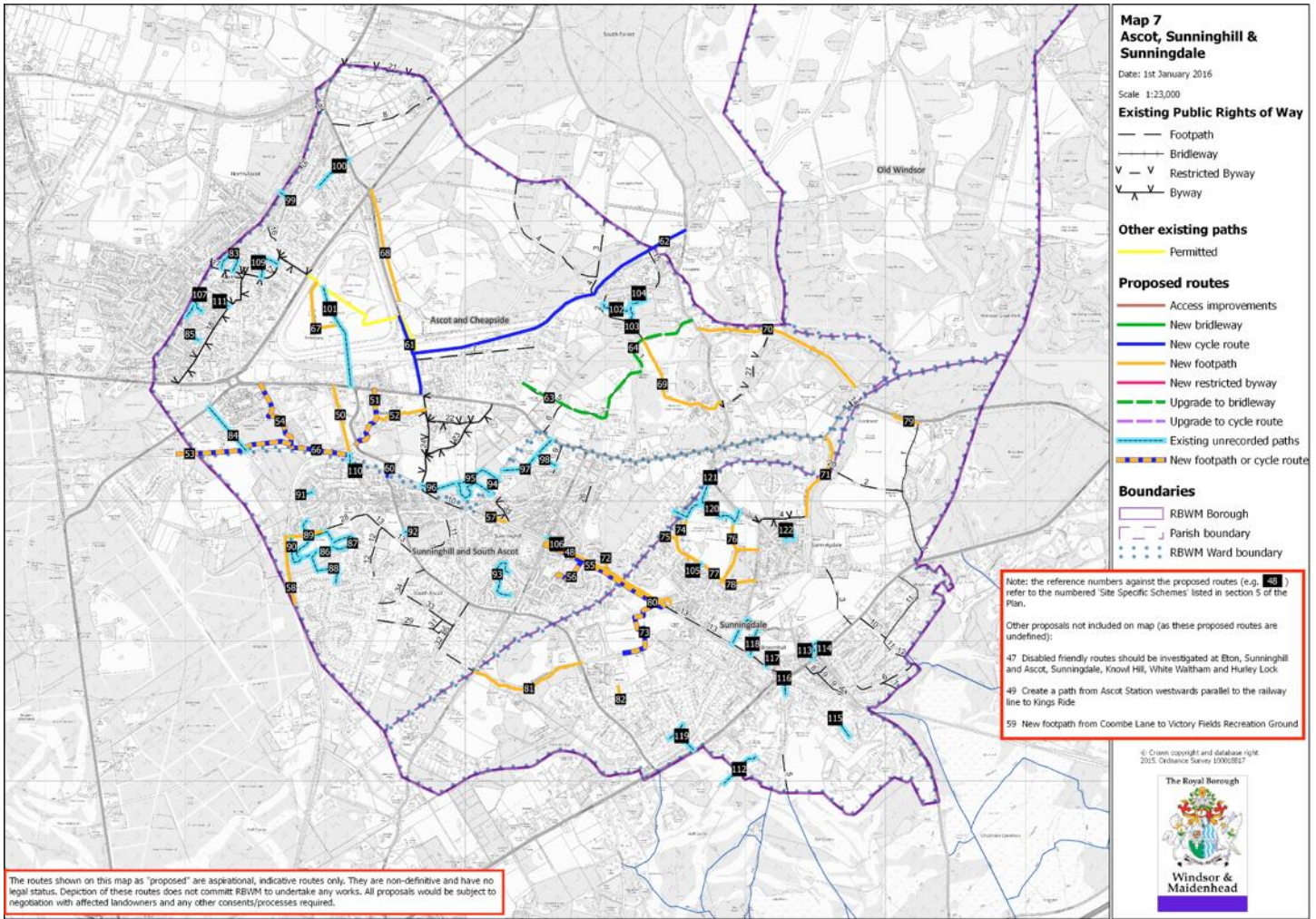
- MAPS OF CURRENT NETWORK -





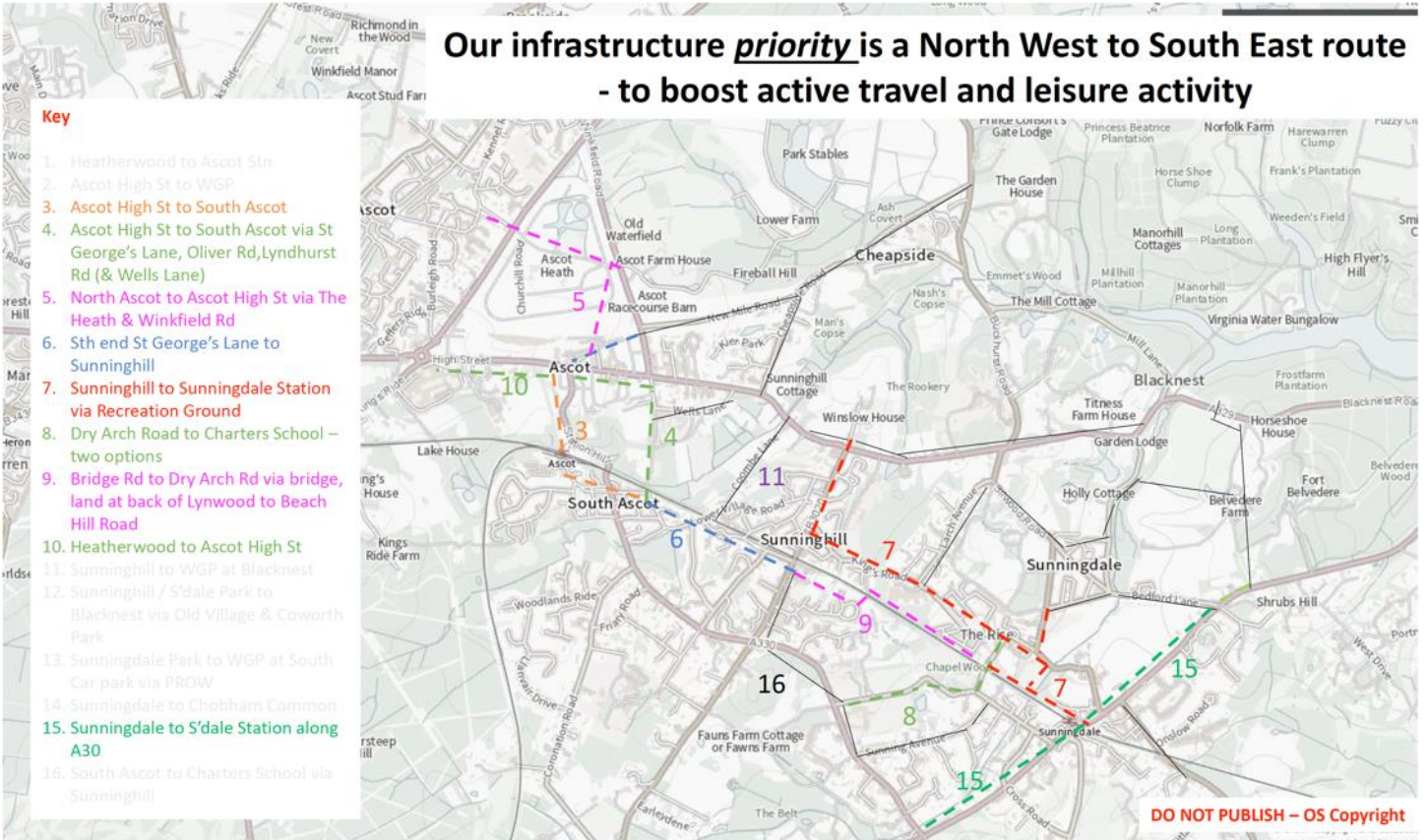


- MAP OF PLANNED IMPROVEMENTS IN RBWM 2016/2026 PLAN -

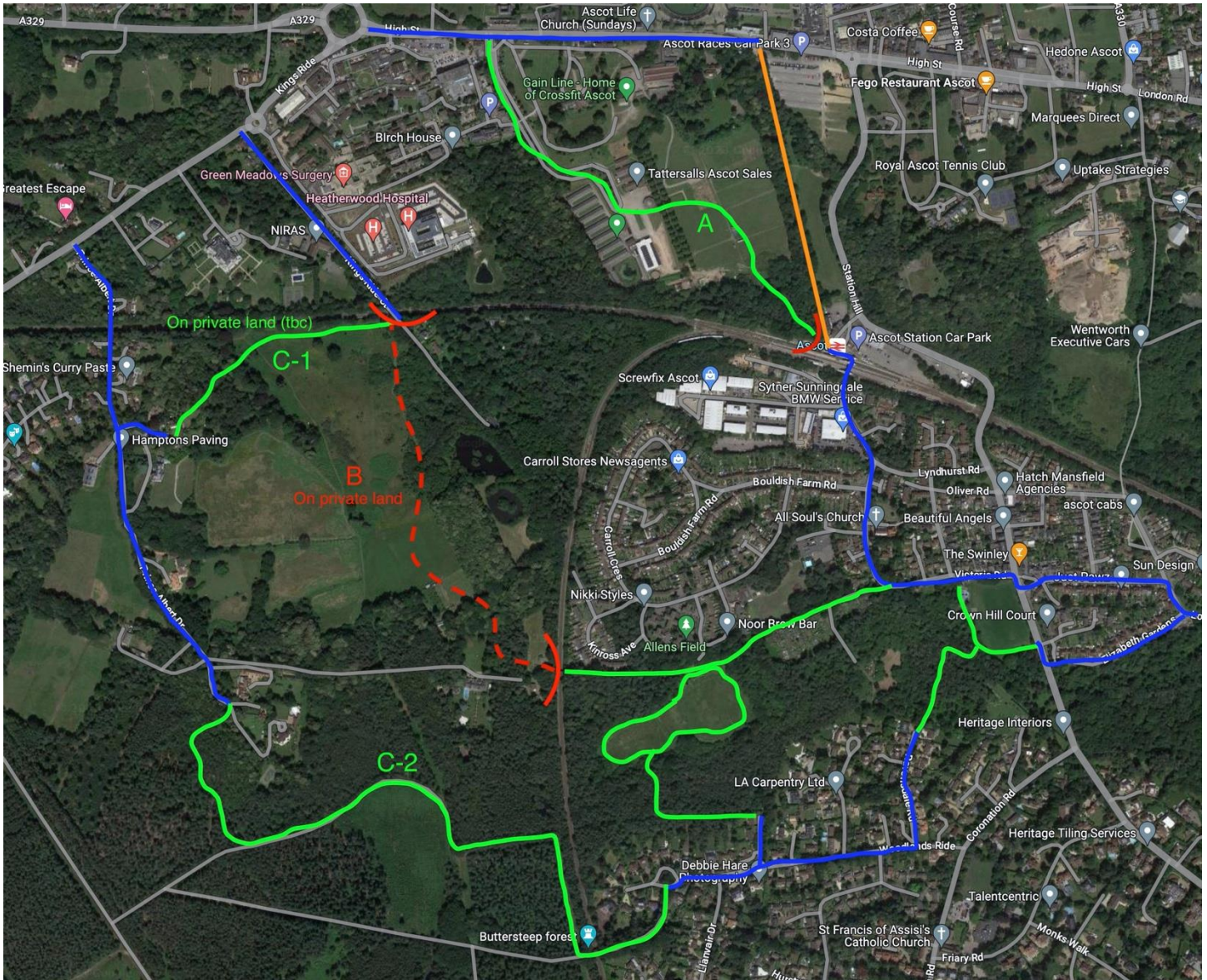


- CRITICAL INTERVENTIONS RECOMMENDED BY THE JOINT WORKING GROUP IN JUL 2021 -

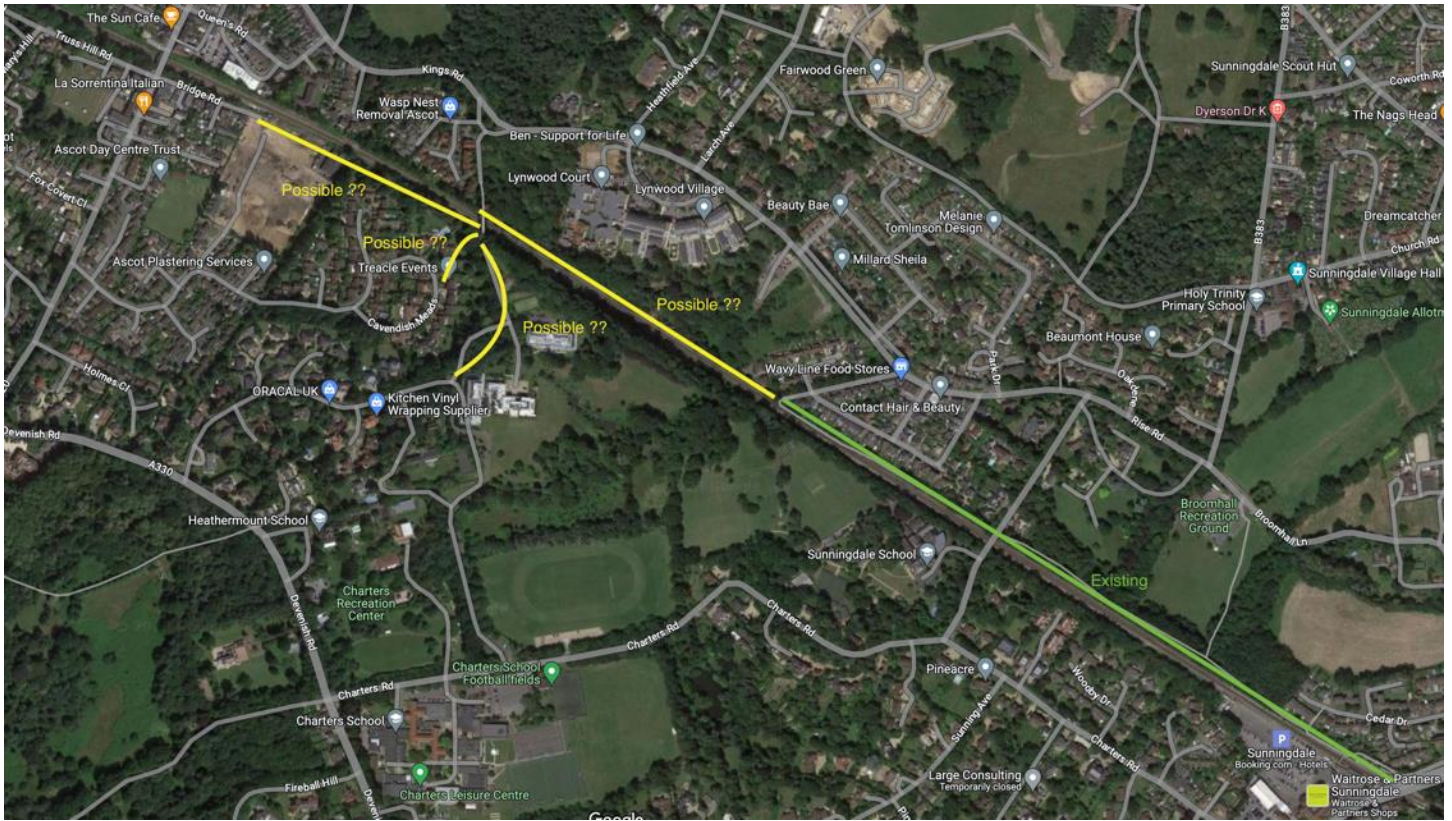
Our infrastructure *priority* is a North West to South East route
- to boost active travel and leisure activity



- INSPECTED POSSIBLE ROUTES -



Next step is to check if C-1 is really on private land, check if we can create a PROW on the path B.



Next step is to engage with RBWM and Sunninghill Square in person to assess the feasibility of the yellow connections above.