

HAMPSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

Decision Report

Decision Maker:	Executive Member – Environment and Transport
Date:	11 September 2012
Title:	Project Appraisal: Cycle and Pedestrian Route, Hitches Lane to Fleet Town Centre
Reference:	4216
Report From:	Director of Economy, Transport and Environment

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1. Executive Summary

1.1. The purpose of this Project Appraisal is to seek approval for the implementation of the pedestrian and cycle route from Hitches Lane to Fleet Town Centre, at an estimated cost of £722,000.

1.2. This paper seeks to:

- provide the background to the scheme for which approval is sought for implementation;
- provide an outline of the scheme details; and
- provide information about how this scheme links into the Town Access Plan, and how the improvements will link into the earlier section of the route undertaken in 2011/12.

1.3. This scheme forms part of the Fleet Town Access Plan improvements and, subject to approval, will be funded by external funding from developer contributions and also from the Local Sustainable Transport Fund.

1.4. The scheme fulfils the County Council's corporate priority of making Hampshire safer and more secure for all.

2. Recommendation

2.1 That the Project Appraisal for the implementation of the cycle and pedestrian improvements, from Hitches Lane to Fleet Town Centre, at an estimated cost of £722,000 be approved.

Rpt/4216/HM

CORPORATE OR LEGAL INFORMATION:**Links to the Corporate Strategy**

Hampshire safer and more secure for all:	yes
Corporate Improvement plan link number (if appropriate):	
Maximising well-being:	yes
Corporate Improvement plan link number (if appropriate):	
Enhancing our quality of place:	yes
Corporate Improvement plan link number (if appropriate):	

Section 100 D - Local Government Act 1972 - background documents

The following documents discuss facts or matters on which this report, or an important part of it, is based and have been relied upon to a material extent in the preparation of this report. (NB: the list excludes published works and any documents which disclose exempt or confidential information as defined in the Act.)

<u>Document</u>	<u>Location</u>
Fleet Town Access Plan	http://www.hants.gov.uk/fleet-town-access-plan.htm

IMPACT ASSESSMENTS:

1. Equalities Impact Assessment:

- 1.1. Statement one: The short term minimum required to meet this action: areas of the town with the poorest transport links.

The Fleet TAP has a duty to ensure that its proposals help to provide fair and equal access within the town area regardless of age, race, ethnicity, religion, disability, gender, sexual orientation, mobility and social and geographic inclusion (eg people on low income and those living in areas of the town with the poorest transport links). Preparing the recommendations involved assessing the local population and understanding the varied access needs.

- 1.2. Statement two: Longer term minimum required to meet this action:

The Fleet TAP has a duty to ensure that it reflects the access needs of the local community. Developing the plan involved carrying out community engagement with local members and stakeholders to identify their varied access needs. The results from these audits and information form a range of strategies (roads and traffic, walking and cycling, public transport, and smarter choices) and helped to produce proposals for the schemes included in the Fleet TAP. The adopted TAP has been subject to six weeks of public consultation. These aim to provide fair and equal access to the town centre and surrounding facilities regardless of age, race, ethnicity. Religion, disability, gender sexual orientation, mobility and social and geographic inclusion (eg people on low income and those living in areas of the town with the poorest transport links)

2. Impact on Crime and Disorder:

- 2.1. Schemes that provide enhanced or new lighting could have a beneficial impact on reducing crime and anti social behaviour owing to fewer areas with secluded outlooks.

3. Climate Change:

- 3.1. How does what is being proposed impact on our carbon footprint/energy consumption?

The Fleet TAP will seek to improve accessibility and therefore increase the opportunities for use of more sustainable modes of transport than the motorised vehicle.

- 3.2. How does what is being proposed consider the need to adapt to climate change, and be resilient to its longer term impacts?

The Fleet TAP supports the need to adapt to climate change by looking to promote and support a move towards more sustainable modes of transport, in particular improving walking and cycle routes within the Town Centre. This scheme as part of the Town Access Plan will encourage more people to walk and cycle.

HITCHES LANE TO FLEET TOWN CENTRE PEDESTRIAN CYCLE ROUTE

Background, Aims and Objectives

The Fleet Town Access Plan (Fleet TAP) has been adopted by Hampshire County Council to be used to support the evidence base for negotiating developer contributions and other sources of funding towards transportation and accessibility improvements.

The Fleet TAP Members Steering Group chaired by County Councillor for Fleet and attended by County Councillor for Church Crookham and Ewshott, Hart District Council's Deputy Leader together with County Council Environment and Hart District Council officers, has directly influenced the progression of the Fleet TAP to date.

A well-structured and extensive consultation was key to the development of the TAP. Between July and December 2008 key stakeholders were consulted to scope and prioritise schemes identified in the emerging TAP proposals. The general public and key stakeholders were given six weeks to comment on the final draft TAP between May and June 2010.

Following a review of the consultation comments changes to the TAP were agreed with the Steering Group and final document was granted final approval from Councillor The Executive Member for Environment and Transport 5 April 2011.

The Fleet TAP comprises five strategies: Pedestrian & Cycle; Bus; Rail; Smarter Choices; and Traffic Management & Highways. During the development stage of the TAP preliminary design was undertaken to produce a deliverable action plan of schemes which could be implemented once funding was in place.

The **Hitches Lane to Fleet Town Centre Pedestrian Cycle Route** comprises parts of three TAP action plan schemes

- PC3 : Hitches Lane, Tavistock Road, Calthorpe Park, The Views;
- PC10 : Part of the Hitches Lane to Church Crookham; and
- PC19 : Reading Road North/ Calthorpe Park, junction improvement with toucan crossing

The feasibility study will cover only those sections indicated in the location plan. Other sections, particularly of PC10, will be addressed in future studies.

PC19, was completed in September 2011 as a stand alone scheme. Although built as a toucan, when opened for use in time for the start of the school term in September 2011, it will be commissioned as a puffin crossing, with spare sockets to enable upgrade once the linking cycle routes are complete.

Between 2007 and 2008, during the preparatory stage for the TAP, feasibility highway design was completed for the majority of cycle route PC3 and PC10. Details of this can be found in Chapter 5 of the TAP, which can be viewed on the website link below:

<http://www3.hants.gov.uk/hampshire-transport/transport-schemes-index/taps/fleet-town-access-plan.htm>

A full topographical survey and land ownership details have been obtained for the entire route. The required land is either owned by Hampshire County Council, Fleet Town Council or Persimmon Homes. The Town Council and Persimmon Homes have agreed, in principle, to dedicate / transfer sections of the route owned by them. for highway purposes.

Previous consultation with the LPA has identified areas of the route that will need special attention:

- Flood plain - covering the section of PC10, the link between PC10 where the route turns towards Merivale
- Landfill – the south west end of Calthorpe Park
- Street lighting – this is expected to be the biggest issue for locals adjacent to the scheme. A suggestion put forward by Fleet Town Council is to trial low power LED lighting during the consultation period for the scheme – this is deemed to be achievable and we have agreement in principle to do this by Street Lighting Client.
- Protected woodland – covering the section of PC10 and other TPO trees and landscaping mitigation - impact on landscaping is expected to be the second biggest issue for residents, to this end the County's Landscape section has undertaken a review of all existing landscaping along the proposed route and made an assessment of the impact the scheme will have. This information will be used to aid the production of the pre-planning consultation drawings.

There are only two sections of the current scheme that were not subject to full feasibility design:

- The link between PC10, where the route turns towards Merivale and runs adjacent to Tavistock Infants School & All Saints Junior School. Here the existing path needs to be widened to 3m with street lighting added. The operational land required to widen the existing footpath is owned by HCC and forms part of the Tavistock Infant School. Associated works on the school grounds would need investigating.
- The link between Victoria Road and Branksomewood Road via the existing footpath. Here the existing path needs to be widened to 3m with street lighting added. Land adjacent to the path is owned by a doctors surgery which although private covers an area of overgrown, unmanaged landscaping which through associated works would improve access to the surgery and is deemed by the Fleet TAP steering group as worth investigating.

As part of the consultation activities during the development stage, pupils from Calthorpe Park Secondary School who cycled to school were asked, in 2008, the routes taken to the school and problems they had. Figure 6.1, which is included in the supporting information for the Fleet TAP shows the outcome of this survey.

With the exception of the two extra sections given above, that came out of the Fleet TAP consultation, the remaining sections of routes PC3 and PC10 were subject to 6 weeks of public consultation in 2010. Response to the Fleet TAP public consultation was good with the break down of comments received as follows:

- 136 online comment forms;
- 73 paper comment forms;
- 17 Emails;
- 63 Letters of which 49 were in support of only the Reading Road North toucan crossing PC19 not a uncontrolled refuge crossing PC150; and
- petition signed by 139 people, representing 289 children who wish to cross Reading Road North safely, using a traffic controlled crossing.

The main stakeholders were Hart District Council and Fleet Town Council. Hart District Council continues to support the Fleet TAP and the only schemes it referred to were the three pedestrian and cycle routes (PC3, PC10 and PC11) linking Calthorpe Park school being given the highest priority. Fleet Town Council replied with support of the TAP and in the case of PC3 supported its implementation provided the PC19 controlled crossing is installed and the route is extended to continue off-road using part of PC10.

A post consultation problems and issues workshop to discuss the route of the **Hitches Lane to Fleet Town Centre Pedestrian Cycle Route** was held with Fleet Town Council in November 2010. From this the preferred route, which is mainly off-road passing through parks is proposed linking Hitches Lane with Victoria Road, as shown on the location plan.

The scheme will ultimately be funded in the main from the S106 contribution associated with the residential developments on Hitches Lane and Campbell Close. In addition, the Hitches Lane to Fleet Town Centre pedestrian cycle route formed part of the successful funding bid for the DfT Local Sustainable Transport Fund (LSTF). Funding has been approved for £146,000 in 2011/12 and £104,000 in 2012/13 – this funding must be used ‘in year’.

PC19, was completed in September 2011 as a standalone scheme. Since that time design has been progressing on the remainder of the scheme which comprises four phases:

- **Phase 1** links to an existing shared off road pedestrian cycle route in Hitches Lane and follows an existing tree lined footpath alongside Calthorpe Park Secondary School and Tavistock Infants School. The route passes Broadacres and the Tavistock Infant School entrance ending with a bridge crossing the Sandy Lane Ditch to The Spinney
- **Phase 2** is the section through Calthorpe Park between Merivale and Reading Road North.
- **Phase 3** follows the existing footpath from Reading Road North to The Views Meadow

Although most of the scheme is located on highway land four plots are subject to planning permission which is currently being sought from Hart District Council. Pre-planning consultation undertaken earlier this year showed good support from landowner and the general public for the proposals within each plot.

- **Phase 4** covers the section of route that follows the link between Victoria Road and Branksomewood Road via the existing footpath. Feasibility design on this section was not undertaken at this time and remains a future enhancement of this pedestrian cycle route.

There remains good public support for the scheme. There is ongoing community liaison through the local county member and the Fleet Town Council.

PROJECT APPRAISAL

1. Executive Summary

- 1.1 The purpose of this Project Appraisal is to seek approval for the implementation of the pedestrian and cycle route from Hitches Lane to Fleet Town Centre, at an estimated cost of £722,000 be approved.

Scheme Outline

- 1.2 The Fleet Town Access Plan (Fleet TAP) has been adopted by Hampshire County Council. The **Hitches Lane to Fleet Town Centre Pedestrian Cycle Route** comprises parts of three Fleet TAP action plan schemes
- PC3 - Hitches Lane, Tavistock Road, Calthorpe Park, The Views;
 - PC10 - Part of the Hitches Lane to Church Crookham; and
 - PC19 - Reading Road North/Calthorpe Park, junction improvement with toucan crossing.
- 1.3 PC19, was completed in September 2011. Although built as a toucan, when opened for use in time for the start of the school term in September 2011, it was commissioned as a puffin crossing, with spare sockets to enable upgrade to a toucan crossing once the linking cycle routes were complete.
- 1.4 Detailed design has been progressing on the remainder of the scheme which comprises three phases:
- **Phase 1** links to an existing shared off road pedestrian cycle route in Hitches Lane and follows an existing tree lined footpath alongside Calthorpe Park Secondary School and Tavistock Infants School. The route passes Broadacres and the Tavistock Infant School entrance ending with a bridge crossing the Sandy Lane Ditch to The Spinney;
 - **Phase 2** is the section through Calthorpe Park between Merivale and Reading Road North; and
 - **Phase 3** follows the existing footpath from Reading Road North to The Views Meadow.
- 1.5 Detailed design of phases 1 to 3 is progressing in tandem with the planning application in order to achieve a minimum spend this financial year of £104,000 to ensure the LSTF allocation is met. Total funding is sufficient to complete the design of the full scheme and to start on site this year completing all phases within the planning period
- 1.6 There remains good public support for the scheme. There is ongoing community liaison through the local county member and the Fleet Town Council.

Alternative Options

- 1.7 The option put forward by the Fleet TAP for route PC3 to be on-road between the Calthorpe Park School cycle exit and Merivale was not pursued following additional feasibility design undertaken in the vicinity of Tavistock Infants School. It was found to be feasible to provide an entirely off-road pedestrian and cycle route akin to the principle of safe routes to school, whilst also opening up more direct access to local parks in the form of the Views Meadow and Calthorpe Park.
- 1.8 The option put forward by the Fleet TAP for route PC3 to extend the route between Victoria Road and Branksomewood Road via the existing footpath was not pursued following initial investigations into landownership. Feasibility design on this section was not undertaken and remains a future enhancement of this pedestrian cycle route.

Measures of Success

- 1.9 The proposed works will help raise awareness of the Fleet TAP and in particular the Pedestrian and Cycle Strategy. The scheme is intended to set the benchmark standard for off-road pedestrian cycle routes as proposed by the Fleet TAP.
- 1.10 Travel mode choices (section 2.6 of the Fleet TAP 2008 & 2010 Consultation Review) and routes taken by cyclists to Calthorpe Park School (Figure 6.1) were collected in conjunction with the development and consultation of the Fleet TAP. Full details of which can be found on the Fleet TAP website:

<http://www3.hants.gov.uk/hampshire-transport/transport-schemes-index/fleet-town-access-plan.htm>

It is proposed to repeat these surveys one year after the completion of the full scheme. Success can be measured through an increased number of pedestrian and cyclists using the route and, in the case of parents of local school children, a mode change in the travel to school.

2. Finance

2.1	<u>Estimates</u>	<u>£'000</u>	<u>% of total</u>	<u>Funds Available</u>	<u>£'000</u>
	Design Fee	80	11	LSTF	104
	Client Fee	3	1	Developer EF	618
	Supervision	45	6		
	Construction and Land	594	82		
	Total	<u>722</u>	<u>100</u>	Total	<u>722</u>

2.2	<u>Revenue Implications</u>	<u>£'000</u>	<u>% Variation to Committee's budget</u>
	Net increase in current expenditure	59	0.053
	Capital Charge	59	0.044
	Total Expenditure	118	0.097

3. Programme

- 3.1 A planning application for the four plots not currently highway was submitted to Hart District Council, the Local Planning Authority, on 20 July 2012, and is due to be determined within 13 weeks.
- 3.2 Detailed design is progressing parallel to the planning application as it is necessary to have procured but not awarded the advanced and main contracts before this project appraisal is approved.

	Gateway Stage			
	3 - Project Appraisal	Start on site	End on site	4 - Review
Date (mm/yy)	11 September 2012	November 2012	July 2013	July 2014

- 3.3 Subject to planning permission being granted, advanced works in the form of advanced site clearance is due to start in November 2012. These works will be undertaken by Amey the term arboriculture contractor.
- 3.4 Main works will start in January 2013, with all phases being built concurrently. These works will be undertaken under the SE7 framework.
- 3.5 There are three main risks as identified that may have an impact on delivery:

- (i) Delay to construction start due to planning requirements.

Extensive pre-planning consultation has been undertaken to engage the local community in order to identify and address any concerns. The unusual step of providing a street lighting trial is to address one such concern.

- (ii) Loss of funding planning permission not obtained for all phases of the scheme.

Construction works must start before the end of March 2013 to meet the LSTF criteria associated with the funding to achieve fees and works cost £104,000 in 2012/13.

- (iii) Delay to construction start date due to required interests in land not being available or transactions not completed in time to meet programme timelines.

4. Scheme Details

- 4.1 A location plan is in the background section and detailed plans showing phases 1, 2 and 3 will be displayed at the meeting.
- 4.2 The proposed predominately off road, 3.0m wide, shared use pedestrian cycle route is split in to three phases, which will be constructed as one, two or three schemes.

- **Phase 1** links to an existing shared off road pedestrian cycle route in Hitches Lane and follows an existing tree lined footpath alongside Calthorpe Park Secondary School and Tavistock Infants School. The route passes Broadacres and the Tavistock Infant School entrance ending with a bridge crossing the Sandy Lane Ditch to The Spinney.

Through this section of works there are several pinch points where the width of the footway cycleway is reduced to 2.5m to avoid removing good value mature trees. There is a need however, to remove some poorer quality trees to achieve the desired 3.0m paved width.

Direct cycle access to the route will be available from Hitches Lane, Calthorpe Park Secondary School, Tavistock Infants School, Broadacres and The Spinney. Pedestrians will also be able to access this section of the route via several links from Tavistock Road.

At the pre-planning consultation concerns were raised about safety of infant school children in the vicinity of the school where cyclists will be passing on the shared route. The design was reviewed and subsequently modified to provide a segregated solution which has, in principle, been accepted by Tavistock Infant & All Saints Junior Schools and Children's Services as a safer arrangement. Pedestrians would have the option of being segregated from cyclists between the school entrance and The Spinney.

Through this whole section of the route there have been reports of vandalism in the past. With the footway cycleway proposals to include lighting columns providing 'white light' during the hours of darkness, it is hoped that vandalism incidents will be less likely.

- **Phase 2** is the section through Calthorpe Park between Merivale and Reading Road North. Access to the park from Merivale is currently across a ditch on a narrow bridge and then via steps or a steep ramp. The proposals include for a 3m wide bridge across the stream and for the steps and ramp to be removed so that the new route will rise up a 60m long 1:20 grade ramp to the playing fields, then continuing at grade to join the existing access road near the Scout Hut. From here the route follows

the access road out to Reading Road North with pedestrians on a footway segregated from the access road with a white line for the section past the tennis courts and then a kerbed footway to the controlled crossing at Reading Road North.

The flooding issues near the Scout Hut were raised at the pre-planning consultation and the proposals address the problem by reprofiling the access road in this vicinity to the tie-in to the cycle pedestrian route at the existing green gate. Parking facilities along the access road will remain as existing and the existing dragons teeth along the north side will be taken away and replaced with similar taller timber dragons teeth which will be more visible to motorists parking in the bays along the access road. Existing parking bays are to be extended where the new footway encroaches in to the existing bays.

- **Phase 3** follows the existing footpath from Reading Road North to The Views Meadow which then rises up the slope with a 1:17 gradient ramp which includes four level landing bays. This will replace the existing steeper path which will be removed. Part of the ramp will be in a cutting where a timber crib wall with a maximum height of 0.7m will be required. Also along this length will be a flight of steps to the existing path past the playground and on to Harlington Way.

Footway cycleway construction throughout all three phases will be bitumen macadam surfacing with concrete edgings. Where the route passes through tree lined areas, the footway cycleway construction is specified as 'No Dig'. Timber edgings will be used in the 'No Dig' areas. Tactile paving will be installed at all road crossings and hazard paving will be included at all pedestrian access points on to the route.

4.3 The following structures are proposed along the route of the footway/cycleway:

1. Earthworks embankments and cuttings have been designed to provide a stable slope, normally graded to 1:3 and covered with topsoil or other soft landscaping. Where this gradient cannot be achieved, retaining walls shall be used.
2. A timber bridge will be built across the Sandy Lane Ditch at the western end of The Spinney. The bridge will span across the open ditch providing access for pedestrians and cyclists only on to the footway cycleway from the public highway in The Spinney. The bridge will be constructed of wooden deck and parapets with an anti-slip surface. Abutments will be constructed on both sides of the ditch to support the bridge deck and retain the embankments on each side of the ditch. The finish of the abutments will be fair-faced, concrete.
3. In The Views Meadow where the footway/cycleway traverses the parkland at a 1:20 gradient a retaining wall is required to minimise the impact on the park. The footway cycleway is cut into the existing

embankment with a length of low retaining wall, less than 1m in height. The retaining wall will be of a timber crib wall construction. Timber crib system consists of a series of treated timbers in-filled with a locally-sourced or recycled crushed stone, built on a concrete base. This provides a gravity retaining wall with an attractive open finish which will be planted.

- 4.4 The proposed lighting utilises lanterns containing Light Emitting Diodes which are to be mounted on 5 metre high hinged columns along the tree lined sections of the route and 6 metre high hinged columns along the parkland areas. The LED light source provides white energy saving light with exceptionally long life and low maintenance costs.
- 4.5 The lighting levels have been selected to provide sufficient visibility for safety with regard to energy conservation and light pollution. The lighting units can be dimmed and switched at selected times through the County Council's remote street lighting control system. It is proposed that the lighting units will be dimmed by 25% between sunset and midnight, by 50% from midnight until 5a.m., and by 25% from 5a.m. until sunrise.

5. Departures from Standards

- 5.1 None.

6. Community Engagement

- 6.1 A well-structured and extensive consultation was key to the development of the Fleet TAP for which this scheme comprises elements of three action plan schemes. Between July and December 2008 key stakeholders were consulted to scope and prioritise schemes identified in the emerging Fleet TAP proposals. The general public and key stakeholders were given six weeks to comment on the final draft Fleet TAP between May and June 2010. Following a review of the consultation, comments, as detailed in the Fleet TAP companion document, were agreed with the Steering Group, and the final document was approved by the Executive Member for Environment and Transport on 5 April 2011. The Fleet TAP companion document *'Fleet TAP 2008 & 2010 Consultation Review and Steering Group approved changes to TAP, February 2011, Environment, Hampshire County Council*, available to download from Fleet TAP website at www.hants.gov.uk/fleet-town-access-plan.
- 6.2 Approximately 600 people attended the Fleet TAP public exhibition. Response to the public consultation was good with the break down of comments received as follows:
- 136 online comment forms;
 - 73 paper comment forms;
 - 17 Emails;
 - 63 Letters of which 49 were in support of only the Reading Road North toucan crossing and not a uncontrolled refuge crossing; and

- petition signed by 139 people, representing 289 children who wish to cross Reading Road North safely, using a traffic controlled crossing.

Scheme Consultation

- 6.3 The public consultation of the Fleet TAP only identified the route and stated that it was for cyclists and pedestrians. With more detailed proposals developed, pre-planning public consultation took place 23 February to 16 March 2012 for the full route. Copies of the consultation display can be viewed on the scheme website.
- 6.4 The general public were invited to comment on the proposals via the County's E-Consultation website, posters in Hart Shopping Centre and letters. 160 letters were sent to residents living along the route, inviting them to comment on the proposals by either attending the exhibition and completing a comments form, viewing the proposals on-line via the Fleet TAP website and completing a comments form, or at the library where comments could be submitted on the website. A total of 1750 similar letters were also delivered to the three schools for all the children attending those schools to hand deliver to their homes and guardians.
- 6.5 57 comment forms were returned . The first question on the comments form asked whether they supported the pre-planning proposals for the route. There are four plots requiring planning permission and consultees were asked which ones they supported. The response was as follows:
- Plot A near Tavistock Infants School 44 supported;
 - Plot B near Tavistock Infants School 42 supported;
 - Plot C Calthorpe Park 46 supported; and
 - Plot D The Views Meadow 45 supported.
- 6.6 Consultees were then asked if they had any additional comments on the proposals. The main comments/concerns/issues were as follows:-
- a) Proposed lighting. Will lights be on all night? (7No)
 - b) Congestion specifically in the vicinity of Tavistock School. Conflict between young children being delivered to school and passing cyclists. (5No)
 - c) Ecological issues. (6No)
 - d) Congestion between pedestrians and cyclists. No segregation. (11No)
- 6.7 Many of the consultees gave full support to the proposals. Stakeholders generally supported the scheme although there were some concerns raised about pedestrian safety in the vicinity of Tavistock Infant School during parent/pupil pick up/drop off periods when Calthorpe Park Secondary School pupils could be cycling past the Infant School. This problem was considered after the consultation period and a pedestrian/cyclist segregated arrangement has been developed past the school which has now been accepted as a safer solution.

Street Lighting Trial

6.8 Two of the main principles adopted by Hampshire County Council's Street Lighting Policy are:

- the addressing of crime and disorder issues together with increasing personal security, reducing the fear of night-time attacks on individuals and deterring vandalism of property; and
- the avoidance of detrimental environmental impact in terms of the visual appearance of lighting, both day and night, adjacent to and on the highway and the overall impact on the environment in terms of energy conservation and light pollution.

6.9 It is proposed to illuminate the full length of the pedestrian route with a type of lighting using Light Emitting Diode (LED) lanterns, in order that the route can be used at all times, not just during daylight hours. A trial of LED lanterns is currently underway and residents were invited by letter to observe the lighting trial at the following locations:

- Tavistock Infants School: One on the lamp column to the left of the main entrance and another to the right of the second entrance of the school, located along the footpath from the main entrance towards 'The Spinney'.
- Calthorpe Park: Two locations adjacent to the tennis courts and cricket pavilion.

Ongoing Community liaison

6.10 Scheme specific web pages are provided on the main Fleet TAP website for the scheme at www.hants.gov.uk/fleet-town-access-plan/hitches-lane-cycle-route. Here residents are kept up to date with progress, can find out background to the scheme and are consulted on proposals as applicable. Residents are encouraged to sign up to e-updates when the pages are updated.

6.11 In addition, people have access through the 'My Journey' website, to walking and maps at www.walk4life.info and www.cyclestreets.net. It is proposed to upload the Hitches Lane to Fleet cycle and pedestrian route to both websites.

7. Statutory Procedures

7.1 N/A.

8. Planning

8.1 Planning consent is required for four plots along the pedestrian cycle route that are not currently dedicated as highway. The four plots are:

- **Plot A** is located behind No's 6, 8,10 and 12 Broadacres. The Plot is currently owned by Persimmon Homes;
- **Plot B** is the plot between Tavistock Infant School and All Saints Junior School boundaries and the footpath alongside No4 The Spinney. The Plot is currently owned by Persimmon Homes
- **Plot C** is in Calthorpe Park between Merivale and Reading Road North. **Plot D** in The Views Meadow. Both on land owned by Fleet Town Council.

9. Land Requirements

- 9.1. To implement the proposals, interests in land are required from Fleet Town Council, Persimmon Homes and Tavistock Infant School as shown on the plans annexed to this report.
- 9.2 Fleet Town Council and Persimmon Homes have indicated that they are willing, in principle, to dedicate / transfer the respective areas of land at no cost but for the County Council meeting their reasonable legal and other expenses.
- 9.3 Operational land from Tavistock Infant School will need to be dedicated for highway purposes by Children's Services. Tavistock Infant & All Saints Junior Schools, its Governors and Children's Services have all indicated their support, in principle, to the proposals and to making the required areas of land available for highway purposes.
- 9.4 All land transactions will be funded from Environment and Transport capital budgets.
- 9.5 Subject to this Project Appraisal being approved, the acquisition, dedication or licence of any interests in land and / or easements required to implement the proposals shall be included in the Schedule of Routine Transactions to be submitted by the Director of Culture, Communities and Business Services to the Executive Member for Policy and Resources on 25 October 2012.

10 Environmental Impact

- 10.1 The potential ecological impacts of the scheme were assessed by Hampshire County Council Development & Biodiversity senior ecologists. The Biodiversity Statement follows in appendix 1 of this project appraisal.

11 Maintenance Implications

- 11.1 The proposed improvements will largely upgrade existing infrastructure. This will reduce the maintenance burden by providing newer and more durable materials. The new infrastructure will be selected to require limited maintenance over the lifespan of the improvement.

12 Recommendation

- 12.1 That the Project Appraisal for the implementation of the Hitches Lane to Fleet Town Centre Pedestrian Cycle Route, Fleet at an estimated cost of £722,00, be approved.

Appendix 1 to Project Appraisal: Hitches Lane to Fleet Town Centre Pedestrian and Cycle Route

Biodiversity Statement

Background

It is proposed to create a cycle route, shared with existing footpaths in Fleet, Hampshire, between Victoria Road and Calthorpe Park School. This work, although following the route of an existing footway, will require widening or other modifications in many areas.

An initial brief ecological appraisal of the route was undertaken in 2011 (Ecological Constraints Report, Atkins, October 2011). This identified areas of potential ecological constraints to the scheme and any mitigation measures needed to address any identified impacts to biodiversity interests along the route from the implementation of the scheme.

This document updates the Atkins report following ongoing discussions with project engineers. An annotated map is provided at the end of this report.

Impact assessment

Habitats

In general, the habitats affected by the proposals are of limited ecological value. Most of the route is hardstanding and associated amenity grassland or ruderal vegetation (nettles, dock etc) verge. Significant portions of the route will cross areas of open amenity grassland, through the two recreation grounds, and many other sections, particularly past Calthorpe Park School are bare compacted ground, again with ruderal/grass verge vegetation to either side.

The key areas of other habitat of higher interest affected by the proposals are small sections of wet ditchbank habitat (map, Notes 3 and 4), elements of scrub and semi-mature trees within some of the more wooded sections of the route (map, Note 6) and some parts of more extensive rough grassland / ruderal vegetation at the western end of Calthorpe Park (map, Note 2).

Possible impacts to legally protected species and mitigation measures for these are discussed in subsequent sections.

Scrub and ruderal habitats are common and widespread across the area, so any small losses to these as a result of the scheme will not be significant so no overall adverse ecological impact is foreseen to these habitats.

The stream and ditch banks do support an interesting diversity of plant species associated with these habitats, such as lady fern, purple moor grass and remote sedge. There appears to be a reasonably extensive network of such streams / ditches in general, and the habitats affected are not of particularly high value. Nevertheless, such areas, and the plants supported, do have some intrinsic biodiversity value. Local authorities have a duty under the Natural Environment

and Rural Communities Act 2006 (NERC) to conserve and enhance biodiversity and therefore it is recommended that steps be taken to ensure that impacts are minimised and where possible, mitigated / compensated for.

There are two specific points where the route crosses ditches / streams. In these locations, it is advised that construction is carried out to avoid unnecessary clearance/removal of bankside vegetation. If temporary clearance is needed, any bank re-instatement should use soil removed from the banks beforehand rather than soil from other sources. This will preserve the seedbank and rhizomes of any locally occurring plant species. Procedures should be in place to ensure that there is no undue spillage of spoil or other material on the ditch banks either side of the works – any temporary storage of materials or machinery should be located on areas of low or no biodiversity interest – preferably hardstanding, or amenity grassland.

Map note 3 refers to a short section of ditch that will need to be culverted (600mm culvert) for access to/from Calthorpe Park from Merivale. There is an existing crossing point here, and provided that reasonable precautions are in place as detailed above, any residual impacts from the culvert construction would not be significant.

Map note 4 refers to a bridge over a small stream at the western end of The Spinney. This stream is concrete lined in this location and thus has negligible biodiversity value. It is not foreseen that the works would have any adverse impact in this location.

Additionally, the section of cycle route will pass alongside a ditch past the boundary of Calthorpe Park School. Although this ditch will not be directly affected, there is the potential for the works to accidentally damage the associated vegetation. It is therefore recommended that the procedures outlined above are adhered to here as well.

Species – nesting birds

Nesting birds are legally protected under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended). Any works to clear scrub / trees has the potential to affect nesting birds.

It is therefore recommended that vegetation clearance takes place between September and February (inclusive), thus avoiding the nesting season.

Species – great crested newts (GCN)

The Atkins report identified a pond present in the grounds of Tavistock Primary School (map Note 5). This pond has been examined during studies related to the school site. A Habitat Suitability Index assessment (HSI) was carried out on the pond. This assesses the pond against a range of criteria such as surrounding habitat, shading, location, water quality. Although the survey was carried out in the winter, which is not the optimum time for surveys, allowing for this gave the pond an average to good suitability for supporting GCN. It is therefore difficult to be confident at this stage that the pond will not support GCN on that basis.

Subsequently, an assessment of the risks was carried out using Natural England's rapid risk assessment tool¹.

The works will require the widening of the existing path to accommodate a separation between pedestrians and cyclists at this point to avoid concerns over safety given the proximity to the primary school entrance. This would result in the loss of approximately 0.007ha of habitat to the corner of the school grounds. The rest of the route along this section close to the pond is hardstanding and unsuitable terrestrial GCN habitat.

On the basis of the small area affected, the NE risk assessment tool identifies that it is unlikely that the proposal would result in an offence. Nevertheless, in order to ensure this remains the case, it is imperative that the construction works and any ancillary elements such as storage, access etc does not encroach on to any further habitat / vegetation in the school grounds.

Species – reptiles

The rough grassland and ruderal vegetation to the northern boundary of Calthorpe Park has the potential to support slow worm and grass snake (see Photo 1).



Photo 1

Ruderal vegetation /
rough grassland to west
of Calthorpe Park

These are legally protected under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended). Although the majority of the route through the park will not affect this habitat, there is a wider section of such habitat at the western end of the park that may need to be partially cleared. If reptiles are present then this clearance work has the potential to kill / injure them.

No areas have been identified in this area that would potentially be used as hibernation sites, although ideally, the area should be cleared in the winter.

¹ http://www.naturalengland.org.uk/Images/wmla14-2_tcm6-4103.xls

Alternatively, if clearance is to take place between February and October (inclusive) it should be cleared in stages. The vegetation to be cleared should first be strimmed down to approximately 200mm high, working slowly from the south towards the north, into the vegetation. The area should then be left for 24hrs, then strimmed again, in a similar manner, down to ground level.

Species – bats

The Atkins report identified that a number of mature trees along the route had the potential to have features such as cracks, splits etc that could provide bat roosting opportunities. In particular, a number of trees (Map Note 1) where the route crosses to the cricket pitch area, and several trees along the route past Calthorpe Park School, which is heavily wooded.

The route has subsequently been amended and a further ground-level inspection of the trees carried out. The trees by the cricket pavilion are now no longer to be felled, and the only trees to be felled along the route past the school are smaller specimens that have no identified potential roost features.

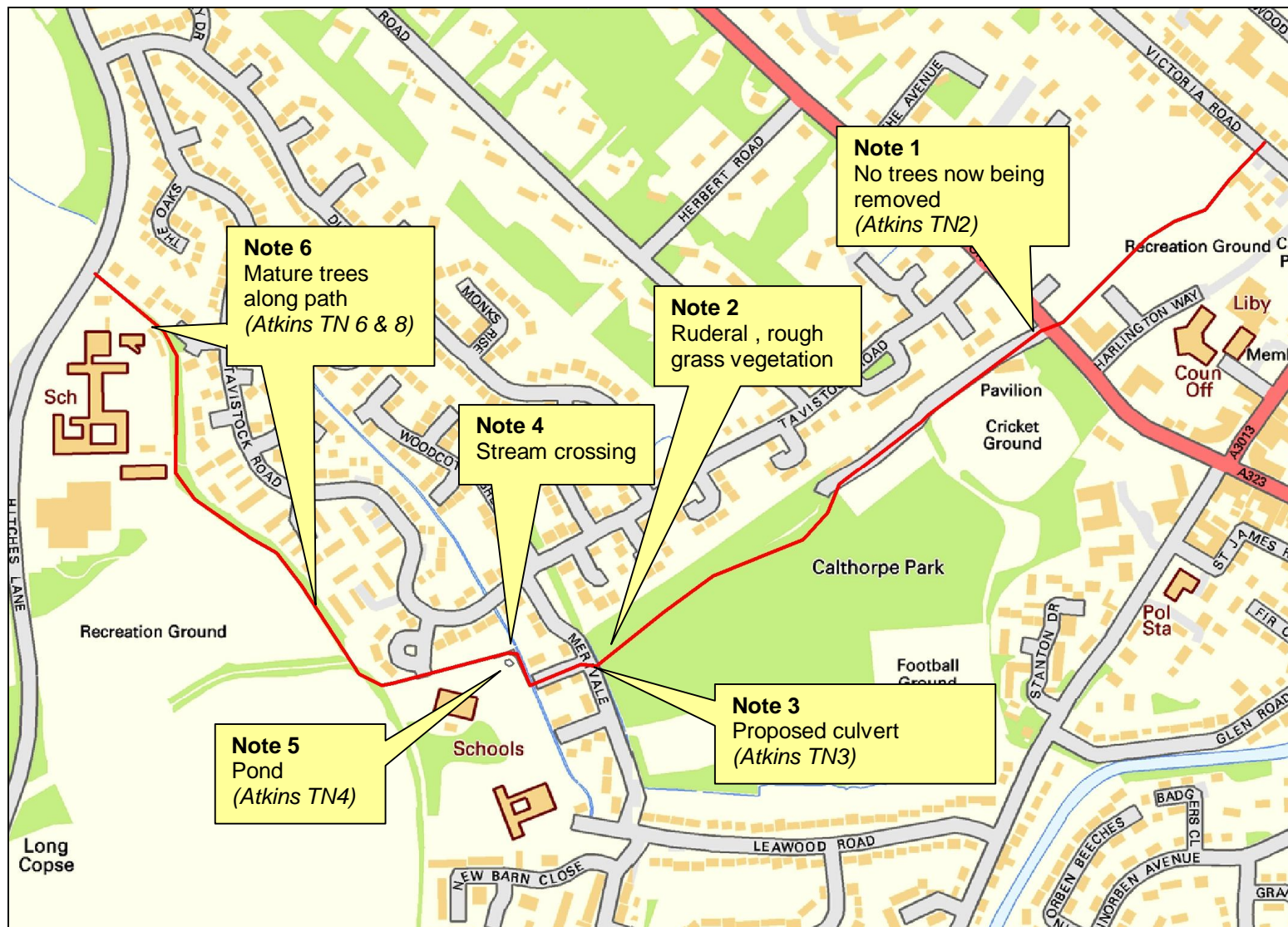
The further inspection revealed that while many of the trees along the route are large, mature specimens (mainly very tall oak trees), no trees close to the route, and potentially affected, appeared to have features that would potentially be used by bats. However, the limitations of an inspection from the ground on some of these very tall trees does mean that there may be features at higher level not immediately visible. Therefore, while it is not currently believed that the proposals would affect any features that could potentially be used by bats, if plans change and any of these trees do need felling, trimming or crown lifting, then procedures should be in place to ensure that if any features are discovered, that work stops and further advice sought. A method for this is held by HCC Arboriculture, and this should be adhered to.

It is proposed to provide lighting along the cycle route. It is understood that LED lighting will be used, mounted on either 6m columns (in the open park areas) or 5m columns (in the more wooded sections). Modern LED lighting is far more directional than other street lighting and produces light of a wavelength that does not affect bats as much as other types. Additionally, it is far more directional so light spill into adjacent habitat will be minimised. In the wooded sections, the shorter columns would be mean that less of the tree canopy is at risk of experiencing light spill, particularly as the trees in these sections are far taller than the columns. It is therefore believed that the installation of lighting along the cycle route, with these broad specifications, is unlikely to adversely affect foraging / commuting behaviour of bats.

Summary of recommendations

- Ditch works to minimise vegetation clearance
- Ditch bank re-instatement to only use soil previously removed from banks
- Clearance of nesting bird habitat to take place between September and February (inclusive)
- Procedure to be in place to avoid habitat loss in school grounds
- Sensitive clearance of potential reptile habitat

- Procedure in place should works to large oak trees along route be needed during works



Map 1 – Route and notes (refer to report text for fuller explanation of notes)

Priorities and Targets

7 LTP2 Objectives

Increase accessibility to services	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Promote Safety	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Reduce impact and effect of congestion	<input type="checkbox"/>
Widen travel choice	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Contribute towards improvements in air quality	<input type="checkbox"/>
Support wider quality of life objectives	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Encourage value for money and efficient asset management	<input type="checkbox"/>

17 LTP2 Targets

LTP1 - Accessibility. Percentage of people who consider accessibility is good	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
LTP2 - Change in area-wide road traffic mileage	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
LTP3 - Cycling trips (annualised index)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
LTP4 - Mode share of journeys to school	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
LTP5 - Bus punctuality indicator	<input type="checkbox"/>
LTP8 - Air Quality. Related to traffic in Winchester, Eastleigh, Totton and Lyndhurst	<input type="checkbox"/>
BVPI 199x – Casualties. Total killed and seriously injured	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
BVPI 199y – Casualties. Total child killed and seriously injured	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
BVPI z – Casualties. Total slight casualties	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
BVPI 223 – Road Condition. Contribute towards improvements in air quality	<input type="checkbox"/>
BVPI 224 a – Road Condition. Classified non-principal roads	<input type="checkbox"/>
BVPI 224b – Road Condition. Unclassified roads	<input type="checkbox"/>
BVPI 187 - Footway Condition	<input type="checkbox"/>
BVPI 102 – Public Transport. Number of bus passenger journeys	<input type="checkbox"/>
BVPI 104 – Public Transport. Satisfaction with local bus services	<input type="checkbox"/>

Other

Please list any other targets (i.e. National Indicators, non LTP) to which this scheme will contribute.