

# **WAVERLEY BOROUGH COUNCIL**

## **EXECUTIVE**

**7 FEBRUARY 2023**

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**Title:**

### **Guildford-Godalming Greenway - Lammas Land crossing options**

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**Portfolio Holder:** Cllr Steve Williams, Portfolio Holder for Environment and Sustainability

**Executive Head:** Chris Wheeler, Executive Head of Service for Environmental Services

**Key decision:** Yes

**Access:** Public

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#### **1. Purpose and summary**

1.1 Waverley is supporting Surrey County Council (SCC) to develop a 7km long Guildford to Godalming Greenway, the spinal route of a wider Greenway network extending to Milford. Following a positive public consultation, SCC has secured full detailed design funding.

1.2 To reach the town centre of Godalming, the Greenway will have to cross the Lammas Lands. As landowner and manager of the Lammas Lands, Waverley needs to provide SCC with a preferred route that will then be put forward for detailed design, planning application, flood modelling (Environment Agency approval) and common land consent.

1.3 The purpose of this report is to:

- a. present the Executive with the consequences and risks for each of four potential options;
- b. seek in principle approval for one of the four options for SCC to take thought the next stage of design.

#### **2. Recommendation**

It is recommended that the Executive:

- a. Authorises SCC to proceed with detailed design and application for consents to cross the Lammas Lands using Option 3, hybrid, route alignment, subject to in principle landowner permission from National Trust.
- b. Makes route approval on the basis that SCC would have the primary responsibility for route maintenance.

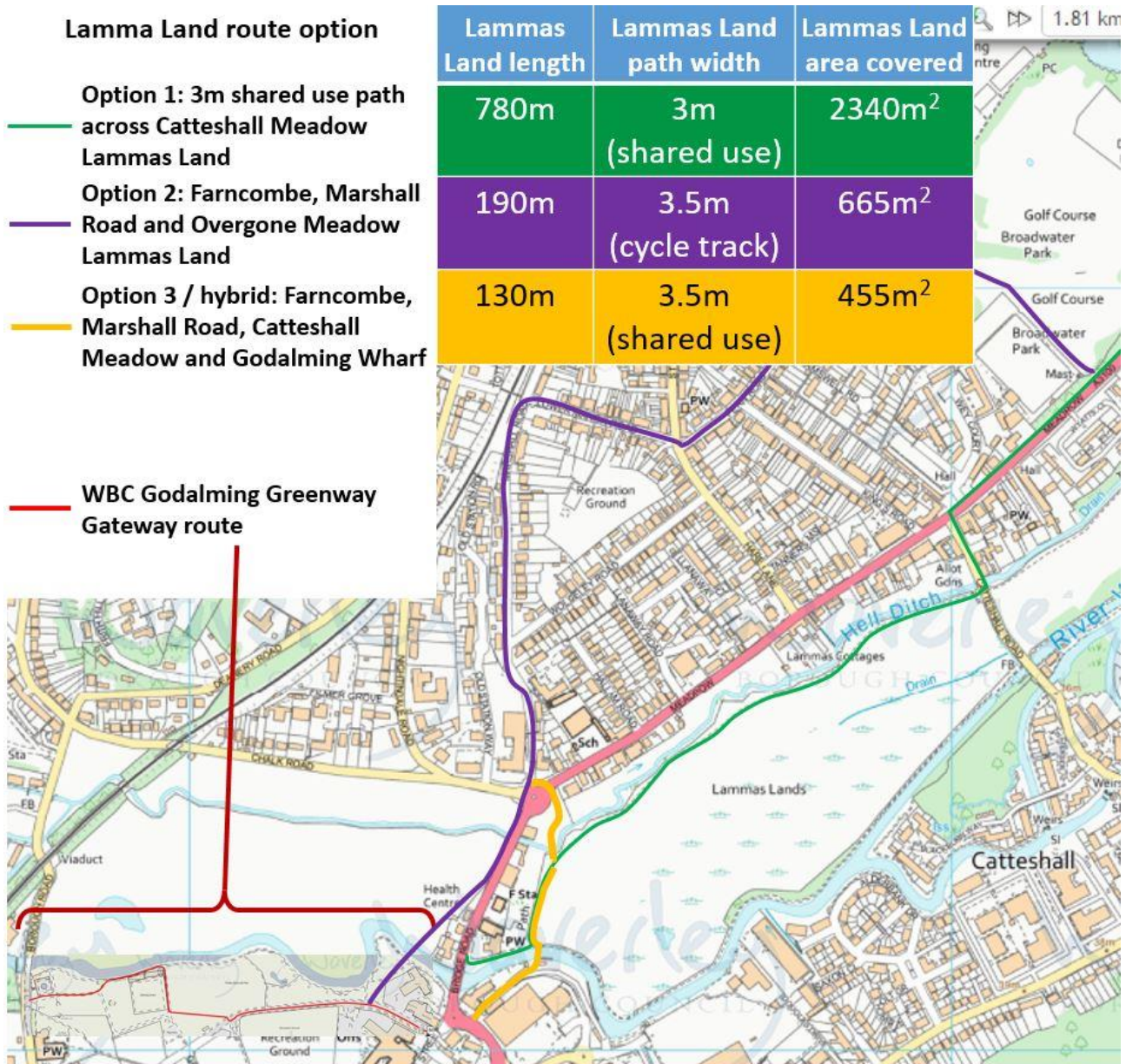
### **3. Reason for the recommendation**

- 3.1 Authorisation will enable SCC Highways to proceed with detailed design, planning and other consents. The hybrid route (Option 3) minimises disturbance to the Lammas lands whilst still supporting active travel between the centres of Farncombe and Godalming.
- 3.2 SCC are recommended to take primary responsibility for maintenance because:
- Maintenance of the Guildford-Godalming Greenway needs to be managed by one authority. The Greenway forms a strategic, spinal corridor for active travel and a piecemeal approach to maintenance will inevitably increase administration costs, risk boundary issues, loss of economies of scale.
  - As a key element of active travel infrastructure, responsibility would naturally fall to SCC as both the Highways and Rights of Way authority.
  - WBC, GBC and National Trust do not have the in-house expertise and maintenance framework agreements for highway standard cycle and footway maintenance.
  - WBC, GBC and National Trust have no maintenance budgets set aside for additional paths (or parts of paths where highway is extended onto borough land).

### **Guildford-Godalming Greenway route options**

- 4.1 SCC, in consultation with Waverley, identified 2 route options for crossing the Lammas Lands indicated by the purple and green line in Figure 1 below. Following public consultation, a third, hybrid, option (indicated in orange and green) is being investigated.

Figure 1: Lammas Land crossing options for the Guildford-Godalming Greenway.



**Option 1 – Catteshall Meadow crossing (adjacent to Hell Ditch)**

4.1 This alignment of the greenway starts further north on Meadow at the Catteshall Road junction, running east along Catteshall Road, crossing Hell Ditch, before turning south. The route would continue south towards Godalming across Catteshall Meadow along the existing path, widened and surfaced for shared use. Approaching Bridge Road, the path diverges from Hell Ditch, running behind the children’s nursery, fire station and Godalming United Church. At public consultation, the route was shown to divert onto Bridge Road to cross south over the River Wey and link into the town centre.

There is insufficient highway space to accommodate segregated cycle tracks at both Catteshall Road at the northern end and Town Bridge at the southern end.

## 4.2 Consequences

Aspect	Consequence
Transport and connectivity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Does not create a direct active travel corridor between Farncombe and Godalming centres.</li> <li>• Gaps in the, otherwise safe, provision for cycles at Catteshall Road and Town Bridge will deter less experienced and nervous cycle users.</li> <li>• Pedestrians, pushchair and mobility scooter users would have to continue using narrow footways beside the busy A3100 along Bridge Road.</li> <li>• More isolated route so less secure at night and short winter days.</li> </ul>
Flooding / drainage	<p>Route is parallel to Hell Ditch, a principal drainage channel for Catteshall Meadow for 650m. Consequently, this alignment:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Has the potential to affect drainage and adjacent flood defences if proud of the meadow surface.</li> <li>• Is likely to be unserviceable as an active travel route for weeks at a time unless raised significantly above the meadow surface.</li> </ul>
Economic development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A safe, direct route via Catteshall Meadow would improve the access to Godalming for employees arriving from Guildford by cycle, increasing the access to skilled workforce and create a more positive visitor economy experience. This option avoids a dog-leg via Farncombe.</li> </ul>

## 4.3 Risks

Aspect	Risk	Mitigation
Maintenance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• WBC responsible for maintenance costs and officer time for which no budget has been identified</li> <li>• Water flow across the surface during periods of flooding and drainage will be common, with risks of erosion and/or silting up.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Request SCC to apply a Cycle Track Order (Highway responsibility)</li> <li>• TBD at SCC detailed design</li> </ul>
Ground loss / disturbance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Construction disturbs / compacts soil</li> <li>• Route covers large area of meadow</li> </ul>	The risk of soil degradation is reduced by following an established, well used, path on Catteshall Meadow.
Biodiversity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Wildlife disturbance</li> <li>• Change of use of the area, potentially increased traffic and speeds.</li> </ul>	Greater numbers will create greater disturbance unless the cycle route is fully fenced off from the remaining field.
Grazing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Grazing is required and this surfaced path will fragment the habitats and attract animals</li> </ul>	

	<p>(cows) to sit and defecate on the route.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• There could be dangerous interaction with the public riding into animals or sliding on faeces, dog and the larger grazing animals.</li> </ul>	
Maintenance Access	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Route cuts across current access point to site from Bridge Road</li> <li>• Route restricts access to Hell Ditch on site</li> <li>• Access to Catteshall Meadow from Bridge Street end is over land owned by the Godalming United Church, they could object and restrict our access</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Requires design of potential pedestrian/vehicle crossing points</li> <li>• Waverley may have prescriptive rights, due to accessing over many years, needs to be checked out by legal first.</li> </ul>
Natural England funding via (High Level Stewardship (HLS) scheme	<p>“Overall, Natural England does not support either route. Rather we support the ongoing sympathetic management of Waverley’s priority habitats.”</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Loss of grant income from Natural England as the area required for the path will not be eligible and the grant scheme Agreement will need to be renegotiated</li> <li>• Council required to pay back HLS funding for the parcel of land impacted by Greenway as a penalty, this could be back dated to the start of the agreement</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Avoid habitat fragmentation, maintain cattle grazing (land management) and minimise disturbance to wildlife and soil.</li> <li>• Actively engage Natural England in design and management solutions and seek clarification on financial impacts</li> </ul>
Legal	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Objections to (SCC) application for ‘restricted works’ on common land</li> <li>• 1985 Covenant on meadows states “Not at any time hereafter ... to take any action which would encourage public use of the said property”</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• SCC is expecting its application to result in a public inquiry</li> <li>• Apply to the Upper Tribunal to discharge the covenant</li> </ul>
Visual impact	Godalming Lammas Lands are classified as an Area of Strategic Visual Importance (ASVI).	Impact of path development across the ASVI to be identified at pre-app by SCC / WBC
Heritage / conservation impacts	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The cycle route has great potential to make the management of Hell Ditch and</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Full access will be required with machinery (tractors) to Hell Ditch.</li> </ul>

	<p>fence line more challenging as it could restrict machinery access.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Most of the proposed path would be located within the River Wey and Godalming Navigations Conservation Area. Therefore, this option is likely to impact the character and appearance of the conservation area.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Producing an assessment to identify constraints and opportunities arising from the asset, at an early stage, can identify alternative development options, for example more sensitive designs or different orientations, that will both conserve the heritage assets and deliver public benefits in a more sustainable and appropriate way.</li> </ul>
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### **Option 2 – Overgone Meadow crossing (west of Bridge Road)**

4.4 Starting with a shared use crossing of Chalk Road from Marshall Road to Bridge Road, this alignment of the greenway would cross the Lammas Lands via a boardwalk just west of Bridge Road. Going south, this boardwalk would run past the access gate used for cattle grazing. Continuing behind a veterinary surgery and 3 houses, at its southern end it would crossing the River Wey via a foot and cycle bridge. From here it would connect to the Godalming Greenway Gateway at The Burys to give access to the town centre and westwards towards the station.

#### 4.5 Consequences

<b>Aspect</b>	<b>Consequence</b>
Transport and connectivity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Creates active travel corridor between Farncombe and Godalming centres</li> <li>• Provides pedestrians, pushchair and mobility scooter users an alternative to the narrow footways beside the busy A3100 along Bridge Road.</li> <li>• Seamless integration with Godalming Gateway section.</li> </ul>
Flooding / drainage	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Route is perpendicular to watercourses, enabling unimpeded drainage.</li> <li>• Route follows Environment Agency's 1 in 100-year flood line and, being raised above the floodplain, the boardwalk would remain serviceable for users year-round.</li> </ul>
Economic development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• This option would provide a safe route for families from Farncombe with improved accessibility.</li> </ul>



#### 4.6 Risks

<b>Aspect</b>	<b>Risk</b>	<b>Mitigation</b>
Maintenance	WBC responsible for maintenance costs and officer time for which no budget has been identified	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Request SCC to apply a Cycle Track Order (Highway responsibility)</li> <li>• Galvanised steel / recycled plastic boardwalk materials resistant to rotting, erosion and water damage</li> </ul>
Loss of green space/ disturbance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Construction disturbs / compacts soil</li> <li>• Route covers large area of meadow</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Use of galvanised steel screw (no dig) pilings</li> <li>• Short (&lt;200m) route, creates shaded microhabitat under boardwalk</li> </ul>
Biodiversity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Habitat fragmentation</li> <li>• Wildlife disturbance</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Require SCC to design cattle access to east side of route, but this does not resolve the issue fully</li> <li>• No access from boardwalk onto Overgone meadow.</li> </ul>
Grazing	Route crosses cattle access from Bridge Road	Require SCC to design boardwalk lowering / crossing point at cattle gate
Maintenance Access	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Route cuts across current access point to site from Bridge Street</li> <li>• Council access to Overgone Meadow is across private land, possibly owned by Bridge Cottage/Health Centre on Bridge Street, they potentially could restrict our access as they would likely object to Route</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Requires vehicle crossing point designing across route</li> <li>• We may have prescriptive rights, due to accessing over many years, needs to be checked out by legal first</li> </ul>
Natural England funding via (High Level Stewardship (HLS) scheme	<p>“Overall, Natural England does not support either route. Rather we support the ongoing sympathetic management of Waverley’s priority habitats.”</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Loss of grant income from Natural England as the area required for the path will not be eligible and the grant scheme Agreement will need to be renegotiated.</li> <li>• Council required to pay back HLS funding for the</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Avoid habitat fragmentation, maintain cattle grazing (land management) and minimise disturbance to wildlife and soil.</li> <li>• Actively engage Natural England in design and management solutions and seek clarification on financial impacts</li> </ul>

	parcel of land impacted by Greenway as a penalty, this could be back dated to the start of the agreement	
Adjacent properties	Three adjacent properties. Have already received objections on grounds of privacy and access	SCC and WBC to identify and mitigate likely objections at pre-app / detailed design stage
Legal	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Objections to (SCC) application for 'restricted works' on common land</li> <li>• 1985 Covenant on meadows states "Not at any time hereafter ... to take any action which would encourage public use of the said property"</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• SCC is expecting its application to result in a public inquiry</li> <li>a. A fenced-in boardwalk may not constitute 'public use'</li> <li>b. Apply to the Upper Tribunal to discharge the covenant</li> </ul>
Visual impact	Godalming Lammas Lands are classified as an Area of Strategic Visual Importance (ASVI).	Impact of boardwalk development across the ASVI to be identified at pre-app by SCC / WBC
Heritage / conservation impacts	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Potential to encourage greater visitor numbers onto Overgone Meadow, disturbing wildlife and overwintering waders.</li> <li>• Proposal is within the setting of several listed buildings and the River Wey and Godalming Navigations conservation area. It is likely to impact the significance of the heritage assets.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Fenced boardwalk with no off ramp onto Overgone meadow.</li> <li>• Producing an assessment to identify constraints and opportunities arising from the asset, at an early stage, can identify alternative development options. For example, more sensitive designs or different orientations, that will both conserve heritage assets and deliver public benefits in a more sustainable and appropriate way.</li> </ul>

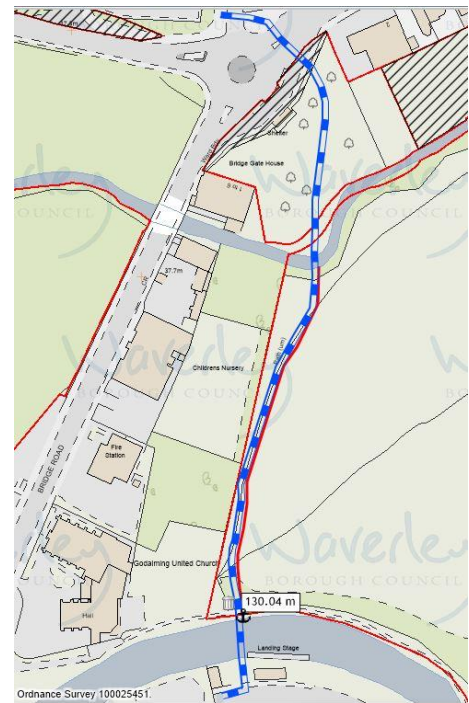


### Option 3 –hybrid route

4.7 This alignment follows the Farncombe route down Marshal Road as far as Chalk Road where it crosses greenspace east of Meadow to follow the Catteshall Meadow route parallel to Bridge Road.

If agreement can be reached with National Trust for a foot/cycle bridge at Godalming Wharf then Bridge Road could be avoided completely.

Based on agreement being reached with Godalming Town Council and National Trust, this hybrid route would minimise the path length on Lammas Land (to 130m) whilst avoiding Hell Ditch and the less disturbed Overgone Meadow area.



### 4.8 Consequences

Aspect	Consequence
Transport and connectivity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Creates active travel corridor between Farncombe and Godalming centres</li> <li>• Provides pedestrians, pushchair and mobility scooter users an alternative to the narrow footways beside the busy A3100 along Bridge Road.</li> <li>• Improved crossing facilities for pedestrians, cyclists and mobility users at the roundabout junction of Flambard Way and Bridge Road.</li> </ul>
Flooding / drainage	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Route is perpendicular to watercourses, enabling unimpeded drainage.</li> <li>• Majority of route in or above Environment Agency's 1 in 100-year flood line. With a raised construction, would remain serviceable for users year-round.</li> </ul>
Economic development	This option would provide a safe route for families from Farncombe with improved accessibility.

### 4.9 Risks

Aspect	Risk	Mitigation
Maintenance	WBC responsible for maintenance costs and officer time for which no budget has been identified	<p>This Lammas Land route:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Minimises length and area of construction on Lammas Land</li> <li>• Avoids the most biodiverse areas.</li> <li>• Minimises effect on grazing management</li> </ul> <p>Request SCC to apply a Cycle Track Order (Highway responsibility)</p>

Loss of green space/ disturbance	Construction disturbs / compacts soil	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The risk of soil degradation is reduced by following the established, well used, path on Catteshall Meadow.</li> <li>• Use a 'no cut', above ground geocell sub-base construction.</li> </ul>
Biodiversity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Wildlife disturbance</li> <li>• Change of use of the area, potentially increased traffic and speeds.</li> </ul>	Any increase in disturbance limited to the edge of the Lammas Land.
Grazing	Grazing is required and a surfaced path may attract animals (cows) to sit and defecate on the route.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Grazing occurs for a limited time each year.</li> <li>• This route occupies less than 20% of the area of the full Catteshall Meadow (option 2) route.</li> </ul>
Maintenance Access	Route cuts across current access point to site from Church land.	Design potential pedestrian/vehicle crossing points.
Natural England funding via (High Level Stewardship (HLS) scheme	<p>“Overall, Natural England does not support .. support the ongoing sympathetic management of Waverley’s priority habitats.”</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Loss of grant income from Natural England as the area required for the path will not be eligible and the grant scheme Agreement will need to be renegotiated.</li> <li>• Council required to pay back HLS funding for the parcel of land impacted by Greenway as a penalty, this could be back dated to the start of the agreement</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Avoid habitat fragmentation, maintain cattle grazing (land management) and minimise disturbance to wildlife and soil.</li> <li>• Actively engage Natural England in design and management solutions and seek clarification on financial impacts</li> <li>• This hybrid route minimises the land area affected and follows a well-established and already well-used path.</li> </ul>
Legal	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Objections to (SCC) application for 'restricted works' on common land</li> <li>• 1985 Covenant on meadows states “Not at any time hereafter ... to take any action which would encourage public use of the said property”</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• SCC is expecting its application to result in a public inquiry</li> <li>• Apply to the Upper Tribunal to discharge the covenant</li> </ul>
Visual impact	Godalming Lammas Lands are classified as an Area of	Impact of path development across the ASVI to be identified at pre-app by SCC / WBC

	Strategic Visual Importance (ASVI).	
Heritage / conservation impacts	Most of the proposed path would be located within the River Wey and Godalming Navigations Conservation Area. This option may impact the character and appearance of the conservation area.	Producing an assessment to identify constraints and opportunities arising from the asset, at an early stage, can identify alternative development options, for example more sensitive designs or different orientations, that will both conserve the heritage assets and deliver public benefits in a more sustainable and appropriate way.
Landowner permissions and access	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• National Trust</li> <li>• Godalming Town Council</li> <li>• Right of Way</li> </ul>	Waverley to support SCC access negotiations.

#### **Option 4 – no Lammas Land crossing (end Greenway at Farncombe)**

##### 4.10 Consequences

<b>Aspect</b>	<b>Consequence</b>
Waverley – Guildford connection	The spinal connection of the 2 boroughs would only serve access to Guildford for Farncombe residents.
Wider Godalming Greenway network	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The active travel network connecting up Milford, Godalming and Farncombe through to Shalford and Guildford would be severed, losing continuity and critical-mass.</li> <li>• Godalming Greenway Gateway would be left isolated.</li> </ul>
Farncombe – Godalming active travel corridor	<p>Without an alternative to Bridge Road, the key objective of providing a pleasant walking and cycling link between the 2 settlements would not be achieved.</p> <p>The lock-in of car dependence would negatively affect:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• town centre footfall;</li> <li>• social inclusion and equitable access;</li> <li>• local and GHG pollution;</li> <li>• health and wellbeing of town residents.</li> </ul>
Economic development	<p>Opportunity costs of no-route option:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The visitor economy employs 7000 people in the borough and a route bringing visitors to Godalming town centre would support tourism.</li> <li>• A route to Godalming town centre would also support employees arriving from Guildford by bike, increasing the access to skilled workforce.</li> </ul>
Walking / mobility access	Pedestrians, pushchair and mobility scooter users would have to continue using narrow footways beside the busy A3100 along Bridge Road.

## **5. Background**

- 5.1** The Guildford - Godalming Greenway will facilitate and improve the capacity for cycling whilst preserving the comfort of pedestrian and mobility users. Specifically, it will facilitate:
- short distance commuting and other utility journeys from Godalming and Farncombe through Shalford, to Guildford;
  - cycle access to the Downs Link, plus National Cycle Network routes NCN22 and NCN223;
  - provide the spinal route for a network of greenways extending across Godalming and on to Milford.
- 5.2** The close cooperation with the Highways design team at SCC through the public consultation will be maintained to ensure integration with the planned Godalming Greenway Gateway.
- 5.3** A public consultation was carried out by SCC from October – November 2021. With over 1000 responses, this found strong support for the Greenway route (67% strongly support, 5% support). For a link from Meadow to Godalming town centre, crossing the Lammas Lands, there was 62% strong support and 6% support. Full consultation available on request.
- 5.4** Following a site visit at Godalming Wharf on 24<sup>th</sup> January 2023, The National Trust General Manager for the Godalming Navigation is supporting SCC Highways review of bridge options. These have to take into account uses and limits of the Navigation, land ownership and technical constraints.

## **6. Relationship to the Corporate Strategy and Service Plan**

This report is directly linked to the delivery of three key priorities of the Councils corporate strategy: taking action on the Climate Emergency, improving Health and Wellbeing for residents and supporting a stronger, more resilient local economy.

## **7. Implications of decision**

### **7.1 Resource (Finance, procurement, staffing, IT)**

SCC has already secured full funding for the detailed design work and will carry this out internally with an established highways design team.

Maintenance as a transport infrastructure is considered as SCC's responsibility, and SCC are looking to produce a maintenance proposal. However, this will require confirmation as plans are drawn together. SCC are expecting the council to fund ongoing maintenance costs of the proposals where they cross council land. No budget at Waverley has been provided for the ongoing costs.

Where the proposals impact HLS funded areas on the Lammas lands, Natural England with whom we have signed the HLS agreement with, will expect reimbursement of HLS monies paid to the council due to habitat loss. The HLS scheme has been running since 2012, income received has been approximately

£7,454 per year. We would expect repayment to be proportional to the area of land impacted.

## **7.2 Risk management**

The development of the Guildford-Godalming Greenway mitigates the risk of the Council not meeting its Carbon Neutrality Action Plan objectives. As a SCC-led project, the primary responsibility for development risk management lies with SCC.

## **7.3 Legal**

The development of this proposal will be principally managed by SCC. However it must be recognised that as landowner the Council has significant responsibilities to ensure its covenants and landowner responsibilities are met. This has to be balanced with the policy aims of assessing the best options for sustainable travel routes. The Council as landowner would need to be party to any inquiry caused by the commons land or planning processes. The project budget will need to reflect this although it is understood that SCC is intending to primarily manage this process.

## **7.4 Equality, diversity, and inclusion**

High quality, safe and continuous active travel infrastructure addresses issues of inclusive mobility, gender equality and the age diversity (see also Annex 1) as well as social inclusion and access to amenities.

## **7.5 Climate emergency declaration**

This report is directly related to the Climate Emergency declaration. The Carbon Neutrality Action Plan is the proposed path to achieving its target and includes a focus on active travel and improving air quality.

## **8. Consultation and engagement**

This report covers the results and responses to the public consultation carried out from 10th October 2021 to 21st November 2021.

## **9. Other options considered**

Route options considerations are covered in Section 4.

## **10. Governance journey**

Corporate Management Board 20<sup>th</sup> Dec 2022

Executive Briefing 17<sup>th</sup> Jan 2023

Executive 7<sup>th</sup> Feb 2023

## **Annexes:**

Annexe 1 – Equality Impact Assessment report

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## **Background Papers**

SCC Public Consultation report available on request

There are no background papers, as defined by Section 100D(5) of the Local Government Act 1972).

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Agreed and signed off by:

Legal Services: Ian Hunt (15/12/2022)

Finance: Rosie Plaistowe (15/12/2022)

Strategic Director: CMB (20/12/2022)

Portfolio Holder: Steve Williams (10/01/2023)