

# Note – Sustainable Movement Corridor Update 2024

Planning Policy, July 2024

## 1. Introduction

- 1.1 This note is intended as a position statement on the Sustainable Movement Corridor (SMC). For the avoidance of doubt, it has not been subject to public consultation and has not been adopted as planning policy. The note is intended to provide comment and direction on current expectations in relation to the SMC, specifically in the absence of a dedicated Supplementary Planning Document (SPD).

## 2. General Basis in Local Plan

- 2.1 Guildford Borough Council's (GBC) Local Plan: Strategy and Sites 2015-2034 (LPSS) was adopted in 2019, bringing the SMC into policy.
- 2.2 The intention was for the SMC to connect key trip origins/destinations in the urban area, including the proposed strategic development sites. This is still the focus of the proposals. The SMC was seen as necessary to deliver the level of planned strategic growth in the Guildford urban area in a sustainable way.
- 2.3 The SMC is mentioned throughout the LPSS, specifically but not exclusively in policies ID3, A4, A6, A8, A9, A10, A13, A16, A17, A24, A25, A26, A28 and in the Infrastructure Schedule. Policies beginning with 'A' are site allocation policies.
- 2.4 Policy ID3: 'Sustainable transport for new developments', at point (3), introduces the SMC and a potential SMC SPD. It is specified that:

*New development providing, contributing and/or close to the routes of the proposed Sustainable Movement Corridor in the Guildford urban area will have regard to the Sustainable Movement Corridor Supplementary Planning Document.*

**LPSS Policy ID3 (3)**

- 2.5 The mentioned SPD has not been produced but its potential contents have instead been covered by other documents. It is only specified that site developers should *have regard* to the mentioned SPD.
- 2.6 In the absence of any such SPD a site's developer would not be able to have regard to the SPD. This does not however remove obligations for development sites to take up opportunities to promote sustainable transport in the context of the type of development and its location, in line with National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) 2023 para. 114 and the LPSS Policy ID3.
- 2.7 Delivery of specific sections and contributions to elements of the SMC are also enshrined in the Infrastructure Schedule and site-specific policies. These expectations are still valid in the context of alternative guidance, with developers logically accountable to the Department for Transport and Highway Authority requirements.
- 2.8 The SMC is also mentioned in Policy ID9 of the Local Plan: Development Management Policies (LPDMP), adopted in March 2023. Policy ID9: 'Achieving a Comprehensive Guildford Borough Cycle Network' refers the reader to the Policies Map:

*The routes and infrastructure which comprise the Comprehensive Guildford Borough Cycle Network, including the cycle elements of the Sustainable Movement Corridor, as represented on the Policies Map, will be the starting point for the identification of improvements, primarily for utility cycling, provided and/or funded by new development.*

**LPDMP Policy ID9**

- 2.9 The indicative route of the SMC has been included on the Policies Map. This predominantly replicates the routing which was set out as part of the LPSS examination. It illustrates the broad corridors it was expected the SMC routing could take (an alternative section of SMC East via Park Lane and Epsom Road is excluded from the Policies Map).

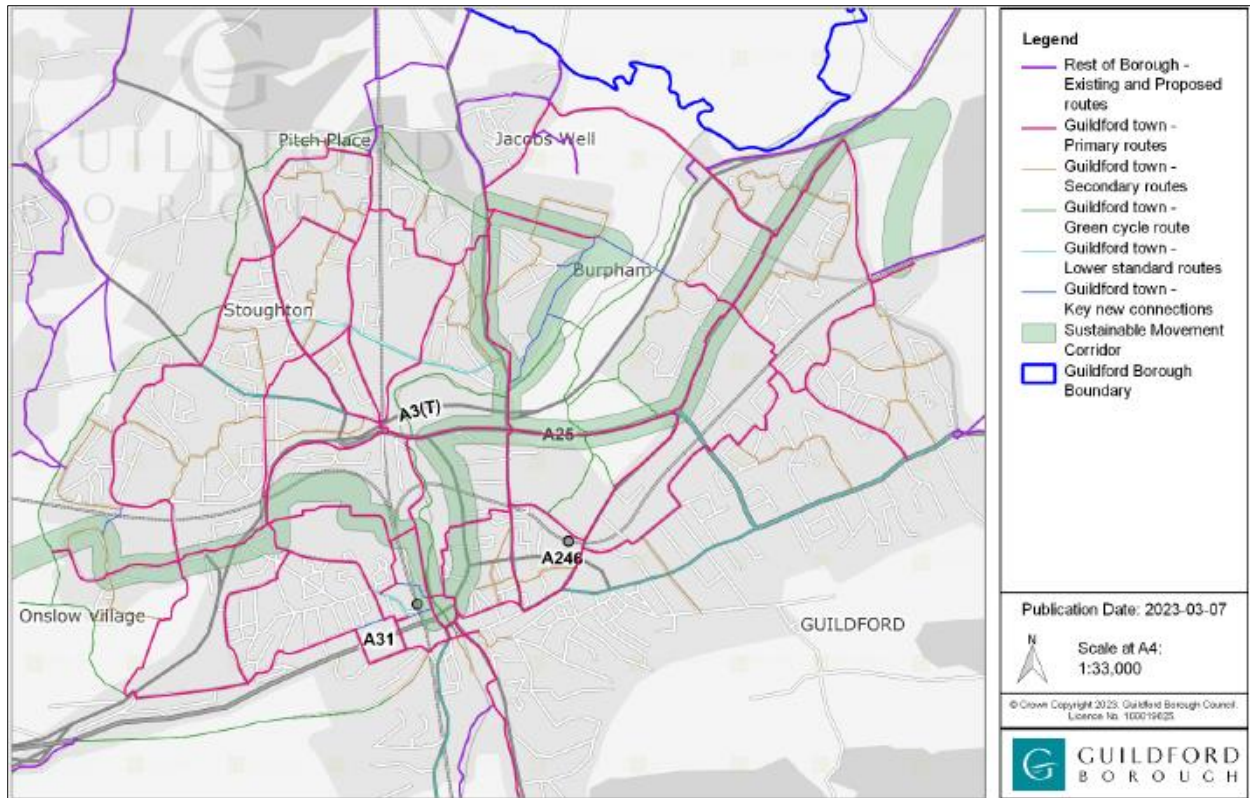


Figure 1. Indicative routing of the SMC, shown as a green buffer, as per the policies map

2.10 The map should not be seen as definitive as in practice, walking, cycling and bus infrastructure improvements have taken place along alternative alignments since the LPSS was adopted.

2.11 Likewise, the strategic sites have not come forward as quickly as expected at the time of LPSS creation and adoption. Therefore, as opportunities have become available, there has still been a desire to improve conditions for walking, cycling, and bus use, in line with national policy. This has led to sections of the SMC being progressed ahead of strategic site delivery.

2.12 This flexible approach does not detract from the aims of the SMC to connect key trip origins/destinations and is a result of evolution of the concept, accommodating constraints and easing delivery.

### 3. The SMC Route

3.1 The SMC can be simplified and broken down into sections, these are between:

- Blackwell Farm & Guildford Park Road
- Guildford Park Road/ Yorkie's Bridge & Stoke Crossroads
- Stoke Crossroads & Weyside Urban Village
- London Road & Gosden Hill Farm

3.2 Figure 2, below, conceptualises these links:

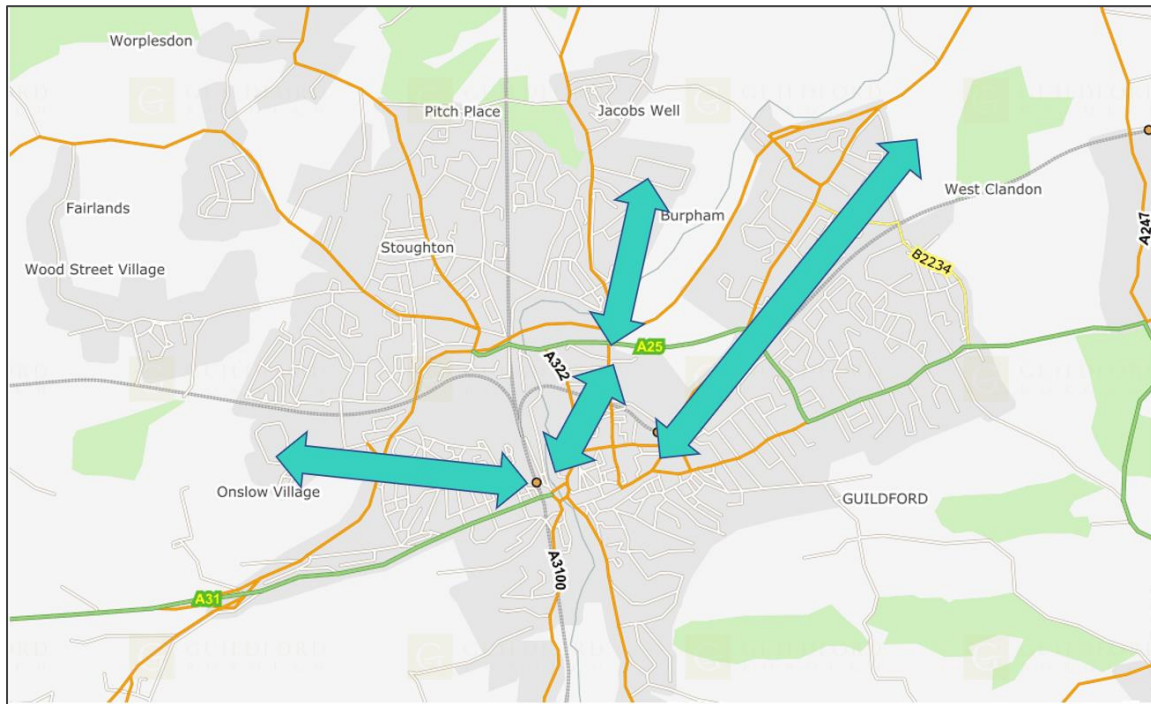


Figure 2. Indicative SMC origins/destinations

#### 4. The SPD

4.1 As discussed, the SMC SPD has not been produced, however guidance which may otherwise have been included in the SPD is now provided in other sources.

4.2 The SMC route design was further conceptualised during the preparation of GBC's Strategic Development Framework Supplementary Planning Document (SDF SPD), as part of the wider master planning of the strategic sites. It is considered the SDF SPD (adopted in 2020) includes a large amount of the content which would make up an SMC SPD.

- 4.3 The SDF SPD sets out that, on the strategic sites, GBC requires that segregated and continuous cycleways and generous pedestrian paths are to be provided on the primary streets. With-flow cycle lanes are preferred over bidirectional provision on one side of the carriageway.
- 4.4 It also sets out that segregated bus lanes and/or bus gates/modal filters will only be required in congestion hotspots, including site accesses, where queuing traffic in peak periods might be expected to delay buses on the primary streets. Further detail can be found in Section 3.3 of the SDF SPD.
- 4.5 Beyond the strategic sites, and in terms of the design principles sought for the SMC on the Local Road Network, this will depend on the location of the improvements, and its opportunities & constraints.
- 4.6 SMC provision could be by way of segregated and continuous cycleways and generous pedestrian paths, with segregated bus lanes and/or bus gates/modal filters in congestion hotspots. In other locations, priority modes could be routed via secondary streets where these could provide direct connections in low traffic environments.<sup>1</sup> Retrofitting infrastructure into historic and varied streetscapes typically results in the need for different design solutions in different locations, responding to constraints caused by the likes of various land ownerships, statutory designations (historic/environmental) and pinch-points caused by the built environment.
- 4.7 As discussed in Section 2 above, the routing of the SMC in the Policies Map is indicative and at point of creation was only conceptualised at a high-level. In practice, the delivery of the SMC will continue to be tailored to respond best to different user groups and to respond to the constraints of the built environment.

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<sup>1</sup> This replaces initial design thinking contained in earlier notes.

4.8 As such, the routing for buses may differ from the routing for those walking and cycling. As an example, walking and cycling facilities have been implemented along Alresford Road/Ridgemount, which is a low-trafficked secondary street and provides a direct connection for those traveling on foot or by bike between Guildford town centre and trip generators to the west of the town. Bus infrastructure enhancements would generally be considered more appropriate on corridors such as Perimeter Road through the University of Surrey campus, or along The Chase/Madrid Road.

4.9 The design standards for the various elements of the SMC will follow national guidance. For walking provision and cycling infrastructure this is:

- Cycle infrastructure design (Local Transport Note 1/20)
- Manual for Streets
- Manual for Streets 2
- Design Manual for Roads and Bridges
- Surrey County Council's (SCC) Healthy Streets design guide
- Inclusive Mobility.

4.10 For bus infrastructure best practice can be found in:

- Bus user priority (Local Transport Note 1/24)
- Traffic Signs Manual
- Traffic Signs Regulations and General Directions
- Transport for London's Accessible Bus Stop Design Guidance.

4.11 GBC's Planning Contributions SPD (adopted 2017) also provides relevant guidance. Detail is provided relating to sustainable transport contributions. Paragraphs 16.12, 16.15 and 16.16 are of most relevance.

4.12 To date, contributions have been secured towards the SMC through the planning process. For example, as part of 21/P/02559,<sup>2</sup> the applicant's

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<sup>2</sup> 21/P/02559 | Demolition of existing building and redevelopment of the site to provide a mixed-use scheme comprising 3 blocks ranging from 3 to 8 storeys providing purpose-built student accommodation (Sui Generis) and residential accommodation (Class C3), delivered alongside landscaping and public realm improvements, disabled car parking, cycle parking and other associated works. | Builders Merchant, Walnut Tree Close, Guildford, GU1 4UB

Transport Statement was used to estimate the existing and proposed daily and yearly non-car related trips from the site. A contribution to the SMC was then calculated based on these daily trips. In this case, it was acknowledged that the applicant was providing a section of the SMC through the site, as well as contributing to other off-site highway works and the contribution was reduced. Similar contributions have been secured as part of 21/P/01811.<sup>3</sup> These examples set a precedent for negotiating and securing developer contributions towards the SMC.

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<sup>3</sup> 21/P/01811 | Erection of four buildings of between 4 and 6 storeys to provide up to 301 units of Co-Living accommodation (Sui Generis) together with associated communal facilities, basement level to provide access, vehicle and cycle parking, plant and refuse enclosure, with associated groundworks and landscaping. | Guildford Plaza (former Burymead House), Portsmouth Road, Guildford, GU2 4DH

## 5. Implementation Update

5.1 Elements and sections of the SMC have been taken forward to construction since the adoption of the LPSS. Some of these improvements have not been progressed under the 'umbrella' of the SMC, but ultimately share the same outcomes. Improvements comprise of the following:

- A new shared use pedestrian and cycle path running through Bannister's Field, connecting the Royal Surrey Hospital with Tesco (SMC Phase 1).
- Widening of the existing path between the Tesco Superstore and the University of Surrey, delineated to segregate pedestrians and cyclists (SMC Phase 2a).
- Localised improvements to the west of Guildford Cathedral and improvements to promote Alresford Road/Ridgemount as a quiet route for pedestrians and cyclists.
- Pedestrian and bus stop improvements on Guildford Park Road at the western entrance of Guildford Rail Station (SMC Phase 2b).
- A one-way traffic restriction on Walnut Tree Close, meaning between Kernal Court and just south of the Royal Mail Delivery Office motorised traffic is only permitted northbound. A contraflow cycle lane is provided to allow two-way cycling.
- An improved Walnut Bridge and associated public realm improvements, providing a wider bridge across the River Wey from Walnut Tree Close to Bedford Plaza and an improved route into the town centre for pedestrians and cyclists.
- An extension to the southbound bus lane on Woodbridge Road, improving bus journey times into central Guildford.
- Localised improvements to the existing shared use pedestrian and cycle facility along the A25 to Stoke Crossroads.
- Improvements to the A25/A324 Stoke Crossroads, including improved crossing facilities, footway widening and upgrading signals to improve bus reliability.



5.2 It should be noted that a number of these infrastructure projects were implemented prior to the release of Local Transport Note 1/20 Cycle Infrastructure Design and Local Transport Note 1/24 Bus User Priority and opportunity may exist for further improvements to be made.

5.3 In terms of planned SMC-related works, at the time of writing:

- Planning permission has been granted to develop the current Jewsons' site, off Walnut Tree Close, which will deliver the walking and cycling elements of the SMC between Yorkies Bridge and Station View when complete.
- Outline planning permission (and subsequent permission for reserved matters applications for phases for the site) has been granted to develop Weyside Urban Village, a mixed-use strategic site. The site will:
  - accommodate the northern section of the SMC on the spine road.
  - fund on- and off-site infrastructure improvements required to mitigate the impact of development, including improvements to walking and cycling routes. Further detail will be available as the project progresses.
- Works proposed by SCC to develop an active travel corridor along London Road between New Inn Lane roundabout and York Road junction would have delivered the walking and cycling elements of the SMC along this corridor. At the time of writing:
  - a decision on whether to proceed with improvements between New Inn Lane roundabout and Boxgrove Roundabout has been deferred.
  - improvements to Boxgrove Roundabout will progress, however revised details are forthcoming.
  - planned improvements between Boxgrove Roundabout and the York Road junction will not proceed.

Further detail can be found in the decision paper.<sup>4</sup>

- Proposals to improve bus infrastructure are to come forward as part of SCC's Bus Priority Programme and Quality Bus Corridors projects (timescales for the delivery of this are not available at time of writing).

## **6. Future Focus**

6.1 The following section suggests the steps and areas which should be considered when engaged in pre-application discussions or when assessing applications for sites located on or near the SMC.

6.2 It is important to note that contributions have been successfully secured for allocated sites (which have had a direct reference to the SMC in their site allocation policy), and also developments on sites located near to the SMC as it has developed on the ground.

6.3 For applications on or near the SMC, GBC should:

- Consider the indicative routing of the SMC on the Policies Map as a starting point. The Guildford Borough Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan (LCWIP) should also be consulted to help characterise the wider aspirational active travel network, as referenced in Policy ID9 of the LPDMP, Achieving a Comprehensive Guildford Borough Cycle network.
- Consult internally to determine the level of improvements delivered to date, or planned, in the area surrounding the site.
- Consider the quantum of additional non-car trips generated by the development.
- Contributions can be sought to further improve existing infrastructure, or to deliver new infrastructure.

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<sup>4</sup> [Agenda for Leader Decisions on Tuesday, 27 February 2024, 10.00 am - Surrey County Council \(surreycc.gov.uk\)](https://www.surreycc.gov.uk)

## **7. Conclusion**

- 7.1 GBC's Local Plan: Strategy and Sites 2015-2034 was adopted in 2019, bringing the SMC into policy. An SPD is mentioned in policy, but this SPD has not been produced and its potential contents have now instead been covered by other documents. Due to this, it is no longer the intention to produce an SMC SPD.
- 7.2 The indicative route of the SMC is included on the Policies Map. Flexibility in delivery has been necessary to accommodate constraints and cater for different modes of transport.
- 7.3 Sections of the SMC have been progressed ahead of development site delivery for the wider benefits they provide. This has presented an opportunity to allow the SMC to take a form appropriate to each setting.
- 7.4 Further guidance on the SMC is provided in the Guildford Borough Council SDF SPD.
- 7.5 Additional guidance from the Department for Transport and Surrey County Council, as the Highway Authority, has come forward since the adoption of the LPSS and created a consistent set of principles to be worked to.
- 7.6 Mentions of an SMC SPD in policy are now considered redundant and an SPD is not considered to add anything unique or useful to the strategy, which is progressing in line with Local Plan ambitions.
- 7.7 Routing is flexible by design, and this remains the ambition for future sections.
- 7.8 Obligations for development sites to take up opportunities to promote sustainable transport in the context of the type of development and its location, in line with NPPF para. 114 and LPSS Policy ID3 remain.