

Woodbridge Road, Guildford Transport Improvements: Statement of reasons

New traffic regulation orders and amendments to existing traffic regulation orders due to the implementation of the town centre transport package and Guildford quality bus corridor in certain bus lanes in the borough of Guildford

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Introduction

Woodbridge Road (A322) has been identified in the Guildford Town and Approaches Movement Study¹ as part of the town's proposed network of Sustainable Movement Corridors, defined as 'priority pathway[s] through the town for pedestrians, cyclists and public transport'. The study, commissioned by Guildford Borough Council, is in support of the spatial vision of the borough's Local Plan².

Surrey County Council is working on three interlinked initiatives on Woodbridge Road that will make it easier to walk, cycle and use the bus along this route.

The Town Centre Transport Package project would introduce a toucan crossing to the south of the junction of Woodbridge Road and Wharf Road, as part of an improved walking and cycling link between Guildford railway station and Guildford College.

The Guildford Quality Bus Corridor project would improve, extend and connect the short sections of bus lane at the northern end of the Woodbridge Road, as part of an upgrade to key bus corridors in the town.

Consultations are now taking place on a set of proposed Traffic Regulation Orders and Notices that would allow us to deliver these initiatives, which cover both the introduction of the measures mentioned above and associated changes to the highway to accommodate them.

A justification for each of the proposed Traffic Regulation Orders and the proposed toucan crossing (a combined pedestrian and pedal cyclists crossing) are laid out in the following Statement of Reasons and plans are available which indicate the proposed changes.

Despite being related to different initiatives, these Traffic Regulation Orders and the Notice relating to the proposed toucan crossing are being advertised together in this one set of documents, to give a clear picture of all the improvements proposed for Woodbridge Road.

¹ Guildford Borough Council Guildford Town and Approaches Movement Study: Strategy Report. 11 April 2014, ARUP.

² Guildford borough Local Plan: strategy and sites. 2015 – 2034. Adopted 25th April 2019. Guildford Borough Council.

Proposed extension of the existing bus lane in Woodbridge Road underneath the New Guildford Railway Line Bridge and consequent alteration to existing parking controls in the area

Woodbridge Road is a key bus corridor from the north to the Town Centre and caters for 7 bus routes; 5 frequent and 2 infrequent. There are approximately 48 two-way buses per hour at peak times. Woodbridge Road forms part of the Guildford Borough Council promoted Sustainable Movement Corridor (SMC) 3 & 4 with the vision for a priority pathway along Woodbridge Road for buses, pedestrians and cyclists.

There are existing sections of bus lanes along Woodbridge Road but these are narrow and not coherent. There is also no bus priority where the bus operators consider to be the most congested section; north of the Stocton Road/Faraday Road roundabout to under the New Guildford Railway Line Bridge. The existing southbound bus lane on Woodbridge Road heading towards the town centre stops short of the railway bridge leading to buses becoming delayed, particularly during peak periods, as they attempt to merge into a single lane with general traffic.

It is therefore proposed to extend this southbound bus lane by approximately 79 metres under the railway bridge as shown on the Drawing No. SP0033/05 and resolve this existing congestion point. (Note: the existing headroom under the railway bridge allows a double decker bus to pass under it when adjacent to the kerb-line).

There is currently a shared use 2-hours limited waiting/Permit Holders Catchment Area A Parking Place operating between Mon-Sat, 8.30am-6pm on the west side of Woodbridge Road extending from a point immediately below the northern-western face of the railway bridge southwards for a distance of 51 metres. The road is not sufficiently wide at this location to be able to extend the bus lane under the railway bridge and also retain the on street shared-use parking place on the opposite (Woodbridge Café/Public Conveniences) side of the road.

Consequently it will be necessary to remove the whole of this shared-use on-street parking place (consisting of space for approximately 8-9 vehicles) lying to the south of the railway bridge and replace it with double yellow lines (no waiting at any time). However to mitigate this situation an additional 5-6 parking spaces can be provided opposite Gardner Road and fronting part of the Guildford Cricket Club's Sports Ground by removing the double yellow line and designating this length as a shared use 2-hours limited waiting/Permit Holders Catchment Area A Parking Place operating between Mon-Sat, 8.30am-6pm. Overall this results in the loss of formal parking for approximately 3-4 vehicles in the area around the railway bridge.

Surveys indicate there will be sufficient space to cater for current demand in the area following the loss of approximately 3-4 formal parking spaces.

Proposed change to the operational hours of the existing bus lanes in A322 Woodbridge Road and A322 Onslow Street

Further to the changes to the bus lane and parking controls outlined above, the hours of operation of all the existing bus lanes (currently Monday to Saturday 7am to 7pm) on the entire length of the A322 Woodbridge Road and A322 Onslow Street are proposed to be extended to operate 24 hours per day, 7 days per week. This will provide increased benefits to bus services at all times, bearing in mind that bus services also operate overnight and during the early morning and late evening periods. The times of the bus services using Woodbridge Road are indicated in Table 1.

Table 1 - times of the bus services using Woodbridge Road

Route Number	Operator	Times of operation (Monday to Friday service assumed as most frequent/typical service, unless noted otherwise below)
N1	Stagecoach	Night bus operating during University term time only – 1 bus per hour between midnight and 5 a.m.
2	Stagecoach	Between 5 a.m. and 11.30 p.m., every 10 minutes for most of the day, slightly less frequent early mornings and late evenings/night time
4 (Northbound) and 5 (Southbound)	Safeguard	Between 6 a.m. and 11.30 p.m. every 10 minutes for most of the day, slightly less frequent late evenings and at night time
28	Falcon Buses	Irregular frequency – 5/6 journeys per day between 6 a.m. and 7.10 p.m.
91	Arriva	No service on Monday to Saturday. Service uses Woodbridge Road on Sunday only – 1 bus per hour between 9 a.m. and 5 p.m.
C	Arriva	Every 15 minutes between 6 a.m. and 7 p.m.
KITE	Stagecoach	Every 15 minutes from 6.10 a.m. until 6.20 p.m., then every 30 minutes until 8.20 p.m. and then every hour until 10.40 p.m.

The extension of the bus lanes operating hours will also result in the imposition of 'at any time' waiting restrictions (double yellow lines) along their entire lengths, replacing the existing single yellow line sections (no waiting 8.30am-6pm, Mon-Sat) in places (between No. 33 Woodbridge Road and the common boundary between Nos. 36 and 37 Woodbridge Road, between Dapdune Road and Drummond Road and between Drummond Road and Artillery Road). The new operational hours will not change any existing loading restrictions (so vehicles will still be able to load/unload in the bus lanes at any time, except where currently signed otherwise).

Vehicles will also be able to drive across any of the existing bus lanes lane to access side roads, any private parking and premises as they do currently.

Proposed change to the classes of vehicles permitted to use the bus lanes

It is also proposed to amend the vehicle classes which will be permitted to use the existing bus lanes in Woodbridge Road (A322) and Onslow Street (A322). Currently the bus lanes can be used by buses, HGVs over 7.5T, pedal cycles and hackney carriages. It is proposed to limit the use of the bus lanes to buses, pedal cycles and hackney carriages only. Department for Transport (“DfT”) guidance states that HGVs should only be permitted to use bus lanes that are at least 4.0 metres in width, and this would require special dispensation from the DfT to be allowed to operate and be signed to this effect. The road layout and available width in A322 Woodbridge Road does not support the operation of HGVs’ over 7.5T in the bus lane. Furthermore, the removal of HGVs’ over 7.5T will assist pedal cyclists in their safe use of the bus lanes.

Drafting amendments

It is intended to include some minor amendments relating to buses and pedal cycles. The Traffic Signs Regulations and General Directions 2002 (“the 2002 Regulations”) was repealed and replaced with a new set of Regulations, The Traffic Signs Regulations and General Regulations 2016 (“the 2016 Regulations”). The definition of what is a bus and a pedal cycle is now contained in the 2016 Regulations and it is, therefore, now intended to alter the definition of bus and pedal cycle as contained in all the current Orders (as amended) enforcing all the existing bus lanes in A322 Woodbridge Road and A322 Onslow Street so as to take account of this change. The definition of what is a bus and a pedal cycle applies throughout the country so there is no variation in Surrey’s definition from that applying elsewhere in England, Wales and Scotland.

As indicated immediately above the 2002 Regulations were replaced in 2016 by a new set of Regulations (the 2016 Regulations). In the Order (as amended) which currently enforces the existing mandatory “with-flow” bus lane in the A322 Onslow Street there is a reference to a particular traffic sign as contained within the 2002 Regulations. This is the traffic sign to Diagram 1010 in Schedule 6 to those Regulations which is used, inter alia, to indicate the edge of the carriageway at a road junction or lay-by or at an exit from a private drive onto a public road or the division between the main carriageway and a traffic lane which leaves the main carriageway at a junction ahead. This is because there is a lay-by fronting No. 1 Onslow Street, Guildford, Surrey, GU1 4SY which is used by the occupiers of those premises (Sanofi Avantis, a pharmaceutical company) for loading and unloading purposes outside “peak” morning and evening periods on Mondays to Saturdays inclusive and also a service road providing access to a private parking area situated underneath Saxon House, No. 3 Onslow Street, Guildford, Surrey, GU1 4YP and to the Friary Service Goods Entrance (the loading/unloading area used by The Friary Shopping Centre). The road marking is used to mark the division between the bus lane and the aforesaid lay-by and service road. However, the references to this particular road marking are now contained within the 2016 Regulations so it is intended to alter the definition in the Order (as amended) enforcing the existing bus lane in A322 Onslow Street regarding this particular traffic sign, particularly as the 2016 Regulations have made some changes as to the circumstances when this particular traffic sign may be used (these changes do not affect its current use at the boundary between the existing bus lane and lay-by and service road). This change will not affect the operation of the existing bus lane or any of the parking controls in this area, except as provided for elsewhere in this Statement of Reasons.

It is also intended to include a minor amendment relating to the title of the Order that currently enforces the Guildford Town Centre Controlled Parking Zone, within which Zone the A322 Woodbridge Road and A322 Onslow Street lie. In 2009 The Surrey County Council Various Roads in the Borough of Guildford (Guildford Controlled Parking Zone) (Consolidation of Waiting and Loading Restrictions and Street Parking Places and Revocation) Order 2004 was repealed and replaced with a new Order, The Surrey County Council Various Roads in the Borough of Guildford (Guildford Town Centre Controlled Parking Zone) (Consolidation of Waiting and Loading Restrictions Street Parking Places and Revocation) Order 2009. The Order of 2009 has now itself been amended several times. As all the Orders (as amended) which currently enforce the existing bus lanes in the A322 Woodbridge Road and A322 Onslow Street each contain a provision which provides that, if there is any conflict between the provisions of the Order of 2004 (as subsequently amended) and each of the Orders (as amended) enforcing the aforesaid bus lanes in the A322 Woodbridge Road and/or the A322 Onslow Street, then the provisions of the Order(s) enforcing the said bus lanes always take precedence, it is now intended to alter the title of the Order enforcing the Guildford Town Centre Controlled Parking Zone as contained in all the current Orders (as amended) enforcing all the existing bus lanes in A322 Woodbridge Road and A322 Onslow Street so as to take account of this change in 2009. This alteration will not result in any other change to any of the existing bus lanes or parking controls in A322 Woodbridge Road and/or the A322 Onslow Street except as provide for elsewhere in this Statement of Reasons.

For the avoidance of doubt it is intended to insert into the Interpretation article of all the existing Orders enforcing all of the existing bus lanes in A322 Woodbridge Road and A322 Onslow Street (as amended) the following expressions:

"day" and "week".

This is required due to the proposed change of the operational hours of those bus lanes (referred to above) from 7 a.m. and 7 p.m. on Mondays to Saturdays inclusive to at any time of the day or night throughout the week.

It is also proposed to change the definition of "telecommunication system" to "electronic communication apparatus" to account for a change made in Paragraph 1 of Schedule 2 to the Telecommunications Act 1984 in all of those Orders.

This is merely to clarify the situation and formalise the current arrangements and involves no actual changes to the way the existing Orders (as amended) enforcing all the existing bus lanes in A322 Woodbridge Road and A322 Onslow Street presently operate.

In the Order which currently enforces the existing bus lane in A322 Onslow Street there is a definition covering the service road which leads to a private parking area situated underneath Saxon House, No. 3 Onslow Street, Guildford, Surrey, GU1 4YP and to the Friary Service Goods Entrance (the loading/unloading area used by The Friary Shopping Centre). However, since 2004 there have been two minor changes that have affected this service road. Firstly, in 2004, the service road lead to a private parking area situated underneath Friary House, The Friary and this was open to the public only on Saturdays and Bank Holidays. This is no longer the case as it is now situated underneath Saxon House, No. 3 Onslow Street and it is no longer open to the public on Saturdays or Bank Holidays. Secondly, in 2004, the service road also led to The Friary Service Centre Area. The service road now leads to The Friary Service Goods Entrance as indicated above. It is, therefore, now intended to take account of the two changes affecting the service road – this is merely to clarify the situation and formalise the current arrangements and involves no actual changes to the way the existing Order (as amended) enforcing the existing bus lane in A322 Onslow Street presently operates.

Proposed provision of a toucan crossing on the A322 Woodbridge Road and consequent closure of a gap in the central reservation of that road and shortening of an existing “shared-use” on-street parking place fronting “Dapdune Court”

It is also proposed to install a new signalised ‘toucan’ crossing facility (a combined pedestrian and pedal cyclist crossing) over A322 Woodbridge Road, located to the south of its junctions with Wharf Road and Dapdune Road and to the north of its junction with Drummond Road and to carry out associated works so as to accommodate the necessary relocation of the existing bus stops in the vicinity of the site.

In order to accommodate the toucan crossing it is necessary to give effect to the proposals described in the various Public Notices relating to the scheme described in this Statement of Reasons, these to include a reduction in the length of the shared-use on-street parking place fronting “Dapdune Court” and situated on the west side of the northbound carriageway of the road between Leas Road and Wharf Road and the closure to all vehicular use of the gap in the central reservation of the A322 Woodbridge Road lying opposite Wharf Road.

The A322 Woodbridge Road has been identified as one of the roads that make up the Sustainable Movement Corridor concept, supported by the Council and the spatial vision of the Local Plan³. The ambition for a Sustainable Movement Corridor as described in the Guildford Town and Approaches Movement Study (GTAMS), is to provide “a priority pathway through the town for pedestrians, cyclists and public transport”⁴.

The new toucan crossing will form part of a proposed cycle route connecting Guildford rail station with Guildford College, providing a link over the A322 Woodbridge Road in a location where there is currently no formal controlled crossing facility for those travelling by bicycle. Previous surveys have also indicated that many pedestrians cross the road in this vicinity and would benefit from the proposed toucan crossing.

The cycle route forms part of the ‘Guildford Town Centre Transport Package’ of schemes⁵. It has been developed to align with other planned improvements to sustainable transport facilities in the area including the replacement of the Walnut Bridge linking Guildford rail station to Bedford Wharf and the ‘Quality Bus Corridor’ improvements along A322 Woodbridge Road.

The new toucan crossing is intended to improve local accessibility by providing a facility that enables both pedestrians and pedal cyclists to be able to safely and easily cross a wide and busy road where it is currently difficult to do so. Furthermore, in combination with associated improvements in the area, it is intended to make it more appealing to undertake local journeys via walking and cycling rather than by private car thus contributing positively towards modal shift and supporting ambitions to encourage sustainable travel in Guildford.

It is considered necessary to close an existing gap in the central reserve of the A322 Woodbridge Road to avoid a potential safety issue arising from drivers exiting Wharf Road

³ Guildford borough Local Plan: strategy and sites. 2015 – 2034. Adopted 25th April 2019. Guildford Borough Council.

⁴ Guildford Borough Council Guildford Town and Approaches Movement Study: Strategy Report. 11 April 2014, ARUP.

⁵ Guildford Town Centre Transport Package. Guildford major transport schemes, www.surreycc.gov.uk/guildfordtransportschemes. Accessed 20 May 2020, Surrey County Council.

via the gap. A road safety audit has raised concerns that drivers seeking to turn right out of Wharf Road may fail to observe the status of the proposed toucan crossing and be at risk of passing through a red signal. This is likely due to the angle of approach and competing needs to concentrate on traffic approaching from Dapdune Road and A322 Woodbridge Road (northbound and southbound). As a result the existing Traffic Regulation Order enforcing the banned right hand turn by all vehicles from Woodbridge Road (A322) into Wharf Road through the afore-mentioned gap in the central reservation of the A322 Woodbridge Road can be revoked as it will no longer be required.

In order to make room for the proposed toucan crossing it is also necessary to relocate the northbound bus stop to a new location just to the north of the junction of A322 Woodbridge Road and Leas Road. This location has been identified to have sufficient footway space to enable the potential installation of a bus shelter in future.

The length of the on-street parking place (a shared use 2-hours limited waiting/Permit Holders Catchment Area A Parking Place operating between Mon-Sat, 8.30am-6pm on the west side of the northbound carriageway of the road (fronting Dapdune Court)) will be reduced by approximately 23.5 metres to allow for the installation and operation of the new toucan crossing and the relocation of the northbound bus stop. This length is estimated to be equivalent to approximately four parking spaces.

The specific grounds which the County Council are using for the implementation of the proposed scheme as described above are encompassed in the following Sections of the Road Traffic Regulation Act 1984:

- Section 1(a) for avoiding danger to persons or other traffic using the road or any other such road or for preventing the likelihood of any such danger arising.
- Section 1(c) for facilitating the passage on the road or any other road of any class of traffic (including pedestrians).

Proposed provision of the Guildford College Link+

The proposed Guildford College Link+ is a bidirectional cycle route enabling east-west and north south movements between Bedford Wharf and Guildford College.

The route is intended to make it more appealing to undertake local journeys by bicycle rather than by private car thus contributing positively towards modal shift and supporting ambitions to encourage sustainable travel in Guildford. It has been developed to align with other planned improvements to sustainable transport facilities in the area including the replacement of Walnut Bridge, linking Guildford rail station to Bedford Wharf.

Guildford College Link+ is predominantly a quiet on-road cycle route that will signpost users along residential streets and urban paths where possible including: Mary Road; William Road; Wharf Road; Dapdune Road; and Markenfield Road. On the busier roads of A322 Woodbridge Road and A320 Stoke Road new shared use footways and signalised toucan crossings will be provided to separate users from vehicle traffic and to make it easier and safer to cross the road.