

Surrey Strategic Greenway Initiative

Proposals for the provision of a high-quality walking, cycling and horse riding network, spanning the county

Kieran Foster - National off-road advisor, Cycling UK. June 2020

 **Surrey Hills**
Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty

we are cycling
UK

Creating the new normal:

- Government drive towards decarbonisation
- Glover review concerns over levels of car use in protected landscapes
- Social issues of health & wellbeing
- Post Covid-19 changes in travel patterns & commuting
- Rural A-Roads now more dangerous than urban roads for cyclists
- Surrey Climate Change Strategy
- Levels of traffic on minor roads in Surrey growing. Anecdotally much of this is rat running due to traffic management and congestion on main roads & junctions
- Fear of traffic is biggest element in putting people off cycling
- Continued increase in light commercial vehicle use due to growth in online delivery

Or rediscovering the old normal?

Report of the National Parks Committee 1947 (Hobhouse)

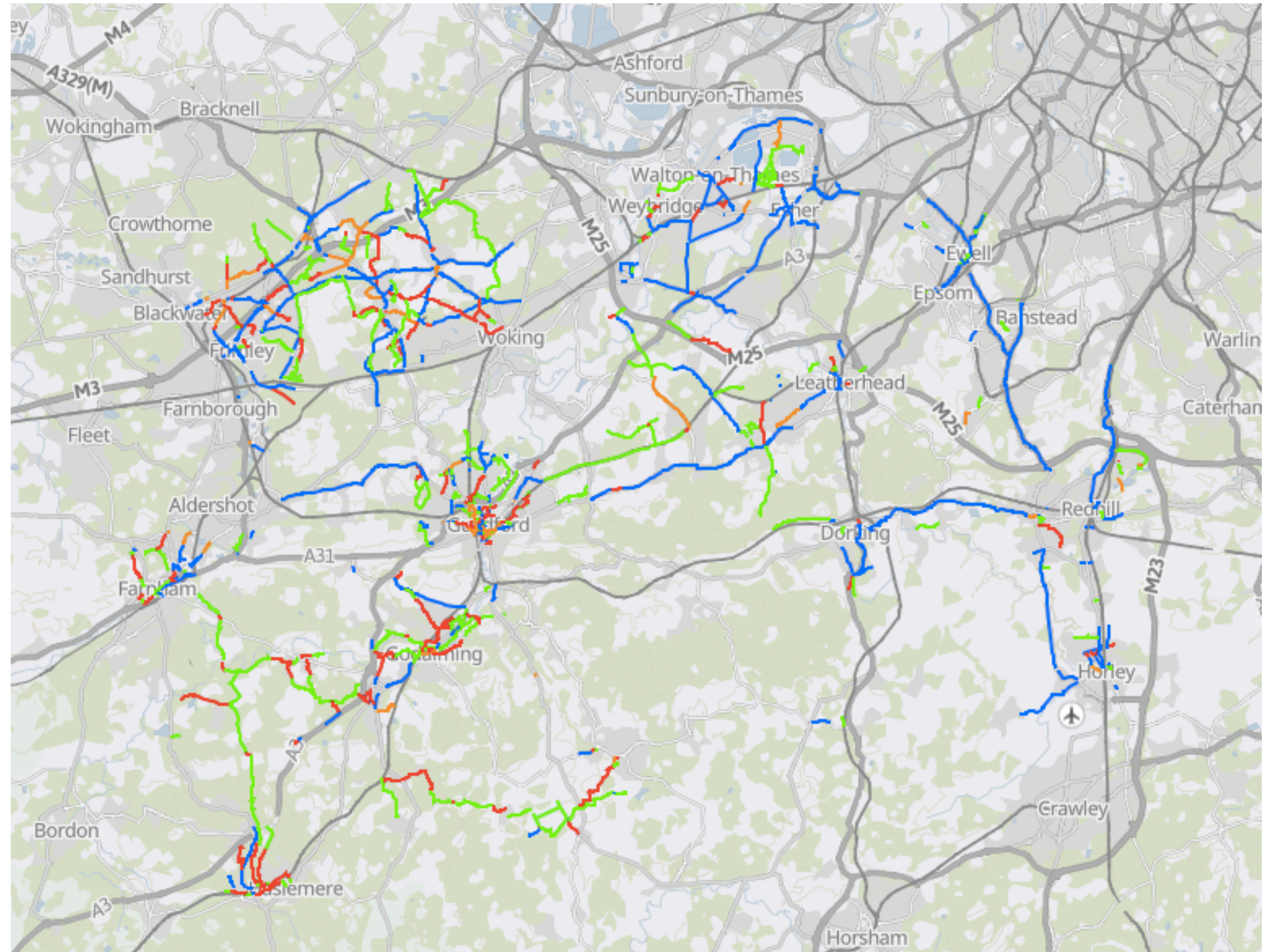
“We also attach importance to the provision of long distance paths and bridleways in and between National Parks and Conservation Areas. There should be continuous routes which will enable walkers and riders to travel the length and breadth of the Parks, moving as little as possible on the motor roads”



Both old and new visions demonstrate the imperative for AONB to help deliver change

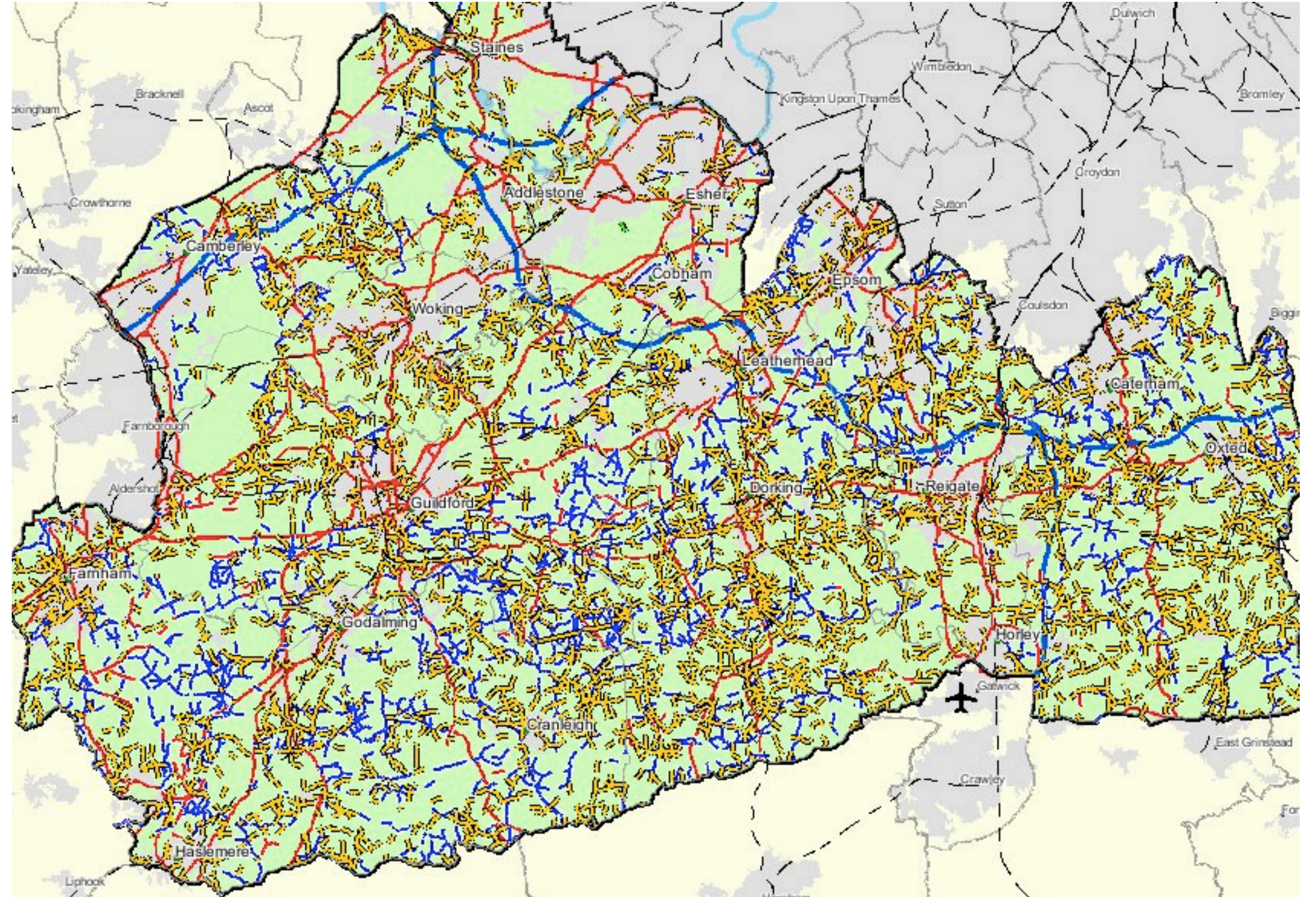
Cycling Infrastructure:

- Often developed on an ad-hoc basis
- cycling & walking investment strategy
- designed & kept at district council level
- integrated with local transport plan, largely road based, focused on local transport & utility cycling needs
- rarely integrated with statutory rights of way improvement plan
- Mainly funded through S106 & CIL



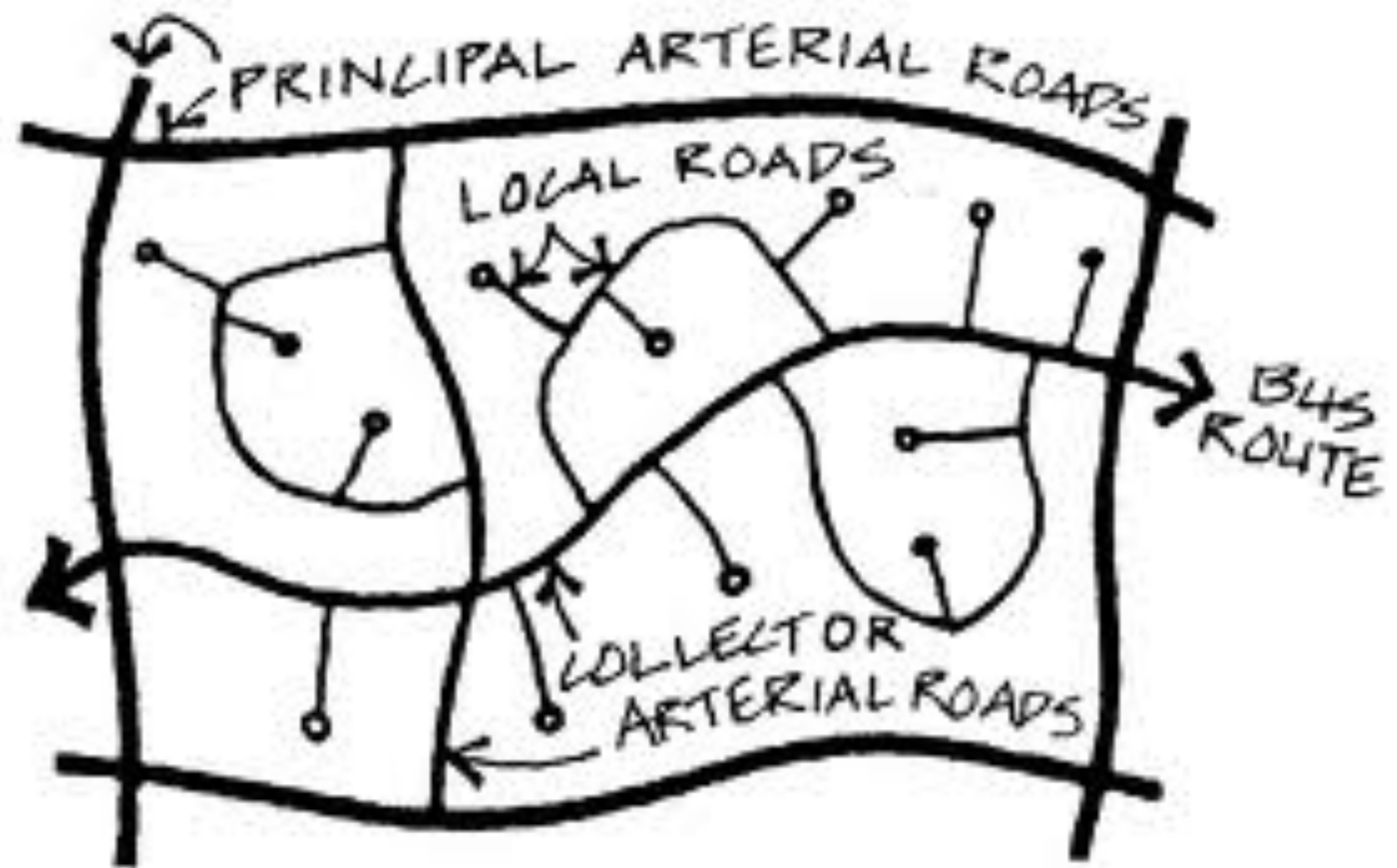
Walking & Horse Riding:

- Focus on historic rights of access
- Managed at county council level
- Statutory Rights of Way improvement plan exists, but no duty (or funding) to deliver improvements
- Mainly funded through County Council budget
- Poor connectivity & inconsistent classification of routes dating back to parish surveys in 1950's
- Compulsory powers exist for creation of new routes where in public interest
- Created just six new bridleways in last ten years



Big picture thinking - the hierarchy of roads:

- Local minor roads feed into network of categorised roads (A, B & C class Roads)
- Managed by County Council
- Large A Roads & Motorways managed as Strategic Network, centrally funded from taxpayer



Understanding our focus

Active Travel

Focused on Cyclists & (less so?) Walkers

Faster travel (more conflict?)

Better surfacing

Urbanising?

More expensive

Easier to fund

Generally highway based schemes

Leisure & Recreation

Cyclists, Walkers & Horseriders

Slower travel (less conflict?)

Lower surfacing standards

More 'natural'

Cheaper

Fewer funding pots

Generally PROW

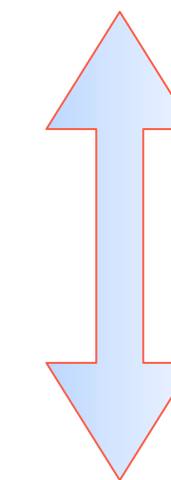
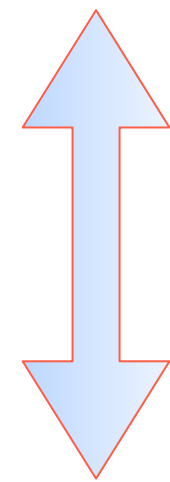
Massive oversimplification

Active Travel

Leisure & Recreation

Surfacing

Traffic Free



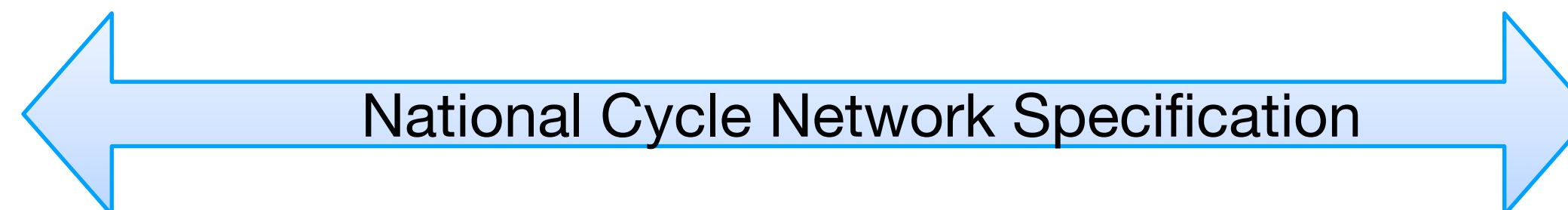
Traffic Free

Surfacing

Which do we prioritise?

“Strong, light, cheap: pick two.”

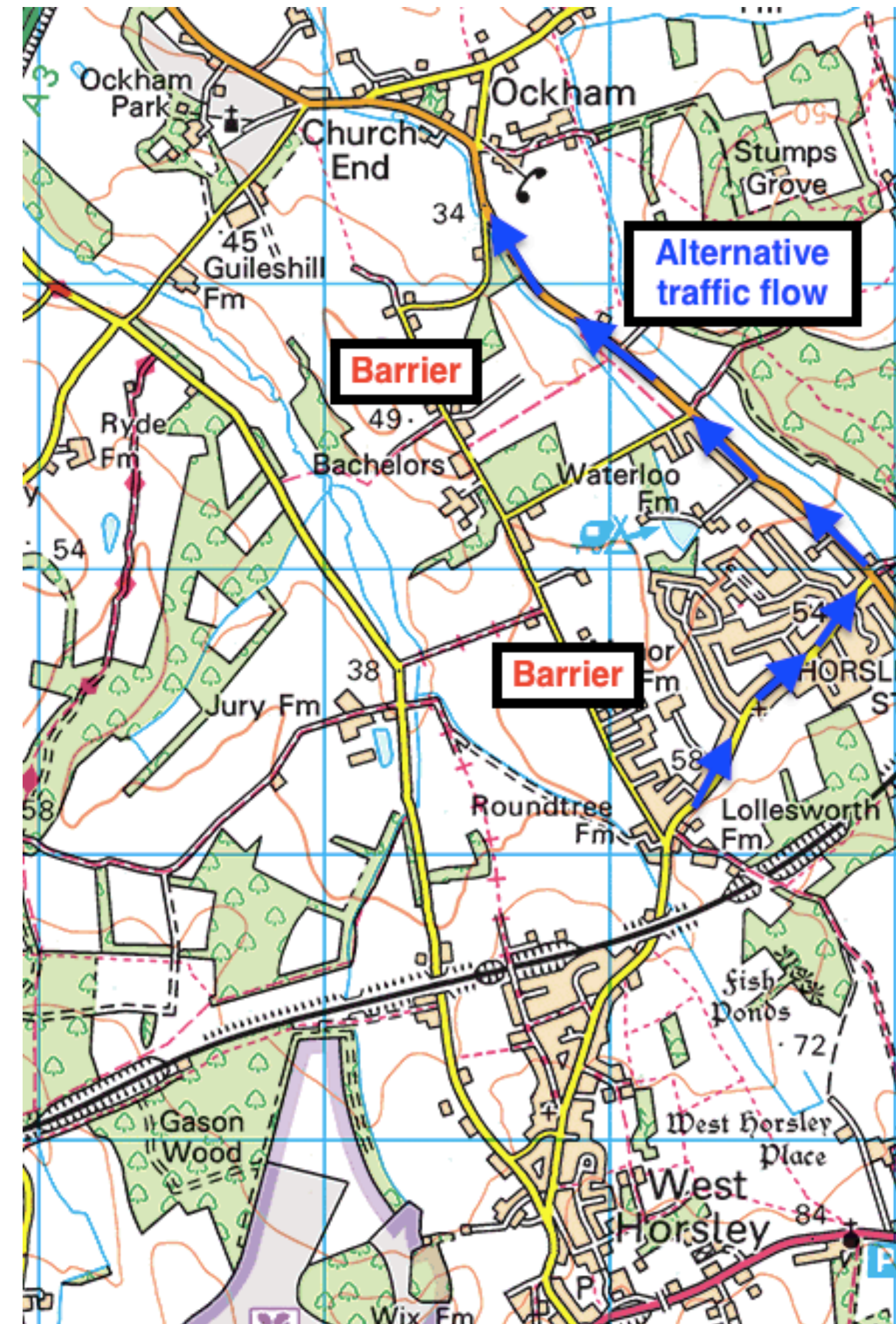
LTN/1/20



‘Forest road’

Using filtered permeability to create Greenways:

- Use of a series of barriers can produce low traffic corridor over longer distances - forming a well surfaced high quality greenway at minimum cost
- Routes identified to run parallel to existing road corridors and integrate with rights of way. Minimal increase in journey for car users.
- Dilution effect - Major % reduction in traffic on minor roads only results in minor % increase in traffic on major roads
- Connect towns & villages - three car routes reduces to two car routes and one greenway/quiet lane for non motorised users



Rural application of filtered permeability:

- As in urban areas, prevents cars and other motor vehicles using a stretch of road, but allows walkers, cyclists & horse riders
- Forces traffic off quiet lane and onto alternative route
- Traffic Regulation Orders require consideration of impact on use of network
- Can have significant impact on some residents on rural route - need to consult
- Local residents, farmers & parish council given keys/access codes



Politicians
say NO

Quiet Lanes:




- Government Led Project
- Designed to make country lanes safer and more accessible to vulnerable users.
- Chapel Lane and Ranmore Common Road were part of pilot project in 2004
- Relies on 'Soft' traffic calming measures
- Does not prevent rat running traffic using lanes as short cut
- Can we do more on 'hard' traffic calming eg. Chicanes?
- Does not automatically include reduced speed limits



Suffolk in process of developing 500km of quiet lanes network

<https://www.itv.com/news/anglia/2021-03-17/roads-to-become-quiet-lanes-in-suffolk-to-encourage-a-safer-and-healthier-way-of-life>

Roads to become 'Quiet Lanes' to encourage better use of countryside

 Katy Sandalls



Published: 10:12 AM March 17, 2021



Andrew Reid, Suffolk County Council's cabinet member for Highways - Credit: CHARLOTTE BOND

Roads in Suffolk are to be designated as "Quiet Lanes" to encourage people to get out and make the most of the countryside.

Integrating Quiet Lanes and Public Rights of Way to Create Strategic Greenways

- Follow hierarchy of roads model to create continuous, strategic, network of greenways that connect places and people,
- Unlike National Cycle Network there is a clearer distinction between transport and leisure routes
- Also play important role in provision of natural greenspace to connect people with nature
- Central to nature recovery network - use routes as focus for planting of trees and environmental improvements



Leith Hill Greenway

Westhumble to Leith Hill

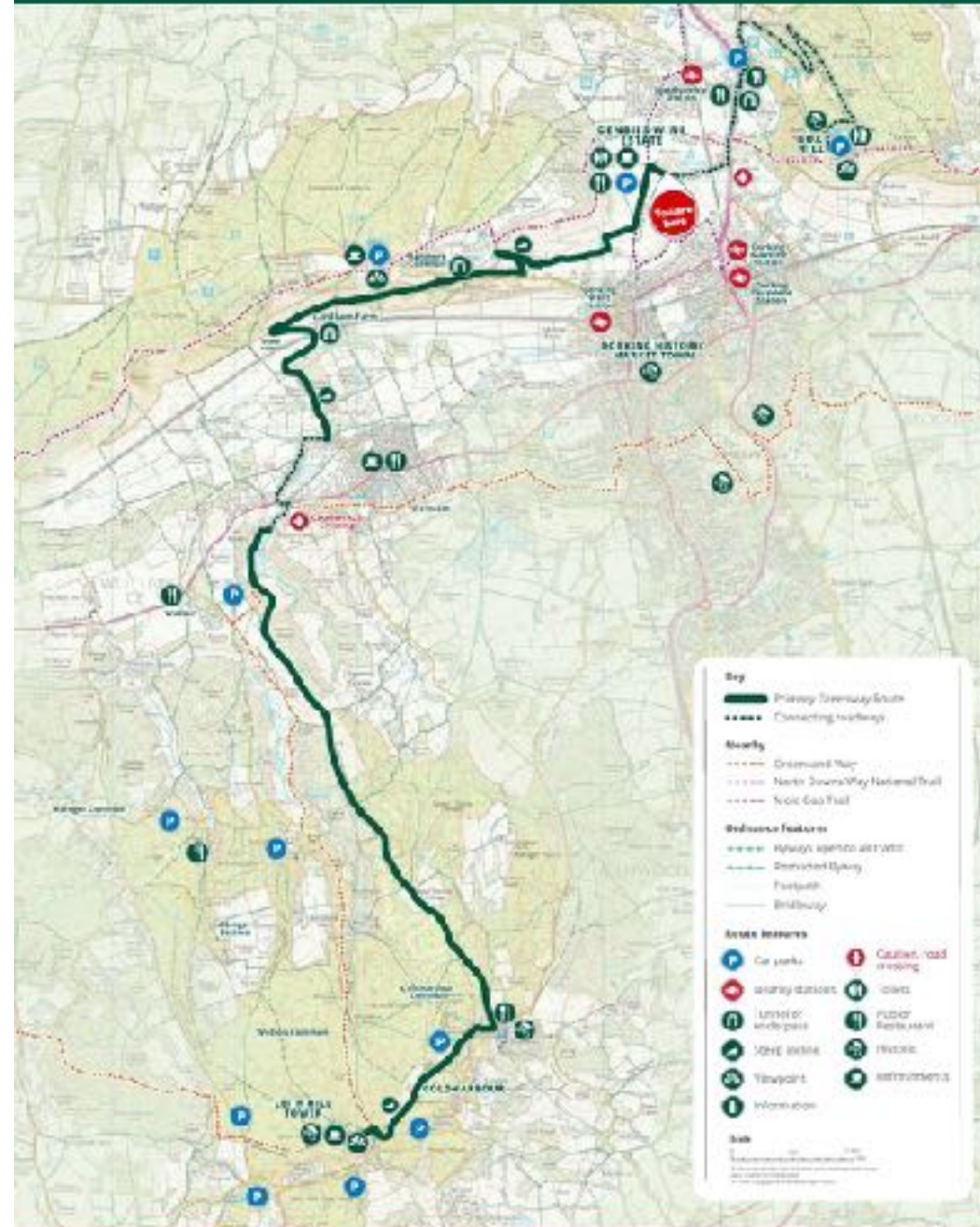
- Upgrade of existing routes and some minor resurfacing creates significant benefit to local network and ensure traffic-free connection between significant local landmarks
- Opportunity to use tunnel on Denbies estate to avoid unsafe road crossing
- Safer crossing needed at Westcott?





Surrey Hills
Leith Hill Greenway

The Leith Hill Greenway is a 15km multi-use off-road route linking Box Hill with Leith Hill, providing the very best Surrey Hills experience. Discover the nature-rich hillside and views of Box Hill, the spectacular vineyard of one of the UK's largest wine producers at Denbies Wine Estate and the majestic tower on top of Leith Hill with sweeping views towards London in the North and the English Channel in the South.




What is a Greenway?
Greenways are a network of long off-road routes providing people to facilities, open spaces and around towns, cities and the countryside.

Surrey Hills Trust Fund
www.surreyhills.org

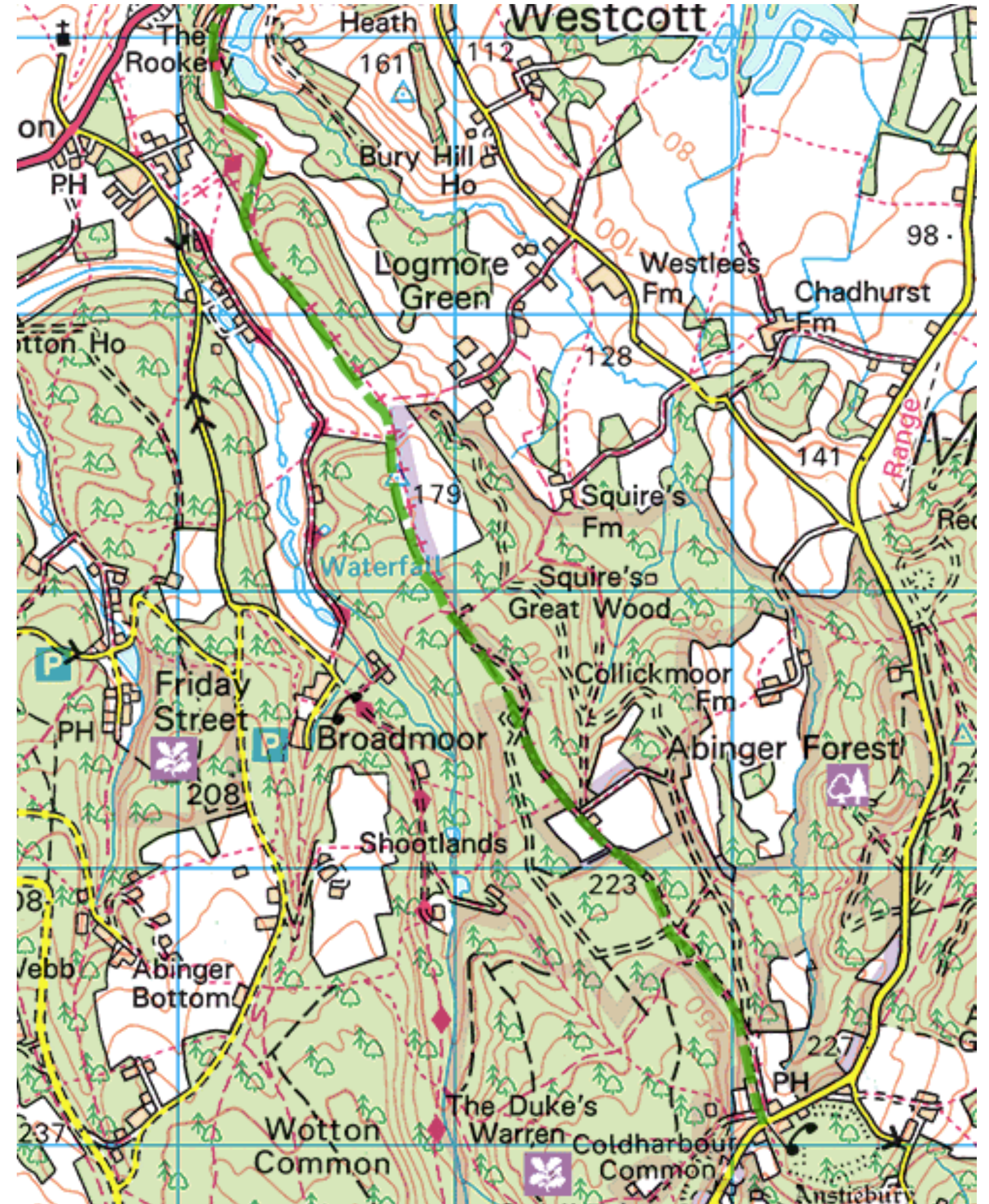
The Leith Hill Greenway is a multi-use, fully accessible, multi-use route which you can start and finish at any point where you see the directional sign. Please be aware there are two road crossings and that it is steep in parts as noted on the map. The route is available for all to enjoy, please remember to 'be nice - say Hi' and follow the Countryside Code.

Respect other people • Protect the natural environment • Enjoy the outdoors



Wolvens Lane

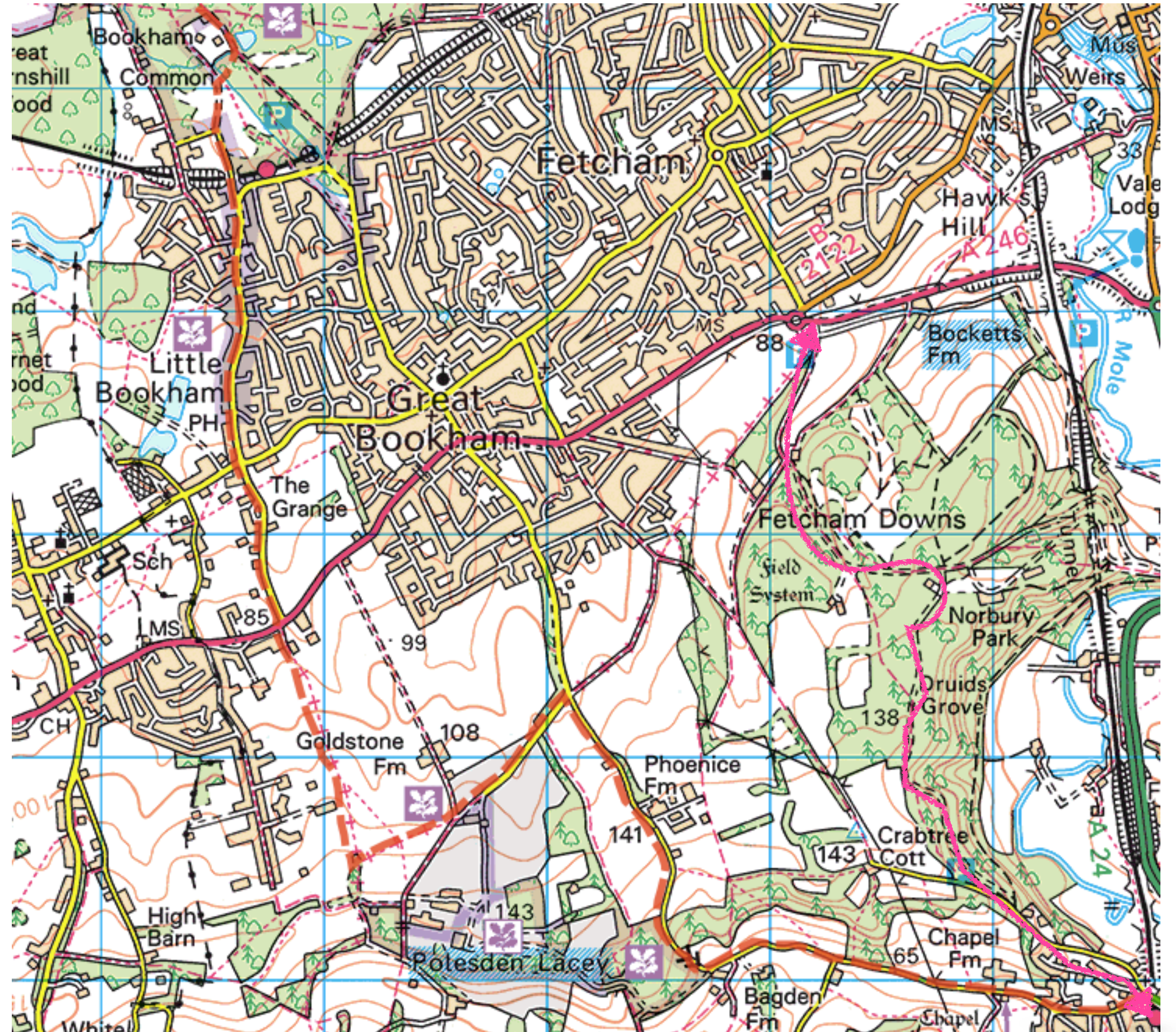
- Existing Byway open to All Traffic
- Currently subject to significant damage by 4WD use and complaints over fast motorbikes
- Traffic Regulation order will allow closure of route and erection of barriers



Next...

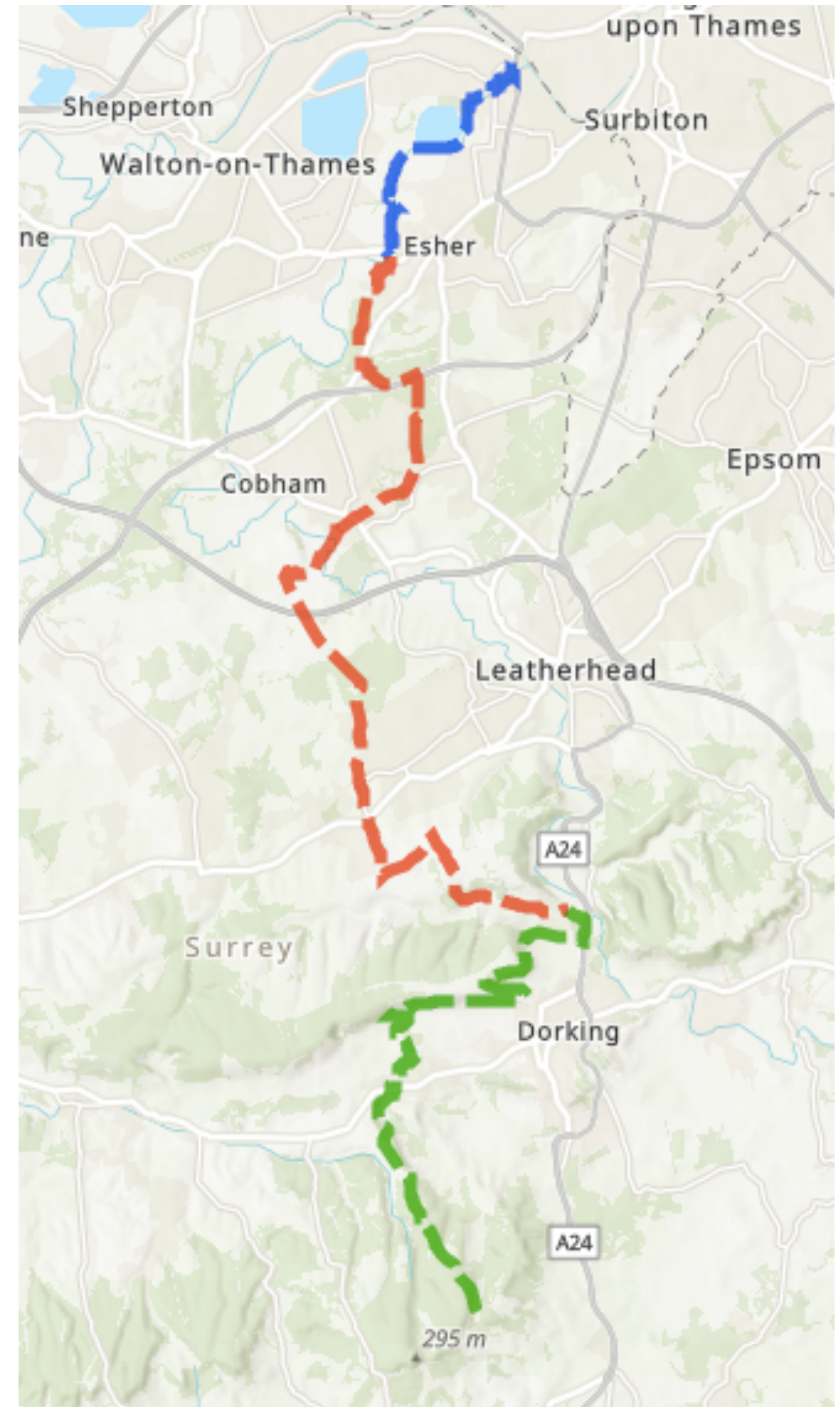
Bookham to Box Hill

- Minor roads in residential area could connect to Polseden Lacey.
- Chapel lane possibly ideal, but limited powers means unlikely to reduce traffic levels or speed. Norbury Park route more achievable
- Significant benefit to local walkers, cyclists & horse riders



Example Strategic Route: Hampton Court to Leith Hill via Esher, Cobham & Dorking

- Good example of the scale and ambition of this project
- Would create an almost entirely traffic free route from Hampton Court Bridge to Leith Hill
- Incrementally more 'natural' as you get further into the countryside
- Would require both introduction of filtered permeability of existing lanes and creation of new cycle tracks/rights of way in order to provide continuous route



What will this give us?

- A network of high quality routes that links to local networks
- Ability for families to enjoy countryside close to home
- Strategic traffic free link from central London to Surrey Hills AONB
- Onwards via Downs Link to SDNP South coast

What is Needed to make it happen?

- Political will - legal powers exist, rarely used at moment
- Funding - does redirecting money from high cost utility cycling routes to lower cost leisure routes offer potentially greater return on investment due to added social value
- Community involvement - wider benefits such as planting of trees and creation of wildlife habitat along route needs buy in of local communities & volunteer effort
- Willingness to see through the 'noise', need to see the end goal and benefit for whole community