

## Note – The Sustainable Movement Corridor:

### Policy basis, scheme feasibility and design to date, and future models for design, funding and delivery

GBC Planning Policy and Corporate Programmes teams, December 2021

#### 1 Introduction

1.1 Within Guildford, the Sustainable Movement Corridor (SMC) aims to provide “a priority pathway through the town for pedestrians, cyclists and public transport”.<sup>1</sup> The corridor will provide high-quality walking and cycling routes, as well as realising improved bus journey times and reliability through bus infrastructure upgrades. These improvements will facilitate more sustainable, safer ways of making short journeys across the town and so encourage modal shift, reducing reliance on the private car for these journeys. The Council’s aim for journeys undertaken on the SMC is that they should be “rapid and reliable by bus and safe and direct on foot and by bike”.<sup>2</sup>

1.2 This note:

- provides a brief overview of the background and origin of the SMC concept
- explains the SMC’s status in the Local Plan, its fit with the Guildford Economic Regeneration Programmes (GERP) masterplanning exercise for Guildford town centre, and its alignment with national, sub-national and county policies and strategies
- identifies the design principles for the delivery of the SMC on the Local Road Network and on the strategic urban extensions
- provides an update on the delivery of the various route sections
- identifies the next steps required to continue with the project, including the necessary funding and how this might potentially be secured, and the project delivered.

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<sup>1</sup> Guildford Town and Approaches Movement Study: Strategy Report (Arup, March 2015): page ii

<sup>2</sup> Guildford borough Local Plan: strategy and sites 2015-2034 (GBC, 2019): para 4.6.26

## **2 Origin of the SMC**

- 2.1 The concept of the SMC was first developed by consultant Arup in 2014 in the Guildford Town and Approaches Movement Study (GTAMS).<sup>3</sup> The aim of the GTAMS study was to develop a recommended long term movement strategy to 2050 for the town of Guildford. The GTAMS study was undertaken for Guildford Borough Council's (GBC) Planning Policy team as part of the transport planning workstream in the Local Plan-making process.<sup>4</sup>
  
- 2.2 The SMC scored highly in Arup's assessment of a variety of potential measures.<sup>5</sup> Arup's Appraisal Summary Table, in Figure 1 below, highlights these potential impacts.

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<sup>3</sup> Guildford Town and Approaches Movement Study: Strategy Report (Arup, March 2015): page ii and Guildford Town and Approaches Movement Study: Scenario Analysis and Appraisal of Interventions Report (Arup, March 2015)

<sup>4</sup> Topic Paper: Transport (GBC, 2017): para 5.27

<sup>5</sup> Guildford Town and Approaches Movement Study: Scenario Analysis and Appraisal of Interventions Report (Arup, March 2015): page 59

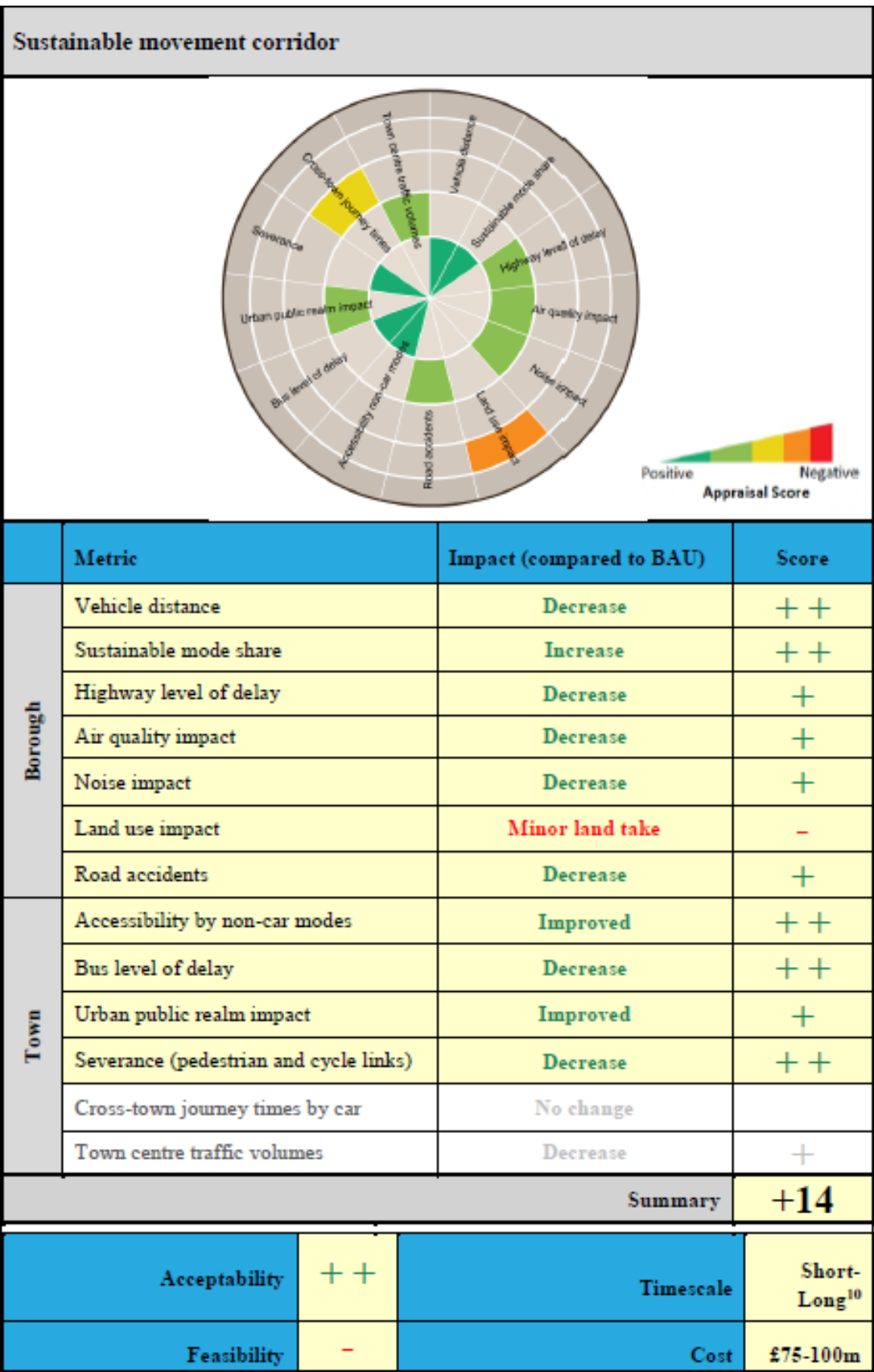


Figure 1. Appraisal Summary Table – Sustainable movement corridor, from Guildford Town and Approaches Movement Study Scenario Analysis and Appraisal of Interventions Report (Arup, 2015)

2.3 The SMC was the “centrepiece” of Arup’s recommended strategy.<sup>6</sup> In terms of public transport, Arup proposed that the SMC “...can be used by existing bus services, but also by new services running only on this corridor, potentially Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) or even a tram system, if there is significant growth in demand in future to support this type of technology.”<sup>7</sup> A visualisation of the SMC from Arup’s original proposal can be seen in Figure 2, below.



Figure 2. The original SMC concept, including trip generators and linkages over rail, road and river crossings.

2.4 GBC’s Executive endorsed the Strategy Report of the GTAMS study in April 2014. The Executive also authorised study work to develop the SMC concept further, including establishing the preferred route, any further route options, and any further land which could be safeguarded for the SMC corridor through the Local Plan process.

### 3 Basis in statutory Local Plan

3.1 GBC’s Local Plan: Strategy and Sites 2015-2034 (LPSS) was adopted in 2019. The Local Plan facilitates the provision of at least 10,678 new homes over the plan period, in order to accommodate a forecast 15 per cent increase in the borough’s population to 167,000 by 2034. The Council considers that the SMC is necessary to deliver the level of strategic planned growth in the Guildford urban area in a sustainable way.

<sup>6</sup> Guildford Town and Approaches Movement Study: Strategy Report (Arup, March 2015): page 16

<sup>7</sup> Ibid page 15

3.2 The SMC will connect key trip generators in the expanded Guildford urban area, including three strategic urban extensions and also town centre site allocations adjacent to the corridor as identified in the Local Plan.<sup>8</sup> These key trip generators and attractors include:

- Guildford town centre and rail station
- Ladymead Retail Park
- Royal Surrey County Hospital
- University of Surrey's Stag Hill and Manor Park campuses
- Surrey Research Park
- Slyfield Industrial Estate
- existing urban communities in seven wards
- future new rail stations at Guildford West (Park Barn) and Guildford East (Merrow)
- Park and Ride at Onslow and the future new facility at Gosden Hill Farm
- the new communities of the strategic urban extensions at Blackwell Farm (Policy A26), Weyside Urban Village (formally known as the Slyfield Area Regeneration Project (Policy A24) and Gosden Hill Farm (Policy A25).

3.3 Figure 3, below, shows the broad corridors the SMC route sections could utilise and the relationship to new Park and Ride and railway stations.<sup>9</sup>

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<sup>8</sup> Topic Paper: Transport (GBC,2017): para 6.75

<sup>9</sup> This figure was provided for the Inspector during the Local Plan Examination in 2018.

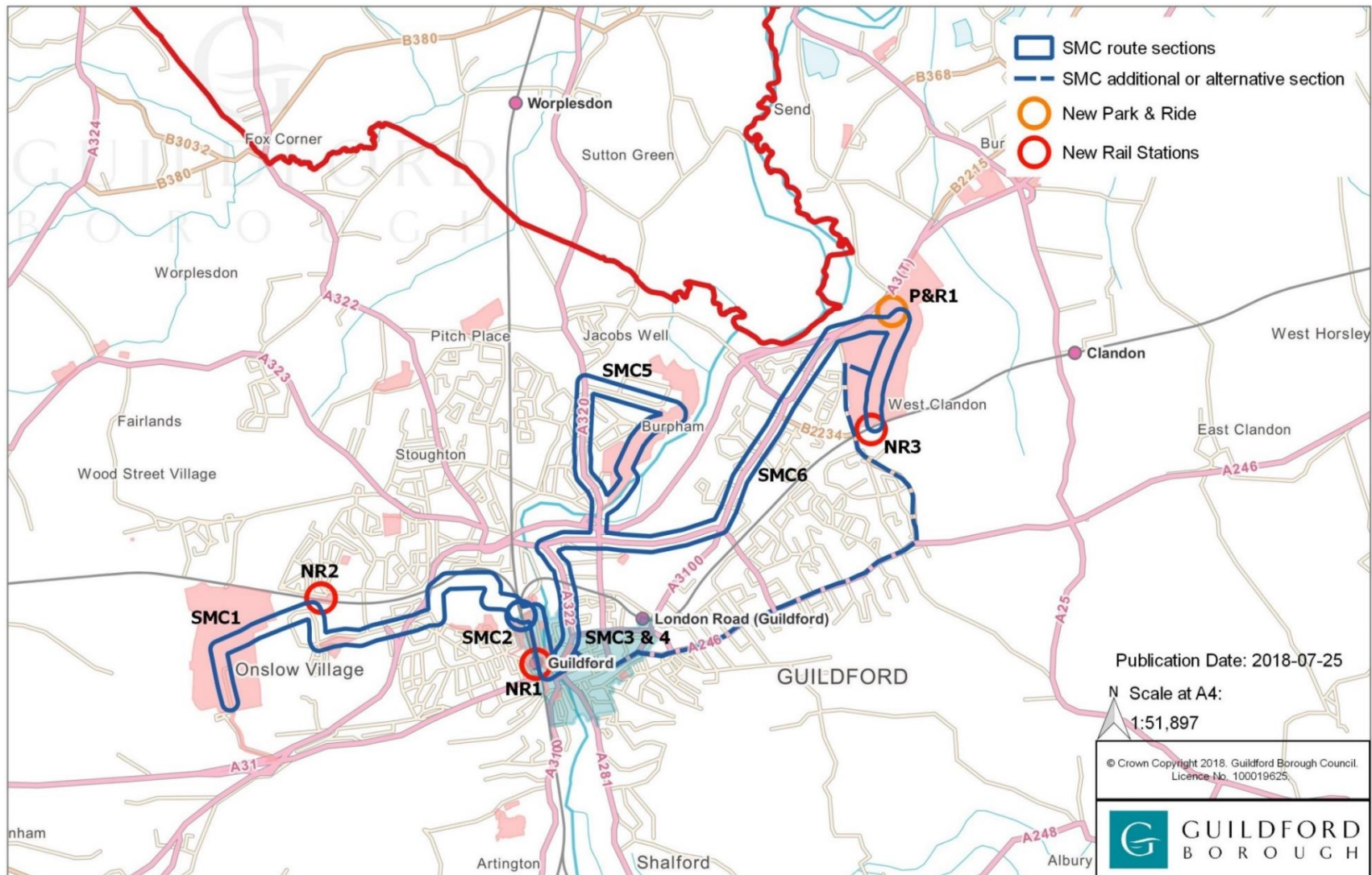


Figure 3. SMC broad corridors and relationship to new Park and Ride and railway stations (Source: GBC-LPSS-025a GBC note on SMC, traffic on A3 and Wisley SNCI (GBC, 2018))

- 3.4 The site policies for the three strategic urban extensions have corresponding requirements with respect to the SMC. The respective policies require that their respective SMC route section is implemented in full on site and that a necessary and proportionate contribution is made to the SMC route section on the Local Road Network (LRN).
- 3.5 Several Guildford town centre and urban area site policies include requirements for the SMC; namely A4, A6, A9, A10, A16 and A17. There is also a requirement in strategic Policy ID3 (3) 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.'<sup>10</sup> GBC has not, at present, taken forward the SMC Supplementary Planning Document, however a significant amount of guidance regarding on-site provision on strategic sites is contained in the Strategic Development Framework SPD (2020) as well as some commentary on the options for providing off-site infrastructure.<sup>11</sup>
- 3.6 The SMC is included in the Guildford Borough Transport Strategy 2017 (Guildford Borough Council, December 2017),<sup>12</sup> which was a transport evidence base document for the Local Plan: Strategy and Sites.
- 3.7 The emerging Guildford borough Local Plan: Development Management Policies (LPDMP) includes draft Policy ID11: Achieving a Comprehensive Guildford Borough Cycle Network. This policy has been designed to facilitate the development of a high-quality cycle network which enhances and expands current provision.
- 3.8 The mapped network will be contained within the 'Policies Map' and has been developed by combining three evidence sources, Surrey County Council's (SCC) Guildford Local Cycling Plan (SCC, undated circa 2015), GBC's Guildford Route Assessments Feasibility Study (Transport Initiatives and Urban Movement, 2020) and the council's concept proposals for the routing of the SMC.
- 3.9 As well as the mapped network of routes, the Guildford Route Assessments Feasibility Study (Transport Initiatives and Urban Movement, 2020) contains tables (Tables 17-30) detailing proposed cycling improvements for the main routes identified. There is an element of crossover between the wider SMC route corridors and the core cycle routes proposed in this study. Figure 4, below, shows the proposed mapped network within the town.

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<sup>10</sup> Local Plan: A24 requirement (2), A25 requirement (4), A26 requirement (4), A4 requirements (1), (2) and (4), A6 requirements (1) and (4), A9 allocation and requirement (1), A10 requirement (4), A16 requirements (2) and (3), A17 requirements (2) and (3); and also relevant are A8 opportunity (2), A13 opportunity (4) and A28 opportunity (1).

<sup>11</sup> See para 3.3.6.

<sup>12</sup> Guildford Borough Transport Strategy 2017 (Guildford Borough Council, December 2017) pages 15-18

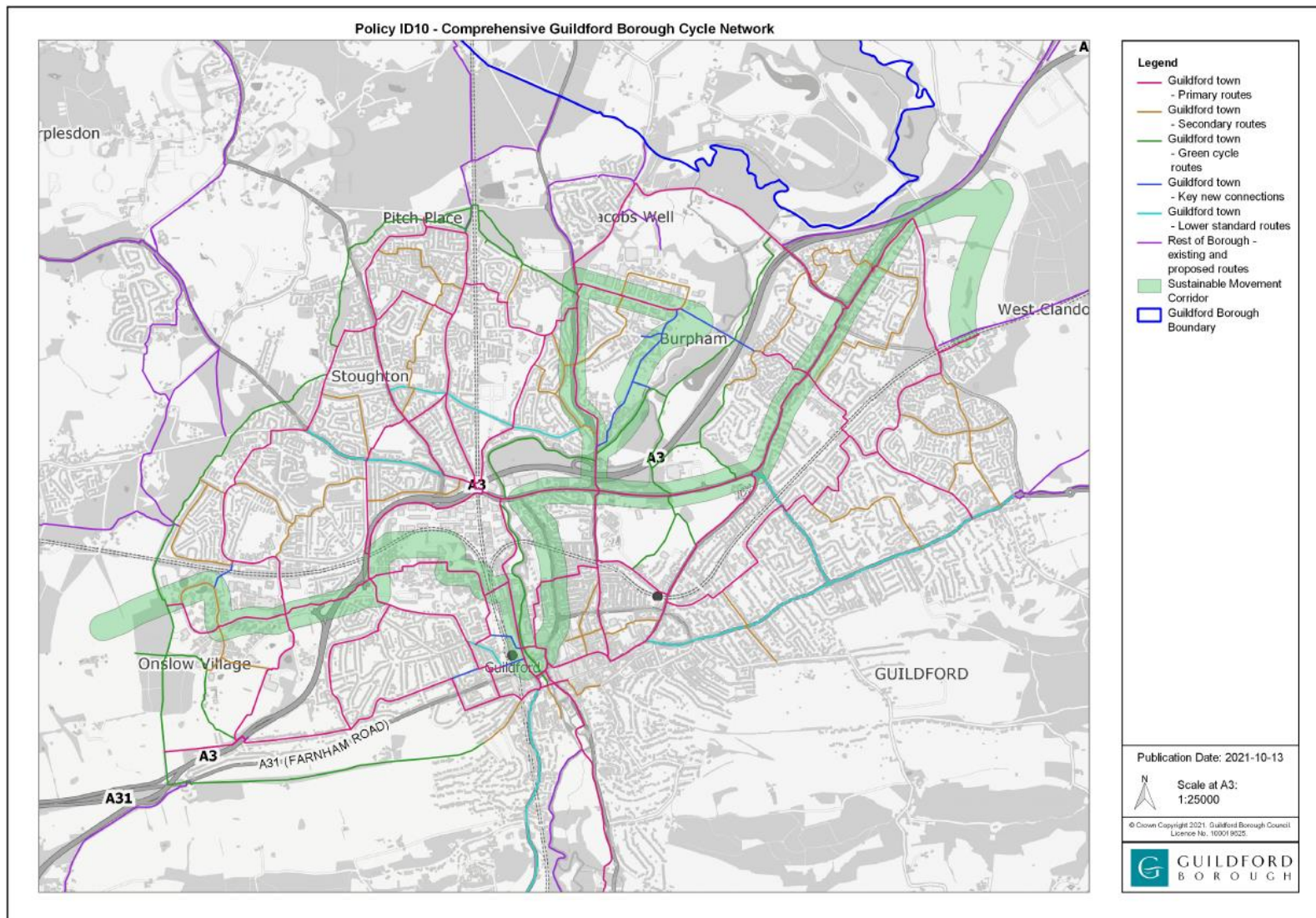


Figure 4. Mapped network within Guildford town as proposed in the draft LPDMP Policy ID10 (Source: LPDMP Regulation 19 consultation document, Appendix A (GBC, 2021))



#### **4 Fit with the ‘Guildford Economic Regeneration Programme’ masterplanning exercise**

- 4.1 The Guildford Economic Regeneration Programme (GERP) is designed to realise opportunities for potential development, including significant new housing, and deliver economic regeneration in Guildford town centre, with a focus on regeneration along the river corridor through the town centre.
- 4.2 The first stage of study focused on understanding the major challenges in the town centre surrounding flooding, traffic, transportation, opening up the riverside, and connecting our High Street with the historic Guildford Wharf. The Stage 1 Report of the Guildford Economic Regeneration Master Plan Strategy was endorsed by GBC’s Executive in May 2021.
- 4.3 The strategy supports many existing proposals, including the concept of the SMC to link key destinations in Guildford by a segregated or part-segregated route for buses, walking and cycling to promote accessibility to the town centre through modal shift to active modes and bus.<sup>13</sup>
- 4.4 Stage 2 outputs will include the development of concept Master Plan, stakeholder consultation, data collection, the preparation of a business case and preparation of grant applications. This work is ongoing and expected to be completed in July 2022. Stage 3 will follow from August 2022 to September 2023 and will include grant funding award & agreement, infrastructure planning submissions and a budget to be agreed.<sup>14</sup>

#### **5 Alignment with national, sub-national and county transport policies and strategies**

- 5.1 The design and delivery of the SMC aligns with multiple national, sub-national and county transport policy and strategy and supporting guidance documents. In terms of national policy, the SMC aligns with policy and guidance related to decarbonisation, active travel, bus infrastructure and improved connectivity, including better integration of land use planning and transport. The main documents of relevance are shown in Figures 5 to 7 below, albeit this list is not exhaustive as transport policy is also related to further policies and strategies focused on achieving economic, social and health outcomes.

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<sup>13</sup> Movement Strategy – Stage 1 Report, Guildford Economic Regeneration Programme (Markides Associates, 2021)

<sup>14</sup> Guildford Economic Regeneration Programme Master Plan Strategy, Executive Report (May 2021): para 3.3

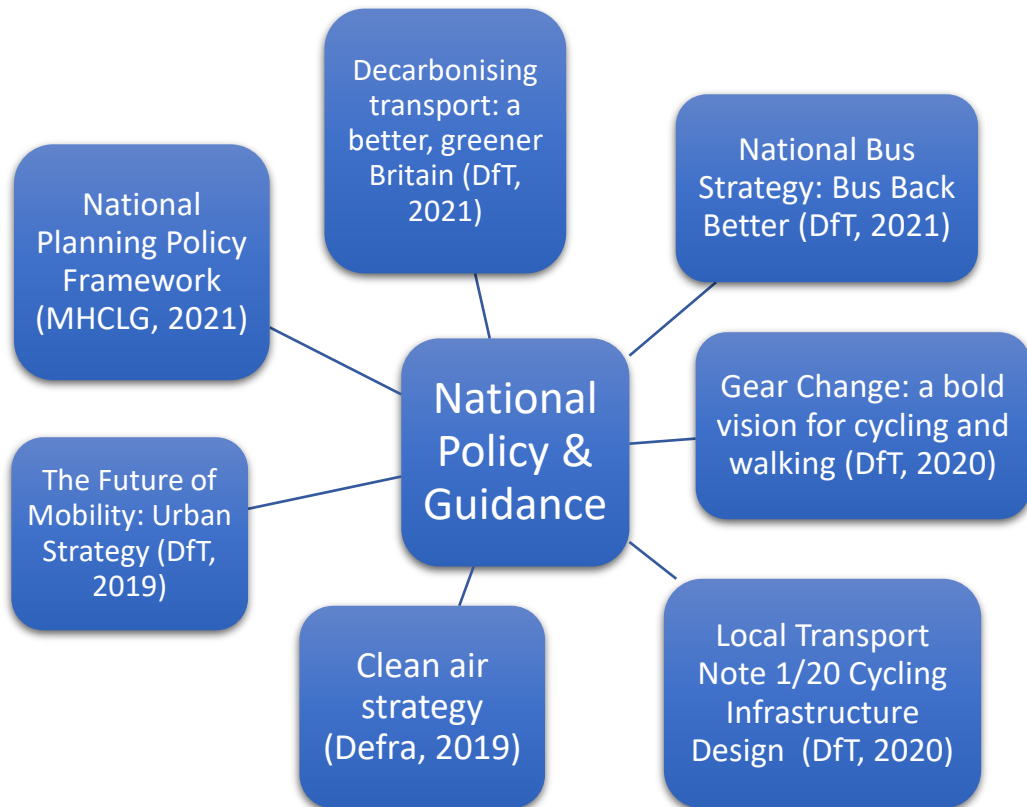


Figure 5. National policy and guidance

5.2 At a sub-national level, Transport for the South East have recently produced a Transport Strategy for the South East. The delivery of the SMC is consistent with the vision, strategic goals and priorities of the strategy. Many of the aspects of the SMC which have been delivered to-date have been part-funded by the Local Enterprise Partnership, Enterprise M3.



Figure 6. Sub-national policy and guidance

- 5.3 Finally, at a county level, the SMC would realise multiple ambitions of the forthcoming Local Transport Plan 4 including improving bus priority and providing an integrated, high quality cycle and footpath network which is designed to be safe, accessible, and attractive to all.

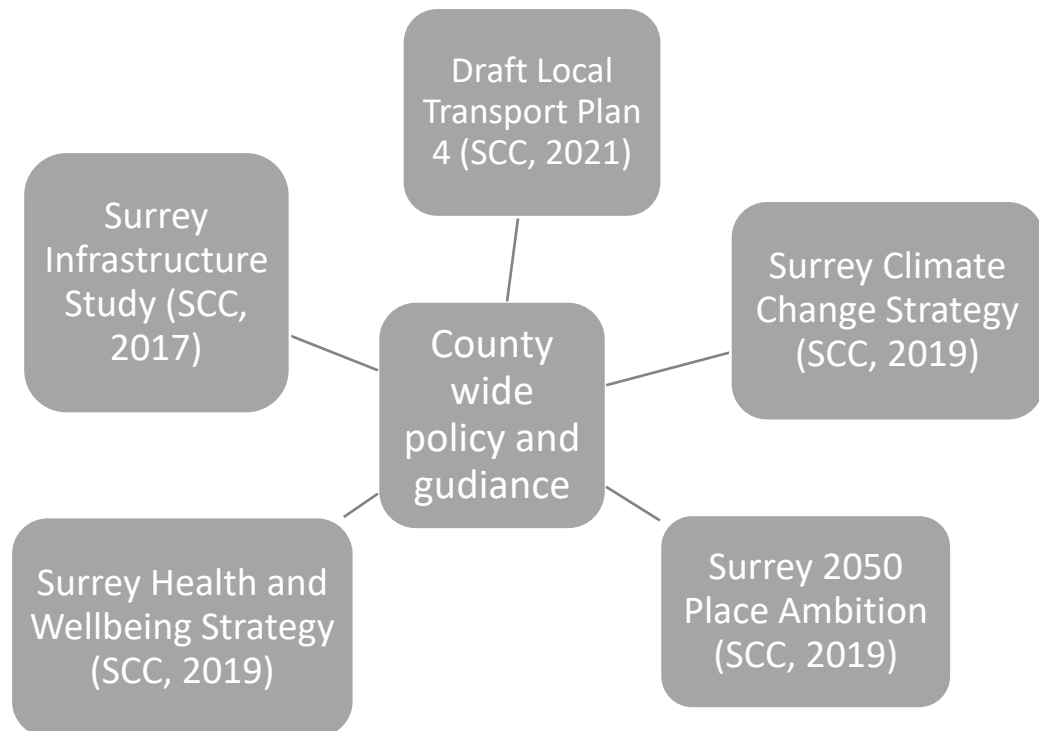


Figure 7. County wide policy and guidance

## 6 Design principles for the SMC

### On the Local Road Network

- 6.1 Depending on the location, and its opportunities and constraints, 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>15</sup>

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<sup>15</sup> This replaces initial design thinking contained in earlier notes.

- 6.2 [Local Transport Note 1/20 Cycling Infrastructure Design](#) (Department for Transport, 2020),<sup>16</sup> [Buses in Urban Developments](#) (Chartered Institution of Highways & Transportation, 2018)<sup>17</sup> and [Bus Services & New Residential Developments](#) (Stagecoach UK Bus, 2017)<sup>18</sup> provide best practice guidance in relation to the design of cycling and bus infrastructure respectively.

### **On the strategic sites**

- 6.3 During the preparation of GBC's Strategic Development Framework Supplementary Planning Document (SDF SPD), the SMC route design was conceptualised, as part of the wider master planning of the strategic sites. Figures 8 and 9, below, highlight how the SMC could be accommodated on the primary streets of the strategic sites and also at the site entrances.
- 6.4 GBC requires that segregated and continuous cycleways and generous pedestrian paths are to be provided on the primary streets of the strategic sites. With-flow cycle lanes are preferred over bidirectional provision on one side of the carriageway.
- 6.5 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.
- 6.6 The SDF allows that "consideration could be given to the potential for a route through the site to be provided for buses, separate from the primary street. This could utilise a series of secondary roads connected by bus gates or modal filters, so long as such a route provides good accessibility to the bus services."<sup>19</sup>
- 6.7 It is noted that in cases where it is agreed that there is significant uncertainty as to the need for and/or extent of such bus priority measures in future years, there is potential for the incorporation of a reserve strip allowing later provision to be implemented at agreed triggers if necessary.

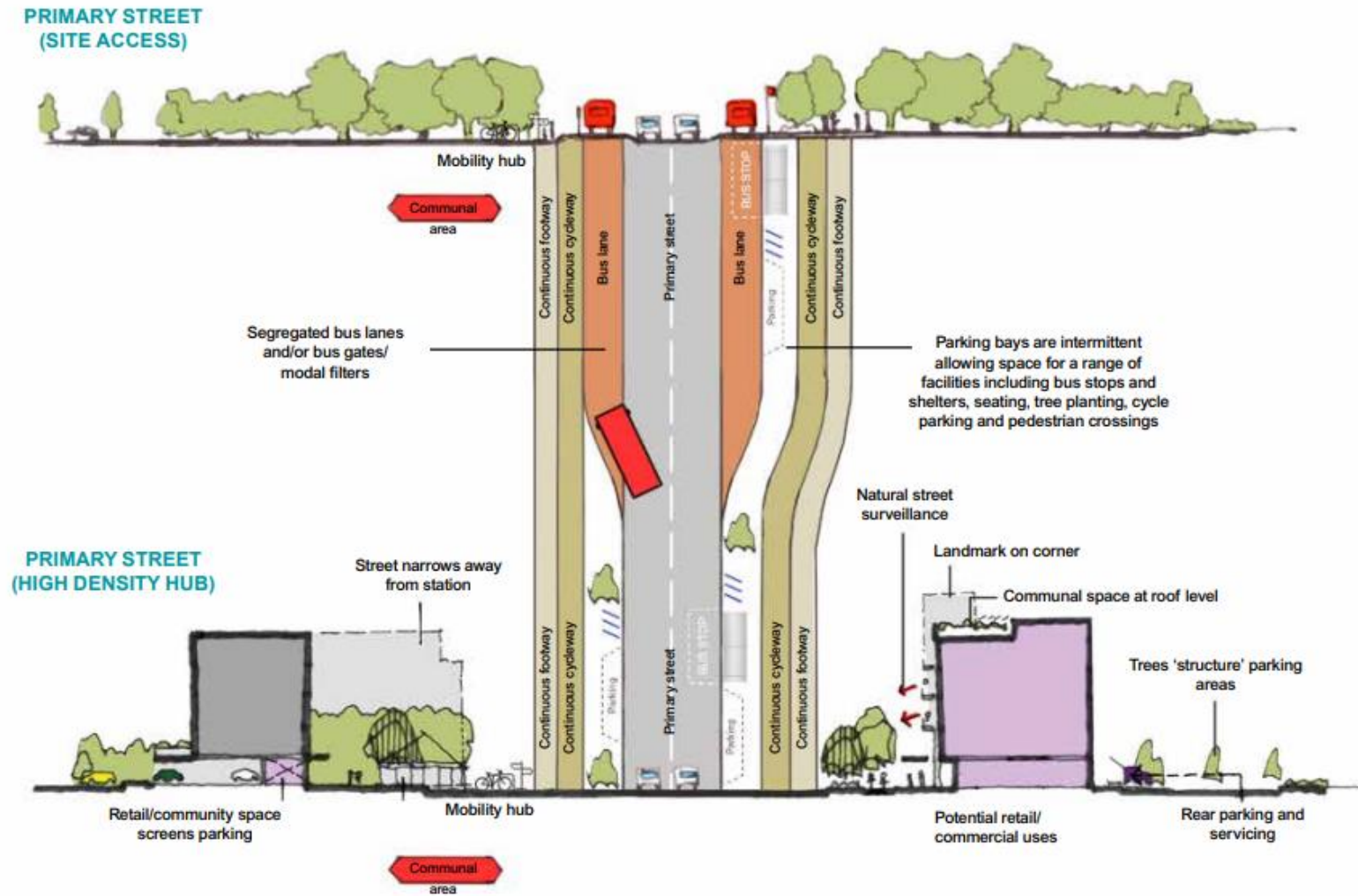
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<sup>16</sup> Available at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/cycle-infrastructure-design-ltn-120>. [Accessed 4/11/2021]

<sup>17</sup> Available at: [https://www.ciht.org.uk/media/4459/buses\\_ua\\_tp\\_full\\_version\\_v5.pdf](https://www.ciht.org.uk/media/4459/buses_ua_tp_full_version_v5.pdf). [Accessed 4/11/2021]

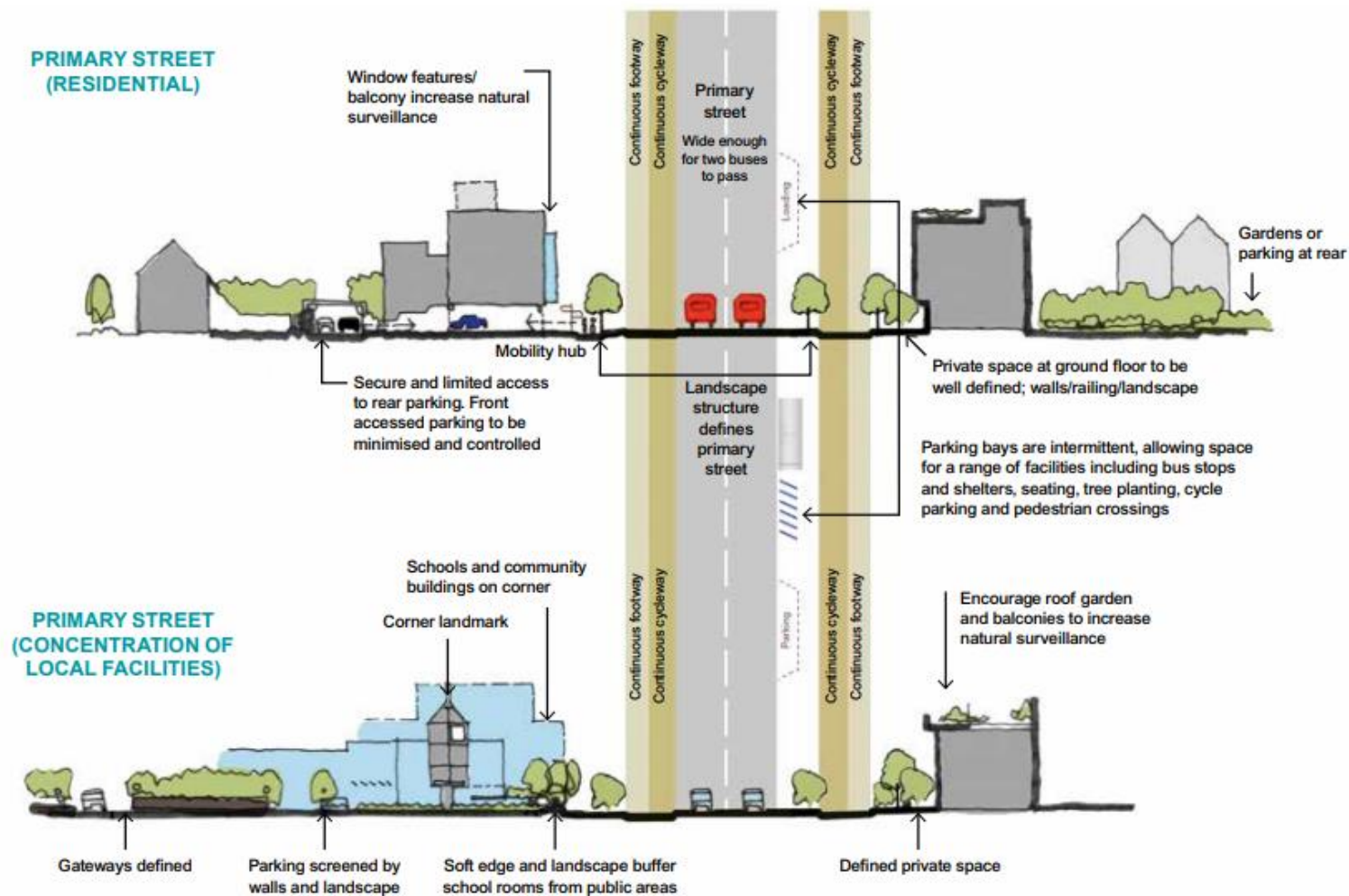
<sup>18</sup> Available at: [https://www.stagecoachgroup.com/~/\\_media/Files/S/Stagecoach-Group/Attachments/pdf/bus-services-and-new-residential-developments.pdf](https://www.stagecoachgroup.com/~/_media/Files/S/Stagecoach-Group/Attachments/pdf/bus-services-and-new-residential-developments.pdf). [Accessed 4/11/2021]

<sup>19</sup> Strategic Development Framework Supplementary Planning Document (Guildford Borough Council, 2020): para 3.3.30



Section 1: Primary street (site access and high density hub)

Figure 8. Conceptualisation of the SMC at site accesses and on the primary street of strategic sites (Source: SDF SPD, page 43 (GBC,2020))



Section 2: Primary street (residential and concentration of local facilities)

Figure 9. Conceptualisation of the SMC on the primary street of strategic sites (Source: SDF SPD, page 44 (GBC, 2020))

## **7 Status of scheme feasibility, design and construction**

7.1 The SMC is broken down into sections, these are:

- SMC1 West – Blackwell Farm to Guildford Park Road/Yorkies Bridge
- SMC2 Yorkie's Bridge
- SMC3 Town Centre Phase 1 – Guildford Park Road/Yorkie's Bridge to Stoke Crossroads
- SMC4 Town Centre Phase 2 – Yorkie's Bridge to Stoke Crossroads
- SMC5 North – Stoke Crossroads to Slyfield Industrial Estate/Weyside Urban Village
- SMC6 East – Stoke Crossroads to Gosden Hill Farm

7.2 In 2017 WYG prepared a preliminary designs at 1:500 scale for the SMC outside the Town Centre. This work included a review of the preliminary feasibility work previously undertaken on the SMC concept by a number of consultants commissioned by different clients. Draft reports for SMC5 and SMC6 route sections were also prepared in 2017, bringing together evidence on existing conditions, preferred options and other developments.

7.3 The focus then shifted to advancing the design proposals for the SMC1 West., in order to secure and then deliver SMC infrastructure here having made a successful bid to the Enterprise M3 LEP.

7.4 The following sections provide an update on progress on the various route sections.

### **SMC1 West – Blackwell Farm to Guildford Park Road/Yorkies Bridge**

7.5 Sections of the SMC1 West on the LRN have been taken forward to construction. These elements were phased and comprised of the following:

- Phase 1 – In April 2018, funding was secured from the Enterprise M3 LEP, supplementing a contribution from GBC. In 2019, a new shared use pedestrian and cycle path running through Bannister's Field, connecting the Royal Surrey Hospital with Tesco was completed, formalising an existing desire line.
- Phase 2A – In 2020, the existing path between Tesco and the University of Surrey was widened to 4-5m, depending on location, with a 3m width retained through the underpass, delineated to segregate pedestrians and cyclists.

- Phase 2B – This phase delivers pedestrian and bus stop improvements on Guildford Park Road at the back of Guildford Rail Station, making trips between the station and the University/ Hospital more attractive for pedestrians and cyclists. These are minor improvements which should be delivered in Spring 2022.
- Phase 3 – Proposals include the installation of traffic lights at Egerton Roundabout, bus lane improvements and a toucan crossing. Design work is being finalised to enable the scheme to be ready for future delivery should the required additional land be made available and funding secured.

7.6 It is expected that the Phase 1-2B schemes for the SMC1 West route section will be further enhanced by subsequent phases including those funded by developers.

### **SMC2 Yorkie's Bridge**

7.7 In 2015, Arup produced initial design work for the route of the SMC over a new Yorkie's bridge. The designs for a new Yorkie's bridge to provide for bus traffic (due to low traffic volumes it was proposed that the bridge would be single track, with signal control for oncoming buses), a segregated cycle track and footpath.

7.8 At the same time, Network Rail were approached and confirmed that there were no immediate plans to replace the bridge in Control Period 5 (2014-2019) or Control Period 6 (2019-2024). With the bridge solely open at present to foot traffic it is not presently understrength, so this asset would not be a priority for replacement. They confirmed the bridge would likely need a full replacement to make it suitable for bus loading due to the current width of the structure.

### **SMC3 Town Centre Phase 1 – Guildford Park Road/Yorkie's Bridge to Stoke Crossroads**

7.9 The SMC3 would utilise the southern section of Walnut Tree Close, which would be traffic calmed through the delivery of a one-way traffic restriction for motorists by SCC.

7.10 The one-way traffic restriction scheme on Walnut Tree Close aims to reduce the amount of traffic using the road, particularly vehicles that use the road as a through-route between the A25 and the gyratory. This one-way traffic restriction will permit only northbound traffic between Kernal Court and just south of the Royal Mail Delivery Office and Mail Centre on Walnut Tree Close.



- 7.11 A scheme was trialled from 29 November 2020 to the 17 February 2021. The trial utilised a window of time prior to the installation of the new Walnut Bridge (discussed below) and the redevelopment of Guildford Rail Station, both of which will result in the full and partial closure of Walnut Tree Close to motor traffic at various stages during construction. The trial also coincided with the second national lockdown during the Covid-19 pandemic, which resulted in a significant reduction of traffic flows and therefore limited the ability of SCC to assess the impacts of the trial. It is proposed to reinstate the trial after the bridge works and other closures on Walnut Tree have finished. It is planned that the monitoring of impacts will be undertaken when traffic returns to (post Covid-19) normal levels in order that the benefits and disbenefits of the one-way trial can be better understood.
- 7.12 During the trial, cyclists were able to continue to travel in both directions along the one-way trial section on Walnut Tree Close, benefiting from temporary on-street cycle lanes in both directions. Pedestrians continued to be able to walk in both directions on the existing footpaths, benefiting from the reduced amount of vehicular traffic, making it a safer environment.

#### **SMC4 Town Centre Phase 2 – Yorkie’s Bridge to Stoke Crossroads**

- 7.13 The implementation of the SMC4 will require development associated with site policies A4 and A9 as well as the replacement of Walnut Bridge and improvements along the LRN.
- 7.14 A planning application is expected to be submitted for the redevelopment of the current Jewsons’ site (Policy A4) in due course. The initial pre-app proposals include a route for the SMC for pedestrians and cyclists through the site, as is required by the site allocation, comprising of a bidirectional cycle route and footway between Yorkie’s bridge and Station View.
- 7.15 In terms of Policy A9 ‘Land for Sustainable Movement Corridor Town Centre Phase 2, off Walnut Tree Close, Guildford’, part of the current access road between the existing Yorkies Bridge and Walnut Tree Close appears to be unregistered with HM Land Registry. Given that this route is heavily used by pedestrians and cyclists and also provides customer access to a Jewson builders yard, it is assumed that there has been continuous use for a long period of time to the extent that there is an established right of way.
- 7.16 Construction work is ongoing to replace Walnut Bridge, providing a wider, safer bridge across the River Wey from Walnut Tree Close to Bedford Plaza and an improved route into the town centre for pedestrians and cyclists. The project was awarded Enterprise M3 LEP funding as part of the 'Unlocking Guildford, Guildford Town Centre Transport Package' in 2014.
- 7.17 An extension to the southbound bus lane on Woodbridge Road was delivered by SCC in 2021. The new section of bus lane runs southbound from the roundabout at Stocton Close to just north of the junction with Gardner Road. This significantly improves a major bus congestion point under the railway bridge, helping to improve bus journey times along this popular bus corridor into central Guildford. Whilst this project was not undertaken under the umbrella of the SMC, the bus lane improvements bring benefits to bus users along this corridor.

7.18 The existing off-road shared-use pedestrian and cycle facility along the A25 to Stoke Crossroads was improved as part of the Local Sustainable Transport Fund in 2014/15 and further as part of the Guildford Town Centre Transport Package in 2018/2019. However, these improvements were implemented prior to the release of Local Transport Note 1/20 Cycle Infrastructure Design and opportunity exists for further upgrades which would bring the infrastructure in line with this guidance.

### **SMC5 North – Stoke Crossroads to Slyfield Industrial Estate**

7.19 In October 2021, outline planning permission was approved for a mixed-use development known as Weyside Urban Village (WUV), subject to the objections of National Highways (NH) and the Local Highway Authority, SCC, being withdrawn. WUV is the main part of the Slyfield Area Regeneration Project (SARP), Policy A24 in the LPSS. Full planning permission was approved for the development of primary and secondary site accesses, internal access roads and associated landscaping.

7.20 As part of the project proposals, in line with Policy A24, the site will accommodate the northern section of the SMC on the spine road. This will include a bus gate at the northern section of the development to prevent through traffic.

7.21 A number of Planning Obligations have been identified to fund the on- and off-site infrastructure improvements required to mitigate the impact of development. This includes obligations to enter into a s278/s38 agreement with SCC to deliver the relevant parts of the SMC prior to commencement of the development of the phase in which the SMC sits. A pre-commencement condition requires that a detailed plan for full planning consent in relation to the spine road (which will include the SMC) will be submitted to and approved by GBC as the Local Planning Authority which includes, but is not limited to, the following:

- A managed 20mph speed and zone
- A minimum 3.5m wide cycle way not shared with the footway and segregated from the spine road carriageway
- Traffic calming measures to give pedestrian and cycle priority
- Junctions to side roads which maintain cycle routes across the junctions, and which require cars and other motorised vehicles to give way to pedestrians and cycles in compliance with LTN 1/20 and the revised Highway Code.

7.22 Improved walking and cycling routes and bus network improvements have been proposed off-site, including a new bridge crossing for pedestrians and cyclists over the River Wey.

## **SMC6 East – Stoke Crossroads to Gosden Hill Farm**

- 7.23 Various cycling facilities were implemented along the route of the SMC6, including advisory cycle lanes, a number of years ago. Some of these have been improved, in places, by SCC as the Local Highway Authority over the last decade and other improvements are now planned. Whilst these projects have not been undertaken under the umbrella of the SMC, the delivery of cycling infrastructure along this corridor is welcomed.
- 7.24 The existing off-road shared-use pedestrian and cycle facility along the A25 was improved as part of the Local Sustainable Transport Fund in 2014/15 and further as part of the Guildford Town Centre Transport Package in 2018/2019. Likewise, on-road advisory facilities exist for the majority, but not all, of the length of the A3100 London Road, supplemented by a parallel shared use path through Stoke Park and off-road shared use facilities at the likes of roundabouts. Proposals are currently being developed by SCC to improve these facilities, from the York Road junction to Boxgrove roundabout of London Road, as part of the Guildford Town Centre Transport Package.
- 7.25 Further to this, SCC have been awarded funding from the Department for Transport to implement segregated facilities along the A3100 London Road from Boxgrove Roundabout to Great Oaks Park. This has been funded from 'Tranche 2' of the Active Travel Fund, brought in after unprecedented levels of walking and cycling across the UK during the Covid-19 pandemic. The scheme proposals include the tightening of junction radii at side roads, a junction redesign to enable space for cyclists at the Woodruff Avenue roundabout alongside toucan crossings, three bus borders to accommodate safe passing for cyclists and boarding/alighting bus passengers and avoiding conflict with buses on this route, and the removal of guard railing where applicable. SCC proposes to complete this work in Spring 2022.
- 7.26 A further bid has been made to the DfT's Tranche 3 of the above fund for £458,750 to improve Boxgrove Roundabout. This will link the existing and forthcoming cycle route improvements described above, making this heavily used roundabout safer for cyclists. The funding announcement is expected in Autumn 2021.
- 7.27 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 opportunity exists for further improvements to be made, for example road space reallocation to replace shared use paths, or improved crossings.
- 7.28 The improvement of these links helps provide, to various degrees, a safe, direct and continuous link between Burpham, George Abbott School (approx. 2000 pupils), Spectrum Leisure Complex, Guildford College and a host of retail and employment sites around Ladymead, Middleton Industrial Estate, Guildford Business Park and Cathedral Hill Industrial estate. Likewise, these improvements will complement the existing facilities and proposed improvements along the A3100 London Road link to London Road Station, Guildford High School and the upper end of the town centre.

7.29 In future, a development at Gosden Hill Farm would provide the route of the SMC6 through the strategic site, provide and/or contribute to the connection required between the development and the existing infrastructure and could contribute to the further upgrade of these cycle links and the implementation of bus infrastructure improvements.

## **8 Future focus and funding opportunities**

- 8.1 The SMC has been identified by GBC's Executive in August 2021 as one of the key schemes likely to be critical to Local Plan delivery. It was noted that the SMC '...is also considered to be a high priority in the absence of the A3 through Guildford scheme (SRN1). Again, it will be critical to manage down the amount of traffic generated by the strategic sites at Blackwell Farm, Gosden Hill and Weyside Urban Village to make them sustainable communities that are not reliant on car-based trips using the A3.'<sup>20</sup>
- 8.2 The identification of the SMC as one of the five priority schemes assists GBC in promoting this scheme in discussions with SCC and NH and other parties such as Transport for the South East on transport infrastructure priorities. It will also assist in terms of lobbying central Government for funding towards the SMC as well as assuring that S106 contributions are made, when appropriate, as planning applications come forward, or that the Council can justify imposing a Grampian condition restricting the amount of development that can come forward in the absence of necessary SMC elements.
- 8.3 An option is to work together with external bodies to design, cost, bid for and deliver bus priority and roadside infrastructure for the SMC – which could support both modal shift and growth particularly for the urban extensions as an ambitious bus priority scheme. This would be complemented by investment by the strategic site developers including in a new Park and Ride facility at the Gosden Hill Farm urban extension.
- 8.4 The SMC was identified in SCC's Initial List of schemes to be assessed using the Surrey Infrastructure Plan Prioritisation Framework in February 2021 however the project was not taken forward as part of the initial list of Category 1-3 schemes presented for SCC Cabinet approval in October 2021. There is potential for the forthcoming Guildford Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan (a planned Category 2 scheme in the Surrey Infrastructure Schedule) to design and provide funding for the walking and cycling elements of the SMC. The improvement of Boxgrove roundabout, detailed at para 7.27 above, is included as a Category 2 scheme in the Cabinet report.<sup>21</sup>

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<sup>20</sup> Priority List of Highway and Transport Schemes Critical to Local Plan Delivery. Executive Report (August 2021): para 3.24. Available at: <https://democracy.guildford.gov.uk/documents/s21534/Item%2006%20-%20Highway%20and%20Transport%20Schemes%20Critical%20to%20Local%20Plan%20Delivery%20-%20Executive%20Committee%20Report.pdf> [Accessed 17/11/21]

<sup>21</sup> 'Surrey Infrastructure Plan- Phase 1 Schemes' – Report to SCC Cabinet 26/11/2021: Annex 2

- 8.5 SCC's draft Bus Service Improvement Plan (October 2021), submitted to the Department for Transport (stemming from requirements as part of the National Bus Strategy: Bus Back Better), includes the 'Guildford + Woking (incl. environs) Bus Priority Programme' which will involve 'junction improvements, bus lanes, intelligent bus priority at traffic signals, bus friendly traffic management; **A25 Epsom Road; town centre - University/Research Park corridor (SMC1); A320/A322/A323/A246/A247/A3100/A25/A31** corridors; all bus services to/through Guildford and Woking' [bold added to define SMC related projects].<sup>22</sup>

## 9 Conclusion

- 9.1 The SMC remains a high priority for the Council and will be important in realising more sustainable patterns of movement on foot, by bicycle and by bus, helping accommodate future growth, as well as tackling existing congestion issues and other externalities including air pollution. The Council declared a climate emergency in July 2019 and is committed to work with partners to become a net-zero carbon borough by 2030. Given air quality limit value exceedances in Guildford Town Centre, on the A3 and with three Air Quality Management Areas declared, there is a need to accelerate the delivery of infrastructure for active and sustainable modes working with partners to achieve this.
- 9.2 The full build out of the West, North and East sections of the SMC are dependent on the strategic sites, with parts of the SMC being delivered on the sites themselves. Therefore, the timing of the full implementation of the SMC is dependent on those developments where they are be required to deliver or contribute to sections of the SMC, and as set out in the site policies in the Local Plan.
- 9.3 However, given the increased importance of the delivery of a strategic walking and cycling network (including the inclusion of Policy ID10: Achieving a comprehensive Guildford Borough Cycle Network as part of the emerging Local Plan: Development Management Policies), supplemented by enhanced bus infrastructure, it is clear that scope exists to deliver sections of this network prior to the delivery of the strategic sites.
- 9.4 The indicative routes which comprise the SMC are typically arterial routes, or parallel routes, which provide direct and convenient connections to, from and between a range of trip generators and attractors. Whilst the delivery of the SMC is vital to mitigate against potential increased trip generation as a result of population growth, multiple benefits for existing residents, staff and visitors can be realised through investment infrastructure for sustainable modes.

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<sup>22</sup> Surrey County Council BSIP, Bus Service Improvement Plan for Surrey (Atkins, 2021): page 31