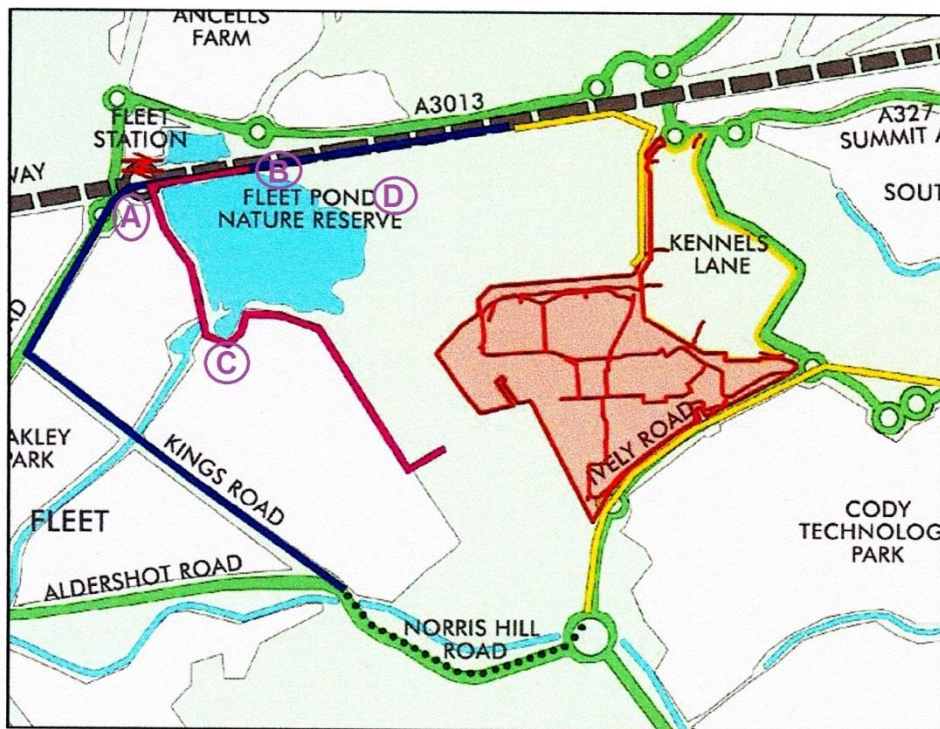


PLANNING COMMITTEE
DATE OF MEETING: 24 AUGUST 2017
PLANNING APPLICATION: 17/00471/OUT
HARTLAND PARK, BRAMSHOT LANE, FLEET, GU51 2SF

Impact on Fleet Pond Nature Reserve footpaths of the proposed cycle route linkages.
 Map extract from the officers' report. Paper B. Routes coded.



Layout 14: Proposed cycleway linkages

The red routes shown on the extract map, where they follow the margins of the open water, are on the narrowest and most restricted existing footpaths. There is no option to widen these paths.

Along the railway embankment A to B on the map, the path is constrained by the embankment on one side and the SSSI pond on the other. The footpath along the residential side from Chestnut Grove to the Fleet Station car park access, A to C on the map, is constrained by the drainage ditch, private gardens and Waterfront Business Park on one side and SSSI wetland on the other. As will be seen by the table below of recorded footfall from 2016, these paths are already very heavily used by the public. To propose that these paths can accommodate an increase in use, particularly by cyclists, is to introduce further conflict with existing users.

Footfall records 2016

2016	January	February	March	April	May	June
Chestnut Grove: main residential path A to C	9067	10228	11863	13113	15022	13063
Outflow: railway embankment A to B	9648	9770	11581	12225	13914	12826

	July	August	September	October	November	December
Chestnut Grove: main residential path A to C	17932	20852	15017	13567	9740	11241

Outflow: railway embankment A to B	18383	20808	15098	13398	9736	11734
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This imposes a serious increase in use that these footpaths could not accommodate.

Regarding the potential impact on the eastern side of Fleet Pond one only has to look at the damage incurred to date by walkers and bike riders on the sandy banks between the upper and lower paths. Crushed vegetation dies and the open soils erode, exposing tree roots. Eventually trees die. This can only be worsened by more people originating from 1,500 new houses within an easy walking and riding distance. The proposed cycle way will introduce people to the reserve and encourage its use for leisure in addition to use as a cycle route to Fleet and Fleet Station.



As can be seen from the following table of footfall records from 2016, the path along the eastern side of Fleet Pond, where the sand banks support some of our oldest trees, these footpaths have the highest level of public use. Most of these banks once supported an increasing population of bluebells. Only bracken and bramble survive this high level of trampling.

		January	February	March	April	May	June
Lower eastern path B - D		13385	13473	4619	9172	17876	6982
July	August	September	October	November	December		
19494	21642	10740	11597	12097	14974		

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