

Horsham's Missing Link

Making the Horsham to Crawley cycle route safe for all

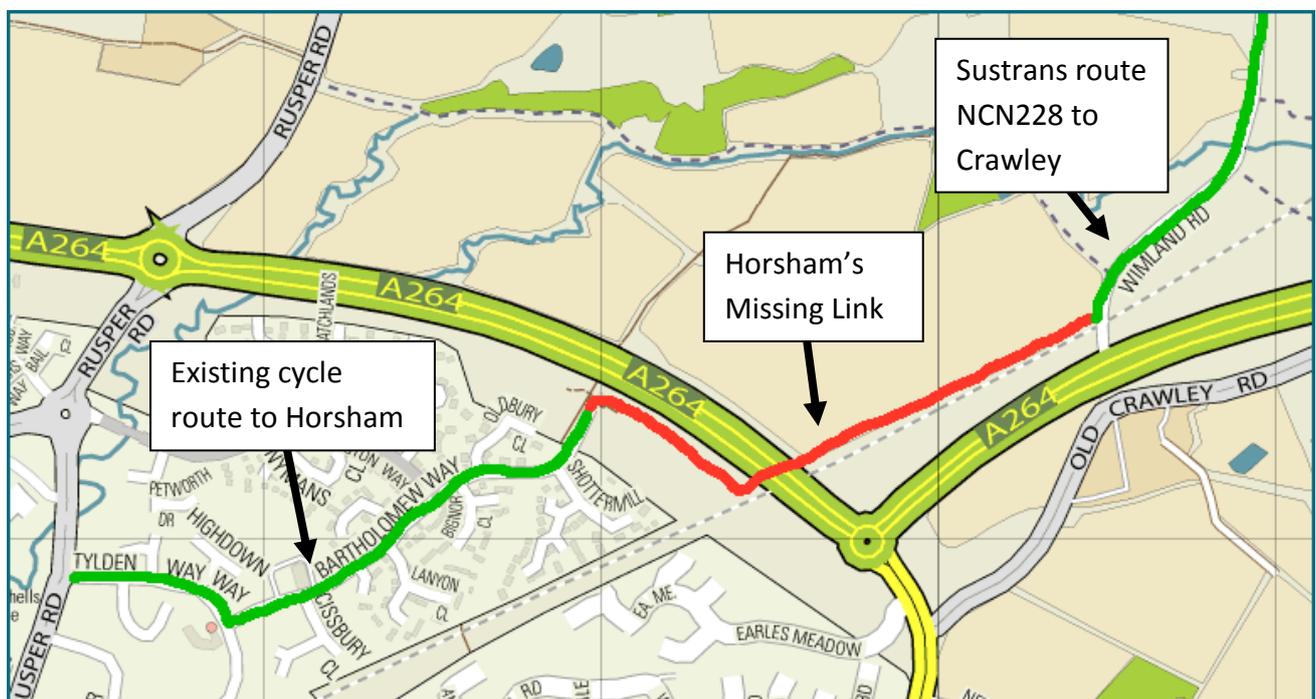
The cycle route between Horsham and Crawley potentially offers a safe and convenient route for people on bikes. This largely off-road route is direct enough for commuters yet also provides a pleasant leisure route for families and children to enjoy the beautiful Sussex countryside.

The route is especially important since there is no alternative direct access to Crawley except by riding along a busy dual carriageway (the A264/A2220) which has no safe provision for cyclists.

Although the route is largely complete, there is a critical gap just north of Horsham where it has to cross the Horsham bypass (A264), effectively preventing the route from being used.

Currently the only options for crossing the bypass are to cycle across the Rusper Road roundabout or to use the unmarked crossing at Wimland Road and the Old Crawley Road. Both these crossings are extremely dangerous. A report commissioned by West Sussex County Council describes crossing the A264 as an "almost total deterrent".

With the increasing awareness of the health benefits that cycling brings, and the demand for the freedom to choose sustainable transport options, it is now time to complete the route – and fix Horsham's Missing Link!



Background

The Horsham to Crawley cycle route was set up as part of West Sussex County Council's Quiet Roads and Greenways Project, with the twin aims of providing a safe route between the two towns and of linking with other strategic cycle/leisure routes in the area such as the Downs Link and the Worth Way.

The underpass under the A264 railway bridge was identified as long ago as 2001 in a study commissioned by WSCC¹ as providing a vital link in the Horsham to Crawley cycle route.

The A264 underpass

Under the A264 railway there is an existing path between the bridge wall and the railway fence. This currently forms part of the alternative footpath to the at-grade crossing on the road above.

**The underpass
looking north**



An example of a similar cycle underpass can be seen to the west of Horsham by the Rookwood golf course. This well-used crossing under the A24 provides access out of Horsham to the west and the village of Warnham.

Benefits of the route

Safety Two recent fatalities on our roads (one in January 2015 on Kerves Lane and the other at Beare Green on the A24 the previous November) highlight the dangers of cycling on busy roads.

¹ Horsham-Crawley: Quiet Roads and Greenways Route - A study by Sustrans for WSCC October 2001

The road network around Horsham has little or no provision for people on bikes and as a consequence actively discourages cycling. This safe and attractive route away from busy roads makes cycling a realistic transport and leisure choice for people of all ages and abilities.

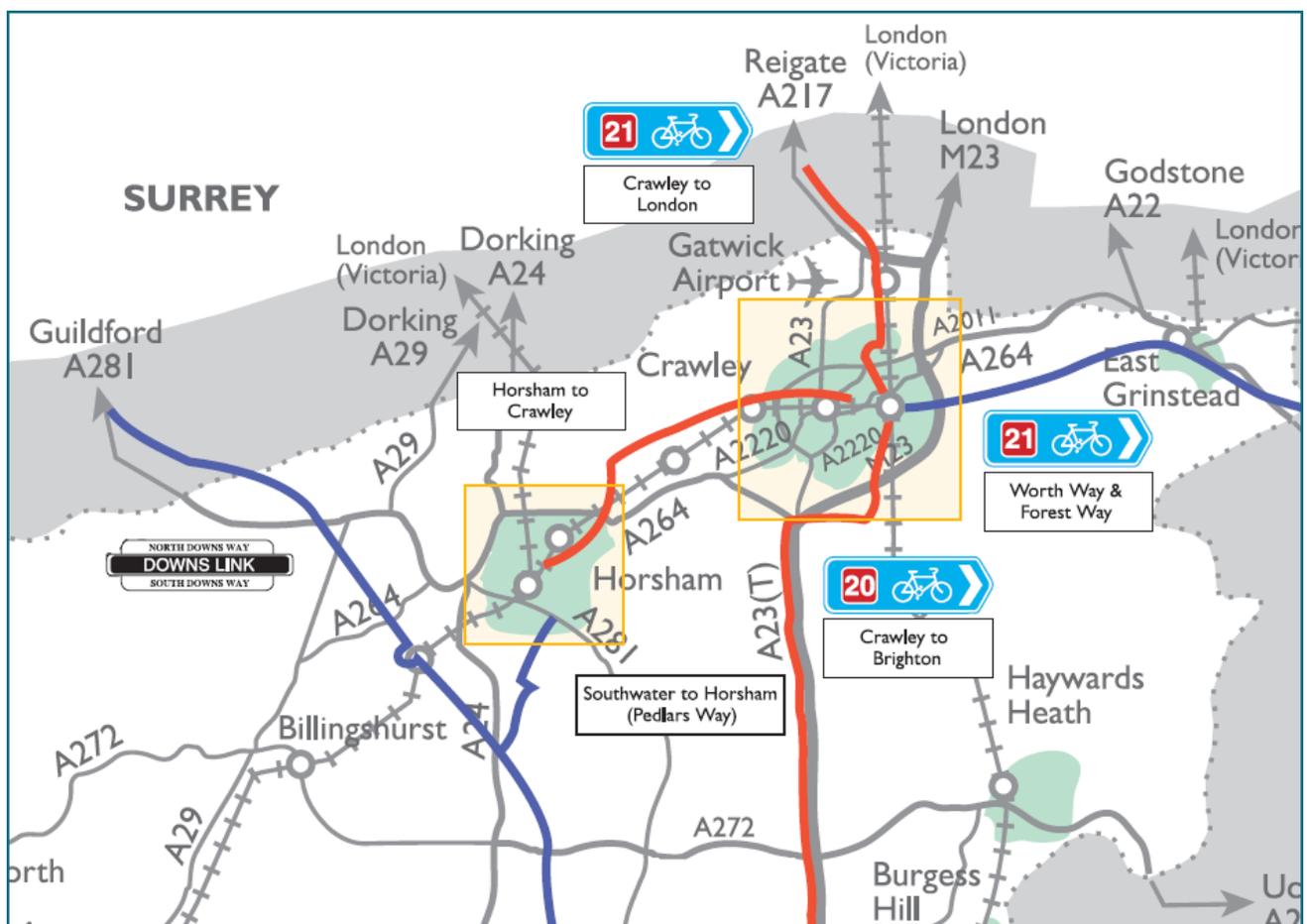
Health The health benefits of regular exercise are well known. In these days of increasing obesity we need to provide people with easy access to safe and pleasant environments for exercise. The whole population will be able to use this route, which provides access to a network of off-road routes and quiet lanes for both walking and cycling.

Economic This route will connect Horsham to a largely traffic-free network of cycle paths leading to and from Crawley, and onwards to London and places like East Grinstead, thereby increasing the number of tourists coming to Horsham. It will improve employment opportunities by making it possible for more people to cycle to work.

Links to the wider cycle network

The Horsham to Crawley route links with popular cycle routes such as Sustrans Route 20 to Brighton, Route 21 to London, the Worth Way and the Downs Link.

Providing a continuous route from Crawley through Horsham to the highly popular Downs Link (and onwards to the south coast) positions Horsham with its burgeoning restaurant culture as an ideal stopping-off point.



Route details

The route is accessed from the south via the existing on-road cycle route along Tylden Way and Bartholomew Way. The start of the new section at the eastern end of Bartholomew Way will need to follow a defined bitmac (bitumen-macadam) path on the western side of the car park by the side of Roffey Football Club.

The path by the football clubhouse



The bridge over the stream will need to be widened to accommodate shared use. The path turns right and follows the stream, parallel to the bypass. There is ample space for a 3m wide bitmac path to the underpass. The path here is overgrown with many young, dead or fallen trees which will need to be cleared to provide safe access and to reduce leaf fall on the path. Being close to the stream, this section will also need good drainage. The path is particularly muddy here and is almost impassable in winter.

The path south of the underpass



The path under the bypass is 2m wide and is defined by the bridge wall and the fence on the track side. It should be bitmac surfaced and lighting should be provided under the bridge to enhance safety.

To the north the route will connect up with Wimland Road and the Sustrans route to Crawley. The path will follow the edge of the field where there is ample space for a 3m bitmac path. There will need to be new bridge over the culvert. Stock-proof fencing may be required on the western side of the path.

The path will need to meet guidelines² for a busy shared-use route and be a minimum of 3m width to allow unsegregated shared use by walkers and cyclists and be of bitmac construction to provide a year-round all-weather surface. There should be no gates or barriers, which prevent the disabled and those with non-standard bikes (tandems, tag-a-longs, trailers etc.) from using the path.

Improved access to the Riverside Walk

Part of the new section of the route shares a path with the Horsham Riverside Walk. Opening up access to the underpass will allow more people to use the Horsham Riverside Walk.

The Horsham Town Community Partnership aims to improve the trail, give it wider prominence and attract local people (as well as those from further afield). Providing a well-drained durable all-weather surface is crucial in achieving that aim.

Approaching the underpass from the south



² http://www.sustrans.org.uk/sites/default/files/images/files/Route-Design-Resources/Sustrans_handbook_for_cycle-friendly_design_11_04_14.pdf

Maintenance

To ensure the safety of all path users and make best use of the good quality surface the path must be regularly maintained, including clearing the drainage ditches.

The full width of the path will need to be regularly cleared of fallen leaves to maintain the path width and to keep the surface from becoming slippery.

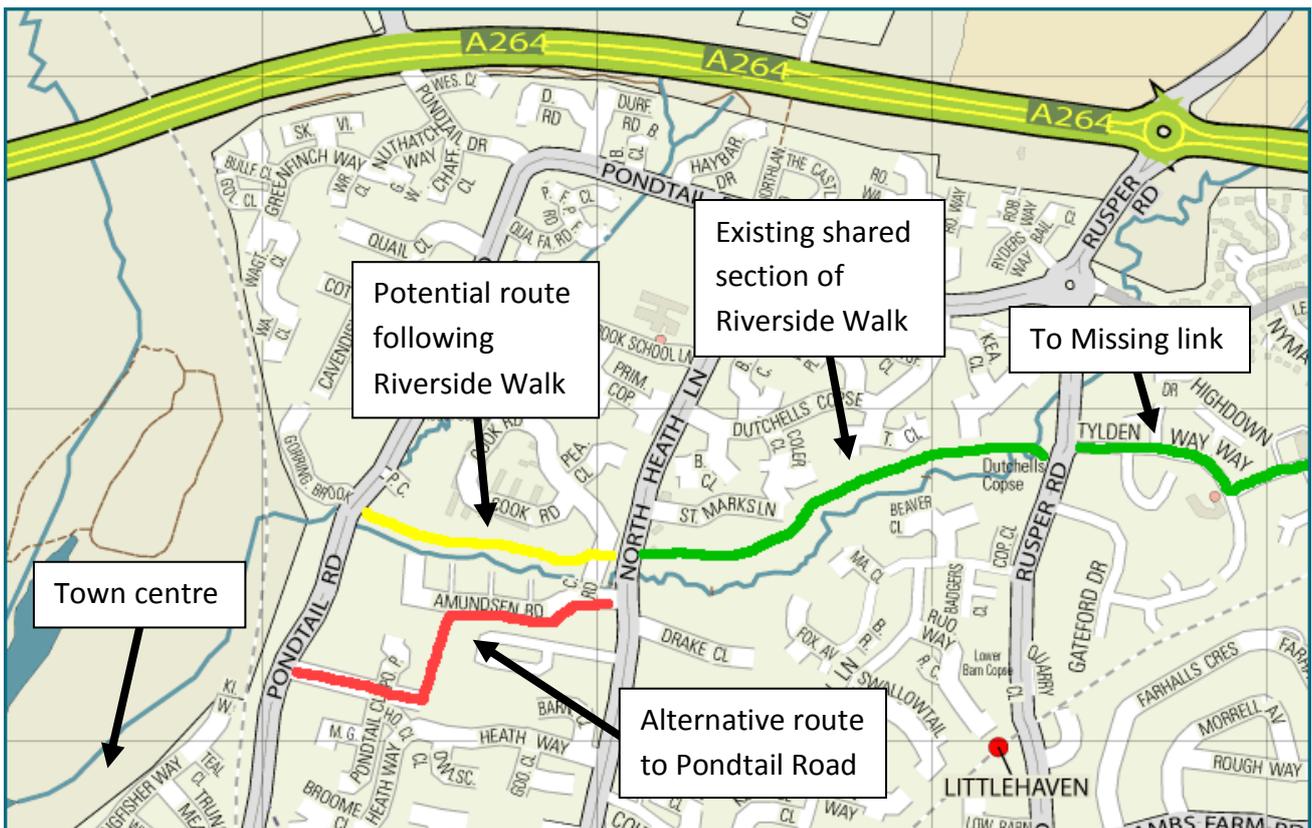
Trees will need to be kept cut back, and overhanging branches will need to be regularly trimmed. Low hanging branches present a particular danger since peoples on bikes typically need more height than when on foot.

Linking to Horsham town centre

Approaching Horsham from the north along Bartholomew Way there are various options for reaching the town centre, for example along Rusper Road and King's Road.

The preferred option is to use part of the Riverside Walk, a traffic-free semi-rural corridor through this built up area of North Horsham. The section from Rusper Road to North Heath Lane (shown in green on the map below) is already a well-used informal cycle route that needs some improvement to meet guidelines for shared use.

The section from North Heath Lane to Pondtail Road (yellow) would also need improvements to accommodate bikes. An alternative route (red) could be signed along Amundsen Road/Pondtail Close. From Pondtail Road the route will follow the existing signed cycle route into Horsham town centre.



Supporting Horsham's Missing Link

If you would like any further information please get in touch.

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