

DC/13/1412, Site at Station Yard, Christ's Hospital: Comment from Horsham District Cycling Forum

1) Provision of the Downlink 'Missing Link'

This is very welcome indeed.

We would like to know further details of the design of the path (widths, construction, avoiding conflict with pedestrians etc) and how cyclists (including the disabled, the elderly, children and riders with non-standard bikes) will cross the railway line in safety.

2) Cycle Access to Christ's Hospital Station

Christ's Hospital station is within easy cycling distance of Southwater, Broadbridge Heath, the West of Horsham developments and the planned development (DC/14/0590) in Southwater. However, cycle access is poor because of indirect or intimidating roads and muddy paths.

Making it easy and attractive for people to cycle to Christ's Hospital station and park their bikes there will reduce car journeys, congestion and pollution; free up car parking space for those who need it; improve access to employment and leisure opportunities for those without the use of a car and provide health benefits.

In addition to introducing parking restrictions on nearby roads (not just Station Rd), the following measures could enable a significant increase in cycling to the station:

a) An improved cycle route from Southwater via the Downlink

This is a direct and traffic-free route. The issues are:

- The surface is unsealed with mud, bumps and puddles so that in winter or wet weather cyclists get covered in mud –OK for a summer leisure ride, but not for a winter trip to the office or shops. Sustrans recommends a sealed surface for sections of routes that are used by utility cyclists. See also comments in Southwater Cycle Network Review, 2009.
- In the centre of Southwater, the access to the Downlink is poorly signed, confusingly laid out and intimidating: see Southwater Cycle Network Review 2009. Improvements would make cycling a more visible and welcoming option.
- Good, well-signed access points will be also needed to link with the West of Worthing Rd development, DC/14/0590.



Downlink – too muddy for utility cycling



Unwelcoming access to the Downlink at Southwater village centre

b) An improved cycle route from north Southwater via Bridleways 1662 and 1642

These bridleways potentially form a useful direct route from the north of Southwater cutting the distance down from 4.1 miles to 1.8 miles and avoiding busy roads. Much of the route is already paved but two short sections are currently unusable by ordinary leisure cyclists and commuting cyclists due to the mud, rough surface and, especially, the stream that is currently flowing along the central section of the path. (For further details, see comment on application DC14/0590, below.)



Current bridleway condition unsuitable for cycling

c) An improved cycle route from Broadbridge Heath and West of Horsham

There are no good on-road routes; this makes off-road cycle routes especially important.

Mill Lane Bridleway BP1630 goes south from Broadbridge Heath to join the Downlink and, if the 'missing link' is provided as proposed in DC/13/1412, there will be direct access to the west of the station; this will make trips to and from Broadbridge Heath and safer than using Christ's Hospital Road. Much of bridleway BP1630 has already been resurfaced, but the Downlink itself and the section of BP1630 north of the existing A264 are still muddy.

[NB Any opportunity to create a new path between the station and the existing A24 underpass (for example if changes are made to the layout of the sewage farm) would make Christ's Hospital station much more accessible from both the Quadrant and the 'Land East of the A24' development.]

d) Additional convenient, covered and secure cycle parking at Christ's Hospital station, ideally on the west side as well as the east.

It is important to have enough convenient, covered and secure cycle parking to accommodate the increased number of cyclists.

The cycle racks should be placed close to the station entrance, ideally on the west side of the station as well.



Current cycle parking is covered, secure and close to the station entrance, but additional spaces will be needed.

Many bikes can fit in the same space as a single car:



3) Safe Cycle routes to school

The Transport Assessment says:

The application site is within the catchment of the Itchingfield Primary School which is currently located on two sites. The infant school is approximately one mile to the west of Christ's Hospital. The school is located away from any settlement and walking or cycling to the school is unlikely to be a realistic option for the age of pupil attending. The junior section of the school is located in Barns Green and a planning application has recently been approved to consolidate the school into this single site.

There are three secondary schools in Horsham, two of which are located in the centre of the town.

We are most concerned at the developer's assumption in relation to Itchingfield school that it is 'unrealistic' for young children to walk or cycle one mile to school - a distance easily covered in 10 minutes by bike or 30 minutes on foot (at a slow pace).

If all we do is to plan for car journeys of such a short distance we will only increase car dependency. However, if we make cycling an attractive alternative, then people will choose to leave their cars at home more often.

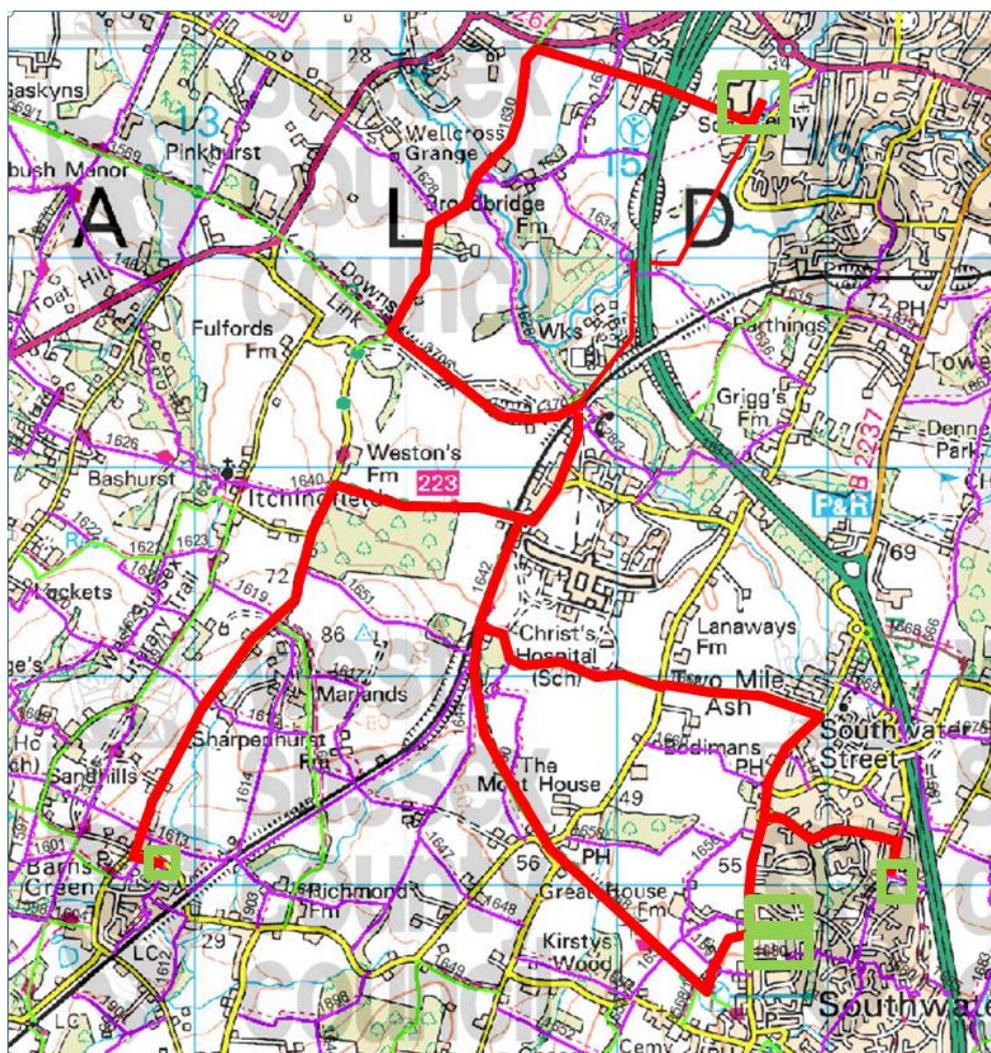
Work has already started on the new single-site school so, by the time any new houses are built at Christ's Hospital, children will actually need to get to Barns Green -but it will still be a distance of less than 2 ½ miles along country lanes. This takes around 15 minutes for an adult carrying a child on the bike. An assessment of the route (including evaluating the use of BP1597/1 as an alternative to Plumtree Cross Lane), should be carried out and any particular issues should be dealt with, for example by traffic calming measures.

The three primary schools in Southwater are also about 2 ½ miles away by bike using bridleways; these need surfacing improvements as described in the comments on DC14/0590, below. Part of the route to Castlewood School follows one of the 'Southwater Red Routes' which, although built to the standards required for cycling, are not yet signed and have no official rights of way.

The distance by road to Tanbridge House secondary school is about 3 miles, but using the 'missing link' and Mill Lane BP1630 it is a little shorter and the route is entirely off-road. The exact route will depend on the rights of way in the Quadrant area.

[NB It would be shorter still to use the existing A24 underpass -if there is any opportunity to build a path between the station and the sewage works. This option is shown on the map with a thinner red line.]

Development of safe cycle routes to the local primary and secondary schools and should be a planning condition. A section 106/CIL contribution should be sought towards the necessary works.



Potential cycle routes to schools from proposed development at Station Yard.

DC/14/0590: Comment from Horsham District Cycling Forum: Bridleways 1662 and 1642 linking Worthing Rd, Southwater with Downlink

The proposed West of Worthing Rd development, DC/14/0590, will cause additional traffic on the local road network and increase the demand for parking at Christ's Hospital station.

These bridleways between the north of Southwater and the station at Christ's Hospital potentially provide a short, attractive, healthy and safe off-road cycle route for commuters, making cycling a real alternative to using the car.

However, at present two short sections of the route are not usable for year-round commuter cycling because of the wet, rough and muddy conditions - including a stream running along the centre of BP1662.

The Horsham District Cycling Forum would like to see drainage and maintenance works and the installation of a sealed all-weather surface to current standards (LTN2/08, LTN1/12, Sustrans). Since this infrastructure need is significantly increased by the proposed development DC/14/0590, a Section 106 / CIL contribution should be sought for this work.



Distance via bridleways: 1.8 miles

Distance via road (Worthing Rd, Church La, Two Mile Ash, Christ's Hospital Rd): 4.1 miles

Red rings show sections that need improving

National Planning Policy Framework, March 2012: “The transport system needs to be balanced in favour of sustainable transport modes, giving people a real choice about how they travel.”

Policy DEV3, West Sussex Structure Plan 2001-2016: [New development should not be permitted unless the on-site and off-site infrastructure needs it creates \(including facilities and services\) are met, and it does not impose costs on the existing residents or businesses of West Sussex.](#)

Current condition of route:

BP1662 has a stream flowing along the middle section. From the vegetation, it appears to have been like this for some time.

Stream emerges from hedgerow here:



The ripples on the surface show that the water is flowing even though the picture was taken on a dry day:





Typical rough and muddy surface condition elsewhere along BP1662



Muddy surface of BP1642 just East of Downslink – needs improvement for year-round commuter cycling

Good surface on BP1642 at Christ’s Hospital School





Current parking around the station



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12/04/2014