

# A Guildford to Godalming Greenway

## Executive Summary

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Surrey Cycling Strategy 2014-2026 sets out a vision to *get more people in Surrey cycling, more safely*<sup>1</sup>. It presents the broad plan for achieving this and invites local involvement to contribute to the detailed, area specific plans<sup>2</sup>.

This document has been prepared by The Guildford Bicycle Users Group (G-Bug) and Godalming Cycle Campaign (GCC) to propose a coherent plan for the development of a greenway in the River Wey corridor to the south of Guildford. The two groups wholeheartedly support the vision of the Surrey Cycling Strategy and have endeavoured, in this plan, to deliver many of its specific goals.

The creation of a continuous 'greenway' route from the centre of Guildford to Godalming is proposed. This spine will join up many shorter routes to shops, schools and other important destinations to create a local network. An extension to Milford is proposed from where it would be possible to continue to Elstead and beyond. The vision is to provide a route that a wide variety of users could comfortably share including pedestrians, cyclists, wheelchair and buggy users, and parents wheeling pushchairs.

At the Guildford end, the route takes into consideration the important route to Cranleigh (via the Downs Link) and its potential to link to Dunsfold Park.

### Why create a Greenway?

The Surrey Cycling Strategy recognises the health, pollution and congestion reduction benefits<sup>3</sup> of encouraging a shift away from personal, motorised transport. The most recent national census<sup>4</sup> shows that many people commute daily in one direction or the other between Guildford and Godalming, but few currently cycle. Of course, journeys between the two towns are made for many other purposes as well. The relatively flat terrain between Guildford and Godalming recommend it as route for walking and cycling and a well-constructed greenway could attract people towards forms of transport other than the private motor car.

The Waverley Local Plan and The Waverley Cycling Strategy also propose the provision of cycle-friendly infrastructure as a means to encourage sustainable transport and to ease congestion on local roads. During 2018, Guildford Borough Council and Waverley Borough Council adopted the Greenway into their respective plans and Godalming Town Council has formally recorded its support.

Some of the route is already served by paths on which cycling is permitted. However, the quality of these paths renders them less than ideal and, in some places, there are issues that actively deter their use by bike. Also, the existing paths do not provide a continuous route. This document presents a plan for improving the existing paths and joining them up to provide continuity.

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<sup>1</sup> Surrey Transport Plan – Cycling Strategy 2014 – 2026, Executive Summary, Page 4

<sup>2</sup> Surrey Transport Plan – Cycling Strategy 2014 – 2026, Executive Summary, Point 2, Page 5

<sup>3</sup> Surrey Transport Plan – Cycling Strategy 2014 – 2026, Executive Summary, Page 4

<sup>4</sup> National Census 2011 – Of the 3,840 people who recorded a commute between Guildford and Godalming (or vice versa) on the day of the census, the vast majority (2,957) travelled by car.

## What would the Greenway look like?

A well-designed route suitable for walking and family-friendly, utility cycling is proposed.

The aim is to provide a route suitable for day to day activities such as getting to school, going shopping, commuting to work or simply enjoying time out in the fresh air. The route is designed to be accessible to a small family group, out together on bikes. If this 'yard-stick' is adopted, the greenway will automatically be of a standard appropriate to a wide range of users.

While the route has been selected with utility in mind, almost all of it passes through scenic landscape making it eminently suitable for leisure as well. However, it is not intended that this should be a route for cycling at speed. Fast routes for commuting by bike may be better provided separately.

What might a family group require? The Surrey Cycling Strategy lists 5 design principles<sup>5</sup> all of which are very relevant to a family group:

- Inclusive
- Safe and secure
- Comfortable and well maintained
- Continuous
- Go where people want to go

The details set out in the introduction and in more detail below, demonstrate that this route will clearly **go where people want to go**. It will run close to a significant population, linking homes to many 'destinations' such as shops, schools, leisure facilities and public transport.

It is vital that it is **continuous**. Stopping and starting is the most difficult aspect of cycling and so a route that allows people on bikes to keep going is important. This is amplified for families where parents face the additional challenge of managing children at every stop. The quality of the route should also be continuous, i.e., a user should expect a similar standard of provision throughout the route and not be faced with a 'no-go-area' part way along their journey.

As a utility route, it should be **comfortable and well maintained**. It should not be prone to flooding or being reduced to mud after rain. Users should expect to be able to use it in ordinary, everyday clothing without getting dirty. The surface should be relatively firm and flat. A loose or rutted surface greatly increases the effort required to cycle and can unseat the inattentive or inexperienced. A poor surface makes cycling particularly difficult for children riding bikes with smaller wheels. The precise standard of construction should follow recognised guidelines.

Many people find road traffic intimidating and are discouraged from cycling as a result. Parents are understandably reluctant to allow their children to cycle on or near busy roads. The provision of a well-designed and largely off-road route will offer a protected and suitable environment in which children and others can be **safe and secure**.

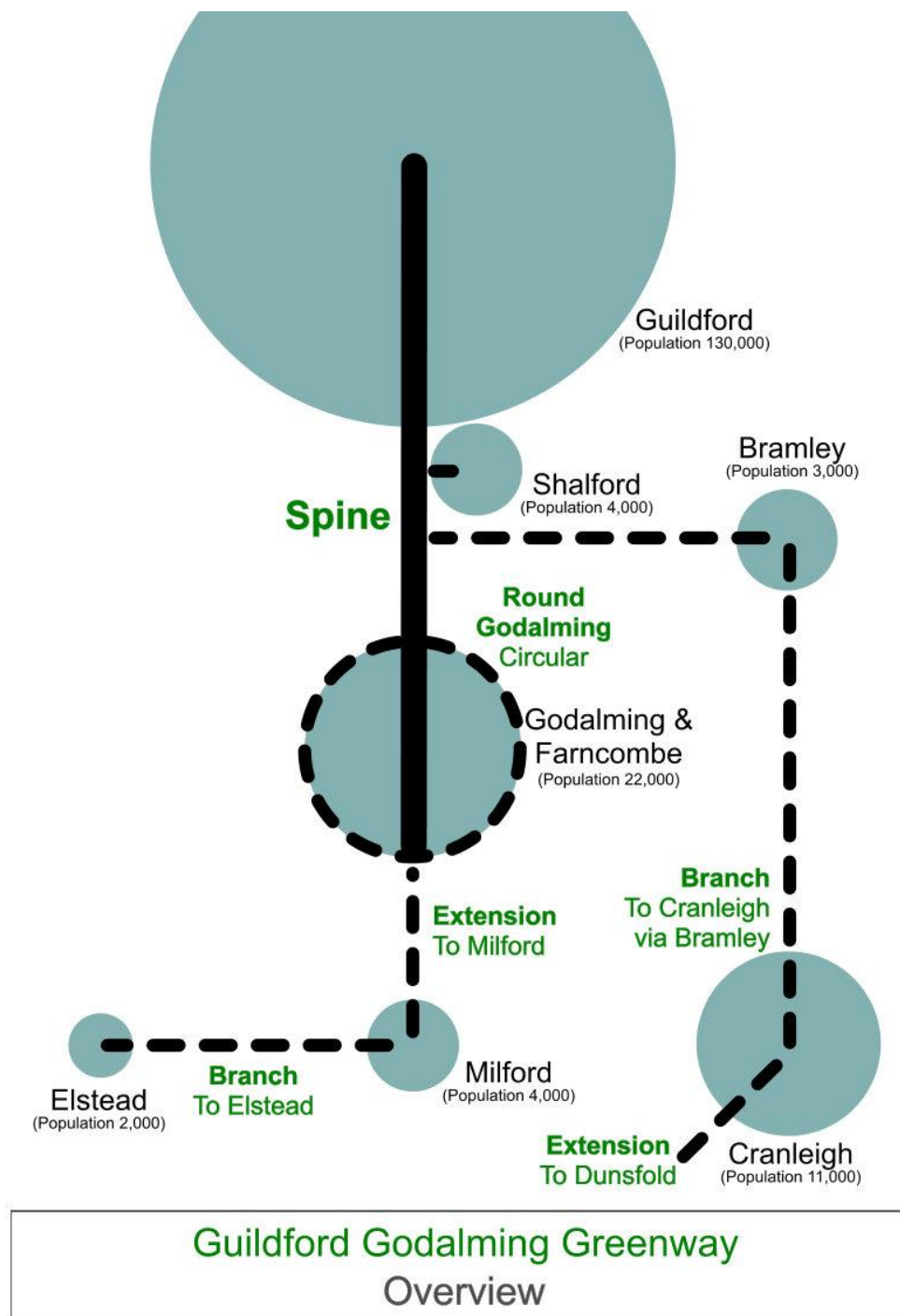
A well designed and implemented route will provide **inclusive** access for many users such as older cyclists, pedestrians, wheelchair and buggy users, and parents wheeling pushchairs.

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<sup>5</sup>Surrey Transport Plan – Cycling Strategy 2014 – 2026, Section 6.1, Page 13

## Route Overview

This 'tube map' style map provides an overview of the plan:



The 'spine' of the route runs from the centre of Guildford to Godalming with an extension to Milford. The route serves many key destinations directly and short 'links' are proposed to connect to others.

This map demonstrates that the proposed greenway has the potential to serve a population of over 150,000 people living within a mile or so of the route.

# Guildford-Godalming Greenway

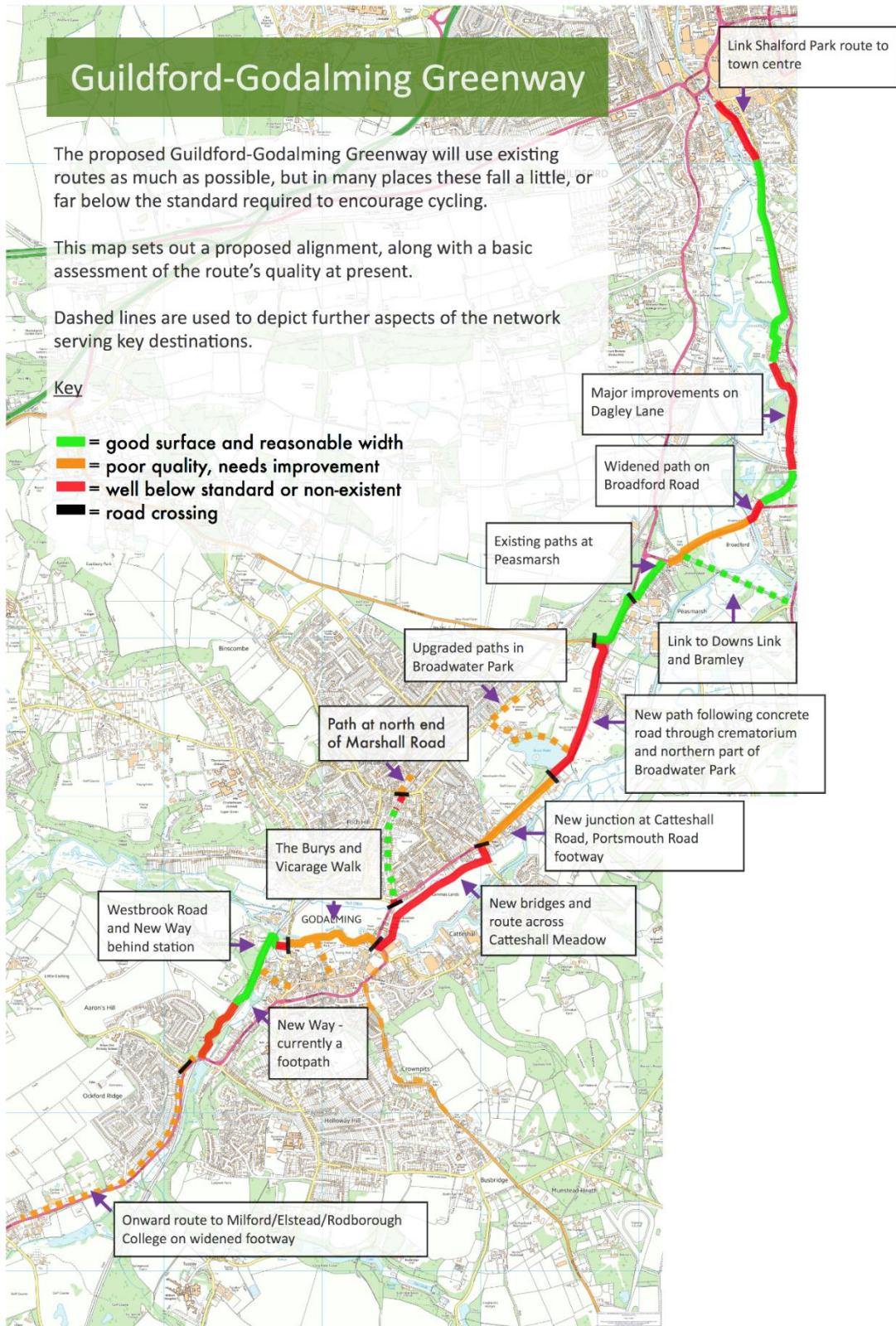
The proposed Guildford-Godalming Greenway will use existing routes as much as possible, but in many places these fall a little, or far below the standard required to encourage cycling.

This map sets out a proposed alignment, along with a basic assessment of the route's quality at present.

Dashed lines are used to depict further aspects of the network serving key destinations.

## Key

- █ = good surface and reasonable width
- █ = poor quality, needs improvement
- █ = well below standard or non-existent
- █ = road crossing



Further details may be view on the Godalming Guildford Greenway website:

<http://www.guildfordgodalminggreenway.com>