

## Summary

The South Wokingham Distributor Road Study has considered the best way of accessing the development, balancing traffic relief and environmental impacts. It concludes that a central route is the most appropriate alignment, running through the centre of the development area, as:

- It is the most efficient use of land and way to serve the development area by road and bus;
- It minimises the walking distance to the main road through the development;
- It has the least environmental impact to existing residents; and
- Appropriate flood mitigation works can be provided to the Emm Brook flood plain.

A new road scheme will always have an environmental impact, but the study has concluded that most environmental impacts can be mitigated.

The traffic study shows the clear requirement for a new bridge forming part of the distributor road and connecting Montague Park with new development south of the Waterloo railway line. The report also recommends improvement of Waterloo Road to Jennett's Park and Bracknell.

Waterloo Road level crossing could be closed but only if the distributor road railway bridge is provided.

The study recommends replacement of the low headroom railway bridge carrying the Guildford railway line over Finchampstead Road so that the distributor road can maximise the potential traffic relief to the town centre, in particular from high sided vehicles travelling between the A329(M) Coppid Beech and the Molly Millars industrial area.

## Next Steps

The study is ongoing. It is important that the Council keeps its existing residents informed of development, proposals and construction activities in the South Wokingham SDL.

The next steps for the South Wokingham Distributor Road project include:

- A detailed investigation of the impacts arising from Finchampstead Road railway bridge reconstruction works;
- Detail the improvements to Waterloo Road;
- Continue work and discussions with the SDL developers, Tesco, Wokingham Motors, Network Rail and other stakeholders to refine the South Wokingham Distributor Road scheme and delivery opportunities; and
- An investigation of the alternative provision of underpasses beneath the Waterloo railway line instead of bridges over the railway for pedestrians, cyclists and mobility impaired;
- Ensure that you, residents' groups, local councillors, parish/town councils and others are kept informed.

## Public Consultation Exhibitions

You will be able to talk to Council Officers about the scheme at **Wokingham Market, Market Place, Wokingham** on the following dates and times:

**Friday 27 June 2014** from 10.00 am to 4.00 pm  
**Saturday 28 June 2014** from 10.00 am to 4.00 pm

**Friday 18 July 2014** from 10.00 am to 4.00 pm  
**Saturday 19 July 2014** from 10.00 am to 4.00 pm

Two static exhibitions have also been arranged as follows:

- **Wokingham Library, Denmark Street, Wokingham**  
until **Saturday 23 August 2014**.
- **Council Offices, Shute End, Wokingham**  
(Monday to Friday between 10.00 am and 3.00 pm)  
until **Friday 22 August 2014**.

## The Technical Report

You can **visit the Council's website** to read the detailed technical report and its appendices at: [www.wokingham.gov.uk/swdr](http://www.wokingham.gov.uk/swdr)

## Have your say

You can **email us** at: [swdr@wokingham.gov.uk](mailto:swdr@wokingham.gov.uk)

You can **write to us** at:  
The Consultation Officer (SWDR)  
Wokingham Borough Council  
Shute End  
Wokingham  
RG40 1BN

**Please ensure you have sent your comments  
to us by Friday 29 August 2014.**



**WOKINGHAM  
BOROUGH COUNCIL**

# South Wokingham Distributor Road Public Consultation

23 June – 22 August 2014

## Introduction

Wokingham Borough Council has completed a study to find the best route for the South Wokingham Distributor Road that will link London Road and Finchampstead Road via the major development area south of the town centre known as the South Wokingham Strategic Development Location (SDL).

The first section of the distributor road is already being built through Montague Park (formerly Buckhurst Farm) from London Road to the Waterloo railway line.

In looking to see how best to secure relief for the town, access the new development and protect the environment, the study considered three possible routes for the road between the Waterloo railway line and Finchampstead Road:

- A central route;
- A northern route, parallel to the Waterloo railway line; and
- A southern route along the SDL boundary.

A central route is considered to be the most appropriate alignment.

The study also looked at:

- Providing a new road bridge over the Waterloo railway line as part of the distributor road;
- The implications of closing Waterloo Road level crossing;
- Improvements to Waterloo Road;
- Improvements at Finchampstead Road;
- Replacing the Guildford line railway bridge at Finchampstead Road;
- Improved pedestrian and cyclist crossings of the Waterloo railway line; and
- The traffic, engineering and environmental impacts of the road scheme.

This leaflet provides a technical summary of the study's findings.



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# Technical Summary

## Traffic and Engineering

All three options would provide some relief to Wokingham town centre as the South Wokingham Distributor Road (SWDR) will provide an alternative route between Finchampstead Road and London Road. The central route provides both the distributor road function and access to the new housing areas; if the northern or southern route was provided, additional roads would be needed through and across the Strategic Development Location (SDL) to provide access to the new homes. This would lead to a confusing design and a duplication of road infrastructure. A central route is also the most efficient way to serve the area by bus.

The proposed road layout is similar to that of the North Wokingham Distributor Road. It comprises a single carriageway road bounded by a verge strip containing trees, and a pedestrian and cyclist path on both sides of the carriageway. The design speed is 30mph throughout.

**New railway bridge over the Waterloo Line** The study has shown that a new bridge over the Waterloo railway line is an essential requirement of the distributor road (see (A) on the plan). If the bridge was not provided, traffic to and from the SDL development area south of the railway line would use Rances Lane and Priest Avenue to get to London Road resulting in unacceptably high traffic levels on these roads. More traffic would also use Peacock Lane towards Bracknell and Jennett's Park if the bridge was not provided.

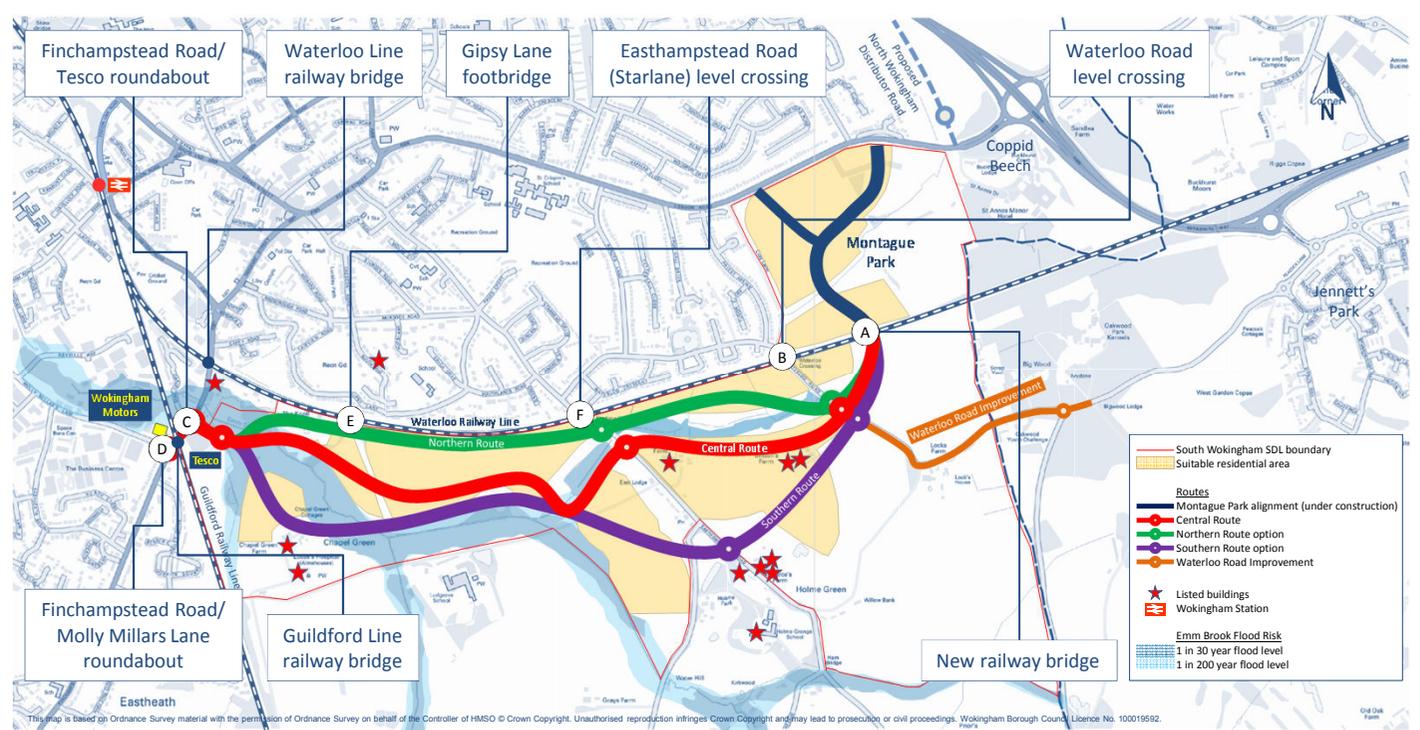
**Closure of Waterloo Road level crossing** Closing the level crossing (B) is beneficial in limiting the traffic increases that would otherwise occur on Rances Lane and Priest Avenue from the SDL development traffic. However closure could only be considered when the distributor road railway bridge is open. The study recognises that closure of the level crossing would cause some inconvenience to local residents in the area who may currently use this crossing. There are no plans to close the Easthampstead Road level crossing.

**Improvement to Waterloo Road and a connection to Jennett's Park** It is inevitable that some traffic from the SDL will travel via Waterloo Road and Peacock Lane to Jennett's Park, Bracknell and beyond. The study recommends the improvement of links to Jennett's Park (such an improvement is in addition to provision to the SWDR railway bridge) whilst maintaining the countryside feel of the area.

**Access to Tesco** The SWDR would connect to Finchampstead Road at the existing Tesco roundabout (C). Access to the store could be provided at a new junction with the SWDR. There is an impact here on Tesco and discussion has commenced with Tesco, the South Wokingham development consortia and the Council to ensure that the store's access is maintained during and after construction, and where possible improved.

**Molly Millars Lane Roundabout** The study has concluded that an improvement to the roundabout at Molly Millars Lane (D) would be beneficial. There are impacts here on Wokingham Motors and discussion has commenced between the South Wokingham development consortia and Wokingham Motors with regard to ensuring the continuity of trading position in south Wokingham.

**Guildford Line Railway Bridge over Finchampstead Road** There is a requirement to replace the existing Guildford line railway bridge at Finchampstead Road, adjacent to (D), to increase headroom and width for road traffic and to provide greater footway width on both sides of the highway to the benefit of pedestrians and cyclists. Improved headroom



would allow high sided vehicles to use the SWDR to access the A329(M) at Coppid Beech and the Molly Millars Lane industrial area. The existing Waterloo line railway bridge can accommodate all but the tallest high sided vehicles and its improvement is desirable in the long term but not essential.

The Council needs to investigate further the temporary traffic implications during the bridge replacement and construction works, and will do so in the next stage of the project. Access to the Tesco store would be maintained at all times.

**Replacement and New Footbridges** The study has investigated providing new footbridges over the Waterloo railway line. These would be located at Gipsy Lane, Easthampstead Road and Waterloo Road ((E) (F) (B)). The Council recognises that these bridges would be high relative to adjacent housing leading to potential loss of privacy and visual intrusion for residents, and would require additional land which, in most cases, could only be gained from private properties.

The Council will be investigating the alternative provision of underpasses beneath the railway line as these could be less intrusive. However subways may require more extensive works and have their own set of public perceptions and delivery issues. These issues will be worked through in the next stage of the project before any decision is made.

## Environmental Issues

There are no significant environmental concerns in the SDL area and the study has highlighted where there may be specific impacts for each of the route alternatives, most of which could be mitigated or would be superseded by new housing around the road alignments.

All route options are influenced by local ecology, existing and proposed housing areas and especially the Emm Brook and its associated flood plain. Indeed, the Emm Brook represents a significant constraint in the SDL, especially towards the west of the development area close to Finchampstead Road.

The southern route has the greatest environmental impact and consequently would be the most challenging to provide. It would remove sections of the existing trees and hedges along the Emm Brook, an area that could be used for recreational

routes within the SDL, and would require the loss of a portion of the woodland near Ludgrove School. Substantial measures would be required to mitigate the effect upon retained habitats and to compensate for habitat loss.

Each of the routes passes through the Emm Brook's floodplain, but a southern route would have approximately one-third of its total length in the flood plain, whereas the central and northern routes would enter the flood risk areas for a short distance, mainly in the western area of the SDL. Consequently flood alleviation, compensation and mitigation measures would be significant for the southern route and hence incur greater overall construction challenges.

The northern route has the greatest impact on air quality, noise and vibration to existing residents north of the Waterloo railway line (those along Gipsy Lane and roads off Waterloo Road), as it would route closest to existing properties. The southern route would bring the road close to Ludgrove School and residents around Holme Green. Generally the central route would have the least impacts on existing areas.

All three routes pass close to or within the setting of ten listed buildings. A northern or southern route could, however, have some serious potential impacts to individual buildings which would be difficult to manage, especially noise and vibration impacts. The central route has a lesser impact and in the longer term any impacts on heritage assets is likely to be mitigated in large part by the new housing developments within the SDL. The next stage of the project will consider these impacts on sensitive locations.

In all other respects, there are no significant or long term effects on habitats, landscapes or visual constraints from any route.

Overall, an alignment based around the central route has the least environmental impact on existing residents.