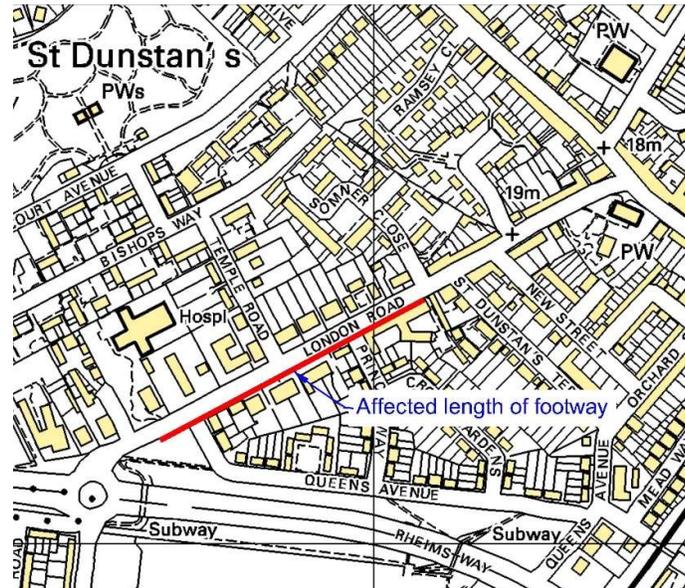


Introduction

The south eastern footway along London Road (between Somner Close and Rheims Way) has become a significant issue for pedestrians due to the impact of the large London Plain trees which have narrowed the footway and lifted it making the surface very uneven.

This is a problem for a range of people including those with wheelchairs or mobility scooters, people with vision or mobility impairments or pushchair/pram users.



Options Considered

Kent County Council (KCC) have considered a number of options to resolve this issue and each has advantages and disadvantages. These are summarised below:

1. Remove the trees affecting the footway

Pros: This is the simplest option and returns the full width of the pavement to pedestrians and will ensure a level surface can be provided. The roots have also been causing problems to some of the underground services, particularly drainage pipes and this will stop this worsening.



Cons: These mature trees are central to the aesthetics of London Road and have an important role to play in the reduction of noise and air pollution. The trees have been checked and they are all currently healthy. Tree removal would be disruptive due to their size and removing the stumps and roots could further damage underground services.

2. Widen the footway behind the offending trees

Pros: This would provide additional space for wheelchairs, mobility scooters, prams and pushchairs improving access for these users.

Cons: Additional land would be needed, which is not possible for all the locations. The humps in the footway caused by the tree roots would not be able to be rectified in some locations without damaging the tree roots which could jeopardise the health of the trees.

3. Narrow London Road between Somner Close and Rheims Way to provide a new footway in front of the trees.

Pros: This option would provide a good standard of footway without affecting the trees.

Cons: This is an expensive option and is likely to cause traffic delays, particularly around the bus stops. All on-street parking in this area would have to be removed. This also has the longest construction period causing the most disruption while it is built.

4. As 3 above but with making London Road one-way to traffic (from St Dunstans towards Rheims Way).

Pros: This would have the same advantages as 3 above plus the one-way operation would ensure that traffic could flow along London Road without being affected by the narrow space. It would also retain the on-street parking and may allow for a few additional parking spaces to be provided.

Cons: This would be the most expensive option and a construction period similar to option 3. It is also likely to have a significant adverse knock-on effect on traffic volumes in other streets, particularly St Peter's Place and St Dunstans Street. It would also require buses to be diverted.

5. Provide localised build-outs around the trees to provide a pedestrian route around the trees

Pros: This retains the existing trees and will provide a continuous pedestrian route without significantly compromising the traffic flows along the road.

Cons: This option cannot deal with all the trees without affecting access to properties on London Road. A small amount of on-street parking would need to be removed.

6. Provide additional pedestrian crossings so that pedestrians could cross the road, use the other footway and then cross back to get to their destination

Pros: This provides a pedestrian route while retaining all the existing trees and maintaining the existing carriageway space.

Cons: This option would require a minimum of four new crossings to ensure full pedestrian access. This would be very expensive, would affect bus stops and on-street parking, it would be inconvenient for pedestrians and would introduce a lot of delays for traffic along London Road.

Preferred Option

7. There is no one option alone that will deal with the problem without causing unwanted side effects. Therefore, we propose taking elements from several of the above options to provide a solution that has the minimum effect on the local environment and traffic while still providing a pavement that is suitable for all users.

We have summarised our proposed approach below and attached the full scheme plan.

- **Trees 1 and 2** - The path will be widened behind the two trees (labelled T1 and T2 on the plans) on the Rheims Way side of Queens Avenue and the hedge line reduced to enable the land to be used for the width of footway needed. The existing kerbs are being pushed out by the tree growth so the road will be narrowed slightly in this area to allow for future growth.
- **Trees 3 and 4** - The kerb will be built-out around the two trees (labelled T3 and T4) between Queens Avenue and Temple Road to provide a pedestrian route in front of them. This also means that the bus stop and shelter outside Georges Turles House will have to be moved a little towards the Rheims Way and be positioned outside the Ann Robertson Centre.
- **Tree 5** - The tree nearest to Temple Road (labelled T5) cannot be bypassed at the back due to land availability or at the front due to the private accesses and the proximity of the junction and so this will have to be removed and replaced with a new London Plain tree at the same location.
- **Tree 6** - The tree mid-way between Temple Road (labelled T6) will also have a build out as with trees 3 and 4. The bus stop will have to be moved to a new position opposite Temple Road. The parking bays opposite (3 spaces) will have to be removed but an additional single space will be located beside the kerb build-out.
- **Trees 7 and 8** – These are already bypassed at the rear but, as with trees 1 and 2 we intend to move the kerbs away from the trees a little to allow for future growth.

Where we are building the kerb out around the trees, this will reduce the road width locally to between 5.7 and 5.9m. This is wider than we currently have alongside the parking bays between Princes Way and Somner Close and will allow two-way passage for cars and smaller vans (for comparison a basic Transit van is 2.37m wide including mirrors giving almost a metre of clearance if two pass in opposite directions). Where there are larger vehicles such as trucks and buses it will probably be necessary for traffic to give way in one direction or the other.

We are planning to use a material called Flexipave to surface the pavements around the trees. This is made, in part, out of recycled tyres and, as its name suggests, it is flexible so that tree growth will not cause it to crack, which could trip pedestrians. It is also porous, so rainwater can get down to the tree roots unlike many other types of surfacing.

Why We Have To Act?

KCC, as Highway Authority, has a duty under Section 41(1) of the Highways Act 1980 to make sure that all reasonable steps are taken to ensure that the roads and pavements are safe for all users and so it has become necessary to take action to deal with this problem.

As a public authority KCC also has a duty, under the Equality Act 2010, to remove or minimise disadvantages suffered by people due to their protected characteristics (age, gender, gender identity, disability, race, religion or belief, sexual orientation, pregnancy or maternity) and to meet their needs.

We have prepared an Equality Impact Assessment (EqIA), which is available to view online at kent.gov.uk/londonroadcanterbury or on request; and will be reviewed throughout the project.

How To Comment And What Next?

If you wish to comment on this scheme, please contact us by the 3rd February 2019. All feedback will be reviewed by KCC's Schemes Planning & Delivery team before plans are finalised. Work is anticipated to start in February 2019 with full construction in Spring/Summer 2019.

You can contact us in the following ways:

- By emailing traffic.schemes@kent.gov.uk (please use "LONDON ROAD, CANTERBURY" as the subject title)
- By letter to Schemes Planning & Delivery, Kent County Council, 4 Javelin Way, Henwood Industrial Estate, Ashford TN24 8AD
- By telephone 03000 418181 (ask to be put through to Schemes Planning & Delivery team)

Before any works commence a Start of Works Notice will be distributed to notify residents, businesses and organisations along London Road of when we expect to start work, how long it will take and how it will affect them.

For alternative formats, please email alternativeformats@kent.gov.uk or call 03000 421553 (text relay service number 18001 03000 421553). This number goes through to an answering machine, which is monitored during office hours.