



**PRESS RELEASE
For Immediate Release**

**Disabled People Campaign Against Controversial Shared Surface
Streets in Woking**

**New layout allows cyclist to use pedestrian areas, putting
vulnerable people in danger**

Disabled people and representative organisations are campaigning against the controversial introduction of a dangerous pedestrian and cycle shared use area in Woking town centre, which will make it a no-go area for disabled people.

The campaigners will be lobbying local Councillors who are holding a Local Committee meeting at Woking Borough Council's Civic Office at 6.00pm on Thursday 2nd September.

The campaigners are urging Surrey County Council and Woking Borough Council to stop the shared surface area becoming a permanent scheme and ensuring that any future developments are accessible and safe for all users.

A shared surface street is built with roads and pavements at the same level, with little or no separation between areas for vehicles and pedestrians. To use a shared surface street, pedestrians, motorists and cyclists need to establish who moves first through making 'eye contact'. This obviously puts blind and partially sighted people in danger, and poses a risk to disabled and elderly people.

Clive Wood, Chief Executive of Surrey Disabled People's Partnership said "If local authorities allow schemes where vehicles, including cyclists are sharing the same area as pedestrians, many disabled people and

other pedestrians will not feel safe and town centres, like Woking, will become no go areas which is wrong”.

A local blind resident who also has severe hearing loss commented "I have lived in Woking all my life, and have seen its transition into a town that has made disability a priority, having historically listened to disabled people about what they need in their town. Because of this, as a visual and hearing impaired person, I have had sufficient confidence to be able to independently navigate it's streets without too much fear of injury. This confidence has now been severely dented, as I now fear being hit by a fast moving cyclist, in areas I should expect to be able to safely walk in. I will not only be able to see approaching cyclists, but I won't hear them either...worse still, they won't know this! Nine out of ten cyclists are probably extremely conscientious and safety minded...I worry about the tenth”.

Nine organisations representing disabled and older people across Surrey have signed up to a joint statement urging Surrey Council and borough councils across Surrey, to put a halt to any plans to introduce Shared Surfaces and to start a proper consultation with stakeholders on this worrying trend.

Notes to Editors

The shared use area in Woking, in which cyclists are permitted to use their bikes in pedestrian areas in parts of the town centre, is a pilot scheme which was introduced in April 2009 as part of the Cycle Woking Project. Surrey County Council did not carry out proper consultation before introducing the Shared Surface Area pilot.

To find out more about the problems of Shared Surface streets go to <http://www.guidedogs.org.uk/sharedstreets/>

Disabled people from across Surrey will be attending the Local Committee (Woking) meeting on Thursday 2nd September at the Woking Civic Offices, Gloucester Square, Woking GU21 6YL. Campaigners will be gathering outside the Civic Office from 5.45pm (The meeting will begin at 6.30pm). Members of the press are encouraged to attend. There will be opportunities for interviews from campaigners.

The joint statement requesting a stop to Shared Surfaces in Surrey has been signed by the following organisations;

- Action for Carers Surrey

- Age Concern Surrey
- Surrey Disabled Peoples Partnership
- Surrey Independent Living Council
- Surrey Association for Visual Impairment
- Surrey Coalition of Disabled People
- Surrey LINK
- Surrey Access Forum
- Social Information on Disability (SID)
- Alzheimer's Society

Further Information

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