

Local Access Forum – Meeting held on Wednesday, 28th January, 2015 at the Meeting Room 1, Chalvey Community Centre, The Green, Chalvey, Slough, SL1 2SP

Present:-

LAF Members

David Munkley, Local Access Forum (Chair)
Ian Houghton, Local Access Forum (Vice-Chair)
Councillor Satpal S Parmar
Toby Evans
Ken Wright
Andy Packer, Local Access Forum

Observers

John Keegan

Officers, Slough Borough Council

Jacqui Wheeler
Rights of Way Officer

165. Apologies and Welcome

Sing Wai Yu
Trevor Allen
Wayne Strutton
Tony Haines

166. Declarations of Interest

None

167. Minutes of the last meeting held on 30th Oct 2014

The minutes of the meeting held on 30th October 2015 were approved as a true record. Alterations were made to the attendance list to show AP and WS as observers.

168. Matters Arising (other than those on the agenda)

Footpath 35a and b – High Street to Herschel Street to Hencroft Street North -

The planning application for the old shop mobility site and car park was submitted in Dec 14 so the stopping up of FP35a will be done under this application. JW explained the issues with FP35b, on the other side of Herschel Street running behind houses in Hencroft St North and Alpha St

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North. This path is very narrow and suffers from horrendous littering and vandalism with fences being burnt. The path is cleaned monthly but the littering is so bad that this isn't sufficient. JW asked the members opinion on stopping up this path permanently under the legal test that it is not needed for public use or alternatively using a PSPO.

DM felt there could be problems in gating off the alley permanently as private residents would still have rear access and the problems with littering could become worse. He questioned the motivation of local residents to maintain the alley should it be gated as many houses are rented out. Members also queried who would maintain the light columns if it is stopped up.

Resolved – JW agreed to get a usage survey done and that the Community Safety Officer be asked to do some door knocking to gauge local opinion.

Update Birch Grove PSPO –

The automatic gate is working well and there have been no complaints.

Old Bath Road Colnbrook – Disused Railway path –

DM requested this issue be brought to a future meeting.

Slough Arm of the Grand Union Canal –

LAF's response to the basin proposals plan was sent. JW will provide a further update after the meeting with CRT on 29th Jan 2014. The Area Housing officer has agreed removal of the concrete wall on the north side of the towpath on the route to Kendal Close would be a good idea. JW will pursue this to see if Housing will pay for it to be done.

SE Chairs meeting on 27th January - DM explained there was rather a short agenda, with main item being about running an independent LAF. There is a SE LAF Conference on 19th May – members to let JW know if they wish to attend. The majority of the LAF's attending the SE Chairs meeting were county areas, rural in nature so the suggestions for items at the Conference were oriented towards rural issues. JW will circulate Conference programme as soon as available. National LAF Conference has been postponed for 2015 to Oct at the earliest.

The LAF Annual Report is due to be submitted on 30th June. Members agreed it would be a good opportunity to have a more promotional annual report alongside the proforma report to try to heighten awareness of the LAF again.

Resolved – JW to work with DM on drafting annual report. JW to circulate the National Annual Report again.

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169. Membership

Welcome to Andy Packer as a fully ratified new member.

170. Transport /Schemes/Designs - Updates and consultations

A355 Copthorne Roundabout and A332 Windsor Road Schemes –

JW tabled letter received from Transport in response to the LAF's comments on the A355 and A332 consultations. Members didn't feel the letter fully addressed the points made. KW felt an improved bus service was paramount and the Council should stop any new Transport schemes.

It was noted that the letter answered concerns about the schemes causing a fall in property values which left members mystified as the LAF comments didn't mention any such concern. JW drew attention to the modelling reports available on the Council's website which has been used to justify the schemes aims. Members felt the consultation itself wasn't promoted widely enough.

It was noted that the Council intends to encourage cyclists to make better use of existing traffic free cycle routes in the area and will be promoting them as part of the main scheme. Members agreed to ask the Council how exactly they propose to promote the traffic free cycle routes in the area.

IH felt that the bigger the main junctions and roads are in Slough, the more off putting it is for cycling.

JW explained the problem footpath crossing of Tuns Lane (A355) which has not been addressed in the new scheme. Members felt that if it served a purpose and is being used then the LAF should fight to keep it open. IH asked how the success of the schemes in reducing congestion will be measured against the model used to justify the scheme and what criteria will be used to achieve this.

Concerns were expressed that if the Three Tuns junction changes scheme was believed to work through the modelling used but is due to be completely reversed now then how can there be any faith placed in the modelling for these current schemes.

Members feel the congestion will simply be displaced elsewhere and would like to know the criteria required for successfully gaining the funding from the LGF to implement these schemes. TE thought there must be a point where it becomes inefficient to undertake any further works on a route designed to reduce congestion.

Resolved – JW would draft a response to Transport and send a link around to the actual responses received to the online consultation.

East- West Walking and Cycling Route –

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The diversion order has been made and is out to consultation at the moment. JW agreed to check on whether the mature poplar trees near the railway line are to be removed or not.

Leigh Road Bridge –

The new road bridge is due to be lifted into place and the plan is for it to be open to traffic by April. Thereafter services can be removed from the old narrow bridge and then it can open for walking and cycling use. JW will seek answers about when the legal process will begin and when proposed design of this space will be available.

Pavement Parking –

No new updates, only that when a design is ready the LAF would be consulted. JW informed the group that there are to be double yellow and a loading ban all the way along Herschel Street. However, TE stated there is already a loading ban along Herschel Street! JW would inquire with Transport about the differences to enforcement the new proposals will provide, continue enquiries about the use of the enforcement car and how many tickets have been issued in Herschel Street. If the current measures are sufficient to enforce the illegal parking in Herschel Street then why is it not happening and why are new measures being brought in?

Buckingham Ave East junction with Farnham Road –

LAF comments on this have been forwarded to Transport.

171. **Ditton Park / Linear Park Cycle Path**

JW tabled a report on the Ditton Park Cycle path (Linear Park).

Ditton Park cyclepath – members discussed the outcomes of the meeting with CA Technologies on 13th Jan 2015. A causeway or raised boardwalk was suggested as a possible solution to the flooding at Southfield path. JW confirmed that CA Technologies have taken on board this issue and will see if any funding is available to solve the drainage problems in this area. The path is the lowest point and inevitably floods with the surrounding field very boggy. The new facilities manager at CA Technologies, Fiona Kincaid agreed that the whole route would not be closed if there was flooding in Southfield, but that appropriate signage would be used to warn users.

IH asked if the Ditton Park driveway could be used as an alternative route in the event of the Southfield path being flooded. JW agreed to ask CA Technologies if this would be possible.

CA Technologies will be replacing the missing signage within Ditton Park and Terry Purser, Sustrans Warden will audit the signage surrounding the route for any missing signs that the Council is responsible for.

Record of closures – members were disappointed to hear another recent closure happened on 17th Jan with gates being closed at 3.15pm with no

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reason given. JW will find out further details from CA Technologies as Fiona Kincaid has been informed.

JW will inform CA Technologies about Japanese Knotweed.

Linear Park cycle path in Slough – The path has been opened since Summer 2008 with ad hoc maintenance since then. Maintenance of the route falls between the Parks and Transport teams. There are issues with the title of the land purchased by the Council in order to construct the path not having been registered properly with the Land Registry. This means that the transfer of the land to the appropriate department for maintenance has not been completed. The problem is that the overhanging trees are an immediate problem obstructing the path

DM expressed concern at the Council's lack of thought as to the long term maintenance and proper assignment of responsibility for this route after having made the effort to buy the land and construct the path. JW confirmed it was not a recorded highway or right of way and that it was always intended to be a deemed cycle path. JW confirmed there was no budget for maintenance due to the scheme running over budget initially. Members couldn't understand why a problem with the registry of the land would prevent the path being transferred internally for maintenance. JW explained the problem was to do with the previous landowner and would find out more detail for the next meeting.

Resolved - The LAF felt strongly that with local roads becoming more congested and dangerous for cyclists the Council needs to secure, improve and maintain this important off road route. The Council should identify and confirm a suitable budget for its long term maintenance and seek to resolve the land title problems to enable a proper transfer of responsibility to a specific Council team. JW will take this recommendation back to the appropriate officers.

172. Cycling Bike It and other

JW tabled the report in the papers on this issue.

Cycle Hire Scheme - Members want to know why the three new docking station locations were chosen given that members feel there is a lack of cycling infrastructure on carriageway between the docks. For instance there are sporadic green cycle lane patches along Langley Road, whose benefit is questionable.

JW agreed to ask what the Council's recommended routes are between docking stations and their evaluation of the safety of these.

TE suggested LA's can get access to interesting data from Strava, a route recording app which is becoming popular with users. Despite the fact it is generally leisure and fitness cycling and walking use, rather than every day,

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the data recorded could potentially be useful to Local Authorities' as infrastructure providers in identifying where improvements are needed.

Members queried the expectations for the use of the cycle hire scheme before it was implemented as its aim was supposed to encourage the use of public transport as a way of getting to work in Slough. Members requested the raw data for the cycle hire scheme usage.

The Cycle Hub – JW would forward the planning application to members so that comments can be made in time. There was a strong feeling that cyclists should be asked what they would like to see as part of this new facility. More information is needed about the detail of what is proposed as the LAF has the expertise to advise the Council on what will work and what won't.

Cycle Training – Bikeability (previously cycling proficiency) training wasn't fully taken up by slough schools last year and so the Council offered the left over spaces during the summer holidays. TE felt encouraged by Stoke Poges Primary School with its new travel plan aimed at reducing car journeys to school and working with the charity called Living Streets and Sustrans. He put this positive move down to the Head Teacher.

DM would look at a randomly selected Slough primary school travel plan and report back to the LAF about its contents concerning cycling to get an idea of why the uptake of bikeability has been so poor. Members felt that the Council could expand their training by targeting other youth groups outside school like the Scouts, Guides, Cadets etc.

DfT's Cycling Delivery Plan – Expressions of Interest – SBC has confirmed it is intending to submit an expression of interest when the final Delivery Plan has been published. It is expected that guidance for LA's will be published as part of the final Plan.

Resolved – actions to be taken as above and JW will invite someone from Transport to the next meeting to continue this item on Cycle Hire, Training, Hub and Delivery Plan.

TE raised a safety issue at St Paul's Ave/Stoke Road junction traffic signals. In his experience the signals are set to change too quickly so that a cyclist or pedestrian on Stoke Road crossing over Queens Road on amber does not have the expected time delay between amber and the lights going green for traffic on Queens Rd to St Pauls Ave. TE said this has resulted in a couple of near misses. JW agreed to take this issue to the Traffic Signals Team in Transport.

173. Horizon Scanning - ROWiP

Slough's RoWIP runs to November 2017 with Defra guidance saying these plans should be reviewed every 10 years. JW felt the RoWIP has been useful in terms of gaining funding particularly as it sits within the Local Transport Plan as a supporting document. The Statement of Action containing the objectives will probably be the most important section to review. DM felt that this would be quite an onerous task so would need to be started soon.

JW agreed to get copies of the RoWIP printed out for members of the forum and suggested the review should be categorised as follows;

- Establishing whether the statement of needs and demands is still relevant.
- Establishing if there are any updates required to the policy section and links to new or updated/obsolete strategies need to be altered.
- Reviewing the Statement of Action aiming for achievable objectives including adoption of strategies for recording new and historic routes.

The RoWIP doesn't have to be a 10 yearly document, it could be a much more "live" document with achievable objectives, if this is more beneficial. DM thought that the RoWIP review for Slough should be mindful of how neighbouring RoWIP's review are being tackled and show integration of aims at cross boundary level if possible.

Issues that are currently coming forward;

- ROWIP review
- Deregulation Act and implications for the recording of routes
- Joint LAF meetings to deal with cross boundary issues and sharing best practice.
- Resurrection of the Britwell Loop and other aspirational routes
- Access opportunities to LNP's and other local green spaces

All these issues are connected; the task will be how to draw them together. JW gave out hard copies of the Phil Wadey presentation on Recording the network.

Resolved - This item will be developed and kept on the agenda for the next meeting.

174. Date and time of next meeting

Thursday 30th April 2015, 6.30pm at the Chalvey Community Centre.

(Note: The Meeting opened at 6.30 pm and closed at 8.45 pm)