

Local Access Forum – Meeting held on Wednesday, 16th December, 2015 at the The Cycle Hub, Brunel Way, Slough

Present:-

LAF Members

David Munkley (Chair)
Councillor Satpal S Parmar
Andy Packer
Tony Haines
Ken Wright
Councillor Roger Davis

Observers

Arnold Richardson (Colnbrook Parish Council)

Officers, Slough Borough Council

Gerald Pleace
Parks Development Officer
Jacqui Wheeler
Rights of Way Officer
Sing-Wai Yu
Team Leader Highways Maintenance & Asset Management

196. Apologies

Trevor Allen
Toby Evans

197. Welcome and Declarations of Interest

None

198. Minutes of the last meeting held on 16th Sept 2015

Minutes of the last meeting held on 16th September 2015 were approved as an accurate record.

199. Matters Arising (other than those on agenda)

JW directed members to the action list in the papers and the updates therein.

Linear Park –

Members reviewed the current condition of the path from recent photos and noted the encroachment and drainage problems adjacent to the stream and

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Cricket Ground. JW described the problem with vehicular use of the path churning the surface at the crossover for the fishing lake.

JW explained that Sustrans is currently favouring a sealed surface on all new cycle routes, even through this type of environment due to long term maintenance costs being reduced. A possible surface that could be used should it prove to be cost effective is Flexi-pave, which is a mixture of recycled tyre rubber and aggregate mixed with a polyurethane substance. This material is porous, hard wearing, slip resistant and flexible acceptable for both horse riding and cycling and walking. JW will make further enquiries about cost.

DM felt the path should reasonably be maintained to allow two people to walk side by side.

200. Horizon Scanning

Joint LAF Chairs Meeting

Various cross boundary issues were discussed at the meeting including;

- the SIFE site in Colnbrook. Though the Inspector has made her report to the Secretary of State, there is unlikely to be a final decision made on whether or not this goes ahead until after the decision on Heathrow expansion has been taken.
- Langley walking/cycling routes to Langley Park/NCN 61. All agreed that the paths to Black Park and Langley Park from Slough are not maintained very well with lack of signage leading to confusion for users. JW had met with the Row Officer of Bucks CC which is now outsourced as a service. There is no money available to maintain the NCN route, but agreed it was definitely required. It was agreed that Bucks Row Officer would make a bid for funding, but the outcome was a freeze on all "unnecessary expenditure" for the foreseeable future. Slough has agreed to source appropriate signage at Trenches Bridge and other locations along the route to Langley Park to improve the user experience. This could possibly be funded from next year's budget.
- Rights of Way in Bucks. TH feels that the paths in Bucks are not well maintained and there is great potential for walking routes to Langley and Black Park eg; bridleway from Middlegreen to George Green. JW agreed to investigate and forward any problems to Bucks Row team. These routes could be included as part of next year's LAF Summer Site visits.

SMART Motorways Scheme

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JW referred members to the report in the papers explaining the current situation. Members discussed the possibility of asking for more mitigation for the inconvenience of closing the Old Slade Lane, Oldway Lane and Upton Court Park Bridges as BucksCC are doing. All agreed the disruption is going to be considerable. JW will revisit each bridge and list all possible mitigation to be asked of Highways England.

SWY queried vehicular use of Oldway Lane Bridge by Thames Water. Site visits confirm this is no longer used for site access by TW as they have an access road via the Jubilee River south of the M4.

The scheme is lengthy but JW stated the intention to get further mitigation requests submitted before the examination period ends at the beginning of March 2106.

Big Pathwatch

JW reported that the latest Rambler's reports have not indicated any defects on Slough paths. John Keegan, Footpath Officer for Windsor District Ramblers, reported that Head Office have said there is a difference of opinion on the effectiveness of the Big Pathwatch project. Most of the surveying has been done by volunteers, not long standing members of the Ramblers. Though John thinks the project has been successful there's an obvious variation in the expectations of surveying volunteers concerning the condition of the paths; surface and signage etc, despite initial training disseminated by the Ramblers.

The main driver for the Big Pathwatch is the looming cut-off date of 2026, though JW questioned this as the paths being surveyed are already recorded. JK thought it was more of a recruitment exercise for the Rambler's because the usefulness of feedback is questionable due to the levels of variation in what is seen as a defect. JK confirmed the majority of paths around the periphery of Slough have been walked and urged members to view the Ramblers website for more information.

Slough Local Plan Consultation – Call for Sites 8th January to 19th February 2016

JW highlighted this consultation which is asking for suggestions for new sites suitable for development or redevelopment in the following categories; housing, employment, open space or community uses. Members discussed the sites already allocated in the Local Plan where the potential use could involve improvements to access for open air recreation, such as; informal nature reserves. One such site is the land to the west of Hollow Hill Lane, Langley.

TH was certain that the land to the east of Parlaunt Road possibly known as "Gypsy Field" was placed into the Colne Valley Park but he has been told by CVP CIC that the records have been lost. Members discussed the history of this land in particular and the fact that it forms a buffer between Slough and

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London. It was also noted that there's a high probability that there is informal access (eg; dog walking) taking place now on some land in private ownership such as these fields in Langley. He also suggested a workshop style meeting may be beneficial in the future where members could thoroughly look at the borough and identify a wish list of all access opportunities. Members agreed.

DM clarified that the consultation is asking for new suggestions for land other than those already in the DPD Site Allocations document.

Resolved – JW would circulate the consultation and current DPD site allocations. Members would identify any land in the borough which they feel could be developed as open space for recreational/leisure use or where a useful link path or short cut could be created.

201. Canal Basin and Parks Integration

JW explained progress since the last meeting. She had spoken to Jonathan Edwards of Morgan Sindell of the SRP who explained that negotiations with Travis Perkins over the sale of the land required are looking positive. [NB: It has since been confirmed that a deal has been agreed with Travis Perkins.] A proposal is due to be submitted for pre-application planning advice shortly. JW advised that Jonathan Edwards will be invited to the next meeting to present the scheme to the LAF.

JW showed members the concept drawings she has; however TH stated that these were old concepts. JW made it clear to the SRP that the LAF wants to see interim improvements now specifically the creation of a link path on the northern bank through to Kendal Close. The SRP agreed that these interim proposals are in line with the long term ambition for the regeneration.

Therefore once the funding is sourced and required agreements in place; any works done on this specific proposal will not be abortive and are supported by the overall regeneration plan. Housing and CRT have both given the necessary approval for the re-alignment of the fencing and the creation of a path being placed on the actual bank, though CRT do not currently want to dedicate the route as a public right of way. The extent of clearance work on the bank is greater than originally envisioned with associated elevated costs.

It is possible that funding could be secured through the Tesco Community Fund which JW is following up dependent on meeting the criteria. TH stated that a future commitment to the widening of the path adjacent to the Tiling Co. should be included in any bid for funding from an external source and he firmly stated his concern that this narrow strip is widened out to the desired 4-5m width. He also felt that the LAF needs to recommend a significant increase in the amount of public open space around the Basin in any plans that are put forward. JW stated that the narrow section alongside the Tiling Co. is shown in the long term plans as being a wide public access path. All agreed that the LAF continues to push for the interim improvement as discussed within the current constraints.

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AP asked if the flexi-pave surfacing could be used for this new path. JW agreed to look into it.

Bloom Park S106 Improvements

GP will provide drawings of the scheme proposed for LAF comments. As they have already been out to consultation 3 times, any comments must evaluate the actual scheme not bring forward new ideas.

He confirmed there will be at least three links from the Park to the canal and a circular path within the Park.

Resolved –That the northern canal path interim project needs to be implemented in spite of the progress with the long term Basin Regeneration. Actions to be taken in accordance with this resolution and the above minutes.

202. LAF Members Training Requirements

Training for LAF members has been discussed at RBWM LAF and about half Bracknell LAF members would like some training dependent on what level it is set at.

The Appointing authorities are happy to fund training if provide a venue if the details could be agreed and members commit to attend. JW referred to the training previously provided by IPROW in a morning session. Presently there seems to be sufficient interest to justify a whole day's training with Slough, RBWM and Bracknell alone.

Approximately 3/4 of members were interested in attending, providing the training had an urban perspective where necessary and the changes due to the Deregulation Act are incorporated.

Resolved- JW will contact RBWM and Bracknell LAF officers to put together a suitable training programme for a full day and source a suitable training provider.

203. Definitive Map Modification Order - BRN

JW updated members on the Definitive Map Modification Order for the bridleway to be added known as Blandford Road North in Langley. The bridleway will be Bridleway 93. The Order received 5 objections which have not been withdrawn, so the Order will be submitted to the Planning Inspectorate who will decide if it will be dealt with by either an inquiry or written representations. The objections are concerned with the width of the way and the status of the way. JW would send TH a copy of this Order again and update members at the next meeting.

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204. Actions List - Summer Site Visits

Potential Claims – Wexham Row

JW handed out updates on all the items as per the Summer Site Visit Action List. Discussions on improvements to the walking and cycling routes and NCN61 towards Langley Park are minuted under Horizon Scanning (item no. 200).

JW confirmed she has sent copies of the Bucks County Council user evidence form and suitable maps to Trevor Allen so he can start gathering user evidence for this route via the allotment users at Cherry Orchard.

Actions from previous meeting are on-going including the following;

- Draft mailshot letter for wexham row and for dis-used railway row
- Investigate possible use of FB and Streetlife Slough

205. Transport/LSTF Schemes/Designs/Updates

No response has been received yet to the LAF's 2nd letter regarding the A355 Copthorne R/bout and A332 Windsor Road Corridor schemes. JW agreed she would chase for an update on these.

Leigh Road Bridge –

The area around the old bridge has been re-landscaped and the surface will be dressed with a buff colour. The TRO to restrict the motorised vehicular use of the bridge remains outstanding. Members noted the likelihood of the old bridge being used is less as cyclists on the main carriageway have to veer off-line on the northbound approach to use it. Members think users need a reason to use the old bridge now even though it is safer. JW informed members that seating has been requested by the Council but the developers are reticent about spending further money.

Pavement Parking Scheme

TA had previously requested that this issue be kept on the LAF agenda. TH said that Rochford Gardens will be included in the next phase.

AOB:

DM reminded all to think about training requirements and any site visits they would like to go on and forward their suggestions to JW. On this prompt TH suggested that the towpath be re-visited to look at the cross boundary issues with S Bucks and BucksCC and also any potential joint issues with Hillingdon.

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206. Next Meeting

Provisional dates for next three meetings are;

6.30pm, Thursday 14th April 2016 at Chalvey Community Centre, The Green,
Chalvey

6.30pm Weds 27th July 2016

6.30pm Thursday 10th November 2016

(Note: The Meeting opened at 6.30 pm and closed at 8.40 pm)