

Local Access Forum – Meeting held on Thursday, 4th October, 2012 at the Venus Suite 1, St Martins Place, 51 Bath Rd, Slough, Berks

Present:-

LAF Members

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

Observers

Tony Haines, The Friends of Slough Canal

Officers, Slough Borough Council

Jacqui Wheeler
Rights of Way Officer
Alex Deans
Principal Engineer, Highways
Viv Vallance

92. Apologies and Welcome

Steve Roberts
Gerald Pleace, Parks Development Officer
Bruce Hicks, Community Parks Projects Officer

93. Declarations of Interest

No declarations

94. Minutes of the last meeting held on 12th July 2012

The minutes of the last meeting held on 12th July 2012 were approved as a correct record.

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

Local Access Forum - 04.10.12

Ditton Park Cycle Path update – JW tabled an amended version of the response to CA Technologies and received approval for it to be sent. Terry Purser, Sustrans volunteer warden along with Anthony Hurst RBWM would receive an email direct from CA in the event of any closure. He has agreed to put closed signs up, including at Upton Court Park should notice be given of closure. JW was hopeful it would open up a dialogue with CA Technologies. DM thought that closures needed to be logged and JW agreed to email Tony Purser, Anthony and Peter Challis to ask if it would be possible to check on a weekly basis if the path is open.

Resolved – JW to send letter out to agreed addressees and enquire as above.

Borderside to Shaggy Calf Lane – after an extensive discussion about whether or not this adopted highway path between carriageways could be legally cycled on, members decided it was not worth pursuing. SBC Transport had said the old “no cycling” roundels could not be removed, though the path is wide enough for shared use with several hundred movements happening daily. However, KW reported the “no cycling” roundels have now been removed so it seems there is no longer an issue. JW would go and check the signs have been removed.

Membership Update - JW would continue trying to contact Annette at Disability Matters to see if anyone would be interested in applying for LAF membership and Tony Haines has applied to become a member.

Update on BHS request for additional equestrian access along Jubilee River -

RBWM Rights of Way team have had a positive response from the Environment Agency about the trial albeit with some concerns about possible conflicts and recommending early warning signage. The EA also mentioned that they will be introducing a new water sports facility at the Slough Road car park. IH asked if we could have more details as members were concerned about the size of the car park and the lack of car parking facilities along the Jubilee River. JW would be joining RBWM officers on an audit of the route on 15th October to look at signage options and any safety issues.

Resolved – to keep this issue on the agenda for updates and JW to find out more detail from the EA about the water sport facility.

Temporary Spectator Bridge over the Thames for the Olympics

DM expressed concern that the temporary closure of the towpath for the bridge to be dismantled is not allowed to slip by the ODA. JW has contacted Corinne Waldron, Bucks CC Rights of Way officer to check on this issue.

Kendal Close Path

JW tabled pictures of the path to members as requested. JW stated she would need to confirm with CRT that if the path is dedicated as a public right

Local Access Forum - 04.10.12

of way as approved by the LAF, then the access across their land at the basin would not be compromised by any future plans for the basin development. JW reiterated that it would be beneficial to protect this route with public highway status as it provides a useful link; there is little anti-social behaviour and no crime statistics to show there is a problem. LAF members reconfirmed their support for this dedication.

96. LSTF (Local Sustainable Transport Fund) Designs

VV explained that £4.5m LSTF funding has been secured in Slough to help change travel behaviour and support economic development and reduce carbon emissions. There are several elements one being a workplace travel programme focusing on the businesses on the Trading Estate and central Slough. Also to offer cycle grants to employers for cycle parking and to work with schools near to employers to reduce pressure in the morning peak hours.

Other elements are an east west cycle route which is meant to improve links between the main travel hubs and the trading estate; local links to the trading estate from surrounding residential areas; a cycle hire scheme; secure cycle parking hub in the town centre and improving traffic flow along key corridors like Farnham Road.

East – West Cycle Route

VV tabled a high level plan of the east west cycle route aspirations and possible proposals. These include four schemes;

Stoke Poges Lane Zebra crossing – on the south side of the bridge there is a proposal for a zebra crossing near the Lansdowne Ave junction. There is a lot of demand to cross from the east side to the western footway to get to the footway bridge. Currently people cross on the north side of the Lansdowne Ave junction which is not considered safe so the zebra will be on the south side of the junction. It was agreed that some action was needed to prevent people crossing from the north side of the junction so they are naturally directed to the zebra, suggestions included; railings, reducing width or completely removing the footway or planting of some sort. IH thought there should be an entrance to the park at the new zebra location.

Off – road cycle routes through Salt Hill Park – a new east – west cycle route through the park – With an entrance to the park, as suggested, VV explained that there are a couple of options for the alignment of the route through the park. It would either continue on the current route parallel to the railway line through a spinney area to link to the subway or create a route through the middle just north of the tennis courts to link to the existing cycle route at the rear of the Barn Café. Transport are working with the Parks department to look at the options for creating attractive walking /cycling routes through the park and through to Salt Hill Way bearing in mind the lack of natural surveillance in these areas due to trees.

Local Access Forum - 04.10.12

New signing would continue directing cyclists along Salt Hill Way with a toucan crossing when you reach Farnham Road. KW pointed out there is an existing crossing point on the bridge but VV stated this would be re-located. The long-term aspiration is to have a cycle way facility on Pitts Road linking through to the A4, though it is possible to cycle this way already. There are no plans for any improvements in Pitts Road under the current LSTF funding.

Investigations are being done to enable widening of the existing footway between nos 59-63 Farnham Road where the highway boundary narrows. This will be dependent on landowners' approval. Minor improvements will also be made to the cycleway link from Farnham Road through to Ajax Ave including a drop kerb.

Existing off carriageway cycleway along Farnham Road will link to new pedestrian phased crossings on all arms of the Buckingham Avenue junction. Cyclists and pedestrians will be directed to use Buckingham Ave East and Northampton Avenue back towards the town centre. TE advised that in his experience this route is dangerous for cyclists at school opening and closing times. Members also advised that Bedford Avenue would be a better route than Buckingham Avenue for cyclists being much quieter and therefore safer. Directing cyclists through the private retail area from Farnham Road to Bedford Road via Yarmouth Road may be an option.

Further improvements to Buckingham Avenue would include; widening existing cycle lanes where possible and changing lighting to use white light which is friendlier for walkers and cyclists.

On – road lanes/signing and facilities near Burnham Rail Station – current walking and cycling access to Burnham Station is not very good and VV is keen to make sure that the best outcome for walking/cycling is taken into consideration in any traffic management improvements made to the area aimed at easing congestion. WS stated the bus stop location is highly problematic and suggested re-locating further along Burnham Lane adjacent to the petrol station. However, VV explained the long term aspiration is to have the bus stopping as close to the rail station as possible and in the short term deal with the congestion and restricted visibility. Modelling is currently being done to help identify the best improvements. IH asked if a contraflow cycle lane could be achieved under the railway bridge however the width is too constrained. TH thought there may be a service tunnel adjacent to the main tunnel which could be re-opened, though Network Rail costs and conditions would probably make this prohibitive.

Members asked about the route north of the railway line shown on the plan and the possibility of acquiring land through the Horlicks site. VV confirmed that should any future development come up on this site they would be asked to incorporate such a route.

Feasibility study of removing dog leg on subway approach to Salt Hill Park (Public footpath 21) – members were aware of this issue from past meetings. JW confirmed owner of small triangle of land is known and underground

Local Access Forum - 04.10.12

watercourses that would need to be considered. VV stated they would see what kind of scheme could be achieved and then approach landowners.

Local links to the Trading Estate from the north – improvements would be identified with drop kerbs and by changing to white lighting. VV also confirmed the route across Kennedy Park will still be implemented with outline planning permission now achieved.

TH stated that future maintenance of any infrastructure improvements should always be factored in to ensure sustainability.

WS brought up the issue of overhanging trees on the wide footway of Whittaker Road as it runs adjacent to The Millie nature reserve and beyond. JW stated that Berks Bucks and Oxon Wildlife Trust (BBOWT) manage the nature reserve and she would ask both them and the Highways inspector to deal.

DM mentioned the Greystoke Road path through to Weston Road and the Dundee Road path through to Scafell Road as important northern access routes to the Trading Estate. Members supported the option to have a proper path between the bunds which is more open and visible.

TE expressed concerns about the potential cycle hire scheme from the Slough Rail Station as he was doubtful the crossing points in the Heart of Slough had the capacity to cope with more than four cyclists as well as pedestrians at the same time. VV answered that the crossings capacity could be altered by increasing the crossing time allowed. VV accepted the obstructive nature of the lighting columns in the newly surfaced footway along Brunel Way; he also informed members that a cycle hire scheme could well be located on the north side of the Railway Station. Plans for Station Forecourt North have been drawn up but are still in negotiations with Network Rail. VV stated that it's important to have desire lines and long term aspirations on a plan and to make sure they are known about by as many officers as possible so that if future opportunities develop there is more chance they can be secured. Members made it clear they would support a route north of the railway line.

TE was doubtful that large numbers of cyclists could use the current cycling infrastructure and would have to be on carriageway. VV stated that any scheme taken forward under the LSTF has to demonstrate sustainability over at least 3 years and that the cycle hire scheme as advertised in the press doesn't have enough sponsorship at the moment so there is a revenue shortfall. Large companies would not support a scheme which is likely to lose money. He made it clear other options for cycle hire schemes are being looked at that may be more suitable for Slough and that are self-supporting.

Overall, the zebra crossing scheme and Buckingham Ave scheme will be implemented this financial year, and routes through the park over the next two years. The cycle hire and cycle hub schemes will be taken forward over the next two years. All LSTF funding has to be spent within three years.

Local Access Forum - 04.10.12

VV thanked members for comments made so far and would forward links and drawings to JW for circulation. He would attend the next meeting to give updates.

Resolved – JW will forward any further comments from members to VV and circulate information between meetings. Members were also asked for comments on the Walking and Cycling map that is currently being updated. TE took a hard copy of the walking and cycling map.

97. Gating

Birch Grove cut through – several members visited site. JW confirmed the fire service do not object to the possible gating of this cut through. However a gating order could be required in this case even though it is across private land as the public use over a long period of time means there is a presumption of dedication of the route as public. After the site visit KW felt that gating this route at night would be acceptable.

Resolved – updates to be brought to next meeting.

Rossiter Close – JW explained that the gating order consultation would start on the 5th October 2012. Members revisited the issues discussed at the previous meeting and agreed that the original design with the build over was flawed. Members were concerned that a beneficial use be found for the otherwise “dead” space that would remain inside the gates and that it would not become a litter dumping area.

Resolved - members agreed that the LAF would not object to the gating order due to the exceptional nature of the alleyway however they had reservations concerning the amount of resources being aimed at youth engagement and asked for further details on what is being provided in the area.

98. Slough Arm of the Grand Union Canal

It was agreed to postpone this item to the next meeting due to lack of time. TH stated that there is a lot of local interest about the re-development of the basin and the towpath for its leisure potential. WS added that the local disabled groups would welcome a suitable place to fish from a wheelchair. TH mentioned a pontoon installed at Bloom Park for this purpose which was incorrectly sited due to overhead cables.

JW asked if the Friends of Slough Canal have an action plan for the Slough Arm. TH confirmed they have a general strategy while there is still uncertainty about basin re-development plans. A smaller scheme is now being considered by CRT as Travis Perkins is unwilling to move from their site. Any re-development needs to incorporate public open space and widening of the access routes to encourage use by making people feel safer. As the Canals

Local Access Forum - 04.10.12

and Rivers Trust the emphasis is now on fund raising to help improve the canals.

There is a user meeting in late Oct 2012 with CRT updating the Friends Group. They are planning a full dredge using a single channel process. The biggest cost is disposing of the material dredged. TH queried whether the material could be deposited around the periphery of Bloom Park. JW agreed to speak to Parks department about this possibility. The dredged material would need to be sorted and contamination levels would be low. Etiquette on shared use paths was discussed and TH suggested that something similar to the "two tings" campaign could be used on multi-use paths in Slough. All agreed to look at this at a future meeting.

Resolved – JW to circulate the Friends of Slough Canal action plan to all members and add to next meeting agenda.

99. Cycle About Slough - Updates

Heart of Slough –

A new date for a cycle about the Heart of Slough with LAF members and SBC Officers was arranged through AD. This would be discussed at the next meeting.

JW tabled the Cycling about Slough issues report many items already discussed under "Item 94. LSTF".

Ledgers Road Permanent Scheme Design – JW tabled the drawings for the scheme. Each road would be done separately. TH mentioned there is old signage directing people down Ledgers Road to the Chalvey Tip and also suggested that use of the Iver Tip could be encouraged.

IH was not happy with the use of green paint to mark out a cycle lane as it breaks up quickly and is costly; DM thought this was no longer Council policy to use green paint. JW will forward any comments received and update on progress of the scheme at the next meeting.

Pavement Parking Forum - JW agreed to get an update on progress with the policy and actions being taken.

Resolved – Cycling About Slough to be kept on the main agenda and updates on all issues to be brought to next meeting.

100. Regional and National News

JW would forward details of all the SE Regional and National news via email and post to members.

Local Access Forum - 04.10.12

Huddle – JW asked members to check for their Huddle invite and would arrange an invite for TH.

101. Any other Business

TH proposed that the national campaign for 20 mph schemes, called “20’s Plenty” is added to the next agenda for discussion. Members were not completely convinced that this issue falls within the Forum’s remit but would like to know more about it.

102. Date of next meeting

JW agreed to look at alternative venues for future meetings where there is a staffed reception after 6pm.

Date of the next meeting is TBA.

(Note: The Meeting opened at Time Not Specified and closed at Time Not Specified)