

Local Access Forum – Meeting held on Thursday, 30th October, 2014 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
Councillor Wayne Strutton
Toby Evans
Andy Packer, Walking and cycling

Observers

Officers, Slough Borough Council

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

154. Apologies and Welcome

DM welcomed Andy Packer as an observer at the meeting. Apologies were received from Ken Wright, Trevor Allen and Tony Haines.

155. Declarations of Interest

None.

156. Minutes of last meeting held on 1st May 2014

The minutes of the last meeting held on 1st May 2014 were agreed to be an accurate record.

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

Ditton Park Cycle Path Update –

JW reported that the repairs to the Northfield path were completed in September 2014 and that CA Technologies have been informed that there are weeds already appearing through the new surface. JW has recommended a regime of spraying on the paths to deal with this problem. CA Technologies have said they will take this up with their contractors.

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JW tabled photos of the cycle path running through Slough exhibiting maintenance issues; weeds encroachment, trees overhanging; explaining the confusion over maintenance responsibility. DM requested details of the original specification (width, surface treatment etc.) and date of path construction as well as enquiring what legal status the path has. Members were concerned that the path in Slough has a legally protected status eg; as a public right of way or as a cycle track and that it is maintained to the original standard. JW thought that as the land was deliberately purchased by the Council to construct this path, it may not have been considered necessary to have a legal dedication. WS mentioned that the farmer uses the path with vehicles. DM expounded the beauty of the path and surroundings through the Ditton Park Estate.

Members discussed the previous path repairs on the South Field path that members visited during the summer. It was felt the level of the path is lower than the surrounding land despite CA stating that they had built the level up. JW said the condition of this path would need to be monitored bearing in mind it had already been flooded once since the repairs.

Resolved – JW would find out details of path construction and investigate its legal status. JW agreed to chase CA Technologies

Footpath 35a – Herschel Street to High Street Slough –

JW tabled the draft design for the “Alpha Street” development and explained the stopping up of the footpath can be achieved under the Town & Country Planning Act as the path is being used within the design.

Footpath 57 Tuns Lane to Glentworth Place –

Members were asked for a steer on whether an informal consultation of the residents in Glentworth Place should be done to help decide on whether this path should be permanently closed as the usage is most likely to be the residents themselves. There had been no further reports of anti-social behaviour and SP as Councillor for this ward reported no recent complaints. Members felt that despite the path being narrow and not providing a significant short-cut that since there is no new evidence of crime/asb, no further action should be taken at this point in order that expectations are not raised.

Old Bath Road, Colnbrook – Dis-used Railway - Planning application

DM queried whether the LAF could take any action to help in getting this path dedicated as a public right of way. JW confirmed that a claim would need to be made by users/interested party for the path to be made a public path. She explained that the Council itself could support an application to add the path to the Definitive Map on the basis of discovery of evidence, but the process

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would be a slow one. Investigations would need to be done to ascertain any historical evidence to show the route has existing public rights.

This path wouldn't necessarily be lost due to the 2026 cut-off date because it doesn't just rely on historical pre-1949 evidence.

JW thought that if the LAF were to support the investigation of evidence for this path to be added to the Definitive Map, then the Council could be persuaded it was a worthwhile use of resources. Moreover, the Council's Transport team have shown interest in gaining this route as public. JW suggested there could be a possibility of the Council purchasing the land. Members agreed that this path has a public amenity value, not only for its economic benefit (walking route to work) but also for its natural environment and asked for the matter to be taken forward.

Resolved – The LAF firmly support the inclusion of this path as a public right of way and recommends the Council proceeds with investigations on how to achieve this.

158. Membership

JW mooted the idea of having a separate independent website using the "Group Space" free website. RBWM LAF has a web space using this resource though the RBWM LAF officer is not sure how successful it's been. JW intends to investigate whether this would be useful for Slough LAF in terms of being an independent space for members with a link to the SBC website.

159. Transport /Schemes/Designs - Updates and consultations

JW tabled the report included in the papers;

A355 Copthorne Roundabout route enhancement, A332 Windsor Road corridor Improvements, Slough Mass Rapid Transit

JW brought these three current consultations to members asking if they would like to respond. The Windsor Road and Copthorne R/bout consultation deadlines are the end of November, though the Mass Rapid Transit deadline is 7th Nov which is too tight to allow a LAF response.

DM queried why the markings on the shared use route on the Bath Road A4 have been removed. JW said she would investigate. Members felt that the Mass Rapid Transit scheme where the service road along the M4 corridor would be used as a new bus lane was less significant to the LAF in terms of walking and cycling. TE though was concerned to know that the new bus lane could be used by cyclists.

DM felt there should be a LAF position on the two other consultations and JW agreed to send the details to members for comments using google docs.

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East – West Cycle Route

JW explained that Planning consent has been received for this cycling route through Salt Hill Park and so the diversion order for the footpath is in progress with Legal being instructed. JW explained that the public footpath has to be diverted because the new proposals would obstruct the legal line. The idea of the east – west cycle route is to take cyclists off the Bath Road and Tuns junction where cycling is more hazardous.

IH raised the issue of the vertical posts inside the Salt Hill Tunnel asking if they can be removed as they are hazardous and reduce the width available to walkers and cyclists passing in the tunnel. JW agreed to find out if they can be removed.

Leigh Road New bridge –

JW updated the group that the existing highway rights across the old bridge will be stopped up and that SEGRO will enter into a S25 creation agreement to dedicate the new width as a public right of way for shared use walking and cycling.

Pavement Parking Scheme –

The next phase includes; Wexham, Elliman, Chalvey and the rest of the new Central ward and the initial design is currently being developed. The LAF will be consulted in due course and an officer from the design team has offered to meet with the LAF at this stage. TE queried whether Herschel Street would be included in the next phase. WS thought that Herschel Street was not within the new central ward. Discussion moved onto the camera enforcement car which WS stated was limited to certain roads junctions and targeted areas. The car can only be used in situations where a definite offence has been committed eg; around schools, double yellow lines and on clearways. Members requested further information on the way the camera enforcement car is being used in Slough for clarity.

Bus Lane Farnham Road –

Members questioned the effectiveness of this scheme with the bus lane being abused by cars and there being no filter lane for vehicles turning into Salt Hill Way and Slough Business Park.

IH observed that though cycling provision has improved at the junction of Buckingham Ave with Farnham Road, once across the junction heading east there is no dropped kerb for cyclists on carriageway to get onto the shared use footway opposite Buckingham Ave East. JW agreed to take this LAF request forward.

Lansdowne Ave Experimental Closure –

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WS thought this experimental scheme ought to be suspended to help with congestion while the Stoke Poges Lane Bridge is closed. However, other members felt that the closure did aid safer walking and cycling access and prevented Lansdowne Ave being used as a rat run.

Resolved – Actions to be taken as detailed above.

160. Joint LAF Chairs Meeting

The report on the joint meeting of LAF Chairs which took place on 24th September 2014 was tabled with JW pointing out the positive effect that partnership working can have especially on cross boundary issues for example; the continuous dialogue with CA Technologies and essential path repairs can be attributed to the initial joint LAF letters to CA Technologies.

The aim is to invite other Berkshire LAFs to the next Joint Chairs meeting. These would include; Bracknell and Mid and West Berks.

JW explained one of the RBWM LAF aims to extend the multi-user route along the Jubilee River towards Maidenhead and has put together a list of cross boundary issues of importance to Slough LAF that the Joint LAF meeting could look at. LAF Officers will put together a map of all the cross boundary issues. JW suggested a possible joint LAF letter to Eton College to persuade them to dedicate extra width on the bridleway known as Wood Lane through to Eton Wick.

DM agreed that there is a lot of scope for joint working with multiple LAF's speaking with one voice giving added weight to recommendations/advice. In the future he could see joint site visits would enable sharing of best practice and perspectives and also the opportunity to share expertise and experience. For instance; the disabled member of Bucks LAF offered help with accessibility auditing of paths in Slough where we don't have that experience within the membership. All agreed that as a mainly urban area Slough would benefit from joint LAF working with residents relying on good access links across boundaries.

Wexham Right of Way –

JW confirmed that Bucks row team would be supportive of a dedication of this route. LAF agreed they would still like to see this dedication happen whether through agreement with landowner or by a user application for a Modification Order. JW stated there is a huge bund of earth obstructing the entrance to the path off the Wexham Road; she agreed to check the current situation and would forward photos and a location plan to members.

SBC Dog Leaflets –

JW brought current SBC leaflets to the meeting.

Resolved – Update to be brought to next meeting.

161. Slough Arm of Grand Union Canal - Updates

JW informed members that CRT has asked for comments on a Basin Proposals plan to enhance the canal Basin and the interface with the Stoke Road. Members perused the draft comments and JW agreed to amend and send the LAF response to CRT and to the Slough Regeneration Partnership. Members felt that the concrete fence should be removed and not replaced with anything unless safety is raised as an issue in which case a wooden railing with wire mesh arrangement could be considered.

Discussions continued about the necessity for car parking space/s as opposed to cycle hire docking station. DM felt that recreational usage would be shut out if no car parking provision is provided with other members saying that car use should not be encouraged. JW pointed out the basin is in the centre of town and so is accessible via public transport. The overall consensus was that the space should be used either for a disabled car park space or for a cycle hire docking station which has a minimum requirement of 12 bikes.

TE suggested taking cycling footage of local cycling journeys to pick up issues for future meetings.

Members requested the cycle hire scheme be placed on the agenda for the next meeting.

Resolved – JW would amend and send the Basin proposals consultation and TE to borrow cycle filming equipment from WS.

162. Gating - Updates

Victoria Road Gating Order – The Gating Order has now been made as a result of the continual fly tipping at this location. It is not a through route.

Torrige Road Gating Order - This Gating Order has just been made.

JW tabled the report explaining the change in legislation that Gating Orders have been replaced with Public Spaces Protection Orders as of 20th Oct 2014. LAFs are no longer statutory consultee for the new Orders and the Council has to decide how best to consult, though the Home Office guidance mentions LAFs could be consulted.

Members were concerned that LAFs are no longer to be statutorily consulted and that the new legislation is ambiguous in defining what a public nuisance is which is detrimental to quality of life. TE asked what the new process of consultation is. JW stated that the intention is to continue with the Community Safety led Review Panel she attends and the Council also has to consider the wider impact and convenience of an alternative route if a right of way is affected. Each PSPO can deal with several issues in one Order eg; restrict access to an area, control dogs and alcohol consumption. A PSPO can also

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restrict behaviour on a particular individual and be enforced by issue of penalty notices.

WS thought the LAF needs to be kept informed of any future PSPO proposals affecting rights of way in order to object if necessary. There was concern that no particular evidential level is set down in the new legislation for the Council to make a PSPO affecting a right of way. The process doesn't seem sufficiently robust and members are concerned Orders will be an easier option.

Birch Grove – Furnival Ave Flats –

A PSPO is being made for this area as the new legislation came into force before the Gating Order could be made. The LAF was previously consulted for the Gating Order and made no objections as the gate would be open during daylight hours.

It will be important to keep alert for any new proposals for PSPO's to see how they are being dealt with by the Council.

163. Regional and National News

SE LAF Conference is due to be held on the 19th May 2015 for diaries. Members to inform JW should they wish to attend.

JW explained the updated LAF Engagement Plan produced from Natural England and the online forum called Huddle for LAF members nationally.

Recent publications on Huddle are;

- The DfT consultation about the Cycling Delivery Plan – government 10 year strategy on how they intend to increase walking and cycling across England – JW confirmed the SBC Transport team is attending a workshop on this and may be intending to express an interest. DM wondered if this would be an opportunity to resurrect the “Slough Necklace” (a walking/cycling route round Slough). TE asked what was happening about Slough's Bikeability resource and if it is still effective as he'd heard Stoke Poges School has banned cycling to school. JW agreed to add this to the next meeting agenda.
- Review of National groups dealing with Rights of Way issues
- Update on progress with Deregulation Bill – is entering the committee stage in Parliament.

164. Date of the next meeting

Weds 28th January 2015, 6.30pm at the Chalvey Community Centre.

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