

30 November 2015

Slough Local Access Forum

Ruth Bagley
Chief Executive
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Replies to: Jacqui Wheeler,
Officer to Slough Local Access Forum
Highways Engineering
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Ref: LAF Linear Park/Ditton Park Cycle Path

Dear Ruth,

I am writing as Chairman of the Slough Local Access Forum, a statutory advisory body whose members are volunteers living in the local area, set up under the Countryside & Rights of Way Act 2000. Part of our remit is to advise the Local Authority and other relevant organisations concerning walking and cycling access to green open spaces in the area.

Over recent years the Forum has taken a keen interest in the Linear Park as an important local route providing a very pleasant off-road walking and cycling provision across the borough east – west. As part of the National Cycle Network, this route is widely publicised and used, a real asset to the local communities of Slough and Windsor & Maidenhead.

The route runs across land owned and in fact specifically purchased by the borough to allow its construction; through Upton Court Park and circuiting the Slough Cricket ground then running eastwards to wind across land which is part of the Ditton Park Estate owned by CA Technologies. This portion of the path was secured as a planning gain in RBWM.

After building up communication links with CA Technologies through joint letters from Slough Local Access Forum and Windsor & Maidenhead Local Access Forum, a dialogue opened with officers at both LA's and CA Technologies which has resulted in long overdue repairs being made to the path surface through the Estate. This accomplishment is benefiting users immensely and the Forum would like to see this replicated on the Slough Council owned part of the route.

Unfortunately, I would like to express our dismay at the lack of a regular maintenance regime on the section of the Linear Park in Slough, particularly in light of the recent investment made by the private landowner in improving the path. It is disappointing to discover that this wonderful route which is included in Slough's Local Plan is now

relegated to ad hoc maintenance; being stuck in a no-man's land between departments with no designated maintenance budget and that core pathway is being lost to vegetation with a consequential reduction in width.

Members feel that this route does not get the recognition it deserves as a major off-road leisure and commuter route and that the Council should give it priority when considering improvements to cycling routes in the coming financial year. Essentially, the Forum strongly recommends that the Council takes greater responsibility for the Linear Park wholly within Council ownership and provides ongoing funds for proper programmed maintenance to ensure the continued accessibility of the route for local people.

The Council must be seen to be upholding their obligation to this route particularly if we are to continue pushing for investment from CA Technologies.

I look forward to your response on this matter.

Yours sincerely,



David Munkley
Chair 2015, Slough Local Access Forum

cc. Councillor Rajinder S Sandhu, Upton Ward, Slough
Councillor Rayman Bains, Upton Ward, Slough
Councillor Wal Chahal, Upton Ward, Slough
Anthony Hurst, Principal Rights of Way Officer, Royal Borough of Windsor & Maidenhead
Peter Challis, Sustrans Area Manager

This letter constitutes formal advice from the Slough Local Access Forum. Slough Borough Council is required, in accordance with section 94(5) of the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000, to have regard to relevant advice from this forum in carrying out its functions.