

Date of issue: Monday, 3 April 2017

MEETING	LOCAL ACCESS FORUM
DATE AND TIME:	TUESDAY, 11TH APRIL, 2017 AT 6.30 PM
VENUE:	MEETING ROOM 4, CHALVEY COMMUNITY CENTRE, THE GREEN, CHALVEY, SLOUGH, SL1 2SP
LOCAL ACCESS FORUM SECRETARY (for all enquiries)	JACQUI WHEELER, RIGHTS OF WAY OFFICER 01753 477479

NOTICE OF MEETING

You are requested to attend the above Meeting at the time and date indicated to deal with the business set out in the following agenda.



ROGER PARKIN
Interim Chief Executive

AGENDA

PART 1

<u>AGENDA ITEM</u>	<u>REPORT TITLE</u>	<u>PAGE</u>	<u>TIME ALLOCATED</u>
1.	Apologies		(2 mins)
2.	Welcome & Declarations of Interest (Members are reminded of their duty to declare personal and prejudicial interests in matters coming before this meeting as set out in the local code of conduct)		
3.	Minutes of Last Meeting	1 - 6	

<u>AGENDA ITEM</u>	<u>REPORT TITLE</u>	<u>PAGE</u>	<u>TIME ALLOCATED</u>
4.	Matters Arising (excluding items on agenda)		(10 mins)
5.	Canal Updates		(5 mins)
6.	Local Plan Consultations & Responses	7 - 10	(10 mins)
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Chiltern and South Bucks • Slough • BHS response and NCN 61 (WEX/26) 		
7.	Blandford Road North		(10 mins)
8.	Joint LAF Chairs Meeting	11 - 32	(15 mins)
9.	SMART Motorway M4		(5 mins)
10.	LAF Work Programme 2017	33 - 34	(5 mins)
11.	Next Meeting		

Training Room 2, Chalvey Community Centre, 11th
July 2017

Press and Public

You are welcome to attend this meeting which is open to the press and public, as an observer. You will however be asked to leave before the Committee considers any items in the Part II agenda. Please contact the Democratic Services Officer shown above for further details.

The Council allows the filming, recording and photographing at its meetings that are open to the public. By entering the meeting room and using the public seating area, you are consenting to being filmed and to the possible use of those images and sound recordings. Anyone proposing to film, record or take photographs of a meeting is requested to advise the Democratic Services Officer before the start of the meeting. Filming or recording must be overt and persons filming should not move around the meeting room whilst filming nor should they obstruct proceedings or the public from viewing the meeting. The use of flash photography, additional lighting or any non hand held devices, including tripods, will not be allowed unless this has been discussed with the Democratic Services Officer.



Local Access Forum – Meeting held on Thursday, 10th November, 2016 at the Meeting Room 1, Chalvey Community Centre, The Green, Chalvey, Slough, SL1 2SP

Present:-

LAF Members

Arnold Richardson (Observer)
David Munkley (Chair)
Councillor Satpal S Parmar
Andy Packer
John Keegan, Ramblers Association

Observers

Officers, Slough Borough Council

Jacqui Wheeler
Rights of Way Officer

227. Apologies

Apologies received for Cllr M Rasib and all hope he's well again soon. Toby Evans, Trevor Allen, Tony Haines and Ken Wright were also absent.

228. Welcome & Declarations of Interest

No declarations were received.

229. Minutes of the last meeting held on 27th July 2016

Minutes of the meeting held on 27th July 2016 were approved as a true record.

230. Matters Arising (other than those on agenda)

AP reported that he couldn't access the LAF agenda and papers from the email link or from the actual website. JW thought this could be a continuation of software problems she experienced when publishing and would investigate.

JW directed all to the Matters Arising report in the papers which gives progress on items not on the agenda.

Walking Bus and Travel Plans

Local Access Forum - 10.11.16

See report on page 11. JW expanded that Lynch Hill Primary School has the only officially recorded Walking Bus which is a success because it is run by paid staff from the school. There may be informal ones being run or ones being run on specific dates, but no definitive list exists. DM thought all schools had to have travel plans under government legislation in which Walking Buses ought to be cited. However, this is not the case they've only happened in schools where a planning obligation exists for a travel plan or where LSTF funding has generated one.

DM felt that a draft Travel Plan ought to be a pre-requisite of gaining planning permission rather than being a condition afterwards. JW stated that implementation of Travel Plans is a key element and that this would be focussed on with the new funding.

Flexi-pave surfacing

Members asked JW to pursue further detail on the cost of this type of surfacing.

Pavement Parking scheme

JW forwarded the last minutes to the Parking Team Leader asking when the new policy would be signed off. The new needs based PPS policy is nearly ready to be signed off as of the 1st November 2016.

Canal Updates

Feedback was received from the Canal and River Trust after LAF concerns were sent to them over the danger of the narrow section of path adjacent to the old Tiling Co compound. CRT says they cannot justify any expenditure on this issue as works on the large scheme are due to start soon. The Slough Urban Renewal has confirmed the Regeneration scheme is on schedule. JW arranged vegetation to be cut back on the narrow section.

231. Huddle

JW confirmed nothing of interest to Slough LAF has been coming through from Huddle recently. The remote access fob did not work to enable the meeting to access Huddle.

Rob Leek who ran Huddle has left Natural England and so members need to send their emails asking to re-register on Huddle to new contacts. JW has circulated the new email address contacts for NE to all members with details.

DM agreed to forward any comments from the chair to JW for the LAF annual report. NE has taken on more staff to deal with LAF work but envisage some delays while new staff bed in. Another LAF conference is due to be held before the end of Mar 2017; details to follow.

232. Local Plan Consultations

JW referred to the papers to show areas in South Bucks which the Chiltern and South Bucks Local Plan proposes to remove from the green belt.

However, WS informed the LAF about land which Slough have been negotiating with South Bucks to get for housing purposes. It was understood SBC would buy areas of land in order to fulfil its housing obligation of 3000 new homes. The significant areas are north of the M4 around Langley and the South Bucks boundary in the west of the borough along the A4 corridor and where the Taplow car boot is held. There are 3 or 4 sites being looked at by SBC over the next 10 years but which require South Bucks agreement. This would be green belt release to meet Slough's housing needs. WS clarified that certain areas of land which Slough had been expecting to be part of the South Bucks Local Plan have not been included and therefore Slough is in a difficult position.

JW agreed to ask for more information on the Slough Local Plan for the next meeting. This item will be on the agenda at the next meeting.

WS announced he will no longer be able to attend the LAF as an observer due to work commitments.

JW stated that she would forward a list of rights of way improvements for potential developer contributions to members for comment and for any other ideas for improvements. This should include all walking and cycling pathways and routes even those which are not recorded public rights of way, like the canal towpath.

233. BHS Consultation Paper

British Horse Society Consultation –

The BHS are asking LAF's to look at the possible role they could have in protecting routes from being lost after the 2026 cut-off date is brought in. Each Highway Authority keeps a List of Streets under Section 36 of the Highways Act 1980 which shows publicly maintainable highways. There are some routes on this list which should be shown on the Definitive Map but which aren't and if they're not recorded on the DMS by the cut-off date then they could be lost as public rights of way. However it is intended under the Deregulation Act and associated guidance that inclusion on the List of Streets would exempt a route from being lost.

Local Access Forum - 10.11.16

The BHS are asking LAF's to address questions to their HA about the robustness of the procedures they have for managing the List of Streets to ensure that routes not recorded on the DMS but which could be, but which are on the List of Streets are safe from being removed from it without proper process.

JW described how Slough's List of Streets is kept as a mixture of old maps, a GIS and a spreadsheet which also shows routes which are private and therefore not publicly maintained.

DM would look at the consultation and make an initial response as the consultation seems to be more relevant to rural areas where there are likely to be lots of unsealed routes and unclassified roads. It is unclear whether or not this is especially relevant to Slough where these kinds of routes are rare.

234. South Bucks Lost Ways Project

South Bucks Lost Way Project –

JW has suggested that Slough LAF members could look at the two parishes in South Bucks, Dorney and Wexham, to identify paths which could be public rights of way. JW tabled hard copies of the Definitive Map extracts provided by the Bucks LAF and suggested that she email the maps to members.

JW had expressed an interest in Slough LAF looking at these two parishes because of the potential to find cross boundary routes and links to them to acquire a more joined up network. DM asked what the Slough LAF were being committed to. JW requested members read the paperwork provided "Restoring the Rights" and decide whether or not they can individually spend any time on this.

JW referred to "Build a List of Routes" on page 5 of the papers which helped explain the process of identifying potential public rights of way which would otherwise be lost. Everyone agreed to look at the paperwork and add this item to a future agenda.

235. Iver Gravel Extraction Planning Application

Iver Gravel Extraction Planning application –

Members noted that Slough Council has objected to this development on various grounds not least that it compromises the Western Rail Link to Heathrow (WRLtH) development at Mansion Lane. JW explained that Bucks Rights of Way response to this planning application though asks for a new path which would link across to Market Lane, improving current provision and beneficial to Slough residents. JW had confirmed in the Slough response that Slough LAF supported the requests made by the Bucks row officer.

236. Summer Site Visits Updates - Actions

Summer Site Visits Updates –

JW referred to the paperwork. All agreed that the site visits had again been a success giving members an enhanced perspective.

The Dis-used Railway land Colnbrook – The landowner has changed and now owns this and the adjacent site. The new landowner wants to move the unofficial trodden footpath to the western side of the site to improve scope for development of these two parcels of land. JW pointed out that the Poyle New Cottages have a private right of access along the existing footpath running between the dis-used railway land and the adjacent land.

237. Training Day Notes

These are to be circulated to members via email.

238. Date and time of next meeting

TBC

(Note: The Meeting opened at 6.30 pm and closed at 8.30 pm)

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Issues and Options consultation for Slough – public rights of way

Rights of way throughout the borough and across boundary into South Bucks and Windsor and Maidenhead combine with other forms of access routes, housing paths, parks, open spaces and streets to provide a network of opportunities for residents to improve their level of activity and so their health and wellbeing. The link between access improvements and an increase in individual health and wellbeing is proven.

The Bucks public rights of way response to the Slough Issues and Options consultation is wholeheartedly agreed and supported by the Slough Local Access Forum (See Appendix 1). Where development allows creation of new walking and cycling provision and improvements to existing walking and cycling routes across borough boundary, funding should be actively sought through the planning process and proactively designed into new housing areas.

The challenge expressed in the consultation at 3.9 shows the importance of a modal shift required to stem congestion. While looking at improvements to existing cycling routes and new options for cycling and walking it is important to recognise equestrian needs too which can be easily incorporated through the use of new surfaces such as; flexi pave which is also beneficial for cyclists and walkers being not only porous and flexible, but non-slip too. Creation of bridleways as multi-user routes should always be considered an option where possible. (see Appendix 2 British Horse Society response).

Countryside recreation corridors are identified in 3.10.13 within easy reach for slough residents. These are;

- The Colne Valley Park
- The Slough Arm of the Grand Union Canal – towpath
- The Jubilee River – (including NCN route 61)
- Routes north from Britwell to Burnham Beeches
- Routes north to Country Parks in Bucks and links between the country parks

It is important that the Council develops a strong approach to maintaining these corridors as well as planning and improving links to them. The Council should aim to ensure that all developers are aware of the need to design such links into housing schemes which may not be adjacent to each corridor but which may provide the opportunity for a new route or a missing link in the network thus enhancing the accessibility of these recreation corridors. The network available for walking and cycling journeys in Slough must be viewed holistically taking into account the value of strong well maintained routes to encourage sustainable commuting.

The need for GI to be injected into existing neighbourhoods is agreed though this must incorporate a joined up approach across service areas to ensure it can be delivered.

It is agreed that whilst strong measures should be taken to discourage people using their car for short journeys, this must be balanced with providing improved and more attractive places to walk and cycle and better public transport.

3.11.22 – The Local Plan will need robust policies to ensure that developments provide infrastructure at the appropriate time. It will be important to note that where section 106 agreements include the dedication of public rights of way the wording must be carefully structured to ensure that the S106 agreement itself can be the “legal event” necessary to add the way to the Definitive Map and Statement and that a further S25 agreement is not then required.

Spatial Options-

Option B – Expand the Centre of Langley

This option would allow improvements to the canal towpath as a vital walking and cycling link through to the town centre and provide opportunities for commuting to other towns. The Local Access Forum believes that the historical partnership between the Canal and River Trust and the local authorities along the Slough Arm of the canal (Slough, South Bucks, BucksCC, and Hillingdon) should be resurrected to provide a focus for maintenance and management of the canal. Improvements to existing public rights of way linking communities to the canal and the NCN route 61 from Slough could be made and links enhanced north to Langley Park would address the need for recreation.

Solutions to the severing of Langley Park and Black Park brought about by the A412 Uxbridge Rd could be sought through development contributions. The BHS has actively sought a Pegasus crossing over this busy road in the past and it is considered that if housing is developed as proposed in Option B and the other Options J1 outside of the borough but surrounding Wexham Park Hospital then this should be actively sought to allow integration of the two Country Parks for recreation purposes and as mitigation for the existing residents.

Option C- New neighbourhood on Akzo Nobel and National Grid sites

There are opportunities to improve the towpath and links to it from any new housing on these sites. The design of the housing could be open to the towpath and the canal rather than facing away from it. This would encourage greater use, providing natural surveillance of the canal and therefore reduce any anti-social behaviour it suffers from.

It is supported and agreed that walking and cycling and public transport links must be provided through the housing to the canal and the historical bridge over the canal on Wexham Road should be improved if possible. The access points to the canal from this bridge do not comply with DDA guidance but the historical significance and character needs to be safeguarded wherever practicable. Eg; ironwork bollard can be re-used.

Option D1 – the canal basin

The Slough Local Access Forum supports the re-development of the canal basin and welcomes further consultation concerning the detailed design. As the entrance portal to the Slough Arm of the Grand Union canal an important recreation and commuting green corridor, it is essential that the design for this site incorporates significant public open space and promotion of the area as a

recreation destination. The north side of the canal bank which provides a path through to Kendal Close must be further enhanced and widened to at least a 5m corridor with a path and seating for enjoyment of the environment. It would be preferable to ask for this path to be dedicated as a public right of way and surfaced in a suitable porous surfacing such as; flexi-pave to allow complete sustainable drainage capability.

The installation of cycle docking for cycle hire has been accepted by the SUR and would be enhanced by the provision of a walking and cycling link towards the town centre and Slough rail station. These could incorporate the existing bridleways from Mill Street and Grays Place through the new developments known as The Junction and Rivington and Lexington Apartments.

Option D2 – New Central Cippenham Strip

Development of the option could accommodate improvements to the existing public footpath 2, a, b and c running alongside the recreation ground and through to Burnham Lane and Bath Road. This could be an upgrade to a bridleway to legalise cycling use and widening of the section of path adjacent to commercial property 352 Bath Road. A signalised crossing point on the desire line across the Bath Road corridor is needed to link this public path to Brook Path (a public footpath on the south side of the A4). This would allow walking and cycling all the way down to the Jubilee River on off-road paths and quiet roads.

Option D3 – Chalvey Regeneration

Fully support this option incorporating an attractive walking and cycling link from Salt Hill Park (FP21) through enhancement of the Salt Hill Stream corridor.

Option H – Slough Green Belt Sites

1 – St Anthony’s Field – the path adjacent to the field on the northern boundary leading through the St Mary’s schurchyard to Church Road needs to be recorded as a public right of way.

7- land in Bloom Park - it is considered further housing would be detrimental to the area and overwhelm the park which is currently being redesigned to incorporate improved access links to the canal corridor.

8 – land east of Mansions Lane – This land known as Gypsy Field was suggested by the Slough Local Access Forum as a potential recreation area/Local Nature Reserve which could incorporate a new cycling route along the Withy stream.

Options J2 – Sites H2 and D7 Land west of Crown Meadow, Brands Hill, and land south of Austen Way

Development of these areas should attempt to incorporate the agreement of Thames Water or landowner for the extension of the Slough Linear Park around the reservoir, an improvement previously pursued by RBWM and Slough councils. TW eventually turned the prospect down. Development here would benefit from this previously envisaged route being provided to allow pedestrians and cyclists to avoid the busy London Road and Jct 5 roundabout while linking to Ditton

Park cycle path to the west, north to the NCN 61 and to Crown Meadow Wildlife Heritage site and the Colne Valley Way to the east.

Option J1 – East Burnham

If this area is released for housing then there is opportunity to create multi-user routes through to Burnham Beeches using the existing Bucks PRoW network and dedication of land as new provision. Existing bridleways are BUH/37/1, BUH/38/1 and BUH/32/1 and existing quiet lanes such as; Walton, Crow Piece and Thompkins Lane. This would encourage a modal shift of short journeys to Burnham Beeches (NNR) from Britwell.

Option J1 - Land around Wexham Park Hospital and Middlegreen

As at Option B, above; any development of this area for housing should seek to deliver solutions to the severance of Langley Park and Black Park brought about by the A412 Uxbridge Rd. If a Pegasus crossing is not feasible then a bridleway bridge is needed.

Every opportunity should be taken to improve the existing walking and cycling routes from residential areas in Slough to the Country Parks. This would involve the upgrade of footpath WEX/9/1 to a bridleway suggested by the BHS creating a more attractive link for walkers and cyclists as well to George Green/Langley Park. Improvements to the network of public rights of way in the Middlegreen area have already been identified by the Slough Local Access Forum with the priority being a better multi-user route along the line of footpath WEX/13/1 linking to Langley Park. Funding should also be sought through the planning process for major improvements to the NCN61 following the route of bridleway WEX/26/2, which needs an entirely new surface.

LAF CHAIR MEETING – 30th January 2017

ATTENDANCE

Local Access Forum	Name
Bracknell Forest LCAF	Peter Radband (Chair) [PR] Graham Pockett [GP]
Bucks LAF	Jon Clark (Secretary) [JC]
Mid & West Berks LCAF	Janice Bridger (Chair) [JB] Jan Heard (Vice-Chair) [JH]
RBWM LAF	Peter Thorn (Chair) [PT] Andrew Fletcher (Secretary) [AF]
Slough LAF	Jacqui Wheeler (Secretary) [JW]

ACTIONS ARISING FROM THE MEETING

Item	Action / Issue	Action Owner	Outcome
1	Send updated contact details out to all	AF	Email distribution list shared with all
2	Share PDF version of LAF Training notes to each LAF secretary for dissemination	AF	PDF Training notes will be distributed to all for dissemination to each LAF
3	Provide details of DEFRA gaps gates and stiles publication to JH	AF	This publication, and an accompanying explanation document from the Pittcroft Trust, will be shared with all along with these notes
4	Question for each LAF whether more joint training would be useful/gauge demand	All LAF Secretaries	
5	Contact EA about proposed joint management meeting for Jubilee River	JW / JC	
6	Contact Josh Kerry (West Berks) for details of funding from Highways England to improve PROW damaged by Highways England projects	AF	

7	Send RPA report form to all	AF	The form used to report issues to the RPA will be included with these notes. Completed forms are sent to Cross.ComplianceReferrals@rpa.gsi.gov.uk
8	Meet with Richard Benyon MP to discuss issues with access and Brexit	JB / PT	
9	Question for RBWM LAF: Would it like to write to Theresa May MP regarding access and Brexit	AF	
10	Letter to be drafted to Natural England regarding concerns about lack of South-East co-ordination for LAFs.	JB / PT	

NOTES FROM ACCESS / BREXIT DISCUSSION

- Agreed that many stewardship schemes have not resulted in good projects for the public
- Issue with stewardship schemes has been that when the money has stopped path and access has sometimes been taken away
- Impression amongst the group that Natural England should be thinking about this
- Paths for communities may be the way forward; a fund can be managed through Natural England.
- Potential proposal made at the meeting that the balance of RPA payments should be biased towards farmers with public rights of way on their land, so farmers would get an increased payment when they have public rights of way compared to other farms. The RPA could potentially be changed in this way without additional funds.

HORIZON SCANNING

- Green Papers from DEFRA – Sharing the Post-brexite Landscape
- Housing Development Plans and asking for early notice from planning
- Slough Local Plan

KNOWN JOINT ISSUES / BOUNDARY ISSUES

1. Upgrade of footpath to bridleway across the boundary of Wokingham and Bracknell Forest – Bracknell Forest/Wokingham

2. Slough arm of Canal at Langley Park – Bucks/Slough
3. Ditton Park (in hand at present) – RBWM/Slough
4. Multi-user route extension at Bucks – Bucks/RBWM/Slough
5. M4 Smart Motorway.

JOINT SITE VISIT SUGGESTIONS

(Invitations to site meetings be extended to all neighbouring LAFs)

1. Proposed upgrade of cross boundary Footpath to Bridleway (*Bracknell Forest/Mid & West Berks*)
2. Black Park and Langley Park and crossing of A412 (*Bucks / Slough*)
3. Hawthorn Lane / Hogoak Lane Traffic Regulation Orders (*RBWM / Bracknell Forest*)
4. Bucklebury Common (*Mid & West Berks*)
5. Britwell to Burnham Beeches (*Bucks / Slough*)

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MID & WEST BERKS LOCAL ACCESS FORUM

PROPOSALS FOR PUBLIC ACCESS IN FUTURE FARM SUBSIDIES POST BREXIT.

We believe there is a need to improve and update public access to the countryside through mechanisms which benefit both the public and landowners /occupiers. Subsidies to landowners /occupiers should be used to create and reorganise the public rights of way network where needed. That is, public benefit will be provided for public money.

Our main proposal is:

that landowners /occupiers should be financially rewarded for creating off-road links (ie. new rights of way) to plug gaps in the rights of way network and to connect existing rights of way which can no longer be used safely because either the roads connecting them have become unsafe for non-motorised users or because the rights of way network has become fragmented by the building of new roads. The required links may have been identified in local authority Local Transport Plans or Rights of Way Improvement Plans.

New access needs to be well publicised, targeted, selective, based on public demand and be attractive to landowners / occupiers. Ideally the new access will be permanent.

We also support **additional proposals** listed in appendix 1.

We suggest that **new schemes are developed** based on the better aspects of previous schemes (Countryside Stewardship and Paths for Communities). See appendix 2.

BACKGROUND

The problem

In the area covered by the Mid & West Berks Local Access Forum, there is a good network of public rights of way in many parishes. However, metalled roads have often to be used to connect these public rights of way. These roads, which include minor rural roads, have become unsafe for non-motorised users because of increasing traffic levels. Hence the public rights of way network is, in practice, fragmented in many areas. This needs to be corrected by providing off-road links by encouraging landowners /occupiers with financial rewards. Examples are given in Appendix 3.

A local access forum under Section 94 of the Countryside & Rights of Way Act 2000, appointed by, and advising



Benefit of a well-connected public rights of way network.

The benefit of outdoor recreation in the countryside to physical and mental well-being is well recognized (Reconomics Plus¹). Our historic public rights of way network offers a facility to provide healthy outdoor exercise, free at the point of use, for a wide variety of recreational and utility purposes: walking; dog walking; jogging / running; horse riding; carriage driving; cycling; disabled rambling; orienteering; appreciating the countryside for its farming value, wildlife, history and archaeology. The network thus provides excellent value for money. It is also accepted that a well-connected public rights of way network supports local economies and tourism.

However, in many parts of the country with strong development pressures, the public rights of way network has, in practice, become fragmented because roads have become unsafe for non-motorised users. Users of the network are taxpayers and, as such, deserve practical compensation for the loss of the links in the network that have occurred over many decades of growth in vehicular traffic. Where local policies have identified a need, opportunities to secure off-road safe routes need to be taken. Landowners /occupiers need to be encouraged to help solve the problem by offering them suitable subsidies for new rights of way to re-connect and improve the network.

APPENDIX 1: ADDITIONAL PROPOSALS

1. Payment for improvement of existing public rights of way: greater width / mowing / regrading and rolling of green lanes / improving the accessibility of gates and stiles / additional or improved way marking and signposting /providing higher rights where needed and suitable.
2. New access should benefit all non-motorised users, that is, pedestrians, cyclists and equestrians.
3. Payment for helping to maintain existing public rights of way, perhaps relieving local authorities of some expenses.
4. Improved existing cross-compliance and simpler regulation.
5. Consideration of reorganization of the network to suit current land use, perhaps in exchange for new paths, and particularly where existing paths go through sensitive or potentially dangerous areas such as farmyards and where there are dead end, unused or unsuitable paths.

APPENDIX 2: FUTURE SCHEMES

1. Schemes need to be developed which make public access attractive to landowners / occupiers and enhance the public rights of way network.
2. LAFs should be more closely involved to ensure new access is useful and provides best value.
3. Local authorities need to receive a financial award for the maintenance of new access and any other additional duties.
4. Previous schemes should be developed and improved eg. Stewardship access, Paths for Communities. There should be demonstrable public benefit. Schemes need to be better monitored than in the past - perhaps a role for LAFs or local authorities with payment?

¹ - see <http://www.sportandrecreation.org.uk/pages/reconomics-plus> published February 2017.

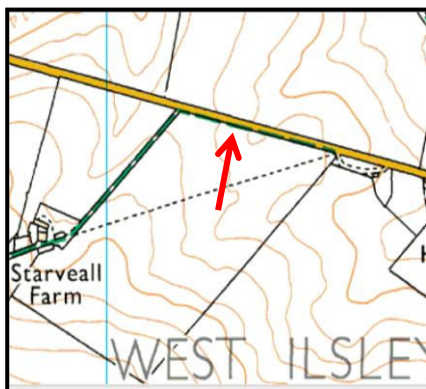
APPENDIX 3: EXAMPLES

Example 1:

The problem of missing links was recognised in ‘*Cyclists, pedestrians and equestrians: a summary of priorities for Highways England’s Network*’ published January 2017 by Transport Focus². On the A35 near Winterbourne Abbas, Dorset, two bridleways emerge onto the A35 a few hundred metres apart with no provision to get between the two apart from using the carriageway. An off-road link alongside the A35 is required to enable the public to use the two bridleways.

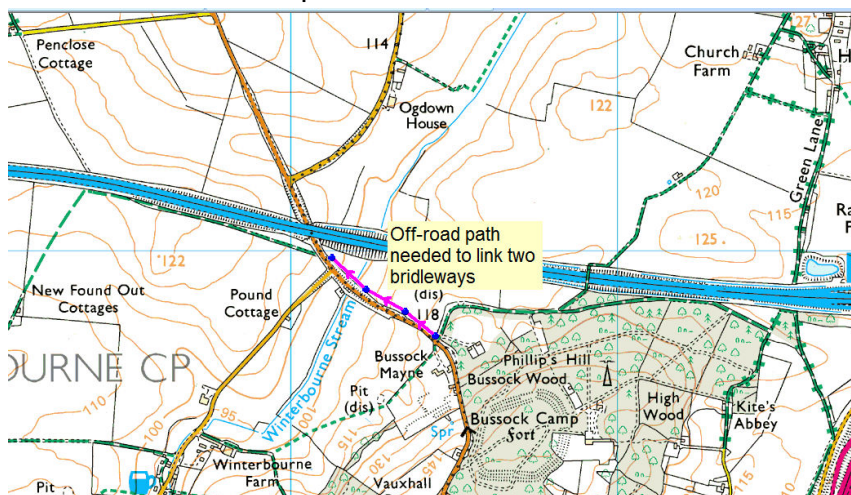
Example 2:

In West Ilsley, West Berkshire, a bridleway diversion for agricultural needs created an off-road link behind the hedge which keeps the public off the adjacent road. This concept needs to be developed by offering landowners / occupiers subsidies to create off-road links.



Example 3:

In Winterbourne parish, West Berkshire, the B4494 has become busy with fast traffic. An off-road path (in pink) is needed to connect the two bridleways (in green) to improve safety. The landowners / occupiers should be rewarded for this.



Further examples may be found in Rights of Way Improvement Plans. For West Berkshire, see the online map at on the Council website.

² <https://www.transportfocus.org.uk/research-publications/publications/cyclists-pedestrians-equestrians-summary-priorities-highways-englands-network/>

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Cyclists, pedestrians and equestrians: a summary of priorities for Highways England's Network

January 2017



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Introduction

Transport Focus is the independent consumer watchdog representing the interests of all users of England's motorways and major 'A' roads, the Strategic Road Network (SRN) managed by Highways England.

While cyclists, pedestrians and equestrians' use of the SRN is confined to single and dual carriageway major 'A' roads because they are prohibited from using motorways, they need to be able to cross all Highways England's roads safely – whether in an urban or rural environment.

Between now and 2020 the Government will invest substantial sums in improving the SRN, and planning for the five years after that is already underway. We believe it is important to understand the priorities of cyclists, pedestrians and equestrians in relation to these roads, and in particular to take their views properly into account.

The objectives of this study were to:

- understand the key issues and barriers that cyclists, pedestrians and equestrians face when using or interacting with the Highways England network
- understand themes that are common to cyclists, pedestrians and equestrians
- make a series of recommendations about how Highways England and the Department for Transport could more effectively address their needs.

We met the key organisations representing cyclists, pedestrians and equestrians. Those involved were British Cycling, British Horse Society, Cycling UK, Living Streets and Ramblers. Their interests are distinct, and this report describes the issues identified for each mode of travel, along with examples of the types of problems experienced. First of all, we highlight a number of themes that are common to all three types of user.

We then make a number of recommendations and will now work with Highways England and the Department for Transport to ensure that these issues are fully considered in future investment decisions.

Interests common to all

From our discussions with these organisations it became clear that many issues were common to cyclists, pedestrians and equestrians.

- Safety, whether users are crossing the SRN or travelling along it, is of crucial importance. Provision that has been made for cyclists, pedestrians and equestrians should be maintained to an agreed standard and inspected on a regular basis.

- The quality of the journey experience is also important to these road users. Key factors that influence journey satisfaction include the type of path surface, noise levels, lighting, signage and physical segregation from road traffic without an excessive increase in distance travelled.
- Cyclists, pedestrians and equestrians want provision incorporated for them at the outset of the scheme design, rather than 'fighting' for adaptations later. They believe that cost inflation when design adjustments are made later leads to proposals not meeting cost-benefit requirements – the view being that acceptable cost-benefit ratios would be achieved if proposals were designed in from the start.
- Better dialogue with Highways England project teams on individual schemes is needed, especially if measures for cycling, walking and horse riding cannot be delivered as originally proposed. This is especially important when users were asked to provide input during the initial design phases. It was a simple message. If people think Highways England has agreed to incorporate something, the company should go back to them and explain if that 'something' later turns out to be impossible.
- We found that, on the whole, users preferred physical separation from motorised vehicles. This could be by separating a byway, bridleway, footpath or cycle path from the carriageway itself, but following the same broad alignment.
- There needs to be better provision for cyclists, pedestrians and equestrians who need to cross motorways and major 'A' roads. Users preferred these to be level with the carriageway (in other words not involving a bridge or subway, but they recognise that there will be practical limitations).
- Users explained that the Highways England's network can be a barrier to making journeys, severing links between communities, places of work and routes such as the National Cycling Network, footpaths, towpaths, byways and bridleways, junctions and roundabouts. This is especially important as many users need to cross the SRN to continue along the local road network. Many junctions lack even basic crossing provision and pavements at present.

Interests of pedestrians

In our discussions with groups representing pedestrians we heard a strong message that in the design of new road schemes, and when upgrading the existing network, their needs must be considered from scheme conception. Also, without careful consideration the network can sever communities and make it difficult to get to a bus stop, local amenities or others parts of the community.

Specific thought should be given to the design of major roundabouts and interchanges. Slip roads with high volumes of fast traffic are a real concern. This is especially important where the network connects urban areas to out-of-town leisure areas such as the rural rights of way network, or to retail and business parks. Lack of provision for pedestrians and cyclists is believed to force people to use motorised vehicles because of safety fears.

There also needs to be greater emphasis in highway design on facilitating 'utilitarian walking'; that is, travelling on foot as distinct from walking for leisure. This is particularly important for short local journeys to friends, amenities or links to public transport. Where Highways England's network passes through built-up areas, there needs to be recognition that these roads have a significant role in facilitating these types of journeys. It is important that pedestrian facilities such as pavements and crossings are designed accordingly.

Crossing busy carriageways can be extremely hazardous for pedestrians, especially for those who are elderly or less mobile. They prefer to cross on the same level as motorised traffic although this has obvious practical limitations. Bridges are the next preferred option, with subways a third preference (although difficulties in protecting the latter from anti-social behaviour, especially in urban areas, is understood). The location and type of crossing also requires careful consideration to ensure they are in a safe, accessible and convenient location. User-operated crossings are preferable when traffic lights are involved.

In many rural areas footpaths and bridleways often emerge onto or lead off 'A' roads. We were told of numerous instances where public rights of way were not aligned on the two sides of the road: they are staggered by several hundred metres. This requires pedestrians to walk on verges, often with dense foliage, or step into the road and face oncoming traffic in order to reach the next path. Also, pavements can run out on one side of the road, then switch to the opposite side requiring pedestrians to cross the road. In some rural areas there are no pavements at all on Highways England's 'A' roads, forcing all pedestrians to walk on the carriageway.

The A35 near Winterbourne Abbas, Dorset, pictured below is an example. Two bridleways emerge onto the A35 a few hundred metres apart, with no provision to get between the two apart from walking in the carriageway. Photo taken at Point A.



Where provision has been made for pedestrians to use major roads, the quality can vary greatly. In certain areas pedestrians find themselves very close to the carriageway on poorly-maintained surfaces being buffeted by air turbulence from passing vehicles. In wet weather the situation can be worse, with carriageway surface water and spray making pedestrians wet even if it is not raining. Using an unlit, poorly-maintained path in the winter months when it is dark early was also cited as an issue.

Pedestrians would prefer physical separation from high speed and heavily-used carriageways. Purpose-built, parallel paths for pedestrians greatly enhance journey quality, especially when these routes are clearly marked to avoid conflict with cyclists and horse riders.

User groups also say that some drivers behave inappropriately towards pedestrians trying to cross or travel along 'A' roads. There is a desire to see improved driver behaviour, including increased awareness that pedestrians have a right to use these roads.

Interests of cyclists

Organisations representing cyclists told us that most cyclists try to avoid travelling along major 'A' roads where possible. They feel that many road improvement schemes have not made proper provision for cyclists. The perception that these roads are unsafe for cyclists deters some from using them. With a growth in cycling predicted in the coming years, there is keenness to ensure the infrastructure is ready for this.

The cycling user groups told us that quality cycling provision needs to be considered at the very early stages of new road construction. Any new road scheme should consider cyclists in two distinct areas; those that need to travel along the road and those that need to cross it.

Major junctions on 'A' roads present their own issues for cyclists to safely navigate and are of particular importance as they allow access to and from local roads, retail and business districts. Poor design and minimal cycling provision can lead to these important areas being effectively inaccessible by bike from residential areas.

Cycling groups told us that the siting of crossing points needs to be carefully considered so that they are located on 'desire lines' (where people will intuitively cycle left to their own devices). They perceive that too often schemes involve them crossing where it was convenient for the design team to put them, rather than for the cyclist to use. Cyclists prefer not to have bridges or subways, and therefore to cross level with the carriageway, to avoid having to dismount and extend their journey time.

When it comes to travelling along 'A' roads, we were told that cyclists prefer "corridors" that are safe from heavy traffic and vehicles travelling at high speed. In this regard cyclists usually prefer physical segregation from motorised vehicles, but along parallel, direct routes that don't require long diversions away from the alignment of the carriageway.



Photo: Cycling on a segregated path. Photo courtesy of Highways England.

We were told that the quality of cycling infrastructure is of key importance in maintaining current usage and in encouraging more cycling. As well as surface quality, other aspirations include shielding cyclists from excessive traffic noise; signage improvements; prevention of flooding; and improved links with other cycling routes. The latter should include close cooperation with local authorities to maximise connectivity.

The provision of cycle-friendly infrastructure varies throughout Highways England's network. We were told that there is no agreed standard for what good looks like. There is also a desire to see regular maintenance and safety checks on cycling assets to ensure they remain fit for purpose.

Interests of equestrians

The British Horse Society told us that use of Highways England's 'A' roads with horses is limited. Many roads do not offer provision for horses and are therefore considered unsafe to use. Indeed, horse riders perceive that better provision is made for pedestrians and cyclists.

To ensure that there is quality provision in highways infrastructure for equestrian use, there is a strong call for their needs to be considered where appropriate at the conception of both new road and improvement programmes. As the design develops there is a desire for stronger engagement with equestrian groups at a local level to ensure maximum benefit is realised from the investment.

As with cyclists and pedestrians, usage can be split into those who need to cross Highways England's network and those who need to travel along it. A top priority for horse riders is to improve the ability to cross busy carriageways and their preferred option is to use a Pegasus crossing because the controls are higher and they can stay mounted. These user-operated crossings allow horse riders to cross safely because traffic lights stop vehicles, helping to keep the horse calm.



Photo: A Pegasus crossing. Photo courtesy of British Horse Society.

Pegasus crossings should be used near to bridleways, multi-user paths and venues such as riding schools. This is especially important when paddocks, training grounds and exercise areas are separated from other buildings by a road. Where a Pegasus crossing is not feasible, dedicated underpasses are the preferred solution, particularly at major junctions, and where dual carriageways and motorways need to be crossed.

User groups also told us that many bridges cross Highways England's network, but they can be for the private use of landowners. They suggested that Highways England explore whether private bridges could be opened to increase connectivity between local communities at minimal cost. This would help long-distance journey planning allowing equestrians to safely cross Highways England's roads and connect to other routes, byways and bridleways under local authority control.

For equestrians travelling along major 'A' roads, we were told that segregated paths away from the carriageways are the preferred option, even if these are shared with pedestrians and cyclists. However, careful thought should be given to the type of surfacing used on these paths to prevent degradation through continued use. Where current provision is already made for horse riders along verges, care should be taken

that traffic signs do not impede riding or block visibility. Other hazards include poorly located drain covers in carriageways (on which a horse might slip), forcing riders further into the carriageway, and bridge parapets that are too low to provide adequate protection.

Conversion of 'A' roads to motorway or expressway

Whenever an existing 'A' road is converted into a motorway or upgraded to the proposed expressway standard, Highways England must carefully consider the impacts of excluding cyclists, pedestrians and equestrians on them. Wherever they are prohibited from using a section of the SRN it is important for Highways England to provide a safe route to all the places currently served by the road, as well as safe ways of crossing it. The earlier observation that some users would prefer a segregated path broadly following the alignment of the road should be noted.

Recommendations

Transport Focus therefore recommends the following:

- **User input to design** – prior to any new scheme entering the design process, Highways England should engage with cyclists, pedestrians and equestrians to ensure that their needs are at the heart of planning. This should include national representative groups for generic input which can then be shared internally within Highways England. Local user groups should also be consulted for project-specific detail. If designs change after initial engagement, Highways England should re-engage to find the next best solution.
- **Crossing the network** – any new road scheme or major upgrade should incorporate crossings for cyclists, pedestrians and equestrians from the very beginning, taking into account both current and potential use. These should, where possible, be along ‘lines of desire’ between key points. Careful thought should be given to installing the most appropriate type of crossing whether it be on the surface, an underpass or bridge.
- **Connecting networks** – careful thought should be given to how crossing roads can improve connectivity between communities and amenities. This should include collaboration with local authorities and local interest groups to maximise strategic and county-wide schemes to encourage non-motorised travel.
- **Junctions and roundabouts** – Highways England should seek to improve the experience of cyclists, pedestrians and equestrians at junctions and roundabouts. This should include the creation of traffic-free alternative routes.
- **Segregated paths** – Highways England should investigate ways for new and existing road schemes to incorporate segregated paths for cyclists, pedestrians and equestrians. Where possible these should be physically separated from the carriageway, but with minimal diversion from the intended route.
- **Minimum standards** – develop a set of minimum standards, beyond the current requirements of the Design Manual for Roads and Bridges (DMRB) for infrastructure intended for cyclists, pedestrians and equestrians. These should focus on the following areas:
 1. Surface quality
 2. Noise protection
 3. Physical protection from motorised vehicles
 4. Lighting (where appropriate)
 5. Flood prevention
 6. Signage
 7. Limited divergence from the existing carriageway route

8. Maintenance and inspection regimes
9. Crossings and underpasses

Once these standards have been developed and tested we would recommend Highways England incorporates them in to the DRMB.

- **Connecting Public Rights of Way (PRoW)** – where a PRoW commences or terminates at the edge of a Highways England ‘A’ road, Highways England should explore options to connect it with a PRoW on the other side of the road, especially if they are staggered by only a few hundred metres. Where this is not practicable, Highways England should engage with landowners and local authorities with a view to re-routing rights of way or constructing a path outside the current Highway boundary.
- **Explore existing assets** – Highways England should fully evaluate whether assets within the Historic Railway Estate could be brought in to use for the benefit of cyclists, pedestrians and equestrians.
- **Bridge environment** – Where a Highways England road crosses over another part of the SRN, a local authority road or a public right of way, the installation of spikes, netting or other means of preventing birds from perching underneath bridges would be helpful. It would help to reduce bird defecation onto paths below, reducing health risks and improving the pedestrian experience.



Photo: Pigeon defecation on footpaths under bridges, as seen here under the M5 at Oldbury.

- **Conversion of ‘A roads’ to motorway or Expressway**
Whenever an existing ‘A’ road is converted into a motorway, or upgraded to the proposed expressway standard, Highways England must carefully

consider the impacts of excluding cyclists, pedestrians and equestrians; providing suitable alternative provision where necessary.

- **Measuring usage of the network** – Highways England should explore low-cost solutions to gather data about the use of major 'A' roads by cyclists, pedestrians and equestrians. This would assist in building a national picture of route utilisation and provide a benchmark for, amongst other things, casualties versus usage on individual roads.

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Transport Focus
Fleetbank House
2-6 Salisbury Square
London
EC4Y 8JX

0300 123 2350
www.transportfocus.org.uk
info@transportfocus.org.uk

Transport Focus is the operating name of the Passengers' Council

SLOUGH LOCAL ACCESS FORUM

PROPOSED WORK PROGRAMME 2017

No.	Work Item	Summary of work required/undertaken
1	Lost Ways Project	Maps of Dorney and Wexham parishes received showing existing PRoW
2	ROWIP Review	
3	RoW Planning Gain Improvements Plan	Members to give suggestions and comments. Continual review required.
4	Joint LAF Site Visits	List of visits suggested in Joint LAF minutes
5	Access Fund	Funding won by SBC to engage with residents and visitors to make a change to their travel habits
6	Transport Schemes	
7	Huddle Hot Topics	
8	LAF Recruitment Campaign	BHS and possible member from Colnbrook Parish Council/Colnbrook Community Partnership
8	Annual Report	
10	Bags For Help – Tesco’s	
11	Local Plans – Slough and Chiltern & South Bucks	

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