

Local Access Forum – Meeting held on Thursday, 29th March, 2012 at the Jupiter Suite 1, St Martins Place, 51 Bath Road, Slough

Present:-

LAF Members

David Munkley (Chair)
Councillor Satpal S Parmar
Toby Evans
Ken Wright
Trevor Allen

Observers

Officers, Slough Borough Council

Jacqui Wheeler, Public Rights of Way Officer
Alex Deans, Head of Highways
Nahid Moghul, Community Safety Officer

Apologies

Cllr Nimrit Chohan
Ian Houghton
Steve Roberts
Gerald Pleace, Parks Development Officer
Bruce Hicks, Community Parks Projects Officer

69. Declarations of Interest

None.

70. Minutes of the last meeting held on 15th December 2011

The minutes of the last meeting held on 15th December 2011 were approved as a correct record.

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

Ditton Park Cycle Path update –JW reported update from Peter Challis (Sustrans) dated 21 March 2012 saying there has been no progress in trying to get a site meeting with CA and he would try to contact someone at a higher level within CA to escalate the matter. He would inform the LAF if successful and if not decide what further action to take. There have been no further

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reports of any random closures recently. Members felt that it is disgraceful that CA, such a huge company are ignoring what is a legal obligation under the planning process to ensure the route is maintained and available for use. JW stated that the actual planning agreement was with RBWM and the path is within RBWM, however, the route is beneficial to residents in both boroughs. AD noted that the route is part of the National Cycle Network but impacts directly on Slough residents as it provides an off –road cycle link across the south of the borough. Members agreed that the SLAF ought to write directly to CA on behalf of the path users from Slough and copy RBWM LAF. DM thought that initial SLAF action should be to contact RBWM LAF to explain the strong feeling on this issue and to see if they would like to send a joint letter.

Resolved – JW would draft a letter to CA and advise RBWM LAF about the situation to see if they would like to send letter jointly.

Update on path dedication in memory of Margery Hitchman

Margery's family are happy for the path to be publicised and JW is working on ways in which this can be achieved in liaison with Tony Downs, the Herschel Park Warden and Bruce Hicks, Community Parks Projects Officer.

Resolved – continue to try to promote the nature reserve section of Herschel Park and in doing so, Margery's path.

Borderside to Shaggy Calf Lane – JW advised that Transport, Road Safety team have requested that the no cycling roundels remain in place as the local NAG group have been complaining that cyclists ride too fast along this path. The route is a public footpath, and also adopted public highway with cycling illegal along both. However, enforcement of this prohibition doesn't generally happen and cyclists do use public paths as an alternative to busy roads. Members agreed that if a path is wide enough to safely allow multi-use, as in this case, it will help support the Council's aims in encouraging increased use of sustainable modes of transport. Members thought the best course of action would be for the cycling usage to be legalised by converting the route to a cycle track; shared-use footway/cycleway signs could then be erected.

[If the path is dedicated as a cycle track then it will need to be extinguished as a public footpath and would then be removed from the Definitive Map – record of public rights of way]

Resolved - The LAF will ask the Integrated Transport team to dedicate the route as a cycle way under the Cycle Tracks Act 1984.

Chalvey One Way Experimental Scheme Consultation

The general effects of the scheme was discussed with TA stating that he feels it provides a more straightforward route layout and that it is helping to increase community pride. It was noted that there is increased parking for deliveries and for passing trade and that there is a variety of local opinion both for and against. Members felt that the Ragstone Road layout though strange

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with minor roads given priority, did open up the options available to navigate around Chalvey and were particularly happy that the contra flow cycle lane will be retained as part of the scheme being consulted on.

Members agreed the scheme appears to have solved the previous congestion issues experienced in Chalvey.

Farnham Road and Buckingham Ave Junction Improvement –Feedback from Transport was that this improvement sounds eminently sensible and would be added to the priority list for consideration. The LAF would be informed of its position on the list when it is decided.

Further Update Received After Meeting: *This request was taken into account as part of the Council's Local Sustainable Transport Fund bid. If the bid is successful there will be 3-4 years in which to implement the scheme.*

Heart of Slough –

- Crossing point at Windsor Road – TE had complained about the hazard to pedestrians due to the new crossing signals design. The problem being where cars heading south continue when cars in opposite direction have stopped creating confusion and danger for those crossing. JW pointed out that the Transport response said that on completion, the signal phasing would be reviewed to see if an alternative sequence might help and high level indicators would also be installed which are more visible to pedestrians. AD advised that sufficient traffic has to be allowed through the junction on this arm of the main junction with the additional complication caused by the new right turn into High Street West. He added that an independent Road Safety Audit would be done on completion in which this issue would hopefully be flagged up.
- TE felt that the overall Heart of Slough scheme has been built with the emphasis on cars and is not friendly at all for cyclists or pedestrians. AD thought it would be better to wait for the scheme to be completed before commenting which would be due at the end of April 2012. TE pointed out that the scheme at the moment did not feel safe and feels like it's designed to drive through rather than walk or cycle. AD said the whole ethos of the HoS was to open it up and make it safer for pedestrians/cyclists with removal of the subways and thus fear of crime. TE was asked to put his concerns down in writing that could be passed to the auditors. AD stated there are no formal on carriageway cycle routes through the Heart of Slough, while TE as an experienced cyclist did not feel safe. AD accepted that a site visit with LAF members could be possible after completion. JW to liaise with DM/AD about dates for this before the next meeting.

72. Membership Update

Welcome to Trevor Allen as new LAF member.

73. Report back on Older People's Forum meeting - re; bus station

KW reported as a result of the Older People's Forum meeting extra shelters would be erected at the Bus Station and there was an idea for a new bus service to Sainsbury's and back to the Bus Station. This is being looked into by Gillian Ralphs with a contribution from Sainsbury's and other companies and would relieve the difficulty for older people.

74. Mallard Drive Development - footpath closures update

JW tabled the report which gave the following updates on this item. The link path has been officially closed and a pedestrian/cycling usage survey has been done. The results show that the FP4C is being used at various times during the day with another survey to be done at the end of April to check use is consistent. JW confirmed these results were from a temporary camera and it was felt this usage was a reasonable amount and showed the path was being used legitimately. Members considered the amount of crime and asb statistics provided to be very little and could not be directly attributed to the path.

The possibility of situating an SD camera in the path was discussed and AD suggested this be dealt with through the Community wardens who could take ownership of it. JW would still contact the British Legion about the camera. DM stated the LAF is on a presumption for keeping the access open until there is sufficient evidence to show otherwise. While TE was worried that crime and asb are defining access in the borough with footpaths being an easy target. Members also raised the point that the crime and asb statistics did not provide enough detail to decide on their relationship to the path.

Resolved – That a closure of this path is not supported by the LAF from the evidence shown so far. JW would bring updates to the next meeting and ensure the Council's petition response is sent to members.

75. Cyclewise - Steve Roberts

In the absence of Steve Roberts this item will be taken forward to the next meeting.

76. Update on BHS request for additional equestrian access along Jubilee River

JW explained that the local British Horse Society want to achieve increased equestrian access by having access rights to the cycle tracks along part of the Jubilee River in Slough and Windsor & Maidenhead. The RBWM LAF is championing the idea of a year long trial which would require landowners' approval. The current construction of the route in Slough is suitable for multi-

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use and so would not require any work. After considering the route, TE was concerned about a possible blind corner after leaving the relief road underpass; a possible solution would be mirrors to aid visibility. JW advised there would have to be suitable signage to warn all users and that education was a key element to the project, so that ultimately all users would act considerately towards each other.

The issue of horse manure was raised as a hazard to other users and JW explained that horse riders are aware this is an issue. Members felt that given the natural emphasis in Slough being on walking and cycling access they were reluctant to see this issue as a priority however, they did agree to a trial. JW pointed out that the LAF's remit is to look at improvements for all types of users including horse riders.

Windsor & Maidenhead Council have agreed in principal with the scheme and JW added that Slough Council as Highway Authority is likely to approve but she agreed to get confirmation. RBWM Rights of Way Officers will also be checking the route for any physical barriers and narrow points. JW will inform RBWM officers and LAF of the Slough LAF concerns over narrow and blind point at the east of the underpass. DM stated that LAF would need to know further details on the trial period; ie; how long it will be, what protection would be put in place for existing users, results of RBWM survey of the route. Members were also concerned at how many more horses would use the route

Resolved – Slough LAF agreed to the trial period as long as it is done formally though with strong reservations about the practicalities of narrow and blind points in the route causing conflict with other users. JW would bring more details of the trial to the next meeting and inform RBWM LAF and Officers of Slough LAF concerns.

77. Feedback from Cycle about Slough

Issues discussed are as follows:

Shackleton Road dead end junction with Queens Road – Members agreed that this revised layout has definitely improved the area and looks much tidier.

Feedback from Integrated Transport and Road Safety Team.

LAF considered the feedback from the Integrated Transport and Road Safety Team. Discussion ensued about the integration of cyclists with pedestrians in shared use facilities on footways and the potential for conflict. The importance of consideration for other users and the necessary education of cyclists was agreed to be paramount. It was also agreed that there are a wide range of cyclists with all levels of skills, attitude and abilities with training and improving awareness being vital.

Pavement Parking Forum (PPF)– AD advised that a new forum has been set up to look at all the options and decide on a new SBC Pavement Parking

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Policy on preventing pavement parking led by Gillian Ralphs and Joe Carter. All legislation needs to be reviewed, including the Traffic Management Act. Options available include; a borough wide ban, a ban trialled in one area, or a blanket ban with positive enforcement in certain pre-agreed areas. Transport will be investigating these options and what implications there are. Significant consultation will be required. Two wheels on, two wheels off parking would be investigated with the disadvantage being that bays have to be marked. Generally not in favour of this method the PPF thought this may be the only option on extremely narrow roads. There is a lot of work involved as each road would need to be assessed according to its characteristics including; parking problems, geometry and available off street parking. A process for implementation of physical preventative measures which have been adhoc in the past will be introduced with a hierarchy of measures including; double yellow lines on junctions, bollards and double kerbs.

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

78. Regional and National News - LAF National Conference Feedback - DM

DM attended the National Local Access Forum Conference for the south on 6th March 2012 in Bristol. He gave the following feedback;

The Conference was well attended with a mixture of presentations by both Defra and workshops with other LAF members. Issues that arose included;

- LAF's relationships with their appointing Councils were a major discussion point. Urban LAF's in unitary areas seem to have had the better experience and relationship with their council. DM thought the remoteness of county LAF's from
- LAF's being consulted and taken seriously
- The perceived independence of LAF's

DM reported that problems with membership are not just an urban LAF phenomenon. A new funding initiative, called the Paths for Communities was promoted though was conditional on it being for new routes in rural areas. JW had heard of this funding stream and would investigate if there was any potential for it to be used in Slough.

DM heard of a new scheme similar to the old Village Green scheme which he found of interest.

Overall the conference was a useful experience with being able to meet other delegates, however on a negative note there were no contact details given to delegates to take away with them and delegates including DM are still awaiting slides to be sent to them from presentations by Defra. DM also thought more examples of good practice would have been beneficial.

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JW stated that there is to be another SE LAF Conference in London on Tuesday 22nd May 2012 and DM said he would attend. Any other members who wish to attend should inform JW as soon as possible. TA might be a possible attendee.

Resolved - JW to find out from Martin Gilchrist if and when Huddle will be open to more LAF members and to inform him of the need to have notes from the conference sent to delegates.

79. A.O.B

None.

80. Date of Next Meeting

Date of the next meeting is Thursday 12th July 2012 at 6.00pm.

(Note: The Meeting opened at 6.00 pm and closed at 8.20 pm)