

Local Access Forum – Meeting held on Thursday, 12th July, 2012 at the Jupiter Suite 1, St Martins Place, 51 Bath Road, Slough

Present:-

LAF Members

David Munkley, Local Access Forum (Chair)
Councillor Satpal S Parmar
Toby Evans
Councillor Wayne Strutton

Observers

Officers, Slough Borough Council

Esther Deacon
Community Safety Project Officer
Jacqui Wheeler
Rights of Way Officer
Alex Deans
Principal Engineer, Highways

81. Apologies and Welcome

Ian Houghton
Steve Roberts
Gerald Pleace, Parks Development Officer
Bruce Hicks, Community Parks Projects Officer
Ken Wright
Trevor Allen

82. Declarations of Interest

Wayne Strutton declared an interest in his owning properties within the borough which are leased to the Council. DM asked JW to check whether a declaration of interest by a LAF member has to be registered.

83. Minutes of the last meeting held on 29th March 2012

The minutes of the last meeting held on 29th March 2012 were approved as a correct record.

84. Matters Arising (other than those on agenda)

Ditton Park Cycle Path update – JW informed the meeting that the joint letter has been approved and is with RBWM LAF for signing.

Resolved – JW to send letter out to agreed addressee as soon as it has been signed by both LAF chairs.

Borderside to Shaggy Calf Lane – JW to contact the Integrated Transport team to request that this path is dedicated as a cycle way under the Cycle Tracks Act 1984 as per previous minute.

[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]

Heart of Slough –

AD informed members that the official safety audit has been done as there was pressure to get the reports completed. General accessibility issues have been looked at as the audit included a walk round of the site with a group of people both visually and mobility impaired.

AD asked if the LAF perspective was solely to look at the cycling issues on the scheme. Members confirmed that it would be, as there seem to be ongoing issues with regard to both cycling and older people. WS stated he is aware that the Older People's Forum has highlighted problems facing older people in getting across the wider crossing points due to being slow or infirm. Though it won't now form part of the formal safety audit for the Heart of Slough, Toby will arrange to meet with the independent auditor. Members asked for a copy of the official Safety Audit report.

- Crossing point at Windsor Road –the new phasing of these lights forwarded to members is to be introduced very soon. Members asked to be informed on the success of this solution.

Resolved – JW to provide a copy of the Safety Audit report to all members with a hard copy to KW and DM. TE is to arrange site meeting with the independent auditor to go through cycling issues on the HoS.

Membership Update - Welcome to Councillor Wayne Strutton as new LAF member. WS also explained that his interest in access matters has been long standing and involves issues faced by people with mobility problems. JW to contact Annette at Disability Matters to see if anyone would be interested in applying for LAF membership.

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

Local Access Forum - 12.07.12

Eton College have agreed to the trial of the multi-use route apart from a section which is through their immediate grounds. The college have expressed similar concerns to the Slough LAF about horse droppings and pinch points along the route. Members suggested that a mirror ought to be placed at the blind corner on the Underpass. The Trial can now go ahead as soon as the route has been assessed for danger points. JW will offer to audit the route with RBWM officers especially on the section in Slough including the pinch point at the underpass of the Relief road.

Resolved – to keep this issue on the agenda for updates and JW will inform members when Trial period due to start.

85. Chalvey One Way Scheme Consultation Update

JW informed members that all LAF minutes and opinions had been provided to the Network Management Team to be included in the report to cabinet that will decide whether the scheme remains unchanged. WS highlighted the problem with the junction at the north end of Ledgers Road and explained the discussion about the scheme that had taken place at the Scrutiny Panel meeting. WS stated that there doesn't seem to be sufficient data currently about the effects of the changes to know if the scheme is working. AD stated that accident data is monitored whenever a new scheme is implemented and it can take time to assess the full impact. The idea behind the scheme is to have the main body of traffic on the main roads.

Resolved – that the cabinet decision is forwarded to members when made.

86. Gating Orders

JW tabled report explaining the Council's new more direct approach to Gating proposals. Essentially each case is looked at individually at a regular Gating Case Review meeting and crime/asb statistical evidence is still required in order to proceed. Alternative solutions to try to alleviate crime/asb levels are always considered in the first instance.

Rossiter Close alleyway – ED of community safety presented members with the case for closure of this adopted highway footpath. The level of reports of asb in the alleyway which runs directly underneath two bedrooms is viewed as sufficient in such an extraordinary circumstance for the Council to propose proceeding with a Gating Order consultation. Furthermore the alternative route is not viewed as unreasonable.

ED made it clear that all the asb reports being taken into account specifically mention the alleyway being a problem. TE asked if there is any usage data for the path, but ED replied it was thought unnecessary to do a count as its known the path is well used. This case is seen as exceptional due to being under actual houses and due to the alternative route being almost equal in distance to the alleyway.

Local Access Forum - 12.07.12

The question of youth engagement was discussed and suggestions were made to have the alleyway narrowed and sound proofed, rather than gated to make it less attractive for loitering. DM thought this wouldn't be adequate to solve the problems and may even make the situation worse. Also services situated within the alleyway would still need to be accessed. The Youth Bus attends the area once a week and ED stated that Community Safety is working with Youth Services. The nature of the asb is heightened due to the unique build over. WS and TE wanted a compromise rather than see a path being closed off completely. Overall no consensus was reached among members with some members feeling the exceptional nature of this alleyway justifies the action being proposed and others not sanctioning closure.

Resolved - members would respond to the formal Gating consultation for Rossiter Close when received, though no consensus was reached on this occasion.

Birch Grove cut through – this is an informal consultation about a private cut through between the flats at the end of Furnival Avenue into Birch Grove and so does not require a Gating Order. The proposal is to fence off the cut through and have a gate which is open during the day to allow pedestrian access. Local residents and users of the path have been consulted and the majority are in favour of having a gate of some kind. This is to be a pilot project similar to the Granville Ave gating project. DM noted that the alternative route is long and inconvenient in this case. JW added that there is also a route alongside the Housing Association flats through to Northborough Estate along the north side of the Stirling Trading Estate that is included in this proposal.

Resolved – In order to give a consensus view about this proposal, members considered that a site visit is required. JW to send invite to members to visit the site to assess the situation.

JW tabled usage survey results and members noted the levels of usage on footpath 4c between Mallard Drive and Brook Path. Members were happy with the way the usage data was presented.

87. DEFRA consultation on improvements to the policy and legal framework for public rights of way

JW explained that LAFs are being consulted about the proposals being put forward by Defra and that a sub group meeting would be necessary in order to look at the documents in detail. JW provided members with the links and the documents and will email members a date for a subgroup to meet should any members wish to.

88. Cycling about Slough

Local Access Forum - 12.07.12

JW tabled the new format of cycling about Slough issues. Items as discussed are as follows:

Pavement Parking Forum (PPF) – AD stated that the next meeting will take place on 24th July 2012. WS asked if the test of the 50/50 parking in Langley had taken place yet. JW would find out.

Cycle Hire in Slough– AD stated Transport is currently working on a scheme involving three transport hubs; Slough and Burnham Railway Stations and one on the Trading Estate; where cycles could be hired. AD also confirmed that part of the Local Sustainable Transport Fund (LSTF) bid is to improve the route from the bus/rail stations to Slough Trading Estate. Details of LSTF schemes will be brought to the LAF as designs are progressed, including a cycling route through to the Trading Estate from Slough Rail Station. Discussion ensued about best possible routes from Slough Rail Station including suggestions about a route through the old university site being developed.

DM stated that there were several clear positives to be taken from the LAF comments and advice on various issues where the Council has clearly taken action as a result. AD suggested that looking at cycling problems along Herschel Street could be incorporated in the proposed cycle about.

Resolved – To be kept on the main agenda and updates on all issues to be brought to next meeting. AD to arrange a date for a cycle about Slough with LAF members and SBC Officers to identify further cycling issues.

89. Regional and National News

LAF South East LAF Conference 22nd May 2012 - JW attended the SE LAF Conference in London on Tuesday 22nd May 2012 and tabled a brief report about speakers/presentations. The Woodlands Trust presented with an overview of their philosophy for managing woodlands focusing on conservation but recognising the need for public access. Members noted a specific area of Woodland in Slough known as The Millie, which is managed on behalf of SBC by Bucks, Berks and Oxon Wildlife Trust (BBOWT) as a nature reserve.

Huddle - JW informed members that Huddle can now take 5 members from each LAF and that the Ministers address to the National LAF Conference in Bristol is on the site.

Paths For Communities – to access this funding stream the proposal has to create a new public right of way and clearly show economic benefit to a rural area. Applicants have to be legally constituted. JW tabled the conditions which have to be met by applications. TE asked about the possibility of the route behind Asda being a candidate for this though it was questioned how this would provide benefit for a rural community. JW would investigate. JW handed out up to date Huddle user guides.

Local Access Forum - 12.07.12

Resolved - JW will email round the relevant presentations from the SE Conference to members and ensure that all Slough LAF members receive an invite to Huddle.

90. AOB

A leaflet showing access routes in and around Cippenham is being planned and JW suggested it may be a good mechanism for promoting the LAF. Further details would be brought to future meetings.

JW asked members to look at the LAF web pages and let her know of any changes they would like to make or new items they would like included.

JW informed members about a path which runs between Kendal Close which leads through to the canal basin. The path suffers from anti-social behaviour and graffiti and is currently controlled by the Housing dept. It is on the list of outstanding claims for public rights of way and so a request would need to be made to Housing to dedicate the route as a public right of way. Members were happy to support any new public right of way coming into existence.

Resolved – JW would forward a map of the Kendal Close path and bring a review of the Slough Arm of the Canal to the next meeting including updates on how British Waterways are viewing it now strategically and the current status of plans for the regeneration of the Slough Basin.

91. 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 Thursday 4th October 20 2012 at 5.45pm.

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

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