

Local Access Forum – Meeting held on Thursday, 24th May, 2018 at the Meeting Room 4 - Chalvey Community Centre

Present:-

LAF Members

Arnold Richardson (Observer)
David Munkley (Chair)
Councillor Satpal S. Parmar
Andy Packer
Tony Haines

Observers

Officers, Slough Borough Council

Jacqui Wheeler
Rights of Way Officer

270. Apologies and Welcome

DM welcomed the meeting and acknowledged there are two planned meetings in 2018 due to reduced LA resources.

271. Declaration of Interest

None

272. Minutes of Last Meeting held on 14th Dec 2017

The minutes of the last meeting are approved.

273. Jubilee River External Partners Meeting

JW tabled the minutes of the JR External partners meeting held by the Environment Agency in February 2018. Updates concerned a request to have some repair work done on the paths, particularly the main cycle route through Slough. JW confirmed that works on this path are being planned for this year with the scope dependent on the amount of commuted sum remaining.

The success of the Riverside Centre was also discussed and the aspiration to have a community café on the grass area in the car park area. TH queried if the management of the car park by the EA is permanent and all agreed the car park is needed. JW agreed to check with EA. Anti-social behaviour is an on-going issue in this area, though the presence of the Riverside Centre and collaboration with Eton College are having a positive impact.

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Pennywort was highlighted as an invasive species by the EA which could be reported if seen on the Jubilee River by using the App called Plant Tracker. Japanese Knotweed is not seen as such a huge problem in the waterside environment.

JW confirmed the next Jubilee River External Partners meeting would be after the Summer.

274. Better By... Sustainable Access Fund Project Update

JW referred members to the press release in the papers detailing what is being delivered across the borough by the Sustainable Access team funded by £1.5m won from the Dept. for Transport to be spent by the Council on engaging residents and visitors about active travel and sustainable modes of travel with the aim of encouraging a behaviour shift.

Cycle training and maintenance courses are being funded by the Council run by Cycle Experience.

JW explained Travel Training which is designed to combat the transport barriers both real and perceived that are often faced by those seeking employment, training and education. It will help widen travel choices by building confidence and by signposting places to find information about travel options and journey planning. There have been several sessions given already and the team are engaging with jobseekers directly at the Job Centre Plus.

The Access Fund has four different elements which seek to engage with different sections of the community; workplaces, schools, young people and jobseekers and residents across the borough.

JW stated that 6 new docks are being implemented this year and highlighted the free wheeler week whereby people who sign up for the cycle hire scheme receive a free week of hire each month.

TH commented that the walking and cycling map is not at a useful scale to be an effective tool for people looking to find a route. DM felt there still may be some people who don't have access to the internet.

Members expressed massive concern that the bus service in Slough has been decimated over recent months. TH suggested that bus stops as well as showing RTPI could also show information about how long it takes to walk to the next bus stop indicating where it is. All felt this would be an encouragement to occasional users as they could then decide whether it was worth waiting or going to the next stop. All acknowledged that there are apps available showing this information but not everyone has access to these, particularly older residents or those with learning disabilities.

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Members would like to see an increase in signage like this not only at bus stops but across the borough showing destinations and time taken either by walking or cycling which will greatly serve to encourage smaller journeys on foot/cycle. JW stated there was a real case for getting the information right at the point of access. The meeting questioned the aim of encouraging people to use sustainable passenger transport when services are being drastically reduced.

Resolved – The LAF is very concerned about the state of the bus service across Slough and would like to know what is being done about it.

275. Slough Canal Updates

JW tabled information about the annual Canal Clean up and highlighted the Friends of Slough Canal monthly clean up which happens on the second Sunday each month. They focus on a section of the towpath each month. TH noted that the CRT contractors Fountains are meant to be doing this job, however, there is always too much.

JW informed the group that a quote for weld mesh along the parapets of Wexham Road footbridge is being sought with ward Councillors being asked to fund. She also highlighted that the area underneath has been fenced off and gated and the rough sleepers have now gone. It is hoped that the mesh will help reduce the amount of litter being dropped or kicked from the footbridge into the canal. JW is working on getting bins and signage at the footbridge to encourage people to take their litter home.

Members agreed that it is important to make people aware that an area has been cleaned even if it's by the Council. Signs telling people how much the cleaning cost the taxpayer might help educate and discourage further littering.

JW explained the project to spray paint dog fouling along the towpath. This is being set up in partnership with the Friends of Slough Canal and a volunteer has been identified to trial the project.

It is intended that two new interpretation boards are to be produced and placed at another two locations; by the Middlegreen Road development and probably near to Trenches Bridge. Members were happy with this action and approved of the design and style.

CRT are encouraging community groups to adopt a section of the canal.

SUR regeneration of the canal basin is delayed

JW updated the meeting that the lease agreement for land at Uxbridge Road bridge has now been signed so that the Council can if needs be enter the land legitimately to clear litter and maintain.

276. LCWIP - infrastructure plan for walking and cycling

The Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan (LCWIP). This is a new plan that DfT is encouraging all Local Authorities to produce to help meet their ambition to make walking and cycling the natural choice for shorter journeys by 2040.

The LCWIP will be a tool through which LA's can build the strategic and economic business cases to access funding for walking and cycling schemes. Officers are currently working on putting together this plan and deciding that it needs to be pitched at a high enough level to attract political interest and will.

Technical assistance will be provided by the DfT and a consortium of partners, including Sustrans, Living Streets, WSP etc.

The Ramblers Charter for Walkable Towns and Cities includes the LCWIP. Members discussed the problems and issues with providing useful and safe cycling infrastructure for all the levels of cycling ability in a crowded highway environment. TH felt it would be important to include safe walking routes to get into and out of the town centre to encourage older people that it is safe and feasible to walk for shorter journeys.

277. Site Visits 2018

Dates for the summer site visits 2018 were agreed as tabled.

Locations agreed for the site visits were as follows;

- Walking routes to Burnham Beeches. Cocksherd Wood, Britwell to Burnham Beeches.
- Walking access between Langley Park/Black Park severance by the A412 Uxbridge Road.
- Old Slade Lane, Iver- cross boundary routes linking with the Colnbrook By-Pass in Slough to the south.

TH argued that the Cinder Track ought to be visited as a high profile route but others felt that less known routes needed to be checked.

278. Joint LAF Chairs Meetings

Members noted the minutes from the last Joint LAF Chairs meeting.

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WRLtH consultation is currently open and if the scheme goes ahead members noted that Mansion Lane would be permanently closed. The potential conflict with Heathrow expansion plans was also noted.

279. The Ramblers Charter for Walkable Towns and Cities

280. Matters Arising from minutes of the last meeting

281. Date of next meeting

TBC – preliminary date is 26th September 2018 at Arbour Park, Stoke Road.

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