

LOCAL ACCESS FORUM REPORT – 22nd May 2013 – AGENDA ITEM 4

1. PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

To provide members with an update on progress made with contacting CA Technologies to discuss issues with the Ditton Park cycle path.

2.

Jacqui Wheeler (SBC RoW Officer), Anthony Hurst (RBWM RoW Officer) and Peter Challis (Sustrans) met up on 19th April 2013 to walk the route to check the condition and assess any progress by CA Technologies. The resulting photos showed no progress and all issues still outstanding.



Surface in disrepair across North Field due to no maintenance and vehicular damage



Drainage problem on southern end of path leading to Major's Farm Road gate

Signage stating incorrect opening and closing times not consistent with promoted times on signage leading to CA site or S106 agreement.

After looking at the path, the decision was taken to make a spontaneous visit to the CA Offices as suggested at the last LAF meeting. This resulted in a breakthrough meeting with the newly appointed Facilities Co-Ordinator, Lisa Gilbert. We explained

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all the issues as covered in the LAF's joint correspondence and emphasised the importance of the route to local residents. Lisa explained that she was aware of the path issues and that quotes were being awaited for repair works to the path. She promised to find out the extent of the works planned and further explained the difficulty in gaining expenditure approval, being an American company.

A few days later we received an invite to a further meeting at which the VP of Facilities, Jim Barry, would be present. As he was only in the country for a few days, this was a great opportunity, to meet with someone with the clout to authorise action and funding.

Notes from CA Technologies Meeting on 9th May 2013 –

The only people driving on the Northfield path are contractors employed to empty the dog bins. CA is looking at re-locating the dog bin so it is not necessary to drive on the path and damage it. Normal maintenance team uses lightweight buggy.

Tree stumps across the path near the gate – CA has been told these are to protect the roots of the ancient trees near the path. They do not obstruct the path significantly.

CA agreed to change the signage on the gates so that it reflects the summertime opening hours until 8pm and is in line with other external signage and public expectations.

It was made clear the main cause for concern was the surface condition both on the path across Northfield and at the southern entrance near Major's Farm Road.

Boggy area near gate at Majors Farm Road – a sealed surface was discussed as a possible solution with a surface dressing to give a more attractive appearance. Levels would need to be raised and the surface cambered.

Peter Challis stated he would like to see the whole route as a sealed surface with a surface dressing, pointing out that the higher initial cost would be outweighed by lower maintenance costs in the long term.

Jim Barry who could remember that CA hated the path initially crossing their land, could clearly see the benefits now particularly for schools kids going north south and vice versa. They were aware that problems with dog fighting, motorbikes and general vandalism could happen on any large site with such a large boundary and that the path being closed wouldn't prevent these things happening.

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LG agreed that AH, PC and JW would be informed by email of any planned closures with 21 days' notice and any emergency closures as soon as possible.

It was agreed that CA would draft an action plan for the path including repairs/improvements and long term vision, in the next three weeks with short term repairs being the priority on the boggy section and through Northfield. Jim Barry would look at the original specification and decide on the scope of works and costs involved.

CA queried the mineral extraction planning application at Riding Court Farm adjacent to their site.