

# Slough Local Access Forum

01 April 2014

Ian Hann  
Development Control  
St Martins Place  
51 Bath Road  
Slough  
SL1 3UF

Replies to: Jacqui Wheeler,  
Officer to Slough Local Access Forum  
Highways Engineering  
Slough Borough Council  
St Martins Place, 51 Bath Road  
Slough, SL1 3UF

Tel: 01753 477 479  
Email: [Localaccessforum@slough.gov.uk](mailto:Localaccessforum@slough.gov.uk)  
Ref: LAF comments P/14306/001

Dear Ian,

## **Re: Disused Railway Line, Old Bath Road, Colnbrook, Slough, Berks**

I am writing on behalf of members of Slough Local Access Forum in response to the consultation for the planning proposal at the above address under application P/14306/001.

It is proposed to use the site for storage purposes, which would mean the clearance of existing vegetation/ habitat and also prevention of the existing pedestrian access adjacent to and over the site.

The Local Access Forum remit includes advising the Council as a Section 94 (4) body under The Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000 on access for the purpose of open air recreation and the enjoyment of the area and also as amended by the Local Access Forum (England) Regulations 2007 on functional access. This includes access undertaken for the purposes of going to work, school, shops or local amenities. The members of the Local Access Forum view this planning proposal as detrimental to the walking and cycling access network in Colnbrook. It would mean the closure of an existing route used by residents of Colnbrook living at the north of the site to access the Poyle Industrial Estate to the south for work and also for those residents who use the route for recreation and to enjoy the open air and natural environment.

It is known that this access has been used for a number of years because complaints were received by the Council's Public Rights of Way Officer several years ago when Network Rail attempted to gate the route. Residents of Poyle New Cottages were concerned at the time to the extent that they were prepared to submit an application to claim the route as a public right of way. On that occasion access remained open so a claim wasn't necessary. It is clear therefore that the loss of this route will impact negatively on local residents.

Though the status of the route is not recorded currently on the definitive map and statement of public rights of way, a presumption of dedication may have arisen through use. The LAF in conjunction with the Council's Rights of Way Officer consider the dedication of this route as a public right of way would enhance the rights of way network in Colnbrook and would like to object to its closure. This position is supported in the Council's strategic plans; the Local Plan for Slough and the Rights of Way Improvement Plan 2007 which seek to improve opportunities for informal recreation and improvements to the rights of way network. Though this site is described as an urban site and the developers view the trees and pedestrian access as a problem, the alternative view is that the disused railway line has become a valuable natural wildlife corridor in the urban environment which ought to be protected. It also enables sustainable access opportunity to the

# Slough Local Access Forum

workplace (Poyle Industrial Estate) which is highlighted as a Council objective in the LDF Strategic Objectives (1 – To reduce the need to travel and create a transport system that encourages sustainable modes of travel such as walking, cycling and public transport)

The site is located within the Colne Valley Park and there are planning restrictions imposed under the Council's Local Development Framework, Core Strategy to prevent development within the countryside or open areas in the Colne Valley Park unless they provide opportunities for countryside recreation which do not compromise the landscape and nature conservation. Members of the LAF contend that this site though narrow and small in size does constitute a pocket of countryside and that since it already provides opportunities for recreational access these benefits need to be enhanced not withdrawn.

In light of the above, the Slough Local Access Forum strongly objects to this planning proposal on the grounds as explained.

Yours sincerely,

**David Munkley**  
**Chair 2014, Slough Local Access Forum,**