

Local Access Forum – Meeting held on Wednesday, 16th September, 2015 at the Meeting Room 1, Chalvey Community Centre, The Green, Chalvey, Slough, SL1 2SP

Present:-

LAF Members

David Munkley (Chair)
Trevor Allen
Andy Packer
Tony Haines
Ken Wright

Observers

Arnold Richardson (Colnbrook Parish Council)
Wayne Strutton

Officers, Slough Borough Council

Jacqui Wheeler
Rights of Way Officer
Sing-Wai Yu
Team Leader Highways Maintenance & Asset Management

186. Apologies

Cllr Satpal Parmar, Cllr Roger Davis, John Keegan

187. Welcome and Declarations of Interest

None

188. Minutes of the last meeting held on 21st May 2015

Minutes of the last meeting held on 21st May were approved as an accurate record of the meeting.

189. House keeping

Re-election of Chair and Vice-Chair –

Five members have confirmed their approval of the re-election of David Munkley as LAF Chair and so he is duly re-elected for another year. However with the resignation of IH from the LAF the Vice Chairship is open. KW nominated Trevor Allen for this position and all voted in favour, so he is duly

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elected as LAF Vice-Chair for the year ahead. TH expressed his interest in standing for this position in the future.

All agreed to a farewell get together for IH who is moving to the Leatherhead area. JW suggested The Red Lion in Langley as the venue and members asked for an early evening time. JW would send an invite around with the idea of appropriating some SBC memorabilia to give.

It would please the Chair and all members would like to thank Ian for his valuable contribution to the LAF over the years and wish him well for his future volunteering exploits.

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

FP35a High Street to Herschel Street-

JW confirmed the application for the stopping up of this alleyway has now been received and is due to be processed. The site adjacent to the narrow section is still hoarded off with no development forthcoming. WS stated that there are various sites in central Slough where development is not progressing which are being chased with a view to possible CPO.

FP35b Herschel Street to Alpha and Hencroft Streets North-

JW tabled usage survey results and photos. All agreed the path is not used very much. A permanent stopping up of this section of path would mean a problem with the lighting columns which are maintained by Highways. The columns would probably have to be removed with a permanent closure. Alternatively, if a PSPO was made the path would remain Highway responsibility.

JW suggested a door knocking exercise to gauge local reaction to a potential closure. Members were concerned about the lack of enforcement in general being undertaken by the Council.

Ditton Park Cycle Path –

Members approved the draft joint LAF letter to try to get a response from CA Technologies in view of the inability to contact Fiona Kincaid, the Facilities Manager over the last few months.

DM has visited the route recently both on the Ditton Park side and on the Linear Park in Slough noting that the condition of the surface has deteriorated and encroaching vegetation is has obstructed the useable width. He specifically mentioned the Southfield path surface has worsened.

Resolved - JW to send the letter to CA Technologies.

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Linear Park cycle path in Slough

The Council's legal team responded to the LAF's email saying that the Council is equitable landowner regardless of whether it is under Parks or Transport and is therefore responsible to repair and maintain. There is an impasse as Parks aren't willing to take on the path for programmed maintenance unless Transport has a budget available to transfer it over with; meanwhile the path continues to deteriorate with only ad hoc maintenance. JW suggested a possible solution could be that Highways take on the path and that it is dedicated as a PRow. However, the problem remains there being no budget, with the length and width of the route requiring substantial investment to sort out and maintain.

JW has asked RBWM for the Ditton Park S106 agreement to check that the permissive path through the CA Technologies site has to be open to the public in perpetuity. The section in Slough cannot be dedicated as a PRow unless it links to a public highway at both ends.

DM asked if this path could just be absorbed into the general PRow budget. JW felt unsure that expectations for the paths condition could be met within available budget. Members felt the path does not get the recognition it deserves as a major leisure off road route and that the Council should give it priority when considering improvements to cycling routes for 15/16 financial year. DM reiterated that the condition of the path is plainly deteriorating.

WS stated that it's likely that the field next to the current Castleview housing development may be developed as well which would undoubtedly result in increased use of this route. He wondered if some funding could be gained through the planning process should this go ahead. There is potential for a LAF recommendation that the Council place a planning condition on any new development at this location for a contribution towards the up keep of the Linear Park.

The consensus was that a letter be drafted to the Chief Executive of the Council and copied to Ward councillors strongly recommending this case for funding, highlighting the importance of the route, its inclusion in Slough's Local Plan and particularly the Council's investment in buying the land specifically to provide it and now allowing it to de-grade.

SWY explained the Community Investment Fund which is divided up between the wards each year, could provide the avenue for a one-off investment if requested by the appropriate councillors. Though not an annual budget, a one-off amount would mean sufficient repairs could be made which would last several years while the issue of a regular maintenance budget is sorted out.

Resolved – That the LAF strongly advises the Council takes responsibility for the Linear Park wholly in Council ownership and that the Council provides funds for proper programmed maintenance of this strategically important local walking and cycling route. The Council must be seen to be upholding their obligation to this route particularly

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from the perspective of gaining continued investment from CA Technologies. JW to draft letter as detailed above and circulate for members' approval.

Audible Beepers at Pedestrian Crossings

JW reported back that the Council uses the audible beep at pedestrian crossings on single crossings, however if there's another unsynchronised crossing close by then the audible beeps will not be used to avoid confusion for users. This is the position at the Salt Hill crossing.

Bloom Park Integration with the Canal

JW to chase up the Parks department to find out how the S106 money will be spent and push the LAF's view that integration with the canal needs to be prioritised.

Canal Basin

TH summarised the meetings that have happened with CRT and the Council and asked if the LAF's recommendations are still under consideration. JW explained that the planning application for the Basin development has still not been submitted to the Council, though she has had sight of some concept drawings from the Slough Regeneration Partnership who are working on the planning application with CRT and the development company.

JW confirmed that she has been liaising with Housing about removing the concrete fencing on the north side of the basin with a view to continuing with trying to get interim improvements prior to any major development. The preliminary quote from the Council's contractors is approx. £6K for removing the concrete fence and erecting a weld mesh fence along the alternative alignment which would open up a wide corridor. This does not include the clearance of trees/vegetation on the northern bank of the canal which belongs to CRT or construction of a new path on the bank.

JW agreed to the following; contact SRP to confirm that the realignment of this fence line does not compromise the long terms plans; ask CRT for approval and part funding of clearance of northern bank and ask Housing to agree new fence line on their land and removal of concrete fencing. Housing may also have money available to help with this work. In the LAF's view moving the path onto the bank at this location will not compromise, but will enhance any future development plans.

WS intimated that the Council is looking at development opportunities at the green space land owned by Housing behind Kendal Close. SWY suggested things are happening with plans for this area which have not been released yet and that we can try to find out.

TH is not convinced that CRT will go ahead with any development at the Basin as this issue has been in the Local Plan for 30 years.

Resolved – Actions to be taken as detailed above and item to be on next agenda.

191. Transport / LSTF Schemes/Designs - Updates

JW directed members to the updates included in the report in the papers.

A4 Huntercombe Lane to Burnham Lane Cycle Scheme

JW will circulate the detailed design drawings for this scheme and asked for any comments to be sent. This scheme involves partnership working with Bucks CC.

Leigh Road Bridge

SWY confirmed the official opening of the new road bridge is around the 14th October 2015 with the bridge opening for actual use a couple of weeks prior to that date.

It has been decided that the adopted highway across the old listed Leigh Road Bridge will not be stopped up at all due to complications with Network Rail owning the actual structure. Instead the simplest option is to make a permanent Traffic Regulation Order which will restrict the use of the bridge and the approaches to pedestrians and cyclists. Physical barriers will be installed to prevent unauthorised vehicular access and landscaping will enhance the environment. SWY confirmed that landscape design plans are being drawn up now. The structure of the old bridge will remain in the ownership of Network Rail but further work needs to be done on the parapets as they don't meet European standards. This means either raising the height of the parapets or dropping the surface.

Pavement Parking Informal Consultations

JW directed members to the PPS consultation plans on the websites. WS pointed out that Haymill missing from the consultation shows the Council has ignored feedback from the LAF and evidence showing that Haymill is definitely a hotspot for the pavement parking problem. JW agreed to ask the Parking team why Haymill is not being consulted on as WS had been assured it was a prime candidate and the LAF had agreed.

TA confirmed that the pavement parking scheme implemented in the central ward is working and it is nice to see people being able to use the pavement again. Though, TH was keen to state that in some areas the PPS has not worked particularly in Goodman Park, Uxbridge Road. The debate continues with opinions differing but general consensus that an individual road by road approach must be used every time.

Slough Station Travel Plans Stakeholders Workshop

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JW asked for volunteers to attend this workshop due to take place on the 1st October 2015 at the Cycle Hub, Brunel Way. Members to inform JW.

192. Summer Site Visits - actions

JW directed members to the list of actions in the papers.

JW is arranging a site visit with Bucks CC row officers to discuss issues arising from the LAF's summer visit to the canal and the NCN route in Langley leading to the Langley Country Park.

Dis-used railway line path, Colnbrook

There is also the opportunity via an email from correspondence with Cllr Dexter Smith for gathering momentum towards a possible claim of the unrecorded path along the di-used railway line, Old Bath Road, Colnbrook. The Cllr confirmed the path is used by a lot of local people for work and leisure and he has raised it with the Colnbrook Parish Council who in general support the dedication of this route as a public path. The Cllr also said that someone has been systematically cutting back overhanging vegetation to keep the route useable.

DM felt this path has potential to be an urban nature reserve and was surprised by the hidden delight of the path while at the same time serving a functional purpose. JW will respond enthusiastically to the Cllr's email with the aim to get some action on this potential claim.

WS reported that the fence in Pippins Park is being broken down to be used as a short cut through to the Colnbrook Bypass. Anti-social behaviour is reported as happening and locals are worried children will be able to access the Bypass via this opening. JW will investigate.

Wexham Row

TA offered help in contacting the allotment users to gather evidence of use of this path. JW will liaise with him on this. JW confirmed the Ramblers central office have no record of the letter in the 1980's that was sent to the Wexham Court Parish Council concerning this path. Hopefully the local Ramblers or Wexham Court Parish Council will have kept a record.

KW queried whether the Council could get the mound cleared, however it is highly unlikely this would be possible particularly as the landowner has had the obstruction placed there along with barbed wire and signs specifically to exclude people from using the path. Despite this during the summer site visit, members witnessed someone using the route and were able to access the whole route though it was very difficult. Members agreed a mailshot should be sent to local residents to gather evidence of use and follow the actions listed. WS suggested asking for anecdotal evidence of peoples experience of this path on Streetlife Slough and FB Slough60's and Slough 70's websites.

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193. Cycling in Slough

No Transport Officer was available to come along to the meeting.

194. Horizon Scanning

Due to lack of time at the meeting, this item will be postponed to be discussed at the next meeting on 16th December 2015.

195. Next Meeting

The next meeting will be at 6.30pm on Wednesday 16th December 2015 at the Slough Cycle Hub, Brunel Way. JW will look into the parking available close to the Cycle Hub for the next meeting and forward details to everyone.

(Note: The Meeting opened at 6.30pm and closed at 8.40pm)