

BUCKINGHAMSHIRE LOCAL ACCESS FORUM

The Buckinghamshire Local Access Forum is an independent, statutory advisory body on all matters relating to countryside access, with members representing a wide range of interests including farmers, landowners, walkers, cyclists, equestrians, parish councils, National Trust and those with disabilities.

31st January 2016

Dear Sir/Madam,

We welcome the opportunity to comment on the proposed Local Transport Plan 4 as the document addresses many of the access issues normally dealt with by the Buckinghamshire Local Access Forum and outlined in the Rights of Way Improvement Plan (ROWIP). We recognise the county council are under severe budgetary pressures and will need to find new and imaginative ways to implement the plan. It is in all our interests that it is successfully negotiated with the partners.

The plan is designed to continue to 2036. However, an objective is to support the Rights of Way Improvement Plan which expires in 2018. We hope LTP4 will be fully integrated with the new ROWIP and that Transportation will continue to recognise and value the rights of way network as a shared resource to deliver the outcomes of both LTP4 and any new RWOIP beyond 2018.

With regard to the specific issues of walking and cycling, the plan is fairly thorough in its content. However I'm not sure why it narrows the objective down to encouraging people to take short walks. All forms of walking should be supported and for all levels of ability. The document is remarkably quiet on encouraging the more vulnerable members of our community to use the network. The plan should include a commitment to provide better access to those across the whole spectrum of disabilities.

It is absolutely vital that we encourage as many people as possible to partake in the many activities that are available in Buckinghamshire. This would see improvements in health for many people and also sustain the many businesses that depend on our custom. Whilst acknowledging the importance of walking and cycling, the plan doesn't mention the many other user groups for which transport and access is an absolute necessity, for example:

- horse riders;
- runners;
- visitors to nature reserves & heritage sites;
- families on days out;
- schools and educational visits; and
- visitors from outside of the county;

To make this plan work it is going to need a greater involvement with local communities and volunteers. The four objectives, as set out, make no mention of the voluntary sector.

Under 'Managing the impact of new developments' the plan refers to investment in the maintenance and improvement of the county's existing roads and footpaths. This is only part of the story, we should be asking developers to contribute towards the expansion of the rights of way network in areas housing and industrial growth, including bridleways to facilitate and provide the legal framework within which residents can easily walk and cycle in an attractive environment.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read 'Richard Pushman', with a horizontal line underneath.

Richard Pushman (Chairman)