

# 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.*

4<sup>th</sup> October 2016

Dear Sir/Madam,

## **AYLESBURY VALE DRAFT LOCAL PLAN**

At our meeting in July 2016 members decided they would like to respond to the Aylesbury Vale Plan as it relates to countryside access.

We are keen to highlight the role played by green infrastructure and rights of way networks in providing improved choices in growth areas for new residents to access local amenities by walking and cycling. They also provide settings for improved health and wellbeing of existing and new populations. Members are pleased to see the plan accurately reflects the positive roles played by these networks within the development framework and protection afforded by policy (T2).

We also support the proposal for Aylesbury to become a Garden Town, which, it is hoped, can be a catalyst to attract funding that supports improvements to walking and cycling networks connecting between the growth areas and into the town centre. Proposed projects such as the Grand Union Triangle, National Cycleway and Waddesdon cycleway can only compliment this bid.

We acknowledge the need outlined in the Plan for over 30, 000 new homes in the District and hope that the rights of way network can play some part in maintaining transport sustainability alongside that growth. A downward spiral of increased traffic leading to vulnerable users being intimidated or discouraged must be avoided and safer options for walkers, cyclists and equestrians provided. Our member for the British Horse Society is concerned with vehicle accident rates involving horses, especially against a background of increased growth in equestrian businesses. Our member representing cyclists supports segregated footways and cycleways that provide opportunities to link new developments with local amenities, where children can learn and gain confidence on their bikes.

Our member representing the Disabled Ramblers seeks to gain greater countryside access for those with limited mobility, in his case on a mobility scooter. With this in mind, we feel the principles of the Equality Act 2010 need more emphasis in your Plan to provide the opportunity for the less able to enjoy as much of Aylesbury Vale as possible, both within urban and rural settings, with connections between the two.

We are also aware of the support that rights of way provide to the district's tourism, which we feel needs greater emphasis. The network enables the public to seek recreation and leisure, for example, at Wildlife Trust sites, open access land, historic sites and the canal network, which in turn supports pubs and cafes and creates jobs. Further opportunities for overnight stays at B&Bs, camping and caravan sites, could increase the relative spend of visitors significantly.

Yours faithfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Richard Pushman". The signature is written in a cursive style with a prominent initial "R" and a long, sweeping underline.

Richard Pushman (Chairman)