

# 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,

## **WYCOMBE LOCAL PLAN**

At our meeting in July 2016 we were given a summary of the Wycombe Local Plan process and the Forum decided to respond to the Plan as it relates to countryside access.

Members are pleased with the protection afforded to countryside access in general and public rights of way in particular within the development framework. We are aware that green infrastructure and rights of way networks provide improved choices within and close to growth areas for new residents to access local amenities by walking and cycling, improving the sustainability of developments. It also adds positively to health and wellbeing of these new populations. The proposed route improvements to walking and cycling opportunities within the Draft Princes Risborough Town Plan, for example, are excellent and we hope this can be duplicated across the district.

We also support the proposals within the Draft Plan under 'Principles for Rural Areas' seeking safer options for walkers, cyclists and equestrians on rural roads. Our member for the British Horse Society is particularly supportive as accident rates involving horses and cars remain a concern. Our member representing cyclists is supportive of segregated footways and cycleways that provide opportunities to link new developments with local amenities, within which 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 Wycombe District as possible, in both urban both rural environments.

We are also aware of the significant support that the rights of way network provides to the district's tourism, which we feel needs greater emphasis in the Plan. Wycombe enjoys hosting the Thames Path (Marlow) and the Ridgeway (Princes Risborough) National Trails, both of which attract outside income. The Chilterns also attracts significant tourism income that relies on good countryside access opportunities, such as the Chiltern Way, Chilterns Cycleway and rights of way network in general. Businesses are popping up that rely on good

countryside access, such as 'The Barn' at Turville Heath, only accessible by a local bridleway. Further opportunities for overnight stays at B&Bs, camping and caravan sites, will increase the relative spend of visitors significantly from the existing day visitor that the Chilterns currently attracts.

Yours faithfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Richard Pushman', with a horizontal line underneath the name.

Richard Pushman (Chairman)