



Buckinghamshire County Council

Minutes

BUCKINGHAMSHIRE LOCAL ACCESS FORUM

**MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE BUCKINGHAMSHIRE LOCAL ACCESS FORUM
HELD ON WEDNESDAY 7 NOVEMBER 2018, IN COUNTY HALL, AYLESBURY,
COMMENCING AT 10.00 AM AND CONCLUDING AT 11.46 AM.**

MEMBERS PRESENT

Mr R Pushman, in the Chair

Mr D Briggs, Mr J Elfes, Mr C Hurworth, Mr A T A Lambourne, Mr G Caspersz,
Mr G Thomas, Ms A Heath and Mr B Worrell

OFFICERS PRESENT

Mr J Clark, Mrs C Hudson, Mr P Turner and Ms G Naeem

OTHERS PRESENT

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies were received from Mr A Clark, Mr B Chapple, Ms S Bayne and Mr N Harris.

Two visitors were welcomed to the meeting.

- Ms Helen Hall, Programme Manager, HS2 AONB Review Group, Chilterns Conservation Board, had been looking to allocate £3m environmental mitigation from HS2 along a 3km corridor either side of the new railway through the Chilterns, including improvements to access and recreation and wanted to meet members.
- Mr Paul Harris, Access Strategy and Development Officer, Oxfordshire County Council, Secretary of the Oxfordshire Local Access Forum and Member of the Wiltshire Local Access Forum was in attendance to observe.

2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were none.

3. ACTION NOTES / MATTERS ARISING

RESOLVED: The minutes of the meeting held on 25 July 2018 were **AGREED** as an accurate record and were signed by the Chairman.

4. RIGHTS OF WAY IMPROVEMENT PLAN 2008-18 REVIEW

The background on reviewing the Rights of Way Improvement Plan (ROWIP) was provided by Mr J Clark, Strategic Access Officer, as follows:

- Mrs S Bayne, a consultant, had been undertaking ROWIP work.
- The review for the ROWIP consultation had started and would be completed by December 2018, ready for sign-off by the Cabinet Member Mr Chapple.
- The proposed timetable had slipped due to Mrs S Bayne starting later than planned, but consultation on the new Plan would start early 2019.
- Mrs C Hudson stated that the Plan would be finished in January 2020, condensed a little from the original target of April 2020.
- Mr J Clark stated the council would be 1-year without a Plan.
- Mr Clark confirmed the government had proposed a single Unitary Council for Buckinghamshire, with a new Chief Executive and Senior Management Team likely to be in place by early 2019. The May 2019 District Council elections were likely to be delayed until May 2020.
- Mr J Clark hoped the Local Access Forum (LAF) would have the opportunity to voice any concerns on the shape of the new council to ensure that there was a continuous rights of way service to the public in the new authority.

A member discussion session followed, structured around the objectives of Chapters 5 and 7 and aiming to inform the ongoing ROWIP review. A written summary would be presented in the papers of the 20th March 2019 meeting.

ACTION: Mr J Clark

RESOLVED: Members of the forum NOTED the report.

A minutes silence was held in honour of Sir John Johnson, ex-Chairman of the Chilterns Conservation Board, champion of the countryside who had a long association with promoting walking and recreation, who had died recently.

5. RIGHTS OF WAY GROUP REPORT

The Rights of Way Group report was presented to the forum by Mrs C Hudson, Definitive Map and Land Charges Team Lead and Mr J Clark, Strategic Access Officer.

Mrs Hudson noted item number 20 at Berkhamstead, a Definitive Map Modification Orders (DMMO) for a public bridleway and one of Ms A Heath's applications, was being moved up to number 7 on the list of investigations as it was now supported by user evidence.

The Chairman questioned the 4-year backlog. Mrs Hudson stated that was probably about right. Ms Hudson stated that they had recruited to another Definitive Map Officer post, so there would be three officers plus a senior officer and Team Leader working on all Public Path Orders (PPOs) and Definitive Map Modification Orders (DMMO's). This would ensure quicker completion.

East West Rail

Mr Clark gave an update on East West Rail. The Transport and Works Act order to build the scheme was submitted to government in July 2018. There were some enabling works starting early next year, such as access routes and environmental mitigation. The Council had registered a number of objections which would be heard at a public inquiry in early 2019. Construction would take place between 2020 and 2024.

HS2

Mr Clark gave an update on HS2. Environmental mitigation and moving utilities continued, with the next project being around Quainton and Grendon Underwood, where national grid would move electricity pylons. Mr D Briggs questioned the length of closure. Mr Clark clarified they would be much shorter than 18 months, but needed to be that long to account for contingencies. Mr Clark also highlighted that members of the forum might be aware of the Great Missenden Haul Road which had uncovered important archaeological remains.

Oxford to Cambridge Expressway

Mr Clark gave an update on the Oxford to Cambridge Expressway: a Highways England promoted motorway proposal between the two towns to support 1m new homes. The Council were invited to comment on possible route options, but it was unlikely rights of way would shape or impact on the final route choice. Mr Clark stated however that if the motorway did follow the East West Rail corridor it would provide opportunities for a multi-user route between Oxford and Milton Keynes, running through Buckinghamshire that could link to railway stations and improve people's travel choices. The Council's baseline requirements were set out in the reports included in the agenda as well as Highways England's plan outlining their preferred route, corridors B1 and B3.

Mr P Harris stated from Oxfordshire's perspective that the Council was very concerned about the proposal in the B corridor which would use the A34, because it was already past capacity and the Council thought it should go to the south-east of Oxford. He said there was a document by the Infrastructure Commission entitled: 'A New Deal for the Cambridge, Milton Keynes and Oxford Arc', and he would circulate a link to the forum.

ACTION: Mr J Clark

Mr Clark stated the Council's position supported a route nearer to Aylesbury, but Highways England rejected that proposal. A member of the forum asked where the new houses were going. Mr J Clark stated that he was unsure, however thought that it would likely be around Bicester and Milton Keynes.

A member of the forum asked if there would be money to mitigate problems that arise from where the road cuts across rights of way and opportunities to improve routes, especially across county boundaries. Mr Clark confirmed there would be ROW mitigation and opportunities for improvements.

Mr Clark stated there had been a meeting of the Chiltern Society's Rights of Way Group along with some of the maintenance volunteers. It was an annual meeting to look at working practices and how the volunteers could work better together. The meeting would take place at the Full Moon Pub at 10am on Friday 30 November 2018; and members of the forum were invited to attend.

RESOLVED: The members of the forum NOTED the report.

6. LAF MEMBERS' REPORT

The LAF Members' report was presented to the forum by Mr J Clark.

The following updates were highlighted:

The Slough Local Access Forum site meeting took place which Bucks LAF members were invited to attend. The meeting looked at a possible multi-user bridge between Black Park and Langley Park. No members were able to attend, but feedback was provided by Mr A Fowler, Head of County Parks. He had helpfully sketched a bridge for the papers, but suggested a bridge was likely to be prohibitively expensive, having to span four lanes of traffic and complicated by the fact Langley was a Grade II listed historic landscape. The Chairman raised his concern and asked why had Slough met in Bucks and who would pay for a bridge. Mr Clark explained many Slough residents accessed both Bucks Country Parks so they had an interest. A new bridge would likely be funded by any Slough growth into South Bucks, which had its own political sensitivities.

- There was a BBQ held at Black Park, attended by LAF Members Mr G Caspersz, Mr A Clark and Mrs Heath and hosted by LAF Member and Cabinet Member Mr B Chapple, to thank volunteers for their work in the county. Mr G Caspersz confirmed it was an excellent event, with opportunities to network and the park was well worth a visit. The Chairman suggested better notice would improve attendance next year.
- The National Land Access Centre had been launched by Natural England opened by Lord Blencathra at Aston Rowan, and attended by LAF Members, Mr Caspersz and Mr A Clark. A written guide was included in the appendix for members to visit at their leisure. All gates had been numbered and follow a set 'course'.
- Mr Caspersz asked if it was council policy to buy gates from only one supplier; how much was spent on gates per year; and what restricted the council installing more gates. Mr Clark confirmed there was no set policy, but the company Centrewire Ltd were the leaders in gate design and delivered good value for money. However, their delivery time was slow. Centrewire gates were installed at the National Land Access Centre. The council spent around £20,000 to £25,000 per year on gates. The restriction on installations was officer time agreeing gate locations with landowners and undertaking utility searches, then having a workforce available to install the gates. However, the rambles 'RIPPLE' volunteers did a great job installing one gate per week in North Bucks.

A member asked about different ways of funding new gates mentioned at the last meeting. Mr Clark confirmed the Donate-a-Gate Scheme in the south was very successful as was the North Bucks Donate-a-Gate Scheme run by RIPPLE, with both combining to contribute around £10,000 per year in private funding. It was confirmed Mr Caspersz was actually referring to new Government Legislation, post-Brexit, funding access, on the basis of landowners providing new or improved access, with rural payments made to reflect the public benefit. It was confirmed this was just a proposal at present.

RESOLVED: Members of the forum NOTED the report.

7. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

Ridgeway Delivery Group report was presented by Mr B Worrell, Rights of Way Officer. Mr Worrell highlighted the following:

- Chiltern Gates Project continued successfully, with 18 new gates installed which include five in Buckinghamshire.
- Signage upgrade continued.
- The next Strategic Links would be Tring, Watlington and Princes Risborough.
- The promoted routes spreadsheet was to be re-circulated for comment as there were some routes under discussion to take off and some to be put on.

ACTION: Mr J Clark

- Ms S Wright, Project Officer would discuss HS2 with Mr J Clark to ensure a joined-up approach to improvements.
- The draft paper entitled 'Driving on the Ridgeway' was nearing completion and would be available for comment. It would include a list of Traffic Regulation Orders TROs for review.

8. DATE OF NEXT AND FUTURE MEETINGS

20th March 2019, Mezzanine Room 1, County Hall, Aylesbury Buckinghamshire.

Chairman