



Buckinghamshire Local Access Forum minutes

Minutes of the meeting of the Buckinghamshire Local Access Forum held on Wednesday 6 March 2024 in Jubilee Room - The Gateway, commencing at 10.00 am and concluding at 11.24 am.

Members present

Mr D Briggs, Cllr S Broadbent, Mr A Clark, Mr N Harris, Mr C Hurworth, Mr R Jennings, Mr R Johnson, Cllr A Turner and Mr B Worrell

Others in attendance

Ms B Binstead, Mr J Clark, Mr B Feeney-North, Mr J Fuller, Ms S Horn and Mr J Spratley

Agenda Item

1 **Apologies for Absence**

Apologies were received from Karen Haining, Melanie Rose, Glyn Thomas and Gavin Caspersz.

2 **Declarations of Interest**

David Briggs declared an interest for the Chess Smarter Catchment Project item.

3 **Minutes / Matters Arising**

RESOLVED: That the minutes of the meeting held on 1st November 2023 be agreed as a correct record.

4 **Chess Smarter Catchment Project**

Please note that there were changes to the order in which these items were heard. This item was heard following the Definitive Map Applications - Statement of Priorities 2024 and Active Travel and Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plans (LWCIP).

The LAF received a presentation from Steph Horn, Smarter Catchment Project Coordinator – Chilterns AONB. A copy of the presentation has been appended to these minutes.

The project focused on 6 different themes to enhance the River Chess catchment. A budget of £3million was available for a period of 5 years, until March 2025. Sustrans were engaged in 2022 to review access within the Chess catchment with the aim of

understanding routes and usage. Analysis found that the Chess Valley walk between Chesham and Rickmansworth was the most popular.

The Smarter Water Catchment Team steering group decided they wanted to enhance the number of connections and increase the number of points of interest. An analysis of different routes and nodes was undertaken in 2022-2023. A stakeholder workshop was held in 2023, hosted by the Chiltern Chalkstream Project, to look at the options for alternative routes identified by Sustrans. In particular, participants were looking at:

- What makes a good route,
- Experiences in the catchment,
- And feedback on the draft network.

Sustrans then identified 3 different routes to review further and developed a criteria for route testing. Barriers impeding access and routes were noted, such as kissing gates or stiles. Following on from this, the new Chesham to Amersham walking route was deemed the most deliverable and fitting of the criteria above. Steph detailed the next steps to ensure the route would be delivered from April 2024, including surveys and landowner engagement.

The LAF also noted the introduction of footfall counters to understand how many people use the Chess Valley Walk. This would create a data set accessible to partners to enable the development of funding bids. 3 locations were identified:

- Latimer Road beyond the Sewage Treatment Works
- Frogmore Meadows
- M25 Solesbridge Lane

It was noted that the Chiltern Society had developed 6 new pub-to-pub walks, which had received positive reviews and engagement. The circular routes had promoted local businesses. The Chilterns Conservation Board had also developed a route aimed at children around chalk streams. Other routes were being looked at for the Chiltern Society Magazine.

In the comments that followed, concern was raised over the fencing of the river, resulting in a loss of the openness of the landscape.

5 Active Travel and Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plans (LCWIP)

This item was heard second, following the Definitive Map Applications – Statement of Priorities 2024 item.

The LAF received a presentation from Jonathan Fuller, Principal Transport Strategy Officer and Benjamin Feeney-North, Senior Transport Strategy Officer. They gave an overview of the work undertaken by the Council's transport strategy team including those delivered under the Active Travel scheme and updates on the LCWIP. A copy of the presentation has been appended to these minutes.

A selection of Active Travel schemes were highlighted, including:

- St Peter's Greenway through Quarrendon which utilised both rights of way and permissive routes.
- Platinum Way running between Aylesbury Vale Parkway station and Aylesbury town centre, as part of the Gemstone routes. It was noted that this route was predominantly highway focused and was upgraded in 2023.
- Canal Towpaths, particularly along the Aylesbury arm of the Grand Union Canal to improve surface conditions.
- Misbourne Greenway soon delivering a 4km link between Wendover Dean and Great Missenden.

It was explained that the schemes were centred around involving the community as much as possible, to support local resident's confidence in utilising the transport infrastructure. Activities included tree planting, chalk artwork competitions with local school children, and bikeability events with the Bike Register initiative.

Jonathan Fuller introduced the Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plans (LCWIPs), which are strategies developed by local authorities nationally to outline priorities for future investment in walking, cycling, and wheeling infrastructure. These plans can be created at a range of scales such as town, city or authority-wide. It was explained that the LCWIPs were needed to be able to access external funding, either through government bids or external partners.

The following LCWIPs were identified:

- Aylesbury Garden Town: produced in 2019.
- Buckinghamshire: light-touch LCWIP developed.
- High Wycombe: LCWIP adopted by Cabinet in January 2024.
- Buckinghamshire-wide LCWIP: currently in development and will cover the county as a whole.
- Chesham: being developed locally, led by Chesham Town Council.

Extensive data analysis had been conducted to identify different destination types across the county and understand the demand for active modes of transport to feed into the Buckinghamshire LCWIP. The team had also conducted a range of engagement exercises across all the Community Board areas and local Member input had been sought to understand their local priorities. It was recognised that the proposed network needed to be realistic in terms of scope.

The Buckinghamshire LCWIP was in the process of approvals prior to going out for consultation. The LAF would be made aware when the consultation was live so they can input their views.

Following questions from LAF members, the following was raised:

- Efforts are made to maximise the protection for new cycle routes, which involved considering adopting the cycleway or ensuring bridleway classification. However, this was dependent on the route in question and was decided on a case-by-case basis. It was identified that a number of routes, such as the Waddesdon Greenway, use a mixture of permissive

arrangements and rights of way.

- Buckinghamshire Greenway would be part of the national cycling network and was being considered for the NCN 50. Buckinghamshire Council was working closely with Sustrans to update the Ordnance Survey maps.
- An interactive map to view walking, cycling and wheeling routes was available on the [Buckinghamshire Council website](#). Feedback detailed the importance of having a national map of all routes. It was explained that as part of the consultation, the team would be looking at how routes are conveyed to the public and conversations would be had with neighbouring counties to align plans. It was suggested that the team utilise existing mapping tools such as Open Street Maps.
- Formal comments were sought from the British Horse Society and local representatives for the High Wycombe LCWIP. High Wycombe comprised of a network of rights of way links and the LCWIP references how equestrians would be considered with any new routes taken forward. Each individual scheme would receive further consultation with stakeholders including changes to surfacing, crossing designs and access points.
- Engagement had been sought from local Members and Community Boards for the Buckinghamshire LCWIP, but consultation had not yet gone out for wider public input. It was suggested that the team look at securing restricted byway status for new links, to ensure it covers the widest user base.
- National guidance was skewed towards more utilitarian uses such as travelling to work and school. The LCWIP was trying to refocus on leisure uses such as exercise.
- Sustrans were leading on delivery of the Wendover-Missenden route, which was due to open later in 2024.

6 Definitive Map Applications - Statement of Priorities 2024

This item was heard first.

Helen Francis, Senior Definitive Map Officer, presented the revised Statement of Priorities, which was included in the agenda pack. Two changes were proposed; update the document with the corporate plan vision and state the Council's intention to investigate and make and order for at least one 'documentary evidence only' based Definitive Map Modification Order (DMMO) each year. The LAF welcomed the changes and agreed to proceed with finalising the Statement of Priorities.

7 Rights of Way Group Update

Jonathan Clark, Strategic Access Officer, gave a summary of the definitive modification map applications caseload and welcomed any questions.

Regarding strategic access, a second sinkhole had appeared near Great Missenden. Councillor Martin Tett, Leader of Buckinghamshire Council, and Councillor Steve Broadbent met with HS2 officials and the sinkhole was repaired quickly by January 2024. The Buckinghamshire Council website had been kept up-to-date with the diversion and reopening of the footpath.

Councillor Steve Broadbent confirmed that the Council had asked for ongoing monitoring to ensure there were no further ground movements, although it was unclear how long this would continue.

Buckinghamshire Council had been consulted on Rosefield Solar Farm for their environmental scoping report and the impacts of a potential project of that size. The Strategic Access team identified 25 public rights of way, across 7 parishes, that would be affected. Concern was raised over the attractiveness of the site and whether it would have an impact on other routes. The developer proposed a rights of way plan for the site, which could be brought to the LAF at a future meeting for comments.

Following discussion, key points raised included:

- A map overlay displaying the rights of ways affected by the Rosefield Solar Farm would be distributed to LAF members.

Action: Strategic Access Team

- The Strategic Access team would investigate the possibility of section 106 contributions from the developers, which could be used in offsite improvements to enhance the rights of way network outside the boundary of the solar farm.

Action: Strategic Access Team

- Councillor Alan Turner encouraged members of the LAF to engage with the planning process and submit their suggestions, if the application goes to committee.

18 donors had been sourced as part of the Donate-a-Gate scheme, to improve the network in partnership with the Chilterns Society.

Jonathan Clark also presented the operations update, highlighting the changes to staffing with 1.5 vacant posts and further recruitment proposed. It was explained that the team were unable to complete the winter BVPI Rights of Way Condition Survey 2023/24 due to resource issues, however it was intended that a 5% condition survey be undertaken in 2024. The capital project update reported on the winter storms and floods that impacted the work of the team. Concern was raised over the impact such damage will have on future budgets due to climate change.

A query was raised about the access point near Chawley Manor Farm on Bottom Road. It was agreed that Jonathan Clark would look into this further.

Action: Jonathan Clark, Strategic Access Officer

James Spratley, Strategic Access Officer, presented the report and informed members that the Royal Borough of Windsor and Maidenhead LAF had approached Buckinghamshire LAF regarding the permissive footpaths around Eton Rowing Lake. A request had been received, asking the Buckinghamshire LAF to co-author a letter to Eton College to ask that the paths remain open all-year round.

It was agreed that the Buckinghamshire LAF would support the Royal Borough of Windsor and Maidenhead LAF, but would encourage an informal approach to present possible solutions.

LAF members were informed of the away-day planned at the Centre for Outdoor Accessibility Training on Saturday 30th April 2024.

The LAF agreed that a formal letter be sent to thank former LAF member, Alison Heath, for her service.

Action: Jonathan Clark, Strategic Access Officer

10 AOB

Brian Worrell shared the response Sir Mike Penning MP received from Rebecca Pow MP, Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Nature, regarding the cut-off date for recording rights of way onto the definitive map. A copy of this letter has been attached to these minutes.

9 Dates & venue of the next meetings

10am, 10th July 2024 (Paralympic Room, The Gateway, Aylesbury, HP19 8FF)



Chess Smarter Water Catchment - Local Access Forum

Steph Horn – Project Coordinator – Chilterns Conservation Board

06.03.24

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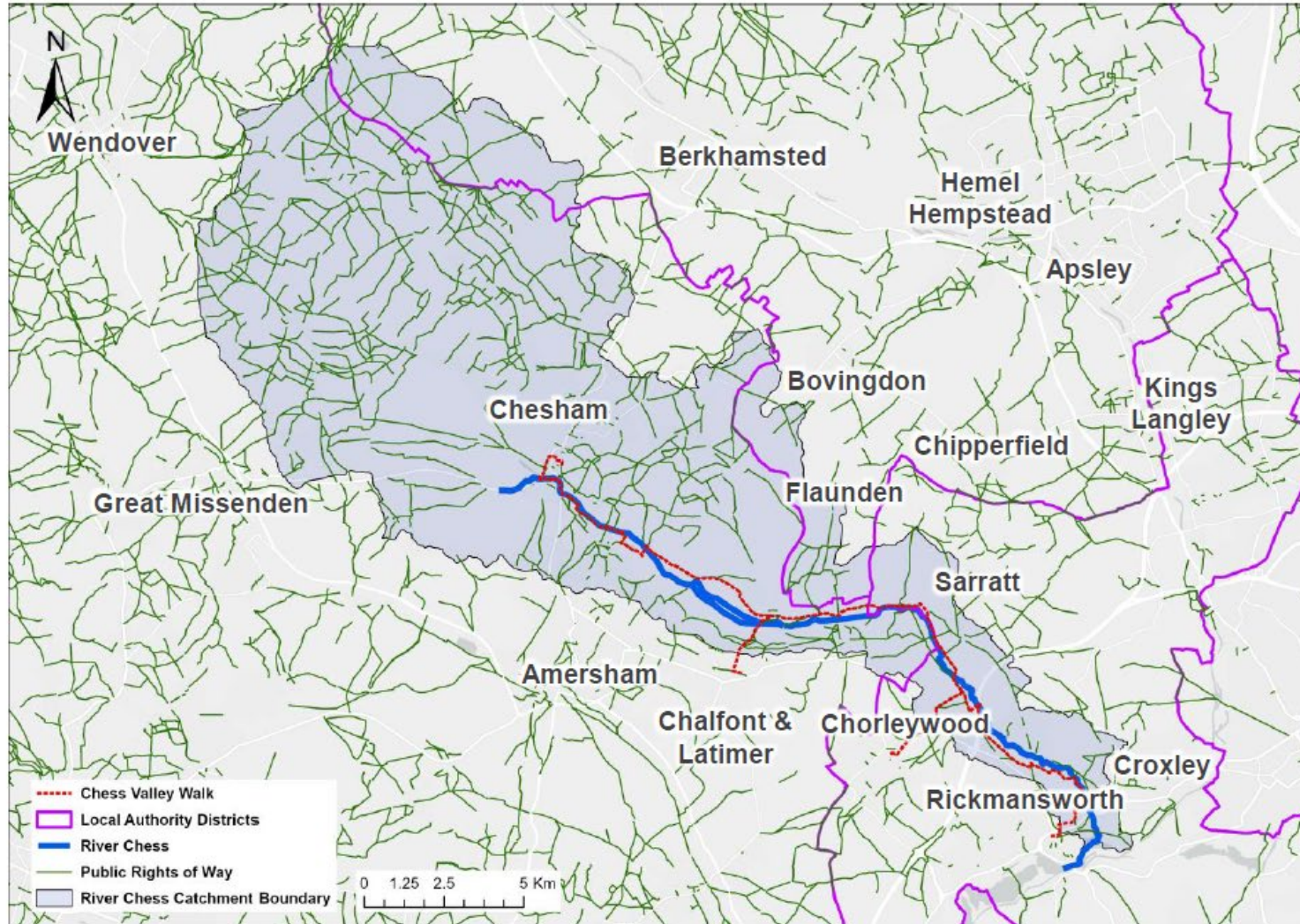
Working in partnership



Minute Item 4

Setting the Scene 2022-23

Data Review



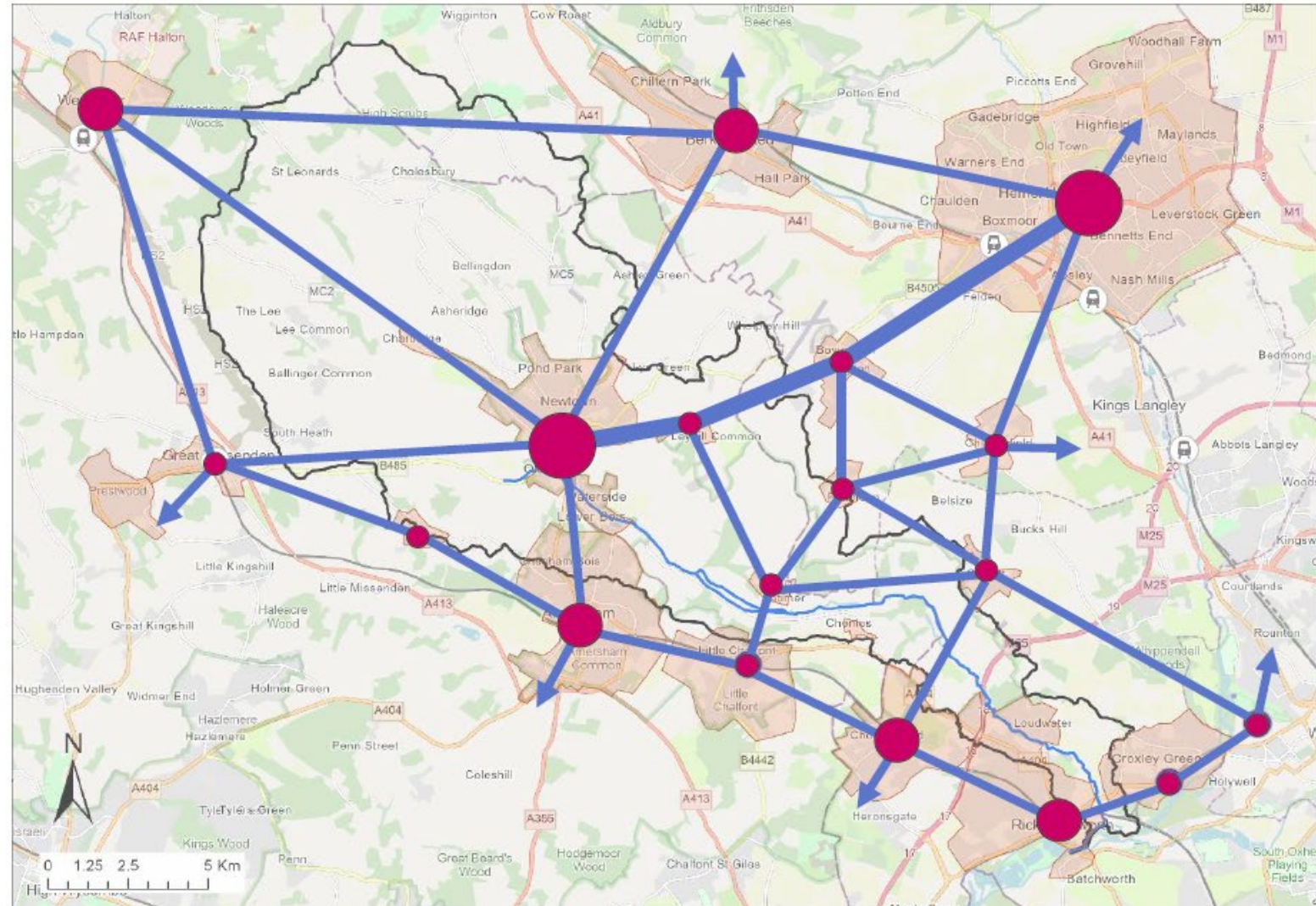
Paths and trails

The Chess Valley Walk
and Public Rights of
Way

The Approach

Developing the Draft Network

- Analysing trip origins, destinations and generators (existing and planned)
- Clarifying existing connections and focus areas
- Considering points of severance such as major roads and railways
- Convert flows into a network of routes and determine the type of improvements required

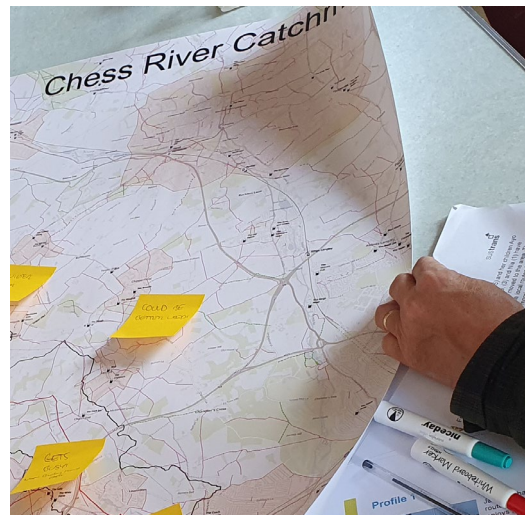


Stakeholder Workshop

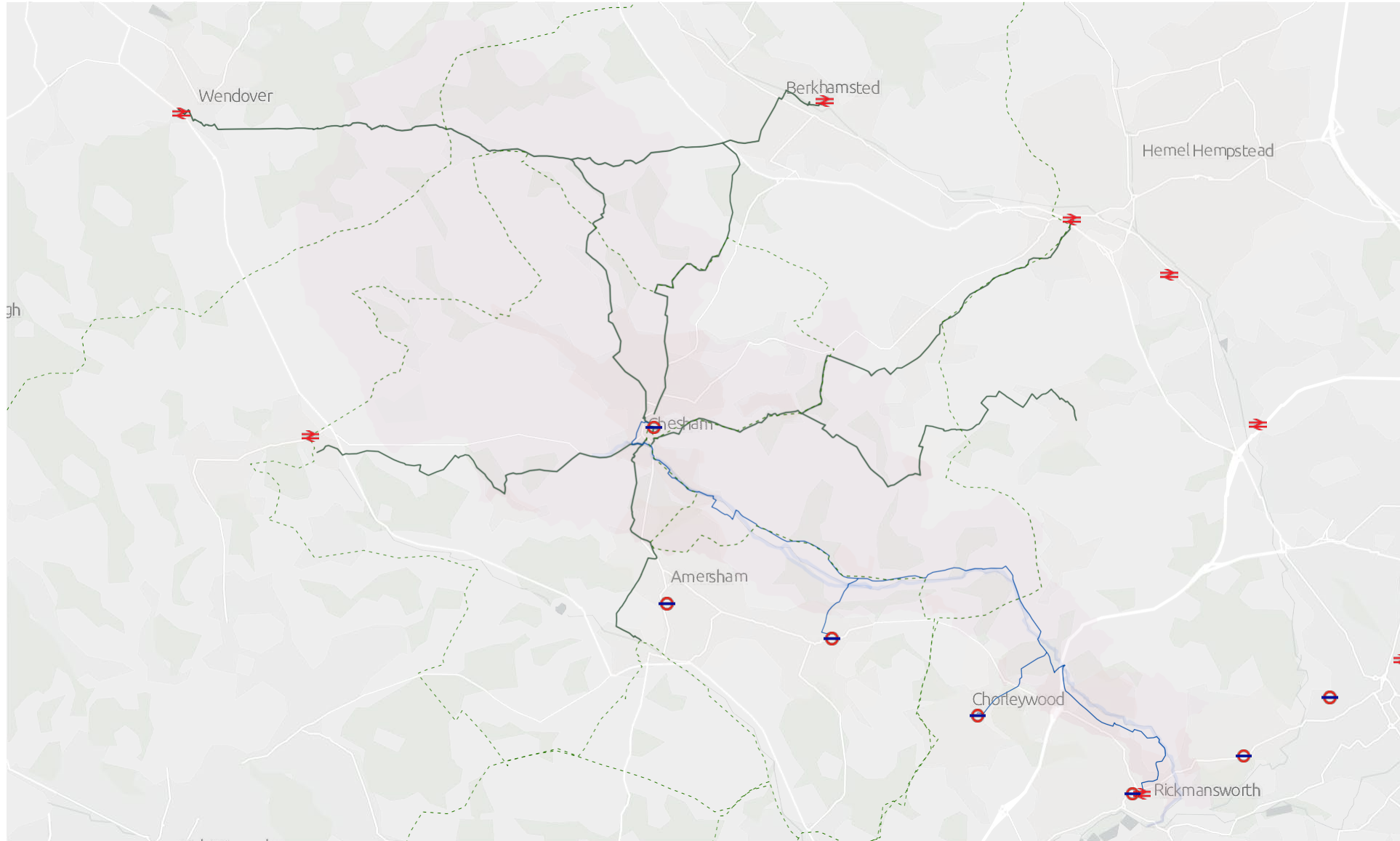


July 2023

- Held in Chesham hosted by the Sustrans and the Chilterns Conservation Board with a range of stakeholders across the catchment.
- Sustrans facilitated a series of table-based activities
- Feedback and ideas were gathered with the aim of ensuring that new routes would complement and enhance existing marked trails and less formal routes
- Activity 1 – What makes a good route
- Activity 2 – Your experiences in the catchment
- Activity 3 – Feedback on the draft network



Proposed routes in the catchment



Route testing

Following stakeholder feedback and with agreement from our partners at Chilterns Conservation Board, we selected three routes from the draft network to be the subject of detailed evaluative site visits. These were the Cholesbury Trail, Bovingdon Link, and Chesham to Amersham Link*.

Each route was walked in its entirety during September 2023 with Sustrans officers recording data using the ESRI Field Maps app on handheld mobile devices. The output data, alongside on-site experience, helped to inform the development of the route alignment.

Five GIS datasets have been devised and populated for this project:

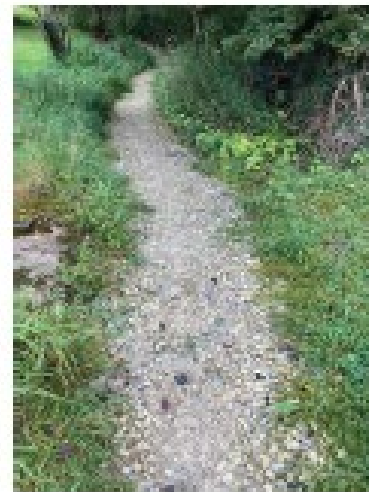
Barriers	Access control barriers including gates, stiles and steps.
Wayfinding	Existing signage, both public rights of way and named trails.
Paths	Observances of path construction and basic dimensions.
Severance	Locations where the route is broken, particularly by the presence of motor traffic.
Nodes	Places where there are facilities or where facilities such as somewhere to rest or shelter could be introduced.



Barriers



Wayfinding



Paths

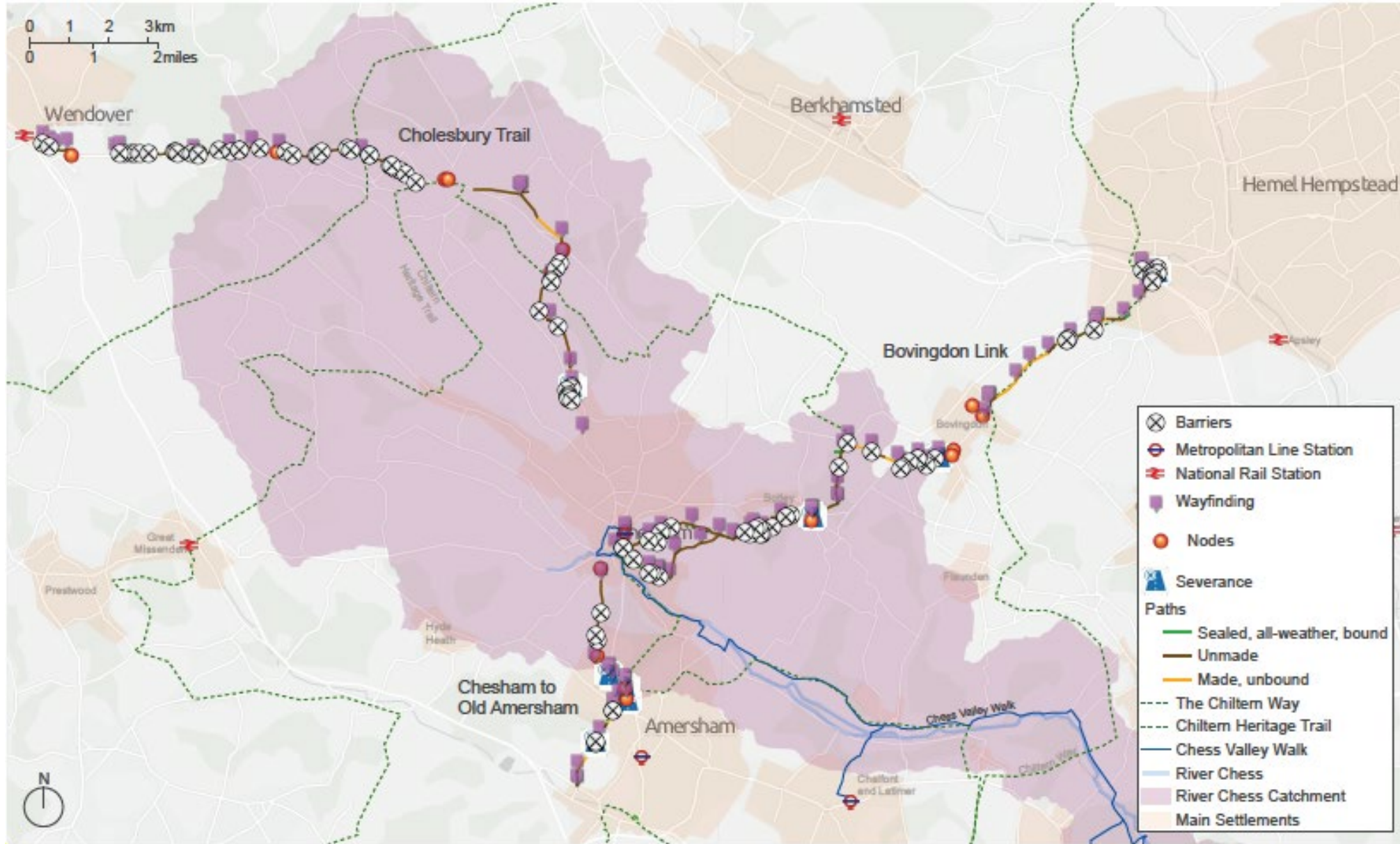


Severance



Nodes

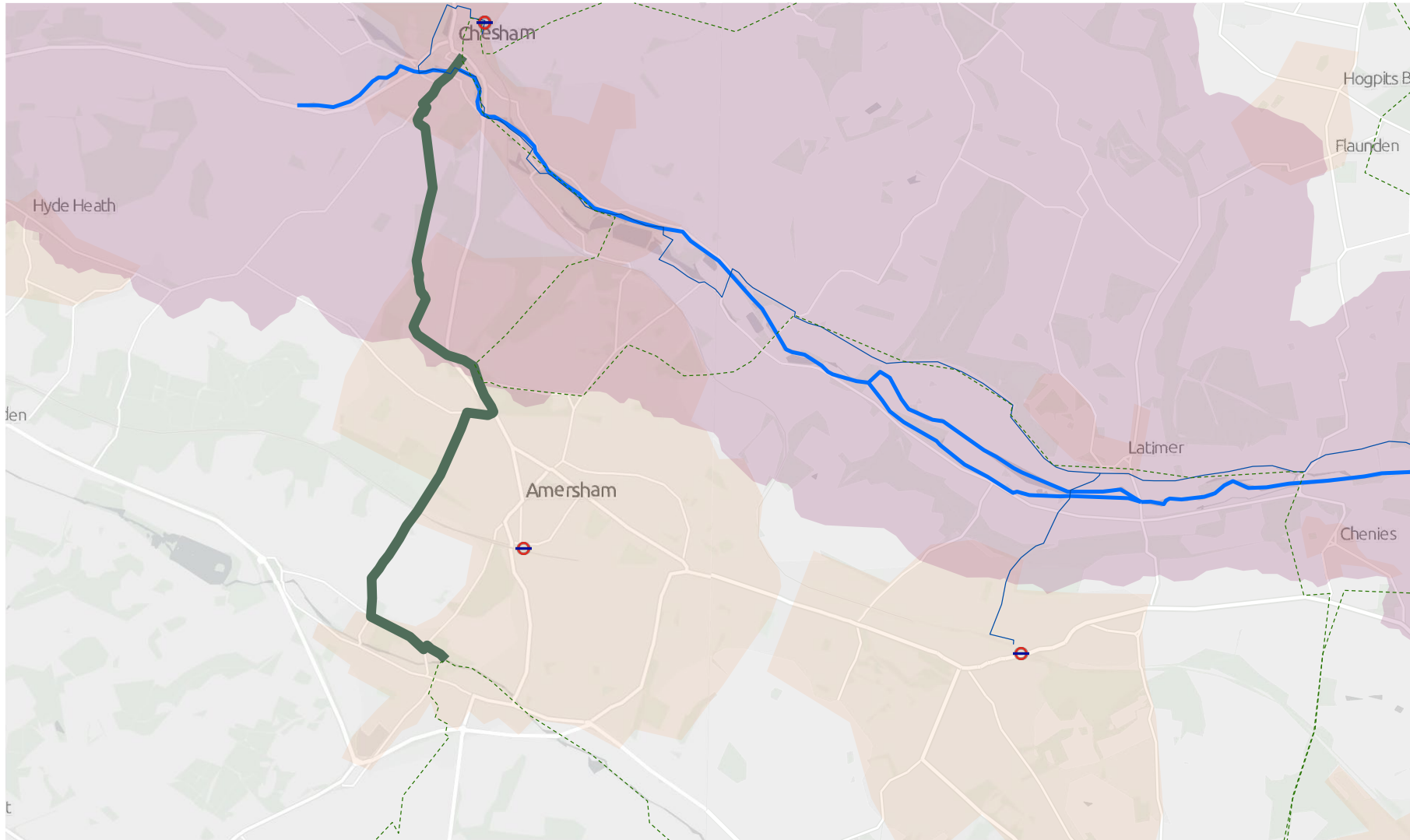
Tested routes – 5 datasets on Access compiled



Proposed walking route for development



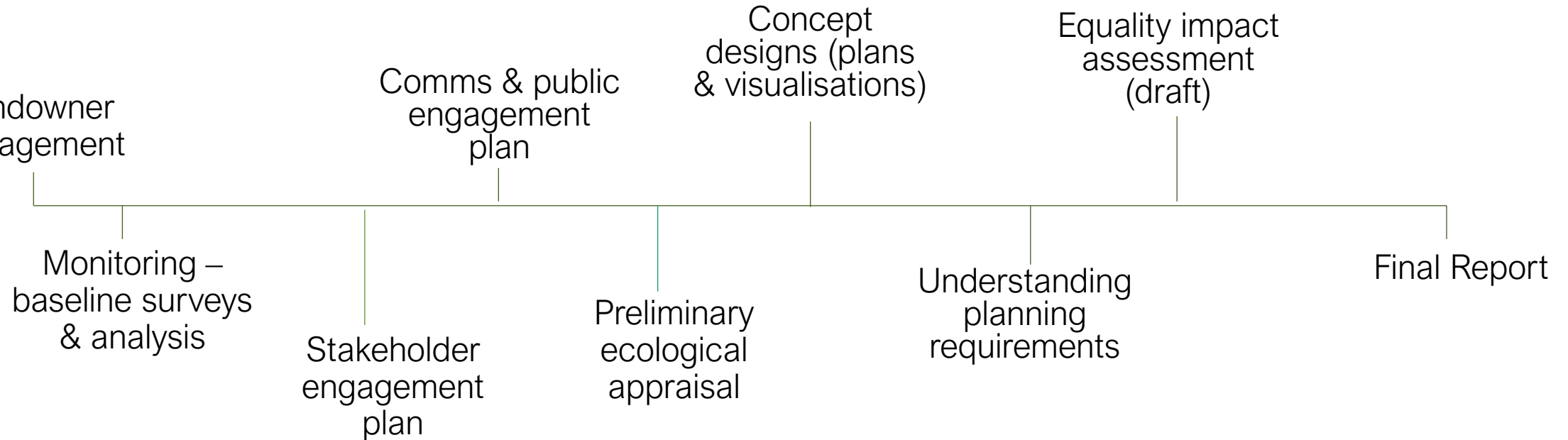
From April 2024



Suggested Next Steps –

For delivery from April 2024

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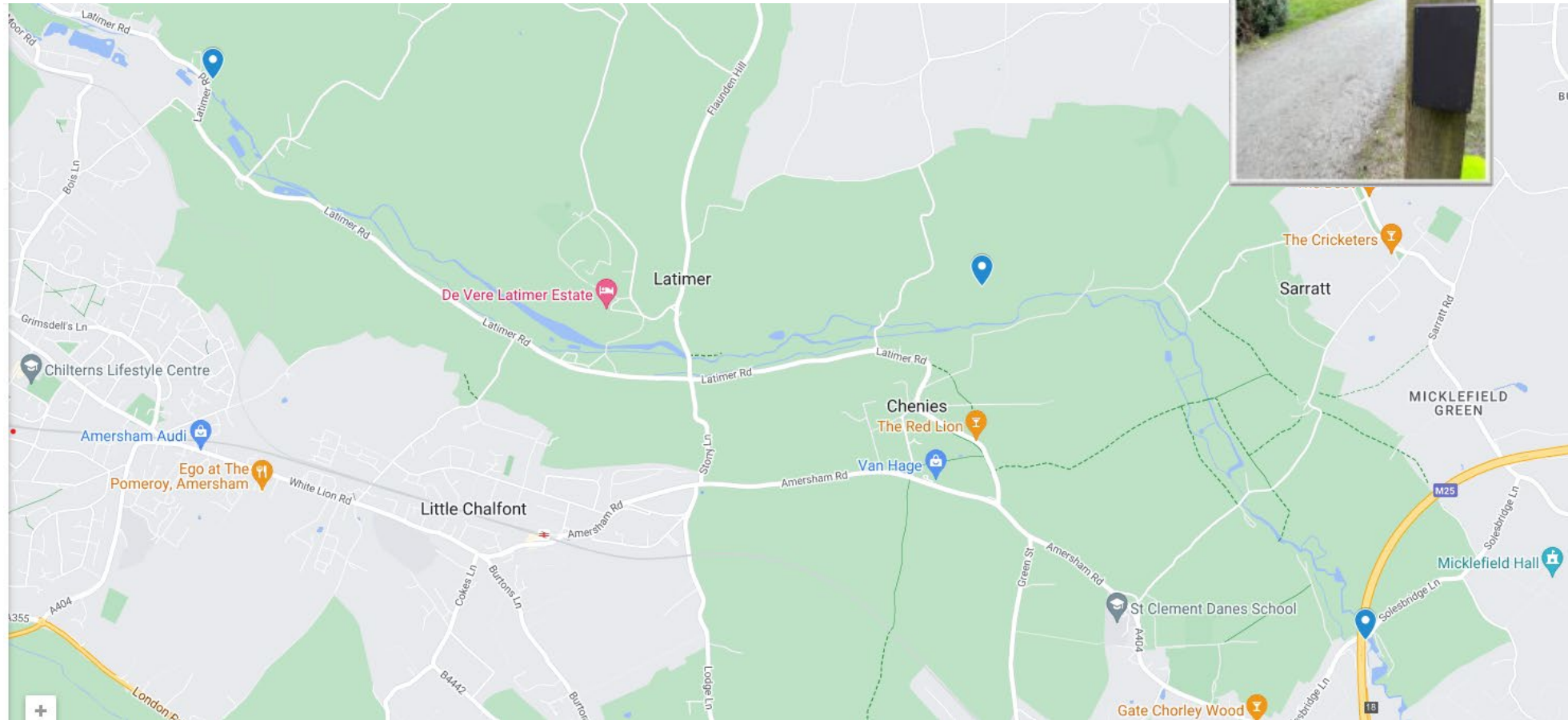


Footfall Counters

Counting people – at entrance points or along any route where people pass

Three Locations
Currently under review
by the supplier.

1. CVW – on the Latimer Road, just beyond the Sewage Treatment Works
2. Frogmore Meadows SSSI – HMWT
3. M25 Solesbridge Lane



Chiltern Society –



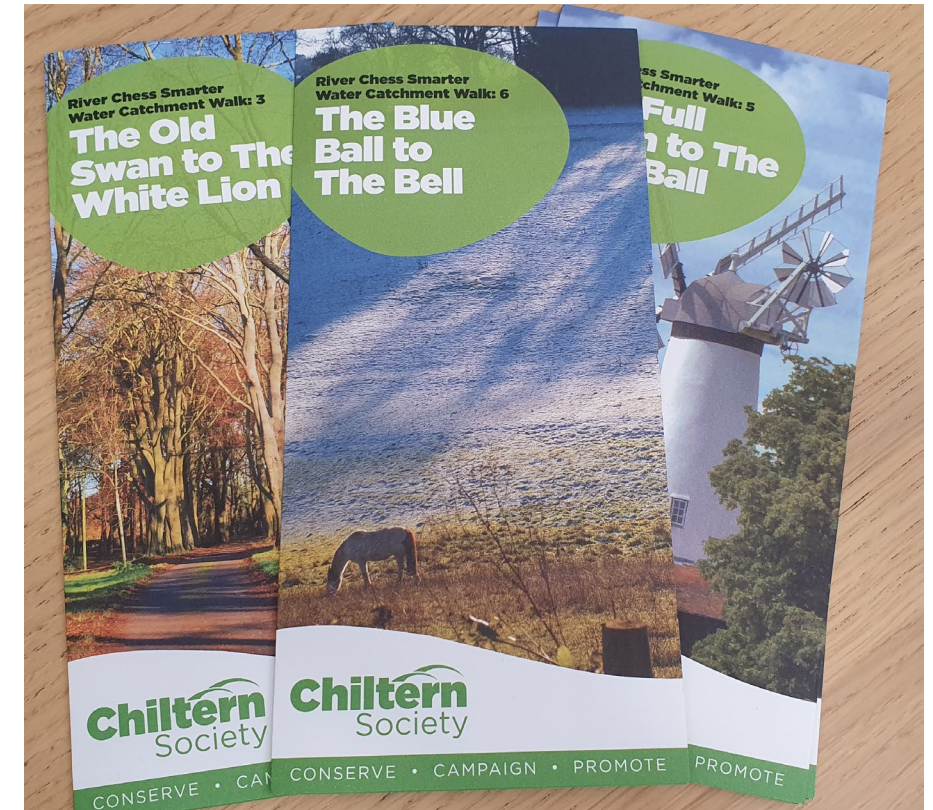
Brief update

Jim Conboy – Pub Walks

- 6 Pub to pub walks complete and leaflets created – all in the top of the catchment around the Cholesbury area
- Next Steps – New walks under development

Andrew Clark – Walks

- Working with the Chilterns Conservation Board to develop a route aimed at Children and accessing Chalk Streams for education
- Looking at other walking routes that will bring people in and out of the catchment for Chiltern Society Magazine
- Looking at Access barriers for wheel chair users as a focus around Chesham Town along the Chess Valley Walk
- PLUS all his regular volunteering





Thank you

stephorn@chilternsaonb.org

www.chesssmarterwatercatchment.org



Examples in this presentation arise from the River Chess Smarter Water Catchment project, with thanks to the following organisations:

Working in partnership



CHILTERN
CHALK STREAMS
PROJECT



Chiltern
Society
We care for the Chilterns



Environment
Agency

AffinityWater



Herts &
Middlesex
Wildlife Trust



Queen Mary
University of London

sustrans 





Buckinghamshire Local Access Forum

Active Travel and Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plans (LCWIPs)

6th March 2024



Delivery



Trinity Road "quietway", Marlow
Trial 'quietway' introduced on Trinity Road, using decorative planters and bollards. Residential / business access maintained. Made permanent in 2022.



St Peter's Greenway
1.7km link connecting Berryfields and Buckingham Park, Aylesbury



Platinum Way
Upgrades to former Emerald Way Gemstone route, via Prebendal Farm and Fairford Leys, incorporating the Haydon Hill link
Winner – Buckinghamshire Design Award (Transport & travel category)



Aylesbury Canal Towpath
Extension, width and surfacing upgrades to the Grand Union Canal towpath between Aylesbury town centre and Kingsbrook



Waddesdon Greenway & School Link
4km Waddesdon Greenway connecting Aylesbury Vale Parkway station & Waddesdon Manor, extended to connect with Waddesdon schools and village



Misbourne Greenway
4km link between Wendover Dean and Great Missenden, being delivered by Sustrans with partners. Second phase of the Buckinghamshire Greenway. Opening later this year.

Community participation

St Peter's Greenway



Platinum Way



LCWIPs

Local **C**ycling and **W**alking Infrastructure **P**lans (LCWIPs).

Evidence-led, long-term plans that identify cycling, walking, and wheeling improvements at the local level.

Can be produced at different scales (e.g. *town, city, authority*)

Local authorities are encouraged to develop LCWIPs, informed by national technical guidance.

LCWIPs are key tools in determining priorities, guiding investment and accessing national funding.

Network Map

Identifying preferred routes or corridors for further development

Delivery Programme

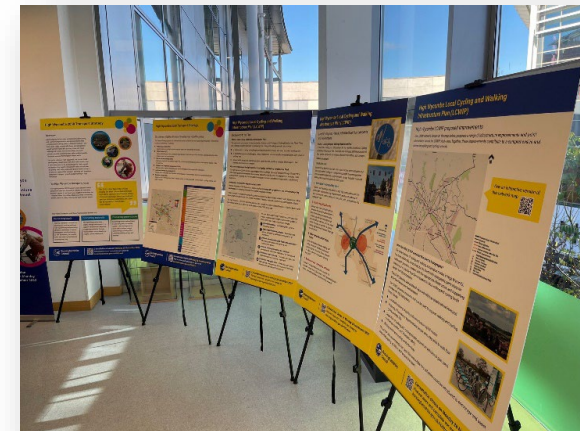
To guide the development and delivery of LCWIP proposals

Background Report

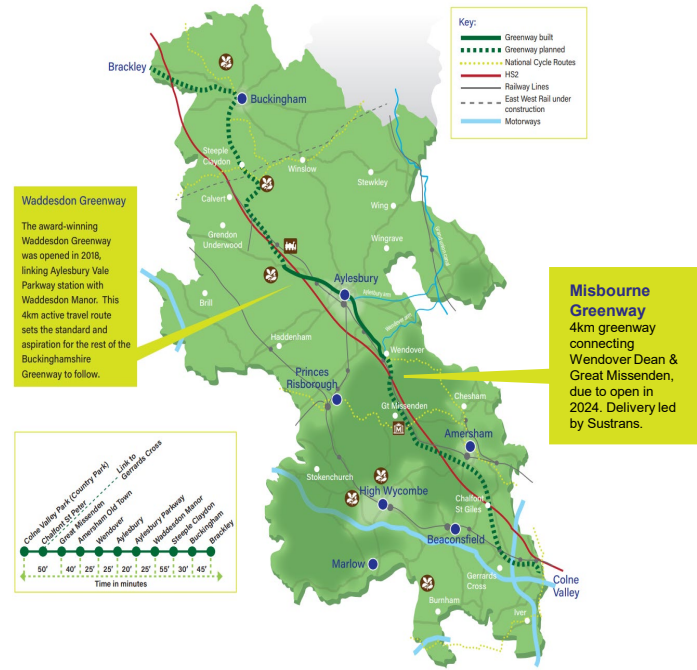
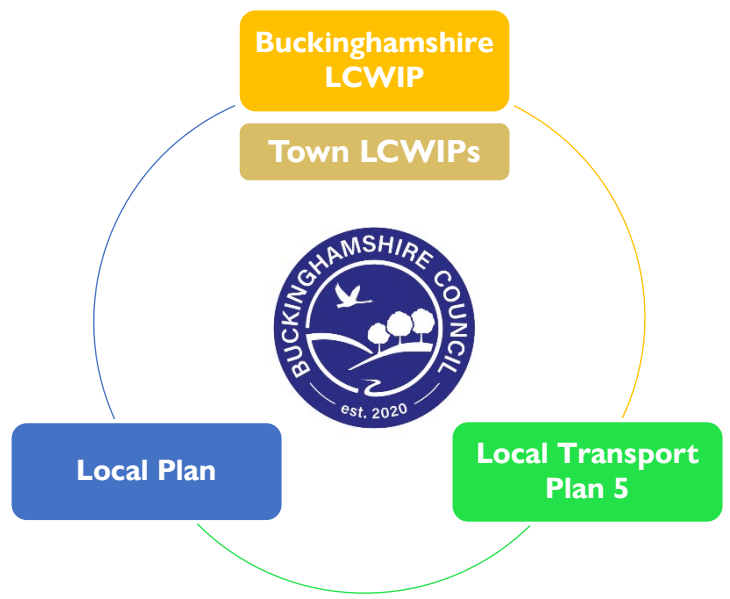
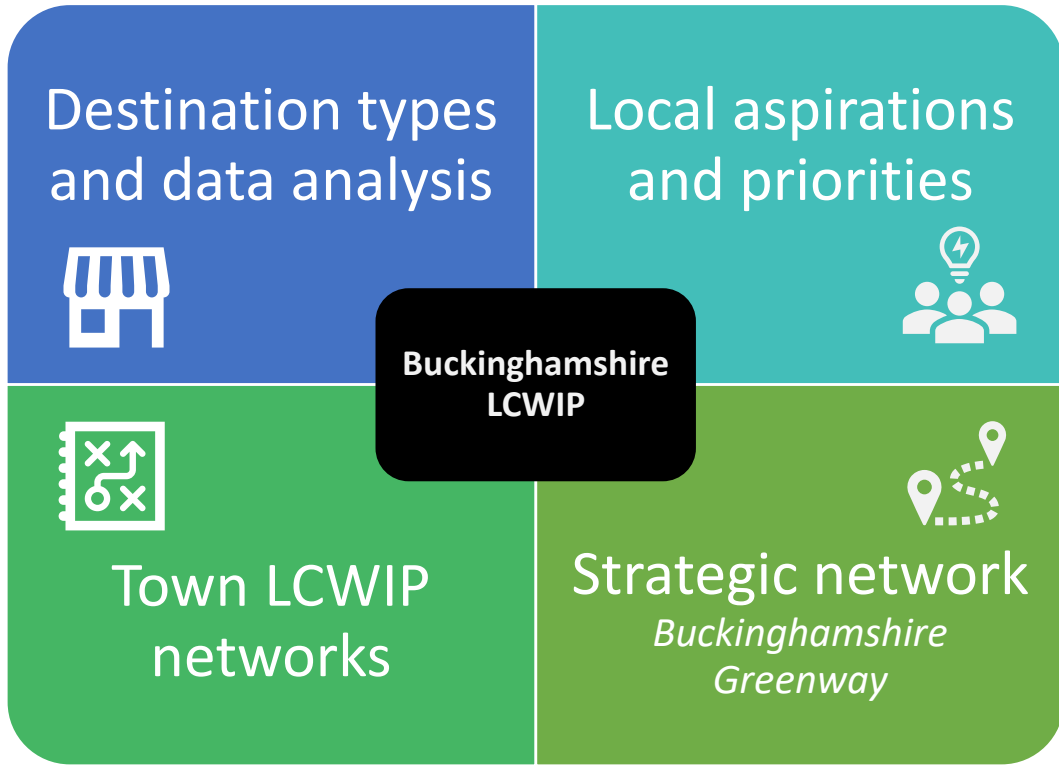
Explaining the process followed and analysis undertaken

LCWIPs

- **Aylesbury Garden Town:** Produced in 2019 alongside the Aylesbury Garden Town Masterplan. LCWIP refresh currently in progress.
- **Buckingham:** Walking and cycling network identified in the Buckingham Transport Strategy transferred into an LCWIP 'lite'.
- **High Wycombe:** Developed alongside the High Wycombe 2050 Transport Strategy and adopted by Cabinet in January 2024.
- **Buckinghamshire LCWIP:** Currently in development.
- **Chesham:** Being developed locally, led by Chesham Town Council.



Buckinghamshire LCWIP



Rebecca Pow MP
Minister for Nature

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Department
for Environment
Food & Rural Affairs

Rt Hon Sir Mike Penning MP
House of Commons
London
SW1A 0AA
mike.penning.mp@parliament.uk

Your ref: MP82779JM
Our ref: MC2024/00494/MM

20 February 2024

Dear Sir Mike,

Thank you for your letter of 16 November to the Secretary of State on behalf of your constituent and their concerns around the rights of way cut-off date. I am replying as the Minister responsible for this policy area and I apologise for the delay in doing so.

The Government remains committed to implementing the rights of way reform programme, including new processes to streamline procedures and speed up rights of way being added to the definitive map. The cut-off date for unrecorded pre-1949 rights of way was commenced last year and extended to 2031, which will allow more time for applications to be submitted.

I recognise that exceptions to the cut-off date will play an important role in making sure it operates fairly. In addition to the other exceptions the Government is already committed to implementing, we have decided to **bring back an exception for unrecorded pre-1949 rights of way that are in public use**. We have also decided to implement this exception separately in the spring, which I hope will provide reassurance.

The Government is also committed to implementing powers which will enable local authorities for 12 months following the cut-off date to designate certain rights of way that have been extinguished, and a process to add these to the legal record. Regulations setting out these powers and the rest of the cut-off date exceptions will be implemented as soon as is reasonably practicable once we have brought in the major rights of way reforms.

Thank you once again for taking the time to contact us about this important issue.

REBECCA POW MP

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