



Buckinghamshire Local Access Forum minutes

Minutes of the meeting of the Buckinghamshire Local Access Forum held on Wednesday 2 November 2022 in The Paralympic Room, Buckinghamshire Council, Gatehouse Road, HP19 8FF, commencing at 10.04 am and concluding at 11.33 am.

Members present

Mr D Briggs (Vice-Chairman), S Broadbent, Mr G Casperz, Mr A Clark, Mr N Harris, Ms A Heath, Mr C Hurworth, Mr R Jennings, R Johnson, Mr A Lambourne, Mr G Thomas and A Turner

Agenda Item

1 Apologies

Members heard apologies from Mr R Pushman.

2 Declarations of Interest

Councillor S Broadbent declared an interest as the Chairman of the East-West Rail Partnership.

3 Matters Arising

Resolved:

That the Minutes of the meeting held on 13th July 2022 be agreed as a correct record.

The Local Access Forum paid tribute to the outgoing Chairman, Mr R Pushman for his dedication, balance, and stewardship of the Forum over the years. The Vice-Chairman, Mr D Briggs took on the Chairman's responsibilities for the duration of the meeting and expressed the hope that a new Chairman would be in post before the next scheduled meeting, and that new Members would be interested to join the Forum.

4 Local Cycling & Walking Infrastructure Plans & High Wycombe 2050 Transport Strategy Consultations

Jonny Fuller (Senior Transport Strategy Officer) gave a presentation to the Forum concerning the two consultations detailed in the accompanying report. The slides would be appended to the Minutes of the meeting. The following key points were raised in his presentation:

- The consultations had begun on 14th October and would run until 28th November 2022.
- The High Wycombe Transport Strategy would be underpinned by three key themes
 1. Connecting Locally - Allowing everyone to access key destinations, services and travel hubs by providing and promoting attractive alternatives to cars.
 2. Connecting Regionally - Support the movement of people and goods within the Thames Valley and to London, Heathrow Airport, Oxford and beyond.
 3. Connecting Green Spaces - Enhancing health and wellbeing by providing safe, accessible routes to and throughout High Wycombe and its natural surroundings.

The Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan (LCWIP) had been developed alongside the Transport Strategy, and was a government-endorsed approach to identifying walking and cycling infrastructure improvements across a ten-year period.

Five concepts had been used to develop the LCWIP

1. Walkable Core (Town Centre) – Improvements to infrastructure for walking and cycling in the town centre, but also things like signage and public realm improvements.
2. Main Radial Routes – Improvement to the main road corridors out of High Wycombe as well as walking and cycling access to key business park locations and key employment hubs across the town.
3. Healthy Neighbourhoods – The primary focus of the plan, which sought to build a network of new routes within Totteridge and Desborough.
4. Wider Network and Strategic Routes – Improving links to surrounding settlements.
5. A Cohesive and Connected Network – The longer-term strategy. Exploring behaviour change programmes, working with schools and businesses to make use of routes as they develop.

Regarding rights of way improvements specifically, the following points were raised:

Proposals seek to improve accessibility, safety and comfort for all users.

Improvements can include (re-)surfacing, improving accessibility (i.e. altering and

widening access points) and clearing vegetation.

Equestrians must be taken into consideration when developing proposals (i.e. route width, type and location of road crossings, surfacing materials).

Individual proposals will be subject to design and further engagement.

Those wishing to respond to the consultations were encouraged to do so online at the [Your Voice Bucks](#) page, or via email at transportstrategy@buckinghamshire.gov.uk

Printed copies of plans and surveys would be made available at High Wycombe library throughout the consultation period, and two drop-in sessions would be held.

The first on 5th November 2022 from 10:30am-2pm at Eden Shopping Centre. The second at High Wycombe Library on the 18th of November 2022 from 10am-4pm.

Following questions, Jonny confirmed the following:

The plans outlined for High Wycombe preceded the county-wide Local Transport Plan (LTP) which was still being prepared for implementation in the longer term.

Funding for the LTP would be primarily sourced externally, as opposed to receiving council funding.

Questions in the public consultation on the LCWIP related to the five concepts outlined in the presentation, as well as offering the opportunity to raise awareness of individual schemes not currently included in the outlined plan for consideration.

It was hoped that there would be a high level of response to the consultations with a variety of public perspectives. To this end, the methods to promote it had been wide-ranging, with emails, posters, drop-in sessions, newsletters, and interviews all utilised as a means to raise awareness and encourage participation.

5 Rights of Way Group Update

Attention was drawn to the report circulated as part of the agenda reports pack and any questions were invited.

Following questions related to the Definitive Map Applications section of the report, Helen Francis (Definitive Map Officer) then confirmed the following:

The expected waiting time for the team to assess an application stood at four years, primarily owing to lack of resources. The team was training new members, and sending more applications to be determined by the Secretary of State in an increased effort to work through the existing backlog. The Forum was agreeable to the suggestion that this demonstrated the need for more resources in the

department.

The delay in determining applications had also been caused by the need to hold public inquiries in cases where appeals had been lodged. With limited budget and resources, these had to be staggered, which could push determination dates back still further. It was hoped that if the current team remained in post, then the backlog would be diminished as applications were processed more quickly.

Jon Clark (Senior Strategic Access Officer) gave an overview of Appendix A accompanying the Strategic Access Update section of the report to the forum. This indicated two areas where planning applications made under the HS2 Act would precede Schedule 4 applications to divert public rights of way over bridges. The first would form part of the Buckinghamshire Cycle Way running northwest from Wendover and connect Elseborough Road and Nashleigh Lane. Jon confirmed that it would be a Type 1 stone surface track, and he was awaiting discussions with HS2 regarding its final access status.

The second concerned the A4010 Risborough Road underpass which would become a three-metre wide, two and a half metre tall underpass for cyclists. The underpass would provide a new link into Stoke Mandeville. It was hoped that the Buckinghamshire Cycling, Walking & Infrastructure Plan would consider the possibility of a further link southeast of that point towards Risborough.

After questions, the following was clarified:

Conversations would be held with HS2 regarding the possible takeover of maintenance tracks running along the line, though this would likely be done on a case-by-case basis.

Jon informed the forum that Savannah Fradley had been promoted to Rights of Way Officer. Savannah's vacant post had already been filled full-time by James Dixon. Additionally, Sophie David would be leaving the team at the end of December 2022. Recruitment for Sophie's replacement was underway.

The results of the BVPI Rights of Way Condition Survey for winter 21/22 were as follows:

Percentage of paths rated 'Easy to Use'	73.5%
Percentage of structures rated 'Easy to Use'	92.7%
Percentage of paths signed from road	92.6%

The 22/23 winter's 5% survey would be undertaken using volunteers and officers, with results available at the March 2023 LAF meeting.

Berry Hill Footbridge, Taplow Public Footpath [TAP/12/1] would re-open in Summer 2023. Environment Agency works on the Jubilee River had caused a delay to the initial installation timetable.

Summer clearance had been aided by the parishes in conjunction with the Rights of Way teams, and two external contractors. 80km of clearance had been completed this year. It was hoped that some further clearance could be accomplished over Winter.

The rejuvenation of the Bernwood Jubilee Way [BJW] 61-mile Historic Trail had been delayed owing to the sad news of Her Late Majesty the Queen's death.

An event to celebrate fifty years of the Ridgeway National Trail would be held in September 2023. Further information could be found [online](#). Sarah Wright (Ridgeway National Trail Officer) had requested that anyone who had identified parts of the trail that were not up-to-standard to get in touch with her to make her aware.

Following questions, Jon confirmed the following:

The summer-clearance continued to be well supported by many of the parishes involved. Jon would speak to Joanne Taylor (Team Leader, Rights of Way) to ascertain how the scheme was funded but was confident it remained the same as had been the case previously. It was hoped that some of the money given to parishes operating under devolved services could be used towards clearance efforts, either conducted by themselves or through external contractors.

6 LAF Members' Report

Gavin Casperz (Disabled Ramblers) agreed to bring more samples of Flexi-Pave to the next scheduled meeting of the forum. Flexi-Pave had been discussed at the previous meeting as a resurfacing option for rights of way.

The application to install a lift and ramps to link north and south-bound platforms at Great Missenden station, supported by the forum, had been delayed from Spring 2022 to September 2022 and more news was expected from Network Rail in early 2023.

Richard Jennings (Cycling UK) had attended the opening of the new Berryfields to Buckingham Cycle Way and fed back that it was a well-designed cycle route which provided a convenient means for local people working at Aylesbury prison to get to and from work. Councillor Broadbent confirmed that he had already seen the route in use and hoped that bins could be installed along the route to ensure that it was kept clean.

Jon confirmed that the recommendation of the forum made at the last meeting to keep Footpath HWU/80/1 closed via a Public Spaces Protection Order (PSPO) had been adopted and implemented by the Cabinet Member for Health and Wellbeing. However, as the continued closure would prevent the collection of evidence to demonstrate that the footpath was no longer needed for public use under s118 of

the Highways Act 1980, it would not be possible to order an indefinite closure.

7 Any Other Business

James Spratley (Strategic Access Officer) read out an update in relation to a long unattended fallen tree limb near a bridleway following a query from Alison Heath (British Horse Society). The update read as follows:

'We are sorry for the time it has taken for this tree adjacent to the bridleway to be dealt with and do appreciate that it is causing an obstruction. Unfortunately, there was confusion to begin with as to who is responsible for this tree. This matter has now been rectified and responsibility has been established. The Arboricultural Officer and Asset Management Team at the Council have asked a tree surgeon to remove the fallen tree limb and carry out any other works necessary to make the tree safe. We can expect this to be done shortly. If there are any further queries with regards to this matter, please direct these to Savannah.'

It was hoped that the matter would be resolved within the following two weeks.

James confirmed that two rights of way crossings (the Charndon crossing and the Swans Way crossing near Swanbourne) had opened over the East-West Rail line already, with more identified. The aim was for all rights of way crossings to have opened by early January 2023.

Councillor Steve Broadbent informed the Forum that he had been in regular dialogue with the Chief Executive of East West Rail, Beth West, in his capacity as Chairman of the East-West Mainline partnership which represented all local authorities across the route. He hoped to secure a guarantee that the proposed spur to Aylesbury along the route would go ahead to the benefit of businesses in the area. Councillor Broadbent had written on behalf of the partnership to the new Secretary of State for Transport to ensure that the momentum pushing for the spur was not lost in the recent government departmental reshuffling. Councillor Broadbent also put on record his thanks to officers for their hard work on the hand back protocol.

8 Dates of the Next Meetings

1st March 2023

12th July 2023

1st November 2023

Each meeting would take place at 10am in the Paralympic Room, The Gateway Aylesbury HP19 8FF.