



## **West Sussex Local Access Forum Wednesday 18 October 2017**

A meeting of the West Sussex Local Access Forum (WSLAF) was held at **10.30am  
Wednesday 18 October 2017** at in **County Hall, Chichester, PO19 1RQ.**

### **C o n f i r m e d   M i n u t e s**

#### **Present**

Graham Elvey (GE) – Chairman	Paul Brown (PEB)
Tricia Butcher (TB) – Vice-Chairman	Duncan Crow (DC)
Helen Baldwin (HB)	Geoff Farrell (GF)
Nicol Beard (NB)	Jason Lavender (JL)
Pete Bradbury (PB)	Derek Whittington (DW)

#### **In attendance**

Jane Noble (JN)	Forum Officer, WSCC
Jo Dixon (JD)	Countryside Services Manager, WSCC
Andy Ekinsmyth (AE)	Head of Transport and Countryside, WSCC
Keiran Foster (KF)	Cycling UK

Observers: Allison Thorpe (AT), SDNPA; Val Bateman (VB), SDLAF

#### **Action**

#### **1. Welcomes and Apologies**

GE welcomed PB, who represents WSCC on WSLAF, to his first meeting. PB briefly introduced himself and is the vice-chairman of WSCC's Rights of Way Committee.

GE welcomed KF from Cycling UK, who has also recently become the Chairman of the Surrey LAF.

No apologies had been received.

#### **2. To approve the Minutes of the Forum**

The minutes of the WSLAF meeting held on 19/7/17 were approved as correct.

#### **3. Matters arising from WSLAF meeting of 19 July 2017**

All actions from the previous meeting had either been completed or would be covered later in the Agenda, other than:

**5c WSLAF web pages** - JN had contacted the WSCC web team who require further information on what is wanted. NB had checked the links and web content – links all work and she felt it easy to find relevant information.

**6a A27 Worthing and Lancing improvements consultation** – no response was sent as there are no links to Rights of Way.

**8 Stewardship HLS access** – GE still to contact SDLAF to find out how they are approaching this. GE

**8 Brexit Paper** – TB / GE still to produce a paper along the lines of the one produced by the Mid and West Berkshire LAF, which can be viewed [here](#). PEB offered to assist. GE,TB, PEB

**9 Draft positioning statement for multi-user proposals** – GE / TB still to do. JN circulated a document produced by Devon County Council, supported by Devon LAF: '[Community paths – a 10 step guide to improving public rights of way in your community](#)'. Members felt this was a useful document. Possible opportunity for joint working with WSCC PRoW service. GE,TB, JN

**4. Any urgent matters / any other business to be considered not on the agenda** - None

**5. Current / future consultations and advice given**

**a) Current Consultations**

i) [South Downs Local Plan Pre-submission Consultation](#) – South Downs National Park Authority (SDNPA), deadline 21 November 2017.

AT explained this consultation is mainly looking at the soundness of the plan, however comments on all other aspects of the plan can be submitted. TB has read the Plan and felt it generally covers NMU access well. WSLAF has previously submitted comments relating to the SD Local Plan which are available to view on [WSLAF webpages](#).

Members to submit any comments to consider for WSLAF's response to GE by 13 November. All TB,GE

ii) [England Coast Path East Head to Shoreham](#) – Natural England, deadline 22 November 2017.

GE explained that the report Natural England had submitted to the Government regarding the England Coast Path (ECP) from East Head to Shoreham included details and accompanying maps of the proposed route, as well as detailing other options considered.

NB agreed to coordinate WSLAF response. GE, HB and GF offered to help. NB,GE, HB,GF

TB reminded members that the ECP will not affect any existing access arrangements for cyclists, horse riders or other types of recreational user that may currently exist.

**b) Consultation responses and advice given since the last meeting**

GE highlighted that it had been an extremely busy period for consultations. The Forum noted WSLAF responses that had been submitted (previously circulated to members and other than those marked \* on the [WSLAF webpages](#)):

- i. Railway crossing (footbridge) – Arun District Council
- ii. Chichester Local Plan Review 2034 – Chichester District Council
- iii. Chichester Open Space Study – Chichester District Council
- iv. A27 crossing, Sussex Pad (Planning App. AWD/0961/17) – Adur District Council
- v. Infrastructure Delivery Plan - Horsham District Council \*

- vi. Infrastructure Delivery Plan – South Downs National Park Authority \*
- vii. A27 Arundel bypass – Highways England (HE)

**A27 near Arundel Bypass Scheme - Possible adjacent NMU**

**improvements** - TB reported that HE was sympathetic to the issue of NMUs crossing the A27 slightly out of this scheme’s area, at Poling cross-roads (TQ046058) and at Potwell Copse, Walberton (bridleway 392, SU965068). Both these existing crossings are considered extremely dangerous but there are no alternative safe routes. TB said that HE openly encouraged applications to its “Designated Funding” which could be used for such works. Applications need to be evidenced and would be enhanced and strengthened if making the case for all NMUs and the local community. WSCC RoW team can provide some support to members preparing an application. TB has experience of similar improvements on the A23 and offered to lead collating information for an application. NB, HB and GE volunteered to help.

TB,NB,  
HB, GE

**c) Update on meetings attended**

**Sheep Worrying – NFU.** JL represented WSLAF at a meeting on the 8 September regarding sheep worrying in Sussex. This was facilitated by the NFU and attended by of a cross section of interests, including landowners / managers (including National Trust and Sussex Wildlife Trust), police, local authorities and SDNPA. It was recognised that sheep, and other stock, worrying has a significant effect on farmers, both emotionally and financially. There seems to be a general lack of awareness and ignorance amongst dog owners. It is difficult to reach these people but long term work to change minds must be part of the solution. There was concern that with an increase in dog ownership incidents of worrying will continue to rise, along with other related issues such as dog mess. There are a number of good local campaigns e.g. SDNPA ([Take the Lead](#)) and Ashdown Forest ([Every dog matters training](#)), but there is little coordination, which is an area where those at the meeting felt needed improving.

The police have limited resources so farmers feel it is not taken seriously. The police urged people to report all incidents so they can understand the extent of the issue.

A follow up meeting will be arranged before the lambing season.

In answer to a question JL stated that he was not aware of any research correlating access and incidents, but West Sussex does have lots of both sheep and paths.

PB offered to contact Katy Bourne, Sussex Police and Crime Commissioner regarding this matter and will report back next meeting.

PB

**6. West Sussex Rights of Way Improvement Plan – Update**

JN explained that the RoWIP review draft document is in progress and will ensure the Forum is consulted at the appropriate time through a workshop.

JN

**7. Improvement Projects – North of the Downs**

TB provided the following updates:

**HW3 - Kilnwood Vale, Pegasus crossing of A264** - the legal agreement is still in the process of being agreed but once finalised the developer is expected to provide the start date which has to be agreed by WSCC Street Works team – hopefully this will happen within a few weeks.

**HW135 – Bridleway 3727, Greentrees Farm, Balcombe** - the diversion application had not been received by WSCC from NE. WSCC PRow service will now bid for funding to design improvements on the definitive bridleway route (clearance/drainage/surfacing), for implementation the following year. Currently it is not suitable for use by cyclists and horse riders.

**LW10 –Downs Link at Christ’s Hospital** - progressing slowly. The technical agreements are still to be signed.

**LW12 - Downs Link at Partridge Green:** WSCC is progressing the design for improvements to the section of the Downs Link where users have to use the road. Consultation is expected in late autumn / early winter once the designer has a preferred option.

**LW34 - A23 Newtimber –signed ‘equestrian route’ (bridleway) alongside A23** - HE has no firm date yet for the study into the provision of a safety barrier /fencing, but the scheme is programmed for this financial year. Felicity Drewett, HE Deputy Route Sponsor covering Sussex, is meeting with the Service Provider (HE agent managing the A23 on 20 October to discuss all the HE Designated Funding schemes.

**South of the Downs** – JN to pass list management to GF.

## **8. Rides of Way – Kieran Foster, Cycling UK (previously CTC)**

This item was brought forward at the request of a member.

KF gave a presentation on off-road cycling.

### **Cycling UK survey results / general views**

- Over 50% of those who responded said they rode on footpaths due to lack of choice or traffic concerns.
- The majority said the PRow network does not meet needs, particularly citing the lack of connectivity.
- Majority of novice riders said waymarking is more important than apps or downloads for novice riders.
- Results showed a significant latent demand for cycling on the South Downs Way (one of the only national trails available to cyclists).
- Off road cyclists do not have a good track record of engaging with mainstream e.g. little representation on LAFs or engagement with highway authorities.

### **Priorities for improvements**

- Facilities such as cycling centres, parking, cafes etc. encourage cycling.
- Mainstream trails / routes need to be fit for purpose i.e. not muddy and wet, but not necessarily expensive tarmac – need to make the money get as many routes as possible available rather than just a few high-spec schemes.
- Key target audience should be the less confident cyclist as existing riders tend to take care of themselves.
- The priority should be strategic links and ‘first mile’ linking communities with the wider countryside and PRow network, as well as gateway locations e.g. Alice Holt (Forestry Commission).
- Network improvements are needed to improve connectivity – encourage use of creation orders, but needs political support

- Take a lead from the Yorkshire Dales where circular cycle trails start at towns and villages with suitable infrastructure. This encourages people to stay and supports the local economy.

### **Rides of Way**

KF stated that this is a report into cycling on public footpaths rather than a campaign. The intention is not to have access to all footpaths as some will always be unsuitable. KF felt that most suitable public footpaths are probably already being used to some extent - Strava heat maps confirm this.

A lively debate followed with the following key points raised:

- Although there is some cycling on public footpaths a lot of off-road cyclists do respect the status of the Public Rights of Way and don't cycle on footpaths, although many may have the desire to use them.
- There is sympathy with the fragmented network available to cyclists and horse riders – better dialogue is needed between these groups to work towards a common aim.
- Negotiation to achieve new routes / upgrades is always the best approach if landowners are willing. Claiming routes involves a lot of work and is not popular with landowners. Using creation orders (section 26, Highways Act 1980) to create / upgrade routes is not popular with landowners or politically.
- Need to encourage respect and courtesy positively e.g. SDNPA 'Say hello' campaign. Some cyclists can be quite aggressive and some reported not using certain routes at times when they are likely to be busy with cyclists (e.g. South Downs Way).
- No such thing as a typical cyclist.
- Mountain biking is comparatively new. Work needs to be done to pre-empt possible issues including the likely increase in use of electric bikes. Best if strategic solutions can benefit a range of people e.g. Yorkshire Dales).

*Note – this was not the presentation or discussion the member who arranged the presentation had expected. More emphasis and debate on cycling (and horse riding) on public footpaths was anticipated.*

To finish KF mentioned that he is the newly elected chairman of the Surrey LAF. He thought WSLAF members might be interested to know that the Surrey LAF is looking to achieve charitable status so it can attract funding that Surrey CC can't, in a similar way to Norfolk and Shropshire LAFs.

### **9. Local Transport Investment Programme (LTIP) – Andy Ekinsmyth, WSCC**

AE introduced the Local Transport Investment Programme, LTIP and handed out a related document (appended to minutes). WSCC Highways and Transport has a single capital pot for all small scale WSCC priority capital schemes. In the past PRoW, and other service areas had a dedicated capital budget. Transport and Countryside schemes across the county will be prioritised for funding through the newly adopted LTIP process. Currently WSCC is fine tuning the mechanisms for prioritisation to ensure a balance of schemes, including Rights of Way improvements, get delivered. Initial LTIP prioritisation is expected to be complete in April 2018 for schemes to be designed and / or delivered during 2019.

TB expressed concern about how the PROW service decides which routes need improvements now user groups are not consulted and also about the reduction number of surfacing projects delivered. AE stated that in recently years there has been around £300k spent annually on PROW bridge and surfacing works, albeit reduced slightly over the last couple of years. Going forward there will be less money available so WSCC has adopted the LTIP process to identify and deliver what is important to the Council. Schemes are identified through routine inspections and reports received from the public and from parish councils are also taken into account.

TB stated that Highways England (HE) had recently updated its Design Manual for Roads and Bridges to include [HD 42/17 Walking, Cycling and Horse-Riding Assessment and Review](#). She explained that the purpose of this is to facilitate the inclusion of all walking, cycling and horse-riding modes in the highway scheme design process from the earliest stage, enabling the design team to identify opportunities for improved facilities and integration with the local and national network throughout the design process. Despite repeated requests for WSCC Highways to consult with equestrian organisations before embarking on new schemes to ensure horse riders are not adversely affected, or indeed to maximise any benefits that may be available, this has not happened. TB cited an example of a newly opened route "behind the hedge" which is available to walkers and cyclists and not horse riders. AE explained he does not know this particular scheme, however he reflected that sometimes it is easier to get permissions for some users than others. He believes that the right questions must be asked at the outset and acknowledged that WSCC could do better and that this was beginning to change.

A discussion followed about the West Sussex Walking and Cycling Strategy. AE believes that horse riders had as much opportunity to input schemes suggestions as walkers and cyclists however horse riders felt disengaged with the process, partly due to the title so very few schemes were submitted. He particularly encouraged horse riders to put forward suggestions for schemes next time there is a window of opportunity. WSLAF will be notified of when this is.

## **10. General Report**

The General Report was noted.

GE noted that WSCC is currently not accepting applications for Public Path Orders (PPOs). PEB asked about the number of DMMOs and PPOs outstanding and said the website was not up to date. JN to check.

JN

## **11. Dates of future meetings and Agenda items for the next meeting of the Forum**

The next meeting is on Wednesday 31 January. This is the AGM so if anyone wants to know more about the roles of Chairman or Vice-Chairman please contact JN.

The meeting closed at 1.40pm.

## Action Summary

	<b>Item</b>	<b>Who</b>	<b>When</b> NM-next meeting 31/1/18
3	Actions from previous meeting		
	8 HLS access - meet with SDLAF to determine appropriate actions	GE	NM
	8 Produce a paper along lines of Mid and West Berkshire LAF Brexit paper	GE, TB, PEB	NM
	9 Draft positioning statement for multi-user route proposals	GE, TB, WSCC	Spring 2018
5ai)	South Downs Local Plan Consultation – Comments to GE for him to pull together WSLAF response	All	13/11/17
5aii)	England Coast Path East Head to Shoreham consultation – comments to NB for her to pull together WSLAF response	NB, GE, HB, GF	22/11/17
5b	A27 near Arundel Bypass Scheme - Possible adjacent NMU improvements – apply to HE for funding.	TB	NM
5c	Sheep worrying - contact Katy Bourne, Sussex Police and Crime Commissioner	PB	NM
6	RoWIP – arrange WSLAF workshop	JN	NM
11	Check if updated DMMO list of WSCC web pages	JN	NM