

Jane Noble, Forum Officer
West Sussex Local Access Forum
First Floor, Northleigh
Tower Street, Chichester
West Sussex PO19 1RH
(03302) 226691
wslaf@westsussex.gov.uk
www.wslaf.org

West Sussex Local Access Forum



May 2018

Sent by email to: daniel.parsons@wsp.com

Dear Daniel

WSLAF response to A27 NMU Crossing Consultation

I am responding to the above consultation on behalf of the West Sussex Local Access Forum (WSLAF).

West Sussex Local Access Forum (WSLAF) is an independent advisory body, established under the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000, to give access advice to local authorities, statutory organisations and non-government organisations. In giving that advice, the Forum's main objective is to ensure the existing network of public rights of way (prows), as well as the wider access network, is protected and where possible enhanced. The Forum has a balanced membership of knowledgeable and experienced users (walkers, cyclists, horse riders and carriage drivers), landowners and other interests (including conservation, disabled access, landscape). For further information about the Forum please visit www.wslaf.org.

The Forum considers that the A27 is a significant north-south barrier to non-motorised users (NMUs) trying to safely access either the South Downs National Park (SDNP), or the Coastal Plain (CP). Crossing a busy dual carriageway at grade is an unattractive prospect for those seeking quiet countryside leisure and recreation, or a visit to the beach, whether walking, cycling, or horse riding.

WSSC's Rights of Way Improvement Plan (RoWIP) recognises the lack of NMU routes in the CP, especially bridleways, and the need to improve and provide safe access to the excellent network of routes north of the A27 in the SDNP. Members would like to see NMUs encouraged to leave their cars/horseboxes at home, but in order to do this facilities provided must be easy to access and use, follow a natural desire line, and be enjoyable.

WSLAF feels that NMU safety as regards their need to cross the A27 has been eroded over the years, with desired crossing points closed off, and facilities downgraded. Without the safety of a signalised crossing, walkers and cyclists using desire lines have to look out for gaps in the traffic, and wait in what is usually a small, noisy, intimidating central area gap, unsuitable for use by groups and impossible for equestrians, who have probably been most affected by the desire line closures.

The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF), paragraph 75 states 'Planning policies should protect and enhance public rights of way and access. Local Authorities should seek opportunities to provide better facilities for users, for example by adding links to existing rights of way'. The Forum believes that providing a safe road crossing is just as

much a 'link' as providing a new public right of way. In both cases the intention is to provide a safe connecting network that all NMUs feel comfortable using.

Manor Road roundabout (North Lancing) and Downs Link underpass (Shoreham)

Historically the signalised at-grade crossing at the Old Shoreham Road/Coombes Lane junction has been a popular and well used access route to and from the Downs for all NMUs (walkers, cyclists and equestrians). It provides a direct route into the RoW network in the SDNP, and to the Downs Link promoted bridleway. However, increased traffic flows are now acting as a severe deterrent to its use, and the large amount of development planned for the area will only exacerbate the situation in the future.

Other crossing points used in this area by walkers and cyclists are, Manor roundabout, Manor Leisure Centre, and Hoe Court, all of which need some improvement, although none of them are suitable for equestrian use.

The Adur Local Plan, Policy 5 states that 'It will be essential to ensure that safe and improved pedestrian, cycle and equestrian access across the A27 to the South Downs is provided.'

We note that the proposals in the planning application for the New Monks farm development would close this junction, requiring walkers and cyclists to detour immediately alongside the A27 which will be unattractive to many users, and with no provision made for equestrians.

In our response to the planning application we considered that the proposed development at New Monks Farm offered the best possible opportunity for the delivery of a grade separated NMU crossing of the A27 at this location. Planning should be for the future, and facilities put in place to cope with requirements that will undoubtedly increase. Whilst a bridge crossing at this location is our preferred option, a proposal to improve the bridleway link using the western side of the River Adur and the A27 underpass was cautiously welcomed.

West Sompting between Lyons Farm(East Worthing) and Busticle Lane Sompting)

Four crossing points have been used in recent times along this part of the A27. However, due to increased traffic flows in recent years, and Highways England's installation of central reservation barriers, use has been curtailed, even though the need is still there.

Church Lane (favoured by road cyclists), and Dancton Lane have central reservation barriers, leaving only small gaps, which equestrians cannot use, and other users consider unpleasant and unsafe. The signalised crossings (Busticle Lane and Lyons Farm) are subject to heavy traffic flows so crossing here is certainly not a pleasant experience, and is a highly dangerous one for equestrians. Lambley's Lane benefits from slower moving traffic (due to traffic signals at Lyons Farm).

The Forum's preference would be for a bridge or Pegasus crossing somewhere in this location, easily and safely accessible from the south of the A27, with a shared use (walker, cyclist, equestrian) wide and screened path on the north of the A27, acting as a link between Busticle Lane, Dankton Lane, Church Lane, Lambley's Lane and Lyons Farm crossing points, so that all NMUs favoured onward routes into the SDNP can be made accessible.

This letter constitutes formal advice from the West Sussex Local Access Forum. West Sussex County Council is required, in accordance with section 94(5) of the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000, to have regard to relevant advice from this Local Access Forum in carrying out its functions.

Thank you for considering WSLAF's comments. Members look forward to being updated on progress on this matter, and would welcome being consulted in the future on any similar matters that may impact on access.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Jane Noble', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Jane Noble, Forum Officer
West Sussex Local Access Forum

Copy for information to: All WSLAF members