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West Sussex Local Access Forum



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Sent by email to: strategic.planning@horsham.gov.uk

Dear Sirs

WSLAF response to Local Plan Review – Issues & Options – Employment, Tourism & Sustainable Rural Development

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.

WSLAF Members are strongly of the view that public rights of way (PRoW) and the greater access network should be mentioned in the policies set out in the review. The rights of way network and access routes to local communities provide safe amenity and leisure routes, which are an asset to residents and visitors, and contribute to health, tourism and sustainability of the rural economy.

Whilst the intension to provide new trails is welcomed, members would like to see a commitment to providing new multi-user, Non Motorised User (NMU) routes, linked into the PRoW and wider access route networks. Walking and cycling is a 'gateway' to utility use which reduces car use.

The extensive new housing developments in West Sussex are already causing increased traffic flows on the existing roads and this increase will only continue. Local roads and lanes are already very valuable to NMU's as they are used to link the fragmented PRoW network.

The growth in both volume and speed of traffic, on these rural roads and lanes, makes them unsafe for vulnerable users, resulting in even more fragmentation of PRoW. This is likely to have a detrimental effect on the visitor economy and tourism in the area. To achieve the stated desire "to enable the district to develop as a centre for tourism in towns villages and the countryside" (para 3.9), HDC must work with WSCC to provide a connected, safe network of multi-use (usable by walkers, cyclists, and where appropriate equestrians), PRoW and access routes. All new development sites provide

an opportunity to improve and enhance the PRow network, and HDC should be actively seeking these opportunities to ensure the protection and safety of all NMUs.

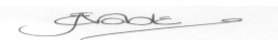
In para 4.17, the Forum welcomes Proposed policy c) "the development does not result in significant increase in activity including traffic movements on narrow and rural roads."

In para 4.21, the Forum supports the amendments as suggested under *Rural Economic Development*.

This letter constitutes formal advice from the West Sussex Local Access Forum. Horsham District 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



Jane Noble, Forum Officer
West Sussex Local Access Forum

Copy for information to: All WSLAF members