



Meeting of the West Sussex Local Access Forum Wednesday 23 October 2019

A meeting of the West Sussex Local Access Forum (WSLAF) was held at 10.45am, Wednesday 23/10/2019 at in County Hall North (Parkside), Horsham, RH12 1XH.

MINUTES

Present

Graham Elvey (GE) – Chairman	Jason Lavender (JL)
Tricia Butcher (TB) – Vice-Chairman	Phil Miles (PM)
Paul Brown (PB)	Carol Montgomery (CM)
Monica Collingham (MC)	Christine Supiot (CS)
Geoff Farrell (GF)	Tim Thomas (TT)
David Green (DG)	Clare Weston (CW)
Ian Hunt (IH)	

Officers

Jane Noble (JN) Forum Officer, WSCC

Observers - None

1. Apologies and welcomes

GE welcomed Peter Phillips (PP), Highways England (HE).

Apologies had been received from WSLAF members Helen Baldwin (HB), Nicol Beard (NB), Pete Bradbury (PB), Duncan Crow (DC) and Derek Whittington (DW), and from WSCC Countryside Services Manager, Charlotte Weller (CW).

2. Minutes of the Forum

- a) The minutes of the WSLAF meeting held on 24 April 2019 were approved as correct.
- b) Matters arising - All actions from the previous meeting had either been completed or covered later in the Agenda.

3. Feedback from informal meeting on 17 July 2019

GE reported the July informal meeting was positive and useful and thanked everyone for their contribution. Actions from the meeting notes (previously circulated to members) are complete or on the Agenda other than:

Item 1 – meetings dates of adjacent LAFs are included in the General Report, together with relevant web links.

Item 5 – CP should read CS for Knepp Castle A and B actions.

Item 6 – Summarising Local Plan (LP) access policies. MC has completed Adur and

DG has completed Horsham, both to be circulated to members. TB to finish summarising Arun LP. Worthing's LP is currently being finalised and will be picked up when it has been published.

Action – GE to circulate Adur and Horsham LP summaries to members and JN

Action – TB to complete Arun LP summary

Action - GE to check progress with NB on Chichester LP summary

4. Any urgent matters to be considered not on the agenda

None

5. A27 Arundel bypass - Peter Philips, Highways England

PP is the HE Route Manager looking after a number of routes in SE England including the A27. He outlined the need for a bypass for Arundel. HE is currently undertaking a second consultation on the preferred options, which now include a couple of additional routes. At this stage it is not possible to provide detailed design information on all of the options.

Once the consultation closes on 24 October, all responses will be analysed and findings will be submitted to the Secretary of State (SoS). A decision on a preferred route is expected in 2020, possibly as early as March. Do nothing is currently an option, however if one of the routes is identified as the preferred option design work will follow, along with further formal consultation. This stage is expected to take at least a year. During this time WSLAF and other organisations should identify requirements and WSLAF will be invited to the non-motorised user (NMU) stakeholder meetings. Construction could start in 2023.

Some questions from Forum members had previously been supplied to PP. He has passed these onto the design team and will forward responses.

There followed a discussion covering the following:

- Do-nothing is not HE's preference, however, if none of the routes go forward some minor improvements are likely to be made to the existing route to try and benefit users, though funding will have to be sought from the designated funding pot.
- The A27 is a recognised barrier to NMUs and it is recognised that improvements to north/south access for these would be desirable. PP understands the needs and pushes hard for such benefits as it is important to get what is required into the main scheme. HE's Major Projects team has different drivers, based on improving travel times, however, NMUs are now considered much more than they used to be.
- The current A27 is likely to be handed over to WSCC to manage, although it is likely that the Council will only be prepared to take it over if in a reasonable condition. It is therefore likely HE will have to consider this in parallel to the bypass works and could possibly include a cycleway or similar, if the budget is available.
- Some members expressed concern that building roads generates extra traffic and un-locks development sites. PP explained that future traffic needs associated with development identified in Local Plans has been considered. Short-term traffic modelling is generally accurate but long-term forecasting is

very difficult. Modelling uses data from traffic counts, mobile phone travel data and road-side interviews and considers N-S travel.

- PP explained it is not HEs remit to consider wider travel solutions, such as improving rail capacity, although it does work closely with Network Rail. It was acknowledged the bigger picture is a matter for the Government rather than HE.
- Some members expressed concern that previous improvement schemes haven't always provided long term travel benefits. It was acknowledged that smart motorway technology, controlling vehicle speed, helps keep traffic flowing.
- Do nothing can result in traffic selecting less suitable back road alternatives, making them even less desirable for use by NMUs.
- It was recognised that there is not much NMU infrastructure along the current route. TB/PP reiterated that the detail for NMUs will be decided during the design phase, once a preferred option has been identified and that WSLAF will be able to input detail at this stage through further consultation and stakeholder meetings. However, general aims for NMUs should be included in the response to the current consultation.

6. Consultations and advice

a) Current consultations

- i) **A27 Arundel bypass**, Highways England. Closing date is 24 October 2019. WSLAF's draft response had been circulated to members. Any further comments to be with GE by 23 October.

Action – Members to send any further comments to GE by 23 October

- ii) **South Hayling to East Head England Coast Path Report** – Natural England (NE). Closing date is 28 November 2019. General feeling is NE seems to have considered detail well. Comments to GF by 14 November.

Action – Members to send comments to GE by 14 November

- iii) **Friars Oak, Hassocks – Mid-Sussex District Council.** The Friars Oak planning application and associated documents can be viewed on the Mid-Sussex District Council (MSDC) planning portal, reference [DM/19/1897](#). Slides were shown of the Friars Oak development site, north of Hassocks, along with other nearby significant development sites and the railway running N-S which forms a barrier between the sites. The local Public Rights of Way (PRoW) network was also shown, with a notable lack of bridleways (BWs) in the area.

TB explained why she felt WSLAF should be involved:

- WSLAF had responded to MSDC regarding planning application in July (available on WSLAF website [here](#)). The original plan proposed a pedestrian tunnel under the railway.
- The A273, which runs N-S parallel to the railway, is very busy and dangerous for cyclists and horse riders, with a horse and driver being killed a few years ago.
- The Clayton Mills developer is keen to create bridleways, with an upgrade of the eastern section of footpath (FP) 5K to BW status and a new BW link to the Burgess Hill Green Circle to the north proposed.

- WSCC is keen to see the western section of FP 5K upgraded, and the tunnel under the railway built to bridleway standards, along with a new route linking to existing BW 4_2C to the west of the A273.
- FP 9C is to be diverted by Bellway.

TB asked if WSLAF wants to be involved to push for connections.

Action – WSLAF to respond and stay involved, including pushing for safe crossing of A273

b) Response to consultation / advice given

Responses to the following were noted and are available on the [WSLAF website](#).

- i) **Design Guide for new housing development – High Weald AONB**
- ii) **2026 Cut-off deadline – Secretary of State for Rural Affairs – A reply had been received from Defra and circulated to members.**
- iii) **A2300 realignment scheme - WSCC**
- iv) **A29 Realignment Scheme – WSCC**

c) Future responses to Local Plans and supplementary planning documents including Neighbourhood Plans

Following a temporary break in responding to Local Plan and associated consultations WSLAF considered what involvement it wants in the future. It was agreed that WSLAF should consider and respond, where needed, to Local Plans and supplementary planning documents relevant to countryside access. It was felt local knowledge was required to be able to adequately consider Neighbourhood Plans.

Action – in future WSLAF to consider and respond where appropriate to Local Plan and strategic planning consultations

Action - JN to circulate Neighbourhood Plan consultations to local WSLAF members only

PM asked if WSLAF would be responding to MSDC's consultation on its Draft Site Allocations Development Plan Document. 22 sites are being considered (from over 100). PB declared an interest as he is now a MSDC Councillor.

Action – GE to consider MSDC consultation and circulate as appropriate

7. Defra Higher Level Stewardship access in West Sussex

A map showing the location of HLS funded walks in the county was shown, along with details of each walk.

The following have been investigated by WSLAF members:

1. Whithurst Park, Kirdford – useful and attractive link. Recommended aim should be to keep.
2. Moor Farm, Sidlesham – didn't seem well used. Not a link path so not considered essential.

3. Rivers Rest, Wisborough Green – short linear link to get to conservation area. Conservation area was flooded (after period of wet weather). No other access to canal here. Possibly of use to retain.
4. Terra Mata Meadows, West Chiltington – some of the fields are conservation areas with wide margins. Well signed and appears reasonably well used. Links road with FP. Ideally retain.
- 5, 6, 7, and 8. Knepp Estate – All can be used but local promotion (leaflet) needs to be clarified. JL offered to raise this at a planned meeting with the Estate. GE to send JL details.

Action – GE to send JL details, JL to raise with Knepp Estate

9. Lock Bridge, West Grinstead and 10 Buncton Manor Farm, Wiston. Not considered to be important links.
5. 11. Chalder Farm, Sidlesham – Now part of a Sustrans route 88 so long-term access is secured.

The South Downs LAF is doing similar work within the National Park and a bid is being developed to bridge the funding gap for strategic permissive paths until details of the new Environmental Land Management Schemes are known/rolled out.

The next step will be to identify the landowners of the paths considered important and to draft a letter seeking their views on retaining these paths.

Action – GE/TB/JN to identify landowners of paths to be retained and draft contact letter.

JL commented that the central aim should be to pay land managers for public good.

8. **West Sussex Rights of Way Management Plan Annual Review 2018/19**

A draft copy of the first RoWMP Annual Report was available to view at the meeting. The final version will be distributed when complete.

Action – JN to circulate RoWMP Annual Review

9. **Improvement Projects**

TB provided further updates on some of the projects (also see General Report items 2-9):

Item 3 – LW10, Downs Link, Christ’s Hospital – Work has started on construction of this off-road link from Baystone Bridge to the station car park, enabling NMUs to avoid using 1.5 km of a busy, winding road. The aim is for an opening in Spring 2020.

Action – JN/TB to invite members to Christ’s Hospital Downs Link opening

Item 3.2 – HW135, Balcombe BW 3727 – This route is through a Site of Special Scientific Interest which presented challenges for WSCC regarding surfacing of the BW. Now it is open and being well-used.

Item 4 - LW12, Downs Link - Partridge Green - WSLAF put this forward to be added to Local Transport Infrastructure Projects list. DG asked to be contacted by the consultant as he knows landowners. JN to pass his details to relevant person.

Action - JN to pass on DG details

Item 5 -LW34 – A23 Newtimber bridleway creation – PP explained HE

designated funding is a pot of money for minor schemes (it has previously funded £1.2m of cycle routes in Kent). The next 5-year pot is coming available soon, so he will shortly have a better feel for allocation – may know Jan/Feb.

10. WSLAF matters

- a) **New Members' training feedback** – Part 1 (LAFs and WSLAF) and Part 2 (PRoW and access) new members training has been completed. JN to send follow up information.

Action – JN to send training presentations to new members

Action – JN to send out appointment letters

- b) **Work programme / Items for next meetings**

- Lack of BWs on the Coastal Plain (CP) – WSLAF has been approached by equestrians to help secure BWs on the CP. This has been a long-term issue that is now even more important as roads are much busier. There is data on the number of horses kept south of the A27 (a surprising number). A number of Definitive Map Modification Order applications have been submitted to WSCC and more are being prepared. TB stated there is no duty on developers to provide equestrian access, although legislation means walking and cycling have to be considered.

Action - Add BW access on CP to agenda for informal meeting

- Management of paths; PRoW v Highways – GF highlighted that in urban areas it is not always clear which sections are managed by the PRoW service and which by WSCC Highways.

Action - Add urban path management to agenda for April formal meeting

- c) **WSLAF Annual Report** – WSLAF Annual Report was available to view at the meeting. JN appealed for suitable eye-catching photos to use. Final version will be distributed when complete.

Action – All to send JN photos of public access or West Sussex landscape

11. General Report

The General report was noted.

JN mentioned the [WSCC Cycling Design Guide](#). GF and Andy Mouland, WSCC, were thanked for their contribution in its production.

12. Dates of Next Meeting

Informal: Wednesday 5 February 2020 – Chichester (TBC)

Formal: Wednesday 1 April 2020, 10.30am, County Hall, Chichester, PO19 1RQ

Potential dates for future formal meetings:

Wednesday 21 October 2020 – Chichester

Wednesday 21 April 2021 – Horsham

13. AONB

None.

Summary of Actions

Action	Who	Date due DoNM- date of nextmeeting
3 Item 6. Circulate Adur and Horsham Local Plan summaries to members and JN	GE	DoNM
3 Item 6. Complete Arun LP summary	TB	DoNM
3 Item 6. Check progress with NB on Chichester LP summary	GE	DoNM
6ai. A27 Arundel bypass- Comments to GE and send response	All/GE	24/10/19
6aii. South Hayling to East Head England Coast Path Report - Comments to GF and send response	All/GF	28/11/19
7aiii. Respond to Friars Oak development consultation	TB	15/11/19
6c. WSLAF to consider and respond, where appropriate, to future Local Plan and strategic planning consultations	GE/All	On-going
6c. Circulate Neighbourhood Plan consultations to local WSLAF members only	JN/GE	On-going
6c. Consider MSDC consultation and circulate as appropriate	GE	31/10/19
7. Send JL details of Knepp HLS access / raise with Knepp Estate	GE/JL	Mid-Nov 2019
7. Identify landowners of paths to be retained and draft contact letter	GE/TB /JN	DoNM
8. Circulate RoWMP Annual Review	JN	30/11/19
9. Invite WSLAF members to Downs Link, Christs Hospital opening	JN/TB	TBC
9. Pass on DG details re Downs Link, Partridge Green	JN	31/10/19
10a. Send WSLAF training presentations to new members	JN	30/11/19
10a. Send appointment letters to new members	JN	30/11/19
10b. Add Bridleway access on the Coastal Plain to an agenda for an informal meeting	GE	TBC
10b. Add urban path management to agenda for April formal meeting	JN	DoNM
10c. Send JN access/countryside photos for use in WSLAF Annual report	ALL	15/12/19