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West Sussex Local Access Forum



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Sent by email to: mwdf@westsussex.gov.uk

Dear Sir / Madam

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.

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.

West Sussex Joint Minerals Local Plan Consultation

General Comments

It is important that all possible effort is made to ensure roads used to access minerals sites are not those used by non-motorised users (NMU – walkers, cyclists and horse riders) to link off-road routes (primarily the rights of way network). If such a route has to be used by HGVs access the sites then alternative safe routes for NMUs should be provided. Safe crossing of routes used by HGVs by NMUs should also be considered.

At the end of the mineral extraction every effort should be made to improve and enhance public rights of way and maximise public benefits of the sites during restoration.

2.2 Vision

The Forum supports the vision that mineral sites are restored to the highest standards, leading to larger and better managed and connected green infrastructure, with increased opportunities for recreation. The provision of off-road, safe, access, and links to other off-roads access routes, that all can be enjoy by all is increasingly important as roads become busier.

2.3.12 Transport

The Forum supports the commitment to minimise road transport and in particular the use of local roads. The use of roads, including the use of NMUs, must be fully understood before developing a transport plan.

2.3.14 Mitigation and Restoration / Strategic Object 13

The aim to ensure high quality restoration and for this to be implemented at the earliest possible stage is supported. Engagement with stakeholders, including the West Sussex Local Access Forum (or South Downs LAF where appropriate), should take place to maximise benefits.

4.9.2 Health and Amenity

Control of adverse impacts is welcomed and should extend to all areas that the public access including all highways.

5.3.5 National Planning Policy

The links to the National Planning Policy Framework should include a reference to protecting and enhancing public rights of way and access (NPPF para 75).

5.5.4 West Sussex Transport Plan

The West Sussex Rights of Way Improvement Plan – A Strategic Framework 2007 – 2017 (www.westsussex.gov.uk/rowip) should be reference as it is linked to the current Transport Plan.

8.7 Public Amenity and Health; Policy M18

Both a) and particularly b) are welcomed. As mentioned above it is important to protect NMUs and so opportunities to provide off-road routes should be taken. These should cater for as many types of users as possible so bridleways are ideal.

8.9 Transport / Policy M20

The policy is supported. It is important all users are considered and efforts made to protect them, by alternate provision if necessary, if roads used by NMUs are used by HGVs.

8.13 Restoration and Aftercare / Policy M24

The Forum supports this policy.

8.14 Community Engagement / Policy M25

Early discussion with local communities is welcomed but should also include wider stakeholders to ensure all interests are represented. The two Local Access Forums (West Sussex and South Downs) should also be consulted as, with a balanced membership of users, landowners and other interests, they to provide objective advice.

WSLAF would very much appreciate being kept informed of progress on this matter.

Yours sincerely



Jane Noble, Forum Officer
West Sussex Local Access Forum

Copy for information to: All WSLAF members