



THURROCK LOCAL ACCESS FORUM

Working Group - Minutes (4)

Tuesday 4 December 2018
7pm to 9pm Committee Room 2
Civic Offices, New Road, Grays

Present:

Paula Watts – Projects Leader Highways Information & LAF Secretary - **PW**
 Sue Dobson - LAF Chair and Essex Bridleway Association Representative – **SD**
 Carley Hollands – LAF Member - EBA Member **CH**
 David Fish – LAF Member - Sustran’s Ranger - **DF**
 Bernard Smith – LAF Member - Thurrock Ramblers Walk Leader – **BS**
 Brian Hatcher- LAF Member – Thurrock Ramblers - Chair
 Bryan Benton – LAF Member – Thurrock Ramblers - **BB**
 John Lane - LAF Member- Rambler & Cyclist - **JL**
 Jenny Mann – LAF Member & EBA Local Representative – **JM**
 Alison Loveridge - Highway and Public Rights of Way Information Officer – **AL**
 Peter O’Rourke – Forestry Commission – Beat Manager - **PO**

Item	Description	Action
1.	Introduction: SD Madam Chair opened the meeting by thanking those present for attending and welcoming IK Ian Kennard - Network Interface for Highways England and EV Evelyn Ismail – Stakeholder Communications Team.	
2.	Apologies: Steve Plumb – Thurrock Council Mike Ostler – Vice Chair LAF Jenny Mann – EBA Member & LAF Member	
3.	Minutes of Last Meeting: Public Meeting Minutes of the 9 th October 2018 approved.	
4.	Matters Arising SD invited IK to commence the meeting by reporting on the proposed Lower Thames Crossing. IK My role is to act midway between Highways England and the local authorities as the designated fund lead looking into the impact of the proposed LTC in particular public rights of way.	

I see this meeting as very much a listening mode for both Evelyn and myself after providing an overview of Highways England's Designated Funding Programme as well as sign posting attendees to the current consultation process

For reference those present and the public can also view the Designated Funding scheme via:-
www.highwaysengland.co.uk/designated-funds

In the Autumn of 2014 the Government announced 15.6 billion pounds for road improvements for between 2015 – 2020. Highways England in part is looking into funding 900 miles of highway outside day to day maintenance which includes Thurrock sitting in Area 5. which will be aside from the major project of building the proposed LTC. HE wants to look further afield for the opportunity to provide improvements for pedestrians and horse riders along with cyclist outside the boundaries of this major route by providing safe off road accessibility and facilities.

For example the creation of segregated cycle routes and provision of parking for equestrians horseboxes where possible when bridleways are created.

SD It is interesting to note that the new A14 road which is currently under construction in Cambridge has a shared access route being created alongside for all non-motorised users for much of its length. Having read up on HE literature for the LTC it was disappointing the same has not been included especially as Thurrock and HE have floated the potential for NNU along this route. Can we use this example in our consultation / negotiation with Highways England.

IK Don't be too disheartened, speak with the Council as this is what the present public consultation is here for which finishes on the 20th December. At present there is scope for all suggestions even if not in the scheme so far. One of the core aims of HE is the connectivity of any PROW and cycle route severed by the proposed LTC. HE looks at the greater scheme whereby Local Authorities tend not to have the same standards.
SD The Government strategy is always focused on the side of walking and cycling but not equestrians. Can we not have what is being created along the A14 a shared users route for its total length both sides which allows a north / south shared access with connectivity to both existing PROW's and new ones to be created...including cycle routes. **IK** Again HE wants to think bigger but they cannot look into funding without proof a new route is needed and in conjunction with the local authorities for the need for such routes. Where there is an overriding need via the consultation process proposals can be changed.. just make sure your comments / proposals are registered with the Council via this Local Access Forum.

EV Be assured this is not the final design, from the consultation process HE will develop further changes and designs led by responses.

IK Remember this is the start not the end and responses will be acknowledged by the Inspectorate **EV** Response forms are not governed by numbers received its the detail provided which counts

SD Certain areas of land are marked for permanent environment litigation what happens to these pieces of land once works have been completed. **IK** some of the land could become a flood plain or balancing pond reverting back to the land owners. Some of the land may remain under the responsibility of HE for maintenance purposes... where it would be nice to open this land up for public use. **SD** creating new PROW has always been a problem with land owners therefore the use of land retained by HE could open up a good opportunity for new routes. **IK** the creation of new routes would come under a capital expenditure though HE does not have money for an ongoing maintenance.

JL This is a massive project and my concerns being a cyclists is the safety of cyclists due to the pending vast amount of HGV movements. **IK** We will have to consider quarry laws regarding any haul routes linking with the A13 & M25 being an issue...we will need to work in conjunction with the Council. Should you wish to provide both the Council and HE (via the LAF) known large amount of cycle movements this would assist greatly..one route that comes to mind would be Stifford Clays Road, Orsett. A schedule of agreement will have to be in place with Thurrock Council agreeing to diversion routes for use by vehicles, cyclists and pedestrians where we can try and prevent the clogging up of local roads.

JL Understanding clearly the final product is very hard at such an early stage. **IK** That is why HE needs question / suggestions in ASAP for bids can still be made for projects right up to the last day of when the funding will cease.

BS Enquired where Thurrock Ramblers sit within this consultation process. **EV** Arrangements can be made for HE to have a meeting with Thurrock Ramblers in the new year.

BB will HE consult with us if a route is to be stopped up **IK** It won't be HE coming up with the ideas but the local authority.

SD Our remit as a LAF is to look at the enhancement of the existing rights of way which we need to feed into the new Rights of Way Improvement Plan. It was agreed by all members present a separate meeting would be required to consult on the LTC proposal- This was agreed.

Madam Chair thanked both EV and IK for their presentation and they left the meeting.

	<p>4 (A) Public Rights of Way Improvement Plan</p> <p>PW Unfortunately SP was unable to attend this meeting but still continues to try and bring together many rights of way issues..</p> <p>4 (B) Lower Thames Crossing</p> <p>PW Ideally we need to meet up with Steve before our next meeting with HE which may be the February meeting. PW to arrange</p> <p>4 (C) Network Rail Closures – Public Enquiry</p> <p>PW Informed the meeting she had attended with colleague Nav Tung one of the Public Enquiries at Stansted regarding Public Footpath 4 off St Marys Lane, West Horndon as Thurrock had not been officially consulted on this pending closure. At the enquiry Network Rail agreed they had not consulted Thurrock as they deemed Footpath 39 which travels south from the A127 to be Essex County Councils...even though it connected onto Thurrock’s Footpath 4 south of the borough boundary and railway track. It was reported that Essex County Council having been consulted did not carry out any assessment or road safety audit. NWR carried out a 9 day censor and found the path to be frequently used even though the way was blocked to the north of the Industrial Estate. The Inspector also reported he found his right of way blocked be vegetation. NRW proposal is to create a 2m wide un-surfaced path along the southern boundary of their track and within their land. Also create steps up the embankment up onto Childerditch Lane some 4.5 to 5m in height which will consist of some 125 steps with landings being provided.</p>	
	<p>Ramblers legal representative was concerned that group led walks would be at risk of not having to use the steps being created but also having to step out directly onto the carriageway...especially on a brow of the bridge with bad visibility.</p> <p>4 (D) Natural England- Coastal Path</p> <p>No further up date to report on</p> <p>4 (E) A13 Widening Scheme</p> <p>In response to questions asked at October meeting Dan Ambrose provided the following responses</p> <p>1. Q: What will the new Footpath 37 be constructed of A: <i>There are no special materials specified in the design for the footpath here, just levelled ground.</i></p>	

2. Q: Can the new Saffron Gardens Bridge be upgraded to a bridleway?

A: There are bridleway facilities at nearby Bridleway 48 (Horndon Road Bridge) and there is no intention of upgrading Saffron Gardens Bridge to a bridleway. The new bridge at Saffron Gardens will have relatively high parapet walls and horses will not be able to see moving traffic beneath them, although it will not technically be a bridleway.

3. Q: What physical barrier will be in place between the A1013 and the A13, particularly to the east of Saffron Gardens Bridge?

A: Timber post and rail fencing.

Furthermore, Dan Ambrose confirmed the A13 Project is hoping to create a new, safer footpath around the rear of the BP Service Area (on the north side) and Thurrock Council and AECOM (their scheme consultant) are currently developing plans for this. More information will be available in the new year.

Planning Applications / PROW:

Arena Essex – Planning Application 18/01671/FUL

Outline approval for 2,158 dwellings.

Primary / Nursery School, Health Centre, Community Pavilion, Retail Store of 400sq m Public Art together with associated parking, Open Space, Landscape Pedestrian / Vehicular access.

Full Approval for 342 Dwellings. Linear Park, Lido facility with changing rooms and café. 3km of Mountain Bike Routes and a Pump Track. Pedestrian and Cycle Link Tunnel between development and Lakeside Shopping Centre.

PW As part of the above Planning consultation PW has requested consideration for the funding of a bridleway link being created from Stifford Road South Ockendon (to the east of the M25) southwards to connect onto the Mardyke Way bridleway. As well as creating shared access from the bridleway southwards with the provision of a bridge over the Mardyke leading into the new development.

Also funding requested towards the desired bridleway connection between Love Lane Aveley through to Ship Lane and the Mardyke Way bridleway.

Footpath / Bridleway Issue

Bridleway 187 Coalhouse Fort

Update by LAF / EBA members on the above required as site visit was to be made to the river front.

Closure of FP 129 Bradleigh Avenue, Grays

PW Reported the above proposal to remove both Highway and the Public Footpath rights of way have received an objection, this being so the matter will not be a Public Protection issue. **PW** will update as and when any further progress is made.

Davy Down Bridleway Bridge

PW New Bridge should be in place by mid-January at the latest.

Footpath / Bridleway Issues:

Ramblers Pathwatch Reports:

PW Thurrock continues to receive good reporting regarding our Rights of Way network.

Capital Funding for Public Rights of Ways

Bridleway 219 Mardyke Way

PW Confirmed two gates have now been supplied to the land owner on the eastern side of the Mardyke between North Stifford and Bulphan for their installation in an effort to try and prevent antisocial behaviour by motor cycles and quad bikes.

Any other business:

JL Further to previously reporting Parkers Farm Road carriageway surface is slippery and dangerous on the bend just west of cottages 1 & 2 cyclists are continuing to come off their cycles when it is wet. A sign is in place (not a standard highways sign) warning of the road condition but even those who take the bend slowly are coming off their bikes and then those trying to assist are slipping on the dangerous surface. Having spoken with Peter Wright from Highway Maintenance a year ago one SLOW marking was placed on the carriageway. In September a fellow cyclist fell at this location and in October on a Sunday morning around 8am a lady cyclist fell at this point and is now permanently disabled.

Fellow cyclists who assisted this lady also slipped and fell on the dangerous surface. Again early December another known cyclists fell at this location...these are mature cyclists who are approaching the bend at a very low speed.

Injuries are happening with one cyclist being unable to work being a Tanker Driver. What motivate me and fellow cyclists is the human costs therefore Information is being collated with a chart being created as evidence to be provided to the Council.

	<p>DF It seems if it is not vehicular related then improvements may not be deemed necessary. Unfortunately this section of road does not look or appear dangerous but at times if it is slightly misty the surface conditions worsen. It could be the water course beneath is playing a part in the surface condition..</p> <p>CH Should these accidents not be registered with the Council?</p> <p>JL Could the possibility of creating access from the Stanford Interchange down slip onto the A13 Eastbound to meet up with the old section of A13 be considered. PW to enquiry with Transport and Development Team</p>	
7	<p>Next Meeting</p> <p>Working Group Meeting Tuesday 5th February 2019</p> <p>Committee Room 2 @ 7pm</p>	