



Hertfordshire Local Access Forum



71st Meeting Minutes

September 2021

(Zoom)

Present

- Liddy Lawrence, Chair (LL), Ian Gregory, Vice-Chair (IG), Brian Worrell (BW), Chris Hall (CH), Cllr Chris Lloyd (CL), Diana Collingridge (DC), Mark Mills-Bishop (MMB), Paul Christian (PC), Rosemary Gilligan (RG); Russell Huffer (RH).
- Tony Bradford, CRoW Service (TB), Richard Cuthbert, CRoW Service (RC).

Apologies; Rosalind David (RD) & Debbie Hougie (DH);

- Lee Tyson, CRoW Service (LT)
Gary O'Leary (GO'L), David Keeley (DK).

Welcome – all, Dr Phil Wadey (PDW), Chris Beney (CB) , John Featherstone (JF).

Minutes & Matters arising

What influence does the LAF have in planning matters?

Does the LAF get consulted on major housing developments? – Yes, e.g. including new access roads & their impacts on the safety of RoW users.

RD – RC to ask if resigning / explain can still attend.

Aldenham Reservoir Path Application – is it with the Planning Inspectorate (PIIs)? Any news?

Public meeting there next Sunday about reservoir & path

Hertsmeare BC new Local Plan is in the public domain and shows where owners desire planning on the land – open to scrutiny & **RG** will look at it & let all know if there's anything.

HCC Member funding – Corporate approach?

Locality Funding of £10k p.a. aimed at local initiatives – page on HCC website with link for Members to consider requests. Types of organisations who can apply are dictated, e.g. charities, those with a bank account etc.

No limit to individual grants, Member discretion, Highways Officers assist.

Extra £5k this year of Covid funding, c/o Cllr Chris Lloyd.

Wel-Hat Cycle Forum – small company with little funding, managed to get website hosting support.

Highway Locality Budget – Also led by Members, another £90k p.a.

Fly Tipping Forum – RC get update for all.

British Standard Structures (BS5709) – when authorised under this BS, they include depressions under the structure, which should be maintained by the landowner.

Greenways Strategy – **BW** concerned that Herts not keeping-up with Bucks in terms of a coordinated Greenways plan, to link both cross-border with Bucks and within the county? **TB** – Herts' Local Transport Plan (LTP4) covers this theme with policies around active-travel, focus on intra-urban travel, i.e. town to town and village to town.

BW still concerned that there is no specific Policy on public access, linking to public rights of way (PRoW), for the public with public money, including horse riders (and even horse & carriage drivers) linking into other counties in a coherent manner.

LL – Could Officer contact with Bucks be more coordinated, rather than just case by case basis?

TB – Essex good example at the moment with the Harlow & Gilston Garden Town (**HGGT**) not just talking about those on foot, and does include those on horseback and where route status allows, carriages too.

BW – Local Cycling & Walking Infrastructure Plans (LCWIPs), Growth & Transport Plans (G&TPs) and PRoW impacts – Are the LAF on Highways consultees lists?

RC/TB - to check and confirm.

HGGT update – Tony Bradford, Head of CRoW Service

NB – Field trip proposed for first week of Nov. to see this area (w/c 1st - 4th Nov) – all to confirm availability please.

TB – HGGT been on the agenda since last Labour government. Local Plan now has a policy for development in this area, as a strategic site that sets precedents for 60% mode-share, as non-private cars, but bus, cycle, walking etc.

10,000 homes, which meets some of the pressure for Hertfordshire for development of new homes, means 25,000 people, the size of Hertford.

Not just within East Herts District but other development around Harlow also across into Epping Forest District. Expanding due north, and east and south of Harlow towards North Weald and north of Epping.

Developers promoting site as a concept of 7 villages separated by greenspace, which extends from the footbridge over the A414, all the way to 5th Avenue in Harlow.

CRoW Service has been active with the HCC Growth & Infrastructure Team, working in partnership with other LAs, on the RoW network. Specifically what benefits we can gain to the RoW network, looking at the developers' 'Parameters Plan' for items developers to consider when they are looking at impacts on the RoW network, especially if they need to be moved.

Need to consider the RoW network as a resource for people to use different forms of active travel – where they could be improved through the greenspaces of the development – upgrading Footpaths to Bridleways or Restricted Byways.

Particularly looked at the RoW Improvement Plan (RoWIP) and gaps in the network and encouraging them to consider how RoW can link across borders into Essex and provide routes across A414 to Roydon station or to the Stort riverside towpath, with the Canal & River Trust, to improve that route.

Developers looking at both leisure use and utility use, and HCC's standards for future routes across and through what will be a large urban development. They will be presenting to Officers their Transport & Movement part of their Strategic Landscape Master Plan (which is across the whole 7 villages), before the individual village Master Plans, and then the individual planning applications.

LL – can LAF see the Parameters Plan and HCC response to it?

TB – advising EHDC as the Local Planning Authority (LPA), **RC/TB** check what can be shared with LAF / what is in the public domain?

Comment re; future of electric scooters in this country undecided, but could be very good or very bad...

TB – Only electric scooters allowed in the UK so far are those on trial in specific trial areas.

CB – Hope HCC help BC/DCs to work to very high standards?

RC – Yes as outlined by TB, CRoW officers are setting the bar high.

PTRO Review – RC to recruit new Enforcement Officer ASAP.

Access Team – News & Updates – c/o Lee Tyson (written update)

Covid 19 recovery fund

Our two new fixed term Projects Officers, Hester Bennett-Carter and Michelle Morrissey-Chisholm are now in post. They along with Chris Beer our Capital Works Officer are busy prioritising works collated over recent months from existing staff and users and starting to push these through appropriate procurement processes. Chris is focussed on the north of the county, Hester the South West and Michelle the East. Elsewhere staff in our Communities Team have been working with our network of trained survey volunteers to identify signage (finger signs) which need replacement/upgrades to meet our current standards. So far the long list for attention runs to in excess of seven hundred, each requiring accurate mapping and appropriate content to be recorded/devised. Once complete these too will be batched up for procurement. In addition, we have designed a bespoke 'QR Code' link into our map offerings, these are to be produced as vinyl stickers and will be added to all of our finger posts to give direct access to anyone with a smart phone.

Access Team

The Access Team continue to deal with the exceptional vegetation growth this year, a late start and ongoing damp cool weather have been quite challenging. Our regular biannual vegetation clearance contracts are now nearing completion, attention is turned to compiling our winter programme of one offs and cutting back of more significant vegetation now that bird nesting is completed. Other current and

recurring issues relating to cropping and reinstatement are always time consuming at this point in the year.

Agency Agreements - Work to update and renegotiate Agency arrangements with Dacorum and Broxbourne Council's is nearing completion. These updated agreements will bring those areas more in line with current HCC priorities around Active Travel and community engagement through volunteering.

Rolling 100% survey – we are investigating options to extend the scope of our rolling survey to accurately geolocate all of our assets. If this proves possible and cost effective it would enable us to upload all data into our fault reporting system. This would allow users to attach faults to assets at their actual locations as per lamp columns, this would greatly assist in work planning and efficiency in the field.

TB – Hertfordshire Health Walks: recommencing since Covid suspension, rebuilding the programme with the walk leaders 180 prepared to lead walks again now and some more will once they see how the relaunch goes. Leading 45 walks a week across Herts. Risk Assessment limits numbers on each event so booking system being used to ensure numbers controlled in advance. As national roadmap lifts restrictions Herts should be able to roll-out programme further. HHW is part of Walking for Wellbeing national programme (hosted by the Ramblers) with 2 trained trainers courtesy of that scheme.

Member Updates

IG

- Cole Green Way – organised bike rides to Hertford, found it not closed as work delayed, **TB** - was due to High Voltage cable requiring a minor redesign.
- National Cycle Network Route 61 – Parliament Square now closed, as Covid closures don't differentiate between vehicles and cycles? – **RC/TB** to check and ask. Email from Claire Mabbutt, Enforcement Officer – complaints to CSCHighways@hertfordshire.gov.uk / ask Nick Truran?

BW – Ridgeway Group Meeting

- Poacher blocks use across RoW to block illegal access to farm land, but from equestrian point of view not recommended & Ridgeway have said Recommend not used on any official RoW.
- Kent Carriage Gaps also have issues of trips and strikes by cyclists.
- 2023 is the 50th anniversary of the Ridgeway
- Draft leaflet for motor driving on those parts of the Ridgeway to be distributed mainly electronically but some printed for Police to hand-out.
- Resurfacing work on steep heavily eroded section of BR (with HS2 mitigation funding), but now safety issue with cycle speeds!
- Hemel Hempstead Garden Communities project – across Dacorum BC & St Albans DC a major issue as adding-up to 25,000, planning team employed for it, enabled by local plan.

RG – Hertsmere Local Plan

- Released with new development planned called 'Bowman's Cross' starting at 6,000 then up to 12,000 homes.

DC – Helpful to landowners to know what is best to try to deter hare coursers, with criminal activity, **RC/PC** to respond on what positive advice we can give on structures.

CL

- Thanks to RoW Team for work on Croxley Common Moor and will feedback on how surface wears through winter
- Look forward to work on Chess Valley Path
- Petition to HCC to look at closing a lane to traffic – Little Green Lane from school to pond and up to Sarratt Lane.
- Little Green Lane not on the Definitive Map & Statement – application received.

PDW – Mostly claiming paths and worried that with less than 5 years to go will not get all path applications made in time. Hampered by several factors.

- Consider an invite to Agency Areas and send LAF agendas & minutes.
- Brx has some yellow chevrons on signs which should be blue and messages to riders to follow blue routes are therefore getting undermined. **RC** to let Brx officer know.

DM&E Team Update – RC

- Cases high profile, including Judicial Review and Development Control Committee hearings.
- Very few get through without objections in Herts now.
- Commons Applications going to hearings while funding available to hire independent Barristers to Chair Hearings.
- Development work taking DM Officer time.

Stile magazine available online – **RC** to circulate URL to all.

- Includes short DM cases list update.

DoNM = 6th December **RC/LL** to discuss venue.

Date of Field Trip proposed for **Weds 3rd Nov.** to see the HGGT area – **ALL** to confirm availability please.

Dates for next year's meetings – all to be set.