

Re: Rights of Way and Highway Licensing Panel - Monday 7th December 2009

As there are no items requiring a decision, the Chairman has cancelled the meeting of the Rights of Way and Highway Licensing Panel scheduled for 7th December 2009.

At the previous meeting of the Panel in September, Members requested that updates on the Thames Path and on progress with rights of way performance targets be reported to the Panel in December. Please find below an update on these issues, prepared by the officers.

The next scheduled meeting of the Panel is on Monday 15th March 2010 (6.30pm in the Council Chamber, Town Hall, Maidenhead).

Update report for Rights of Way and Highway Licensing Panel members

Thames Path National Trail: update

Thames Path: Ray Mead Road.

At its meeting on 3rd August 2009, the Panel resolved that: *“The Council proceeds with the installation of road crossing facilities at Bridge Gardens, Ray Mead Road, subject to the outcome of a road safety audit and consultations with the local ward Councillors, and to pursue any opportunity that may arise to create a continuous riverside route, for example in association with future redevelopment of the site or area.”*

The local Councillors for Riverside ward have accordingly been consulted and have unanimously agreed they do not wish to proceed with the road crossing facilities.

Thames Path: Cliveden Reach (Boulter’s Lock to Cookham)

As reported at the Panel’s 21st September meeting, riverbank repairs, erosion control and path reinstatement works were carried out along the Cliveden Reach section of the Thames Path in the Spring. Phase 2 of the improvement works, which involved levelling and widening the path and upgrading the path surface are due to be carried out in November/December. This project has been part-funded by a grant of £15,000 from Natural England.

Thames Path National Trail Management Group

At its meeting on 21st September 2009, the Panel requested an update on the work of the Thames Path National Trail Management Group.

The Principal Rights of Way Officer represents the Borough Council on the Management Group. The Management Group also includes representatives from all Highways Authorities along the route of the Trail, and officers from Natural England, the Environment Agency and the National Trails Office, based in Holton, Oxfordshire.

The Management Group meets quarterly to discuss issues of common interest along

the Trail. Currently, key issues for the Management Group include:

- (i) Riverbank erosion. Several sections of the Trail are currently affected by riverbank erosion problems (such as at Cliveden Reach, see above) and the respective Highway Authorities are working on restoring and protecting the worst affected areas.
- (ii) Cycling issues. For most of its length the National Trail is footpath only; however, there are some 'dual use' sections where cycling is allowed, and other sections where cycling takes place illegally. In this borough, the only section of the Thames Path where cycling is formally allowed is a permitted cycleway which runs from the borough boundary at Boveney Bridge (south of Eton Wick) to Meadow Lane (west of Eton). This section forms part of the Eton Wick-Slough cycle route, and part of the route was re-surfaced by the borough in 2008. Unauthorised cycling does also occur elsewhere, for example along the Boulter's Lock to Cookham section: additional "footpath only: no cycling" signage has recently been installed.

In order to help discourage illegal cycling, additional information is shortly to be added to the Thames Path National Trail website (managed by the National Trails Office), which will include detailed maps showing which sections are dual use and which are footpath only.

'Milestones Statement' targets: update

At its meeting on 21st September 2009, the Panel requested an update on progress towards the 2009/10 'Milestones Statement' performance targets.

The Milestones Statement 2009/10 includes a set of 10 performance targets, as listed in table 1 below. The table also sets out current progress towards these targets. At the end of March 2010 the table will again be updated, and will be included in the Milestones Statement 2010/11 to be published in April 2010.

One of the Milestones Targets for 2009/10 (AC2) relates to accessibility improvements for people with restricted mobility, walkers with pushchairs etc. including the removal of stepped stiles, which can be a significant barrier to access.

The Rights of Way Officers have been working closely with the East Berks Ramblers Association to identify the numbers and location of existing stiles across the borough, and work towards replacing stiles with more accessible structures such as gates or gaps.

There are approximately 145 remaining stiles in the borough (approximately 95 have been removed in the past 5 years), as shown in table 2 below.

The Rights of Way Officers will continue to work with the Local Access Forum, East Berks Ramblers Association, and landowners to further improve access to the boroughs rights of way network, including removal of stiles where possible.

TABLE 1
Milestone Targets 2009/2010: update December 2009

WELL MAINTAINED	
WM1 To ensure that all public rights of way are easy to use by members of the public (former Best Value Performance Indicator 178). Target for 2009/2010: 95%	To be confirmed
WM2 To carry out major surface improvements or vegetation clearance on 10 public rights of way. (FP =footpath, BR = bridleway, RB = restricted byway)	Bray BR 44 (Gays Lane), and FP 61. Cookham FP 55 (Thames Path), and Byway 68 (Jobs Lane). Hurley BR 15 (Hodgedale Lane). Old Windsor FP 3 (Thames Path). Sunningdale FP 13. Walt. St. Lawrence RB 30 (Downfield Lane) and RB 7. White Waltham RB 8 (Snowball Hill). Total 10
WM3 To repair or replace 5 bridges.	Cookham FP 48 Cox Green FP 6 Maidenhead FP 84 Walt. St. Lawrence FP 38. Total 4
LEGALLY DEFINED	
LD1 To determine a minimum of 4 applications to add public rights of way to the definitive map (claims).	4 claims currently being investigated (Cox Green, Shottesbrooke/Waltham St. Lawrence, White Waltham, Wraysbury)

LD2	To resolve a minimum of 1 significant error in definitive map.	0
WELL PUBLICISED		
WP1	To produce 1 leaflet publicising access opportunities for people with special needs.	0
WP2	To assist others to produce effective promotional material. Target for 2009/10: a minimum of 1 new publication.	Contributing to Thames Path website improvements made by the National Trails Office
IMPROVING ACCESS AND CONNECTIVITY		
AC1	To achieve 1 new route from the Rights of Way Improvement Plan projects	0
AC2	To make physical improvements, including replacement of 27 stiles with gates, to facilitate use by those with special needs, the elderly, people with pushchairs etc.	<p><u>Bray FP 38</u>: stile replaced with "Oxford" kissing gate for medium mobility vehicles.</p> <p><u>Bray FP 61</u>: four stiles replaced with "Oxford" medium mobility kissing gates.</p> <p><u>Datchet FP 6</u>: stile replaced with "Woodstock" medium mobility kissing gate.</p> <p><u>Old Windsor FP 7</u>: utility marker posts and traffic sign re-positioned to improve access to footpath</p> <p><u>Waltham St. Lawrence FP 38</u>: bridge-stile replaced with "Aston" pedestrian gate and ramp</p> <p><u>Wraysbury FP 11(rail crossing)</u>: two stiles replaced with "Oxford" medium mobility kissing gates and ramps.</p> <p>Total 10</p>
ENFORCEMENT		

EN 1 To resolve 24 enforcement issues	<u>Resolved</u>
<u>Bisham FP 18</u> : electric fencing adj. to stile	Fence non-electrified
<u>Bisham FP 32</u> : path cropped and not re-instated	Path re-instated by landowner
<u>Bray FP 41 and 58</u> : paths not re-instated by SE Water following installation of pipeline	Paths re-instated by SE Water
<u>Eton FP 1</u> : horse riders using/damaging the Thames Path footpath/cycleway	Signage erected, horse riders now using adjacent permitted bridleway
<u>Eton FPs 4, 17, 18</u> : paths cropped and not re-instated	Paths re-instated by landowner
<u>Eton FP 19</u> : path cropped and not re-instated	Path re-instated by Council (costs charged to landowner)
<u>Maid FP 25A</u> : hedge obscuring FP sign	Hedge cut back by householder
<u>Maid FP 44</u> : rat infestation	Dealt with by pest control
<u>Maid BR 46</u> : vehicles using bridleway	Bollard and signage installed
<u>Maid FP 84</u> : garden rubbish dumping	Rubbish cleared by householder
<u>Walt. St Lawrence FP 41</u> : barbed wire adj. to path	Barbed wire removed by landowner
	Total 14

TABLE 2	Number of stiles in the parish
Parish	
Bisham	1
Bray	54
Cookham	7
Cox Green	6
Datchet	0
Eton	13
Horton	1

Hurley	17
Maidenhead	1
Old Windsor	0
Shottesbrooke	5
Sunningdale	0
Sunninghill	1
Waltham St Lawrence	30
White Waltham	5
Windsor	0
Wraysbury	4
Total	145