

Jane Noble
Officer to the Forum
Countryside Access Forum for West Sussex
(01243) 756863 (Tel)
(01243) 777232 (Fax)
jane.noble@westsussex.gov.uk
www.westsussex.gov.uk/cafws

**Countryside
Access Forum
for
West Sussex**

The Grange
Tower Street
Chichester
West Sussex
PO19 1RH
(01243) 777100

Our reference: JN/2009.8

Claire Mangan
Head of Strategic Planning and Regeneration
Worthing Borough Council
Portland House
Richmond Road
Worthing
West Sussex BN11 1LF

10th August 2009

(Sent by e-mail to planningpolicy@worthing.gov.uk)

Dear Ms Mangan

Consultation Response; Revised Core Strategy - Worthing Borough Council

I am responding to the above consultations on behalf of Countryside Access Forum for West Sussex (CAFWS).

About CAFWS

CAFWS, a Local Access Forum, is an **independent statutory advisory body** established under the Countryside and Rights of Way (CROW) Act 2000 to give advice on countryside access matters. It 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). More information about the Forum and its work can be found at www.westsussex.gov.uk/cafws.

This letter constitutes formal advice from the Countryside Access Forum for West Sussex. Worthing Borough 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 forum in carrying out its functions.

Comments

CAFWS welcomes many of the strategic objectives and policies contained within the revised core strategy, in particular the many references to the importance and value of the countryside, often linked to the designated South Downs National Park and to the coast, and the role these play in enhancing the quality of life. It also welcomes the many references to sustainable transport and the need to enhance facilities for pedestrians and cyclists and that the green corridors need to be kept and enhanced where development occurs.

However there is little mention specifically of the need to keep and enhance off-road sustainable transport routes from the town to the wider countryside of the Downs. This would primarily be via the rights of way network, which is not even mentioned in the revised core strategy and should be. Worthing is particularly fortunate to have a good network of footpaths (for walkers only) and bridleways (for walkers, cyclists and horse riders) providing circuits in the north of the Borough, as well as some restricted bridleways which can also be legally used by horse-drawn carriages.

Area of Change 1 - West Durrington

CAFWS strongly supports the British Horse Society in its response on the revised core strategy, regarding provision of a bridge, suitable for pedestrians, cyclists and equestrians over the A27 in the Castle Goring/Holt Farm area, to provide a safe link from Worthing to the quality countryside and access network of the Downs. Roads are often a barrier to access for non-motorised users and any opportunities to improve the situation should be pursued. This supports the aims of the Rights of Way Improvement Plan for West Sussex (RoWIP) – a Strategic Framework. CAFWS has worked closely with West Sussex County Council during

preparation of its RoWIP, as required by the CRoW Act 2000, which in particular places high importance on providing safe off-road network for people to enjoy for both recreation and to access services. It can be viewed at www.westsussex.gov.uk/rowip.

There are often a high number of horses kept around urban areas that are ridden by the local population and the links to the wider bridleway network where they can ride in relative safety, ie the Downs in the case of Worthing, are important to reduce the need for riders to box their horses and therefore not add to increase road congestion.

General Development

The requirement of the recently approved South East Plan for Green Infrastructure Plans is welcomed by CAFWS and should help ensure development brings wider benefits for people as well as wildlife. In the past new housing developments have sometimes eradicated rights of way and other permissive and informal paths that provided access to green space and the wider countryside, or they altered their character so they are no longer pleasant and enjoyable routes to use. However, new development can also be a unique opportunity to solve present problems and to enhance the ability for local people to enjoy access to the countryside.

CAFWS would like to emphasise the importance of considering the needs of the three main users of the countryside during all stages of the planning process, in particular when drawing up 'Master Plans' for new developments:

- **Walkers** – the need is to access the countryside, especially using circular routes of various lengths; internal paths need to link up with the wider network of paths and other means of accessing the countryside. Areas for **dog walking** must be accommodated.
- **Cyclists** – using cycle routes and bridleways – an improved network will contribute to sustainable access to work and school
- **Horse riders** – riding is becoming a more and more important recreational activity around the urban fringe and contributes to the local economy

Carriage drivers are also non-motorised users of some classifications of Rights of Way and the country lanes.

In addition, attention must be given to recreational access for **all types of mobility impaired users**, and Government initiatives highlighting the benefits of walking for health.

Access to the English Coast

The Government, through the Marine and Access to the Coast Bill (currently being considered by Parliament), has outlined its intentions to deliver a corridor for walkers around the whole of the English Coast. This would add legal certainty to the provision of access to the coast within Worthing, much of which although accessible to the public is not as a right but by permission and maybe worth mentioning.

Thank you for considering these comments. Please can CAFWS, via me as Forum Officer, be added to any lists to be consulted on future strategic development matters that may impact on countryside access within Worthing.

Yours sincerely



Jane Noble
Forum Officer, Countryside Access Forum for West Sussex
<http://www.westsussex.gov.uk/cafws>

Copy for information to:

Peter Brown – Chairman, CAFWS
Glynn Jones – Vice-Chairman, CAFWS
All members of CAFWS
Craig Bowdery – Secretary to the Forum

Lisa Creaye-Griffin – WSCC Rural Operations Group
Manager
Deborah Urquhart – WSCC Cabinet Member for
Environment & Economy