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Our reference

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Fiona MacLeod

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**West of Bewbush Submission – Joint Area Action Plan**

I am responding to the above consultation on behalf of the Countryside Access Forum for West Sussex (CAFWS), **an independent statutory advisory body** set up to give access advice to a number of bodies, including all levels of government. The Forum is keen to contribute to this process to ensure that proposed changes meet the needs of local people and that the chance is taken to improve opportunities for countryside access for present and future users. As a result, some new routes may be necessary and existing paths upgraded.

Before commenting on the consultation, CAFWS would like to emphasise the importance of considering the needs of the three main users of public rights of way (prows):

- **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 prows and other means of accessing the countryside. Areas for **dog walking** must be accommodated.
- **Cyclists** – using cycle tracks 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

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

CAFWS welcomes the opportunity to comment on this document and has confined its comments to its primary function – to protect and improve opportunities for people to access and enjoy the countryside on foot, by cycle and on horseback. Horsham District 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.

CAFWS believes that, when rural paths are absorbed into a new area of housing development, it is important to aim to retain some of the rural character and link these routes with the adjacent countryside. Existing trees and shrubs should be retained wherever possible and strengthened where necessary. Old field divisions can be used to align new paths and cycle tracks. Planning guidelines should deter the urbanisation and enclosure of paths, which should be open, attractive to use and safe.

The comments in the attached Appendix 1 have been submitted by the High Weald Sub Forum on behalf of CAFWS.

In closing, may I emphasise that the Forum is keen to continue to contribute to the Action Plan process to ensure that the needs of all users are delivered. We look forward to consultation on similar Plans and hope these comments are helpful.

Yours sincerely,



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**COMMENTS FROM THE HIGH WEALD SUB FORUM ON BEHALF OF THE COUNTRYSIDE ACCESS FORUM FOR WEST SUSSEX (CAFWS)**

**WEST OF BEWBUSH SUBMISSION JOINT AREA ACTION PLAN**

There is much to be commended in the submission document including the retention of the ancient woodland at Capon Grove and Pondtail Shaw; the inclusion of access routes for walkers, cyclists and equestrians especially the circular green route around the development; the commitment to improve access links to the wider countryside; and the provision of the signalised crossing of the A264 to restore access across this busy road to the area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) to the south.

However, on the eastern side of the development the Masterplan Map is unclear, as the circular route and bridleway 1550 are shown as two separate routes. Our understanding from previous discussions was that the circular route would follow the definitive line of the bridleway on the northern and eastern sides. If this is not the case and there are two routes, the bridleway also requires a bridge crossing of the railway, as well as safe crossing facilities at the bus, pedestrian, cyclist and emergency vehicle access points.

Comments on particular paragraphs are listed below:

**Chapter 2: Development Vision, Principles and Objectives**

Vision 2.2 - Support is given to the commitment to providing high quality open spaces and informal leisure facilities, with links into the surrounding countryside, the character of which will be respected.

Green Neighbourhoods 2.6 - Support for both principles, but especially good access to the countryside incorporating a network of public rights of way.

**Chapter 3: West of Bewbush Neighbourhood – Allocation of land and Conceptual Masterplan  
Policy WB2**

**Lane East of Holmbush Farm Access and West of Landfill Site Access – South of the Railway**

3.5 – Support for retention of and public access to Pondtail Shaw.

3.7 – Support for landscaped buffer along the A264 between the road and residential development and the use of this landscaped area to form part of the circular green link around the development for all users.

**Land East of Holmbush Farm Access and West of Landfill Site Access – North of the Railway**

3.8 – Support for western bridge across the railway for pedestrians, cyclists and equestrians as part of circular green route, which it is felt should also link to Capon Grove. The provision of a landscaped buffer along the railway line to provide noise attenuation is considered essential, especially for equestrians.

3.9 – Support principle of no vehicular access onto Kilwood Lane, which is a bridleway (1550), from the development. This will maintain the character and

rural feel of the path. However, access for pedestrians, cyclists and equestrians is welcome.

### **Land East of the Landfill Access and West of Bewbush – South of the Railway Line**

3.10 – Support for provision of formal “at grade” signalised crossing of A264 for pedestrians, cyclists and equestrians, to restore bridleway link across A264 to AONB to the south. Support acknowledgement that diversion of and additional links to existing public rights of way are needed to provide continuous route.

3.11 – At present, equestrians use Sullivan Drive as an access link from BW 1550 to the Crawley Borough Council permissive horseride along the southern edge of Bewbush Playing Fields. They need to retain this access, although on the Conceptual Masterplan access is only shown for pedestrians and cyclists.

We have not raised this matter before, as we were not aware access here would be for pedestrians and cyclists only.

**Objection** Relates to Test of Soundness 7. Document should be changed to include access for equestrians to Sullivan Drive.

3.17 - The Kilwood bridleway (1550) on the eastern edge of the development, at present crosses the railway line via a level crossing. It is understood Network Rail wish to replace the level crossing with a bridge, which is supported as it will be far safer for all users. However, on the Conceptual Masterplan, the bridge, presuming it is carrying the bridleway, is situated at the proposed new railway station, and this paragraph states that the bridge is provided for pedestrians, cyclists, public transport and emergency vehicles. Any new bridleway bridge must also provide access for equestrians, and it would not be desirable or safe for this to be at a busy railway station.

3.19 – The proposed pedestrian, cyclist, public transport and emergency vehicle route adjacent to the railway line, appears to cut across the line of the definitive bridleway (1550), which continues south east from Kilwood Lane to cross the railway and continue south to the A264. If this is correct, a safe crossing point must be provided for users of the bridleway.

3.20 – Whilst a landscaped buffer would be supported, the lack of clarity of the Masterplan Map leads to confusion over whether the circular route and the bridleway follow the same line. This paragraph infers they are two separate routes, the circular route linking with the bridleway only at Kilwood Lane.

### **Policy WB15 Green Linkages**

4.34 & 4.35 - Whilst the principles and objectives in this policy are supported and welcomed, it is necessary to raise an objection due to the lack of provision for equestrian crossing of the railway on the eastern side of the development, and the lack of clarity of the Conceptual Masterplan Map as regards the line of the circular green route and the bridleway on the eastern side.

Confusion arises as to whether these are two separate routes, or whether both will follow the definitive line of the bridleway. If they are two separate routes, the bridleway needs to be provided with a bridge crossing of the railway and also safe crossing facilities where the access points for buses, walkers, cyclists and

emergency vehicles cross the line of the bridleway (north of the railway and at Sullivan Drive).

**Objection.** The need for a bridleway bridge in this location for walkers, cyclists and equestrians was raised at the Preferred Options stage, however the location of the bridge only became apparent on the Conceptual Masterplan map. Relates to Test of Soundness 7. Document should be changed to include a bridleway bridge providing access for walkers, cyclists and equestrians either on or close to the present definitive line of the bridleway. Document should also include protection for users of the bridleway at the crossing points for bus, pedestrian, cyclists and emergency vehicles, north of the railway and at Sullivan Drive. This objection also refers to Paragraphs 3.17, 3.19 and 3.20.

### **Access Infrastructure**

4.114 – Support for network of routes for pedestrians, cyclists and equestrians, both within the development and linking to the wider countryside.

4.115 – Support provision of western bridge for pedestrians, cyclists and equestrians, but eastern bridge to carry bridleway 1550 over the railway, must include access for equestrians.

### **Pedestrian and Cycle**

4.119 - Support principles and objectives in this paragraph for pedestrians and cyclists.

### **Policy WB26**

#### **Transport**

Support pedestrian and cycle access plans, but there is no mention of equestrians, who are included in the West Sussex Local Transport Plan.