

WSLAF response to Strategic Development at Ford (SD8) **Masterplan Document Consultation – Adur District Council**

I am responding to the above consultations on behalf of West Sussex Local Access Forum (WSLAF).

West Sussex Local Access Forum (WSLAF) is an independent advisory body, established under the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000, to give access advice to local authorities, statutory organisations and non-government organisations. In giving that advice, the Forum's main objective is to ensure the existing network of public rights of way (PRoW), as well as the wider access network, is protected and where possible enhanced. The Forum 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). For further information about the Forum please visit [WSLAF's website](#).

We support and welcome many of the general principles and intentions within the document which concern access to the countryside. In particular these include the commitments to:

- ensure connectivity between routes and to the surrounding villages and Ford station
- create a network to link new and existing routes
- to extend and enhance the Green and Blue infrastructure
- promote healthy lifestyles by supporting layouts to promote non-motorised travel
- to promote the creation of a 'green corridor' along the route of the historic canal

WSLAF's main objective is to provide advice on and support the protection and enhancement of the existing PRoW and wider access network. New developments provide a unique opportunity to enhance this network by creating new routes, and improve connectivity by providing missing links for the benefit and safety of all vulnerable road users (walkers, cyclists, equestrians and the disabled).

The Forum regrets that the Document currently only refers to the provision of routes for walkers and cyclists. All new development inevitably creates additional traffic on surrounding roads and lanes, which in this area are already busy and unsafe for non-motorised users (NMUs). This is particularly the case for the large number of equestrians in the surrounding area for whom these roads and lanes are the only means of access, as there are virtually no bridleways or other suitable safe access available to them on the Coastal Plain.

While the intention to provide connectivity from the development out towards the adjacent countryside and villages is welcomed, this would be greatly enhanced by a commitment to provide a multi-user path (bridleway) around the perimeter of the development linked to the wider PRoW network. This could be incorporated into required 'green infrastructure' for the benefit of all NMUs. Improvements to surrounding roads should therefore include the provision of safe crossing points for all NMUs.

This would enable all vulnerable road users to benefit from desired connections, north to the South Downs National Park, east to the River Arun (along which Arun

DC have proposed a 'green link'), south to Climping Beach, and to the Portsmouth & Arundel Canal (a locally supported proposed multi-use greenway project).

Within the developments themselves roads should be of sufficient width to accommodate roadside parking and deliveries to allow safe passing of NMUs. Sufficient parking provision should be provided to prevent cars parking across house driveways and on footways to promote safe access.

We would point to and support the references to the benefits of improved access in the various documents referenced within the Masterplan and to other Plans relevant to development within West Sussex as follows:

Arun District Local Plan

Transport para 15.1.1. – “The Public Right of Way network linking the South Downs National Park with the coast is also disjointed and deficient in bridleway access....”

Cycling and Walking para 15.2.5 - Arun Leisure Strategy 2013, one of the strategic priorities of the strategy is “to make the District exceptionally good for cycling and other activities that are best off-road like horse riding, running and cycling”

Arun Design Guide SPD (Jan 2021)

Page 45 Make sure that the Scheme – bullet point 5 “includes spaces for people to meet, play and interact and creates a user-friendly layout for non-motorised users of all abilities including pedestrians, cyclists, equestrians, and wheelchair users.

Page 50, para 1 - ...“should encourage healthy and sustainable choices, making it as easy to walk, cycle, horse ride or take public transport as it is to drive.”

Page 51, para 2 – “Pedestrian, cycle or equestrian routes may be provided alongside (but separated from) those for traffic, or through dedicated cycle ways, footpaths, bridleways and multi-user tracks, linked with surrounding strategic networks (e.g. Public Rights of Way, National Cycle Network).”

Page 51, para 3 – “Most villages on the coastal plain within Arun District have horse paddocks and stables on the urban fringe. The provision of bridleways to link with the coastal plain, as identified within the West Sussex Rights of Way Management Plan 2018-2028, is encouraged.”

West Sussex Rights of Way Management Plan 2018-2028

Page 7 - “The paths on the Coastal Plain are mainly footpaths so there are very limited opportunities for users other than walkers. Being highly populated, the roads are busy and despite the flat terrain, off-road cycling or horse riding opportunities are very limited.”

Page 9 – “...closer scrutiny of planning applications and earlier consultation with user groups in the design process could help identify improvements and avoid further fragmentation and severance. WSLAF would like to see planning authorities push for commitment from developers to provide a path, available to all NMUs, around the perimeter of developments and to link to the wider PRoW network.”

<p>This letter constitutes formal advice from the West Sussex Local Access Forum. Arun 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 Local Access Forum in carrying out its functions.</p>
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Thank you for considering WSLAF's comments. The i-Transport Technical Note (Aug 2020), para3.8.2, states that "Treatment of existing Public Rights of Way will be considered further as part of future Reserved Matters Applications". Members would welcome involvement in future discussions regarding PRow and recreational routes, both within the development, and regarding connections to the surrounding area.

Graham Elvey
Chairman
West Sussex Local Access Forum