

# West Sussex Local Access Forum

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Sent by email

18.8.22

Dear Sirs

## **Barnham Rail Crossings Footpath Diversions**

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 (PRoWs), 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 [www.wslaf.org](http://www.wslaf.org).

We thank you for the opportunity to comment on the proposal to divert part of Barnham Fp 323 at the West Barnham and Birch crossings. We have carefully considered the maps, photographs and copy of the Planning Inspector's (PI) Decision which accompanied your email dated 1 July 2022, and we have also carried out a site inspection.

The Forum considers that the replacement of two unmanned, signalised at-grade rail crossings on Barnham Fp 323 with a purpose-built footbridge and via an underpass will enable the path to be safely used by Non-Motorised Users (NMUs) and we have no hesitation in supporting the proposal

The proposed development in this location when completed, is likely to significantly increase the use of these crossings, particularly by children, and the improvement to user safety provided by the proposal is much welcomed.

We are aware that there will be considerable strategic development in this general area in the next few years (Barnham, Eastergate, Westergate BEW) and it is important that any improvements made to these crossings look to the future. The PI's Decision refers to the BEW Masterplan for the area to the north of the West Barnham crossing and the likelihood that Fp323 will become a functional link suggesting an increase in use.

Members are of the opinion that the proposed infrastructure (footbridge, underpass) should be provided to a standard suitable to carry walkers and cyclists. The rest of the paths should be of sufficient width to safely accommodate ease of passing of walkers

and cyclists and have a surface suitable for year-round use. The technical specification of the surfaces, gradients etc should be to the standard required by West Sussex County Council (WSCC).

This letter constitutes formal advice from the West Sussex Local Access. Network Rail 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.

We thank you for the opportunity to contribute to this consultation and the Forum looks forward to being updated on the progress of the proposals and would welcome being consulted on any further matters that may impact on access.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Jane Noble', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Jane Noble, Forum Officer  
West Sussex Local Access Forum

Copy for information to: All WSLAF members