



Joint Local Access Forum (JLAF)

for Bath & North East Somerset, Bristol City and South Gloucestershire

Telephone:

Chris Bloor (Chair)
Mark O' Sullivan (Vice Chair)

13/06/16

To Bristol Local Plan
blp@bristol.gov.uk

Re: Lawrence Weston Neighbourhood Development Plan

This letter constitutes formal advice from the Joint Local Access Forum (JLAF) for Bath & North East Somerset, Bristol City and South Gloucestershire, in accordance with section 94(5) of the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000. The Joint Local Access Forum for Bath & North East Somerset, Bristol City and South Gloucestershire (JLAF) is a statutory body set up advise Local Authorities, the Government and others on public access to the outdoors. Our members are drawn from landowners, users of open air facilities and others with an interest in access to the outdoors. Bristol City 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.

I am writing as Chair of the Joint Local Access Forum (JLAF), which, like the Bristol Public Rights of Way Liaison Group (PROWLG) and the British Horse Society (BHS), was not included in your mailing list for this consultation. I only heard about the consultation because I am also the Local Correspondent to the Open Spaces Society. JLAF is a statutory body which ought to be consulted in matters concerning access to the outdoors and it would be good practice to include the Bristol PROWLG and the BHS as well.

The absence of wider consultation is of particular concern in this case, because the area affected by the plan is a subset of a ward, which will have no direct democratic voice until the referendum takes place after the plan has been approved by an independent inspecor. This will presumably be a yes or no referendum. It is not clear if anybody outside the planning area will have a voice, whether or not they are in the Neighbourhood Partnership area. For example, people living in Ferndown Close or off Kingsweston Avenue, within the neighbourhood partnership, have an obvious interest in the plan area, as do the people living in Henbury in the estate north of Moorgrove Wood.

Access to Work has been addressed, but 12.2.3 appears muddled. Lawrence Weston Road is misnamed and "Map 4 above" does not seem to exist. "The above map" is "Map 3," which shows no improvements to Kings Weston Lane, which seems to me more dangerous than Lawrence Weston Road. I should have thought more could have made of the underpass linking the pumping station with the sewage works, where there is an occasionally maintained footpath through to Kings Weston Lane, which might help people wanting to walk to the offices to the west of Kings Weston Lane. I applaud the ambition to provide "a restored and attractive, traffic-free connection between Lawrence Weston Greenway at Saltmarsh Drive and Lawrence Weston Road at Atwood

Drive, but an overemphasis on cycling rather than walking seems to have drawn attention away from the existing route along the motorway that suffers from the lack of a maintenance regime.

We are more concerned about the lack of access to Lawrence Weston Moor. This is a long standing issue, which makes it difficult for local people to envision the Nature Reserve as a possible destination. The chief problem is the obstruction of the public footpath around the western edge of Bankleaze School grounds. The path used to go straight across the field, but was diverted around the edge of the field when the school was built and then fenced. Like many fenced paths that are not properly maintained it has become overgrown with brambles and trees. The public rights of way department will not clear it because the diverted path was carelessly drawn on the definitive map and nothing is done because there is no local pressure to clear it. Perhaps there would be pressure if people knew it was there.

There is access to the moor for children at Bankleaze School, via a gate and bridge, but it is overgrown and unused.

There are two other access points. The most direct is from Lawrence Weston Road along a track beside Newlands Rhine to the north of the allotments. This is blocked by a large rock to deter motorcyclists. This is the access point preferred by the Public Rights of Way team, and it has the advantage that it links with a path that leads ultimately to the sewage pumping station and the City Farm. But it is hardly welcoming. It is the route used by the Moorland Multi-terrain footrace, which is held in January to raise money for the Avon Riding Centre for the disabled, which manages the portions of Lawrence Weston Moor that are not part of the nature reserve.

The other access point leads through fields managed by the Avon Riding Centre (for the disabled) that are north east of Bankleaze School.

It has been pointed out that there is at least one other riding establishment in the vicinity (on Kingsweston Road - just outside the planning area, but within the Neighbourhood Partnership area). This riding school came with horses to the opening of the new bridge on Lawrence Weston Road. It is therefore surprising to us and the local representative of the British Horse Society that there is no provision for horses in the plan.

Footpath 73 from Mancroft Road between numbers 120 and 122, which runs southwards (3-4ft wide) then eastwards as 8ft well defined track to the northeast end of Penpole Wood near Kingsweston House is also an asset worth emphasising.

This advice will be presented for ratification at the next meeting of JLAF on Friday July 1st 2016.

Yours faithfully

Christopher Bloor

Chair Joint Local Access Forum