



**Minutes of the joint meeting of the Central Bedfordshire and Luton
JLAF and the Borough of Bedford LAF**

1st October 2013

Forest Centre, Marston Moretaine

<u>Members</u>	
Steve Bumstead – Chair	Rosalyn Whisker
Pauline Hey	Brian Golby
Tom Chevalier	Tony Welch
Andy Knight	Angela Kirby
Nigel Jacobs	Julian Clark-Lowes
David Binns (part)	Bob Wallace
Suzanne Martin (MK LAF)	James Russell
Dana Green (MK LAF)	John Franklin (MK LAF)
Eric Swain (MK LAF)	
<u>Secretariat</u>	
Caroline Romans - Central Bedfordshire Council	
<u>Apologies</u>	
Jason Jordan	Andy Gerrard
David Simkins	Cllr Dave Taylor
Cllr Mrs Angela Barker	Andrew Pym
Sam Taylor	Cllr Dave Taylor
Brian Cowling	Marion Mustoe
Barry Ingram	Keith Dove – Luton Borough Council
David Leverington – Central Bedfordshire Council	Phill Fox – Bedford Borough Council
<u>Observers</u>	
Jonathan Woods – Central Bedfordshire Council	Simon Fisher – Bedford Borough Council
Andy Burton – Milton Keynes Council	Drew Marchant – Bedford MK Waterway Trust
Charles Hurst – Network Rail	Colin Murphy – Network Rail
Lucy Druce – Network Rail	

	Steve Bumstead, Chair of the Central Bedfordshire and Luton JLAF welcomed everyone to the 10 th Anniversary meeting of the founding of the original Bedfordshire and Luton JLAF.	ACTION
1.	<u>Public Questions</u>	

	There were no public questions.	
2.	<p><u>Apologies</u></p> <p>See above.</p>	
3.	<p><u>Bedford – Milton Keynes Waterway</u></p> <p>Drew Marchant from the Bedford – Milton Keynes Waterway Trust gave a very informative presentation on the proposed Bedford – Milton Keynes Waterway which is planned to create the first broadbeam link between the main UK canal network and the Fenland waterways. See Bedford Milton Keynes Waterway presentation.</p> <p>A really good discussion followed the presentation from which the following key points arose:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Initially the route had been considered primarily for water based users, but it is now recognised that the majority of users will be on the land alongside the waterway. The focus is therefore now on a park with water as the land sections are likely to be delivered before the water sections. Meetings have been established to ensure that the needs of walkers, cyclists and horseriders are considered as well as those of the boating community. - The route of the waterway is now 'protected' but there remains a risk that a development could go ahead which would stymie the project - Developer guides are almost ready for circulation highlighting the value of the waterway and demonstrating what it might look like. - Delivery of the waterway will be opportunistic e.g. Marston Vale innovation park section will hopefully be completed by 2015. <p>It was agreed by all of the LAF's represented at the meeting that the waterway would be endorsed and promoted in each of their area improvement plans. They are keen to work together to help to ensure its delivery. Drew was thanked for his excellent presentation and wished every success with the delivery of the waterway.</p>	
4.	<p><u>East - West Rail link</u></p> <p>Charles Hurst, Colin Murphy and Lucy Druce from Network Rail attended the meeting to talk about the East West Rail link. Charles gave a very informative presentation focusing on the section from Bicester to Bletchley covering the project overview and preliminary discussions on footpath crossings, see East west rail presentation.</p> <p>Construction has already started on the Oxford to Bicester section and the government has given the go ahead for the Bicester to Bletchley section for which funding is available. Network Rail will be responsible for the construction and for running of the service. It is hoped that the Oxford to Bedford section will be opened by 2017.</p> <p>Network Rail are keen to remove all ROW level crossings along the route due to the risks to the public from trains travelling at up to 120mph. For those crossings which are agreed to be strategic, the preferred solution would be bridges, but these are very expensive so tunnels and improved systems at the level crossings would also be considered. In order to make the solution viable, there will be a requirement to extinguish/divert some of the less well used/less strategic ROW crossings especially where there are a number that are close</p>	

	<p>together.</p> <p>The forum members welcomed the opportunity for preliminary discussions with Network Rail before the official consultation process starts as it was recognised the benefits that have been gained from this approach with the recent major road schemes within the area.</p> <p>The Transport and Works Act 2006 provides Network Rail with the ability to make the order to create the route see TWA link. Before any order can be made, Network Rail must be able to demonstrate that the consultation process has been followed. Network Rail takes its duty to consult widely and meaningfully very seriously and goes further than the minimum required under the rules. For example an EWR approach to consultation has been agreed with the local authority, consortium members and the Joint Delivery Board that sets out how Network Rail will consult, who, and what they will consult on. Their attendance at the LAF meeting is another example of this.</p> <p>Forum members requested that where bridges are built near to schools, that the bridges are built with ramps rather than steps to encourage children to cycle to school and parents with buggies to walk to school. It was also requested that the ramps be sympathetic to the environment.</p> <p>The forum thanked Charles for his presentation and his offer to attend any future meetings to talk about particular areas in more detail.</p>	
5.	<p><u>Highlights from the last 10 years</u></p> <p>Phill Fox and Jonathan Woods had prepared a slide show of the highlights of the 10 years since the original JLAF was founded in 2003; see 10th Anniversary presentation. This was played in a loop whilst the birthday cake was cut.</p>	
6.	<p><u>Route 51 – West of Bedford</u></p> <p>Andy Knight from Sustrans (and also a member of the Central Bedfordshire and Luton JLAF) provided an update on the plans for the alteration of the alignment of the current Route 51 cycleroute west of Bedford to remove some of the on road sections; see NCN Route 51 presentation.</p> <p>The revised alignment has been agreed with Bedford Borough Council with much of it along the approximate line of the Bedford to Milton Keynes waterway. A group has been established including BHS representatives to ensure that the route is suitable for all users as far as possible.</p> <p>Work is now underway to get it delivered as soon as possible; some sections have already been created (e.g. A1- B1) and other sections will be created by developers who are building along the route (e.g. B1-C will be delivered by David Wilson Homes in 2014 as part of the Great Denham Country Park). Sustrans receive some funding from DfT. If funding is forthcoming next year, some will be used for the Fields Road, Wootton to Kempston section (L-E) so that residents of the new developments get used to cycling to Bedford rather than jumping into their cars. It is hoped that this section will be delivered by March 2015. Some sections are more complex and may take longer to deliver, but Sustrans and Bedford Borough Council are working together to try to get solutions for all of the sections.</p>	

	<p>Central Bedfordshire Council have also been working to improve the surface of some sections of Route 51 at Cranfield. The Hulcote Wood section has already been improved and it is hoped to improve the connection to Thrift Wood in 2014/15.</p> <p>James Russell from the Forest of Marston Vale highlighted that they had recently been successful in achieving Paths for Communities Funding from Natural England to make the Forest Centre a gateway to walking, cycling and equestrian routes in the area. Horsebox parking is available allowing horse riders to travel to make use of the routes.</p>	
7.	<p><u>Local Nature Partnership</u></p> <p>Bob Wallace, Chair of the Borough of Bedford LAF reported that in September he was appointed as the representative for the Bedfordshire LAF's on the LNP board. The first LNP board meeting is due to take place late October. He has committed to updating each LAF on a regular basis, and will attend the Central Bedfordshire and Luton JLAF annually.</p>	
8.	<p><u>Any Other Notified Business</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Rosalyn Whisker raised the issue of Ragwort in highway verges and farmers fields close to where there are grazing horses. Simon Fisher (Bedford Borough Council) and Jonathan Woods (Central Bedfordshire Council) will raise the issue with their respective Highway departments and report back to their respective forums. • The consultation for the Wixams Country Park is currently taking place; closing date for responses is Friday 8th November. See Wixams Park consultation for more details and to submit a response. • A Swiss Garden behind the scenes tour is taking place on Saturday 5th October for those who would like to see the restoration work in progress. JLAF secretary will circulate the booking details – done. • The Chilterns AONB consultation has started; the closing date is 13/12/13. Jonathan Woods to circulate the details to the JLAF members. 	<p>Simon Fisher & Jonathan Woods</p> <p>Jonathan Woods</p>
9.	<p>Jonathan thanked everyone for attending the meeting and recognised the benefit of having members from both Bedfordshire LAFs and the Milton Keynes LAF attending.</p> <p>Jonathan also thanked all of the members for the time that they have donated to the LAFs over the last 10 years especially those who are founding members (Andy Gerrard, Brian Golby, David Mitchell, James Russell, David Simkins and Bob Wallace). It really is appreciated.</p> <p>The meeting closed at 9.10pm.</p>	