

1. Local Access Forums

Local Access Forums (LAFs) were established under Section 94 & 95 of the Countryside and Wildlife Act (CROW Act) 2000.

A statutory function of a LAF is to advise on.. ***the improvement of public access to land in that area for the purposes of open-air recreation and the enjoyment of the area.***

Regulation 22 of the Local Access Forums (England) Regulations 2007 extended the statutory function of LAFs such that forums can give advice on public access to land for "*any lawful purpose*". This means that forums can advise on public access issues holistically - for example by advising on the improvement of public access on foot, bicycle or horseback for functional purposes (e.g. to get to a place of work or local amenities). In some cases, access can be by mechanically propelled vehicles (e.g. via byways open at all traffic (BOATS)).

The "area" of the Essex LAF (ELAF) is the current area of Essex County Council with Essex County Council being the appointing highways authority for ELAF.

The CROW Acts states that, in carrying out its functions, a local access forum shall have regard to:

- (a) the needs of land management,
- (b) the desirability of conserving the natural beauty of the area for which it is established, including the flora, fauna and geological and physiographical features of the area, and
- (c) guidance given from time to time by the Secretary of State

The DEFRA guidance booklet - see appendix 1 of the ELAF proofs of evidence - section 3.2.1 states that... *LAFs have a statutory function under Section 94(4) of the CROW Act to give advice to the appointing authorities and to the Secretary State including "executive agencies" e.g. the Highways Agency, the Planning Inspectorate.* Network Rail is therefore a "prescribed" section 94 (4) body which must have regard to any relevant advice given to them by a LAF.

Members of ELAF are all volunteers. Members do not represent organisations but the aim is that they are a mix of the type of people who use rights of way and access land and who manage land. Applications to become a member of the forum have to be agreed by the Highways Authority but the forum is independent of the Highways Authority. [ELAF submissions have not been discussed with ECC](#). ELAF now have 3 meetings per year.

The Essex Local Access Forum website is now hosted on the << www.essexhighways.org >> website.

2. ELAF and Network Rail

Network Rail crossing closures have been on the Agenda of ELAF meetings since 2014. Network Rail have attended two forum meetings and there have been regular updates from Garry White of Essex Highways.

(a) Network Rail attended an ELAF forum meeting on 24 June 2014. The Minutes (*now added in full as Appendix E*) record that Network Rail provided information that:

- there is a need to de-risk sites because there is a busier network of trains and of people/vehicles traversing the line therefore incidents are increasing.
- funding is being prioritised to the most risky and then sites on the dormant list will be reviewed if more money becomes available in the future.
- [forum] members were reassured that there will not be blanket closure of crossings if future funding is not available. Network Rail works with ECC and users to avoid severs to the network. The current funding is for capital works and to pay for PRoW diversions etc. Network Rail looks to enhance access if possible, particularly if working with developers.

Subsequently limited information was made available on the crossings proposed for closure, which was not for publication.

(b) ELAF's field trip in September 2015 was to the Stort valley area due to the juxtaposition of access and registered common land and crossings that Network Rail proposed for closure (E01-E04 crossings and Saddlers crossing, since withdrawn). A presentation on the field trip is Appendix iii to ELAF's Proof of Evidence.

At this point ELAF still assumed that there would be a discussion phase as normally happens in a Highways Act Order.

(c) Network Rail gave a presentation to the ELAF forum meeting on 19 April 2016 (*now added as Appendix F*). The Minutes (*now added in full as Appendix G*) record that: www.essexhighways.org/uploads/files/Public-Rights-of-Way/Essex-Local-Access-Forum/ELAF-minutes-160419.pdf

- NR phases 1 & 2 in control period 2014-2019 of the Anglia Level Crossing Reduction Strategy has no budget for bridges or infrastructure works.
- Information is not publicly available on the 58 Essex County Council crossings as landowner consultation is still ongoing.

- The new NR strategy is to use Transport & Works Act (T&W) Orders as a consistent and systematic way of progressing closure of many level crossings simultaneously. This will reduce demands on Highway Authority resources as decisions will be taken by the Secretary of State (SofS).
- Q&A: There are approximately 12 fatalities per year on 6000 level crossings over the whole country. Anglia is the highest risk area as it has a larger population. Crossings in the rest of SE England were largely consolidated in the 1930-1950s.

After this presentation, ELAF were seriously concerned about the implications for access and the public rights of way network.

(d) On 5 August 2106, after the first round public consultation events, ELAF sent a formal advisory document to Network Rail, in accordance with section 94 of the CROW Act 2000, expressing disquiet at the process and consultation timings for such a potentially significant change in the public rights of way network. 4 people from Network Rail received / were copied in on this document. No reply was received. The letter is Appendix A of the ELAF Rebuttal Proof and is also referenced in the ELAF Minutes of 11 October 2016

www.essexhighways.org/uploads/files/Public-Rights-of-Way/Essex-Local-Access-Forum/ELAF-minutes-161011.pdf

(e) ELAF were not aware of and did not know of the December 2016 revisions until the publication of the TWA Order documentation in March 2017. It was not clear from the vast amount of TWA Order documentation that there have been changes.

(f) (*was e*) On 10 May 2017, ELAF sent a formal advisory document to Network Rail, in accordance with section 94 of the CROW Act 2000, objecting to the closures and the use of the Transport and Works Act Order process rather than Orders under section 118A and 119A of the Highways Act 1980 (OBJ/142 Essex Local Access Forum).

Comments have been made that Highways Act Orders only refer to one PRoW. Highways Act Orders can and do cover more than one PRoW or section of a PROW. This enables changes to be considered holistically and to assess the overall impact of the changes on the PRoW network.

Quoting and summarising from the ELAF 10 May 2017 objection document..

- ELAF are concerned about the poor publicity... on the NR website. There is one press release of 31 March on the home web page. Electronic documentation was finally found on an "archive" section of the website (*screen snip now added as Appendix H*)
- In summary, ELAF deplore the use of the TWA Order as it involves:
 - Closure of large swathes of crossings at a time.

- Only limited options being presented and no opportunity for consultees to propose & make the case for alternative approaches. No opportunity for the case for each crossing to be tested at a public inquiry.
- Inadequate publicity.....
- No use of safety measures like warning lights, interlocking gates or train sensor technology as a first approach – simply closure.
- Complex documentation with information about a crossing scattered over several sections ... a robust internet connection is required to download documents, which is often not available in rural areas. No easy access to hard copy documentation

C. ELAF and Rights of Way Improvement Plans (ROWIPs)

Sections 60-62 of the CROW Act 2000 also introduced the requirement for Highways Authorities to produce a Rights of Way **Improvement** Plan (ROWIP). ROWIPs must assess and state actions that will be taken for the management and improvement of ROWs.

Section 60(2) specifies that assessments must consider:

- (a) the extent to which local rights of way meet the present and likely future needs of the public,
- (b) the opportunities provided by local rights of way for exercise and other forms of open-air recreation and the enjoyment.
- (c) the accessibility of local rights of way to blind or partially sighted persons and others with mobility problems... *[The CROW Act pre-dates the Equality Act of 2010]*

The DEFRA guidance booklet says that Local Access forums should champion ROWIPs. A copy of Essex County Council's ROWIP is Appendix (ii) to ELAF's Proof of Evidence. ELAF considers that Network Rail's crossing closure programme contradicts the purpose of a Rights of Way Improvement Plan as stated in the CROW Act and as in the Essex County Council ROWIP, particularly in respect of:

Theme D. A more continuous network

Theme E: Provide an accessible network that meets the requirements of all users



RCCE House, Threshelfords Business Park, Feering, CO5 9SE

MINUTES 24th June 2014

Present

Members:

Robert Johnstone (Chairman)	Bob Drane	Adrian Liddle
Ray Booty	David Eagle	Martyn Towns
Edward Dixon	Katherine Evans	

Observers: Jan Arthur, Marlene Curtis, Louise Fuller, Mags Hobby, Margaret Shaw

Apologies: John Victory, Ed Woods

The following Officers were present in support:

Michelle Gardiner – Rural Community Council of Essex
 Laurie Page – ECC Definitive Map Officer
 Rob Venables – ECC Public Rights of Way and Localism Officer
 Garry White – ECC Public Rights of Way and Records Manager

		ACTION
1	Welcome and introductions	
	RJ welcomed all to the meeting. He introduced Sean Cronin and Steve Day from Network Rail. RJ also introduced Margaret Shaw, a P3 representative from Elsenham parish. RCCE staff are exploring the possibility of employing Margaret to cover Michelle's role while she is on maternity leave.	
2	Minutes of previous meeting and matters arising	
	<p>The minutes of the meeting held on 8th April 2014 were proposed as a true record of the meeting. All agreed.</p> <p><i>Matters arising</i></p> <p>Rob Venables still to circulate the list of current P3 parishes and the minutes of the last User Group meeting.</p> <p>Garry White confirmed that some of the identified planning applications can be shared, but the mechanism by which to do this still needs to be agreed.</p> <p>Garry confirmed that the first 500km of cutting on the premier routes had been carried out.</p> <p>Adrian Liddle reported that wheelchairs and electric buggies will be able to cross roads closed during the Tour de France along with pedestrians.</p> <p>RJ reported that Rowena Macaulay will hopefully be attending the August ELAF meeting to deliver her presentation on inclusive access to the countryside.</p>	<p>RV</p> <p>GW</p>
3	Presentation from Network Rail – Sean Cronin and Steve Day	
	Network Rail is implementing a programme of level crossing closures. There is £99 million of funding available for a 5 year programme. Need to de-risk sites because there is a busier network of trains and of people/vehicles traversing	

	<p>the line therefore incidents are increasing. Responsible users are fine, but there is a new generation of users that are more distracted and therefore less safe.</p> <p>There are about 6,000 level crossings nationally, with approximately 900 in the Anglia region. There are schemes on the ground in Essex already e.g. Motts Lane in Witham and Ingatestone Hall. Garry White tabled a map of Essex sites. The funding is being prioritised to the most risky and then sites on the dormant list will be reviewed if more money becomes available in the future. Some of the sites on the list were briefly discussed. There is a feasibility stage and then pre-consultation work. ECC is advising Network Rail as to which groups to consult with.</p> <p>There was discussion about the problems with the ongoing temporary closures at Ardleigh. This situation should not be repeated elsewhere, because once the technology is finalised for the system at Ardleigh it can be replicated in other areas without the same lead in time.</p> <p>Members were reassured that there will not be blanket closure of crossings if future funding is not available. Network Rail works with ECC and users to avoid severers to the network. The current funding is for capital works and to pay for PRow diversions etc. Network Rail looks to enhance access if possible, particularly if working with developers.</p> <p>The crossings closure programme is running in conjunction with normal level crossings work such as vegetation clearance and along with education sessions in schools etc to raise general safety awareness.</p> <p>Members can contact Steve Day, advisor for Anglia and South East at Steve.Day@networkrail.co.uk</p>	
4	Opportunity for County Council report	
	<p>Byways – Garry White reported that the experimental closure of 5 byways will run from 1st November 2014 to 31st March 2015. Collapsible barriers with appropriate signage will be installed. During the closure, officers will monitor compliance and environmental impact. The pilot will be repeated next year.</p> <p>Bob Drane is continuing his usage monitoring of Byway 13 Shalford and asked Garry if he would like a copy of the figures. Garry confirmed that Byway 13 Shalford is not part of the pilot closures, but that Bob's monitoring is useful. Bob will handover figures at the next meeting.</p> <p>Cutting programme – Garry reminded members that the first 500km on promoted routes is complete, the next 3,300km to be carried out by sub-contractors is imminent and the final 300km of cutting will take place in September. Over £200k for surfacing is available through the Local Highways Panels, which is over half of the maintenance programme.</p> <p>Maintenance hierarchy – Garry reported that the hierarchy is not implemented yet. Officers have been trying to establish use of the network in relation to accommodation and income generation to help with the prioritisation, but this is a time consuming process. Elements of the hierarchy system have been introduced by cutting the premier routes first and starting with Tendring district in the general cut, as Tendring is the pilot area.</p> <p>Coastal erosion – Garry reported that the East Mersea path which he has talked about at previous ELAF meetings is now closed because it is not safe to access. There is still no cohesive approach to the seawall maintenance issue, so discussions are continuing to try to find a way forward.</p>	

	<p>Localism – Rob Venables reported that there are approximately 35 groups signed up to the P3 scheme. Projects have now started, the first of which was in Broomfield parish. There is an interesting Rochford arts project coming up, whereby volunteers are finding lost routes and walking them to keep them open and raise local awareness. There are a number of small parish groups in Rochford district that are going to be joined together as a roaming group for the area, linked to health work that Rochford District Council is promoting. The Headland Management Scheme now funds one cut per year for participating land managers, aligned with the main cutting programme</p>	
5	RoWIP update	
	<p>Laurie Page gave a presentation about creations, which is an element of RoWIP delivery. The 3 ways for a path to be created are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To add a path to a diversion scheme • To create a new path from scratch • To claim a path which has been used for over 20 years <p>Laurie talked about examples of creations as part of diversion schemes and new creations. Michelle Gardiner will circulate his presentation to all ELAF members.</p> <p>There is a useful guide to historical claims available on the BHS website.</p>	MG
6	ELAF/User Group arrangements	
	<p>Garry White and Michelle Gardiner had recently met and looked at the feedback from ELAF and User group members about the format of the meetings. Garry confirmed that his team will continue to co-ordinate 2 User Group meetings per year. They will still be held on the same day as ELAF meetings, but ELAF meetings will be in the morning and User Group in the afternoon. User Group members will need to send in questions in advance of the meetings, to ensure effective use of officer time.</p>	
7	National and regional LAF updates	
	<p>Natural England has confirmed continuation of the regional co-ordinator roles for 2014/15, so Michelle Gardiner has resumed her role as East of England LAF co-ordinator.</p> <p>Since the last ELAF meeting, the minister has sent a response to the national LAF report for 2012/13 which Michelle has circulated to members. The notes and presentations from the national LAF conferences are now available on Natural England's website http://publications.naturalengland.org.uk/publication/6311471092858880?category=4680890114375680 and the last edition of the LAF newsletter focussed on the outcomes of the events.</p> <p>Natural England is reviewing the LAF local contacts, but Fiona Taylor is still ELAF's contact at present.</p>	
8	Huddle	
	<p>Michelle Gardiner reported that Natural England has removed all inactive users from Huddle, which has freed up the number of spare licences.</p> <p>New information whiteboards on Huddle include: dog walking advice, the national LAF conference material and an update on the Deregulation Bill. The Deregulation Bill is now at report stage and will then have a third reading in the House of Commons before moving to the House of Lords.</p> <p>There is a new discussion on a traffic signs consultation and the discussion thread</p>	

	about using footpaths for cycling and riding has been quite active.	
9	Correspondence	
	Defra consultation on reforming access and engagement guidance is now open. Michelle Gardiner will provide a response on behalf of ELAF if appropriate.	MG
10	Any other business	
	Adrian Liddle raised a query about future funding for a bus in the Chingford area which is currently funded by ECC. RJ has a contact he can ask, so will discuss further with Adrian.	
11	Public question time	
	There were no questions.	
	Date of next meetings	
	Tuesday 19 th August 2014 Tuesday 14 th October 2014 (ELAF and User Group) Tuesday 9 th December 2014 Tuesday 10 th February 2015	

Anglia Level Crossing Reduction Strategy

Why close level crossings?

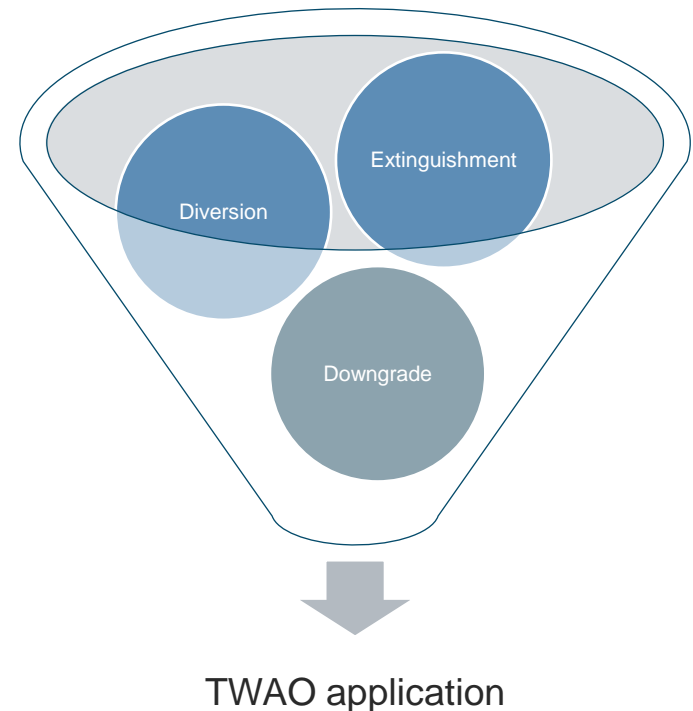
- ❑ Risk to public safety
- ❑ Delays to level crossing users
- ❑ Biggest risk to the railway
- ❑ Outside railway control
- ❑ Risk assessment and maintenance requirements
- ❑ Opportunity for future rail enhancements

How do we close public level crossings?

- ❑ Diversion
- ❑ Bridging
- ❑ Downgrading of rights
- ❑ Extinguishment

A new approach: Using Transport and Works Act Orders

- ❑ Consistent and systematic way of progressing closure of many level crossings simultaneously
- ❑ Stakeholder consultation
- ❑ Public consultation
- ❑ Diversity Impact Assessment
- ❑ Environmental Impact Assessment
- ❑ Transparency
- ❑ Independent Public Inquiry
- ❑ Reduces demands on Highway Authority
- ❑ Compulsory powers



A structured long-term strategy

- ❑ Identify opportunities in CP5, and more complex longer term closure options in CP6 and CP7
- ❑ County-by-county approach, considering all rights of way in an area
- ❑ Phase 1 & 2 – Footpath and User Worked Crossing diversions and extinguishments
 - 144 level crossings, across multiple Local Authorities
- ❑ Phase 3 & 4 – Significant infrastructure intervention or new access roads required
 - CP6 and the future
- ❑ Phase 5 – Major road diversions or bridges
 - CP6 and the future

The design process to date

- ❑ Review usage of crossing
- ❑ Identify existing alternatives
- ❑ Review safety of alternative routes
- ❑ Identify opportunities to improve connectivity
- ❑ Share designs and listen to feedback

TWAO Phase 1 & 2 next steps

- ❑ Mott MacDonald, on behalf of Network Rail, is finalising plans, carrying out ecology surveys and contacting affected landowners
- ❑ Late May/June – Round 1 public consultation events: presenting context and options
- ❑ July/August – Round 2 public consultation events: presenting more detail on single option solutions
- ❑ Specific dates and times will be provided via the chair of the LAF

Any questions?



RCCE House, Threshelfords Business Park, Feering, CO5 9SE

MINUTES
of a meeting held in the Acorn Room at Feering Community Centre
Tuesday 19th April 2016 at 10am

Present Members:

Ray Booty (RB) (Chairman)	Katherine Evans (KE)	Martyn Towns (MT)
Jan Arthur (JA)	Louise Fuller (LF)	John Victory (JV)
Bob Drane (BD)	Richard Gray (RG)	
Ed Dixon (ED)	Robert Johnstone (RJ)	

Observers:

Rob Tongue (GLASS), Annette Todd (BHS); Linda Betchley (BHS);
 Steve Day Liability Negotiations Adviser (Network Rail Anglia & South East);
 Nick Eddy, Commercial Scheme Sponsor (Network Rail);
 Andy Kenning (Network Rail).

The following Officers were present in support:

Margaret Shaw (MS) Rural Community Council of Essex (ELAF secretary)
 Shirley Anglin (SA) ECC Public Rights of Way and Localism Officer
 Garry White (GW) ECC Public Rights of Way and Records Manager
 Giles Merritt (GM) Natural England (NE) Lead Adviser England Coast Path Delivery
 (Essex)

Apologies: Doug New (DN)

		ACTION
1	Welcome and introductions	
	Ray Booty welcomed everyone to the meeting and asked everybody to introduce themselves. RJ proposed and JA seconded that Richard Gray be appointed as a member of the Essex Local Access Forum for a 3 year term.	
2	Minutes of previous meeting 8th December 2015 and matters arising	
	Item 3 PRow hierarchy. Category 1.3 should read: 0.25 mile Radius from edge of built-up areas (safe link paths). Item 15 last paragraph should read: The BHS is concerned that if Network Rail implements the 4 crossing closures programmed in Hadleigh Country Park, there will no safely defined ROW railway crossing for the public to use between Benfleet and Leigh – a distance of some 3.5 miles. With these corrections it was agreed that the minutes of the meeting held on 8th December 2015 were a true record. Matters arising not covered on agenda. Vincent Pearce of Colchester Borough Council has been invited to our next meeting.	MS
3	Essex County Council report	
	<i>Update by Garry White.</i> Rights of Way Improvement Plan (RoWIP) The current RoWIP was adopted in 2009 and was linked to the Local Transport Plan (LTP 2).	

<p>In line with the CROW Act 2000, the RoWIP needs to be updated every 10 years. Although publication of update not required until summer 2019, preparatory work will commence later this year with some ELAF engagement.</p> <p>Lead-in time to publication will need to include a 3 month consultation period and sign off by the Cabinet Member prior to update implementation</p> <p>Although not a fundamental change of the document, the update will nevertheless need to set out high level strategy for period 2019 – 2029.</p> <p>During this period there will be changes to the PROW legislation – Deregulation Act; 2026 cut off point for Definitive Map Review; and also implementation of new projects such as the England Coast Path.</p> <p>This will all be set against a backdrop of continuing downward pressure on the PROW Revenue budget.</p> <p>In this regard, the PROW Hierarchy would make the single most significant impact on the RoWIP review in line with an ever increasing need to prioritise resources and redefining what the service can actually deliver.</p> <p>The update will also need to place greater emphasis on PROW from an Asset Management perspective and find ways of successfully competing for Developer funding against all other competing demands as population and development pressure increases</p> <p>In advance of the next ELAF it would be helpful if members could look at the current RoWIP and start to think about particular areas that are of concern, need updating or clarifying.</p> <p>MS will load to the ELAF website: ECC RoWIP 2009</p> <p>Budget 2016/2017</p> <p>Inclusive of the Chelmsford City Council (CCC) SLA grant money, overall PROW Revenue maintenance budget is about £750,000, which represents about a 3% reduction on 2015/16 –the smallest reduction for a number of years now.</p> <p>Works delivery: the vegetation cutting programme will be the same as last year with one prioritised cut on the main promoted routes next month using ECC direct gangs then a main cut using Sub-Contractors over an 8 week period.</p> <p>Capital funding: Major works/surfacing and capitalisation is still to be confirmed but expected to be the same as last year at £400,000.</p> <p>The funding for Local Highway Panels (LHPs), which was another Capital funding source for PROW schemes, has been significantly cut back this year so we are not expecting many PROW projects to be approved by the LHPs, e.g. there is only 1 funded in Braintree District out of 5 proposals.</p> <p>PROW Hierarchy</p> <p>All options for modelling based on costs are still being considered and will be subject to a further report to Cabinet Member in May.</p> <p>It means for this year the annual cutting programme will not be affected at all.</p> <p>Following an initial report in January this year, the Cabinet Member requested that the modelling be adapted to take into account a bias towards the rural network.</p> <p>This shows affordability or otherwise of different degrees of the modelling against current budgets. A re-draft of the report is currently being prepared.</p> <p>PROW in Chelmsford City Council (CCC)</p> <p>Contract will continue for 2016/17 with CCC undertaking vegetation cutting and defect repair work for jobs with job packs being raised by Essex Highways Inspectors (other than for tree cutting which remains with ECC).</p> <p>The CCC have been asked to look at the policy of cutting back hedges as opposed to requesting landowner to do this first, then resort to formal notice after 21 days, which is the correct process.</p> <p>CCC are to be sent a list of paths which need to be cut.</p> <p>SLA still not finalised – currently with legal departments.</p> <p>ECC are scrutinising all work done by CCC as they do all work that is sub-contracted.</p> <p>Shared facility for cyclists and pedestrians</p> <p>Primarily concerns Cycle Tracks conversion orders and retrospective action; also Sustrans route.</p> <p>In line with the new Essex Cycling Strategy, it is understood that a County Cycling officer</p>	<p>ALL MS</p>
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	<p>will be appointed shortly. This officer will provide a focal point for all cycling policy and will enable overlap with PROW related matters to be fully taken into account. Regarding FPs that are coincident with roads – where overwhelming evidence of status, PROW is subsumed into higher rights and will therefore will be removed from the Definitive Map – hence Balckerne Gate for example – a Roman road!</p> <p>RJ commented that where there are cycle paths alongside footways the design does not follow Essex Highway strategy or Department for Transport “Shared use routes for Pedestrians and Cyclists”.</p> <p>GW replied that many schemes were implemented without consultation. Current schemes are being initiated by Essex Highways with funding from the South East Local Enterprise Partnership.</p> <p>It was suggested that we ask Alan Lindsey, ECC Transport strategy officer, who has defined the schemes, to an ELAF meeting. SA will pursue.</p> <p>Byway experimental closures The first tranche comprising 5 byways - Clavering Byway 50; Pentlow Byway 3; Little Henny Byway 1 continuing as Byway 13 Middleton & Byways 13 and 55 High Roding have come to the end of the 18 month experimental period. A decision now has to be made whether to make the seasonal temporary closures permanent with implementation every winter or take no further action. Part of the decision-making process will rely on repeat of the ecological survey first undertaken during summer 2014 to measure the effect of closure on environmental and habitat quality. This will take place in June in time for a report to the Cabinet Member in August – it will provide an interim report given that the second set of closures will be subject to second closures in winter. One of the facets of the temporary closures has been the number of byways that have been successfully allocated LHP funding for surface improvement. The resultant impact on the ecological/biodiversity issues arising from the surface improvement will form part of the baseline analysis for the report. BD asked that the formal report on the first tranche be presented to our July meeting.</p> <p>Mapping Clement Takyi has left ECC but the GIS Mapping project will continue. MapEssex is now on line with advisory Highway Records layer – similar to status of the PROW interactive map with parallel caveats. Anybody can view map but particularly helpful for managing staff resources in Highway Records by self-serve provision for Private Search Companies on behalf of conveyancing solicitors. Highways Information Map is available on the ECC website.</p> <p>Rolling Program This is a 5 year program such that with 12 inspectors 88km of PRoW are inspected by each inspector each year.</p> <p>Essex Tick Rare but recently found in Harlow, Public Health England have responded that it is not dangerous to humans but it is to horses, cattle, sheep, dogs.</p>	<p>SA</p> <p>GW</p>
	<p>Localism</p>	
	<p><i>Update by Shirley Anglin</i></p> <p>Parish Paths Partnership (P3) 11 new Parishes have joined the P3 scheme this year. Volunteer work proposals are coming in, SA is in process of checking (awaiting budget) prior to sending out to PRoW Inspectors for approval.</p> <p>Promotion Access Essex: A new version will be published in April.</p>	

	<p>Website: Vegetation cutting pages are to be refreshed with up-to-date information. Headland Management Scheme(HMS) layer will not be completed as early as had been hoped but scheduled for later in the year.</p> <p>Fault reporting system Information that is automatically sent from the enquiry system does not always match the Inspectors actions. This is being addressed through the technical manual review. Inspectors will have a better understanding of the status they assign to an inquiry and what response this gives the customer. But the system covers many elements of the service, and so not all situations will fit nicely with a status. SA stated that fingerpost issues can be reported under any heading as everything is given to the PRow Inspector.</p> <p>PROW User Satisfaction Survey The survey is now available on the ECC website ECC PRow satisfaction survey. Members are asked to complete and promote. It will also be publicised in Access Essex.</p> <p>Headland Management Scheme New contracts have been sent out to all participants (97). Formalises the one cut payment and the cutting window to reflect ECC procedures. This scheme is closed to new applicants but may be reopened for the England Coast Path. SA plans to review all schedules over the course of the year to implement changes in 2017/18</p> <p>Ease of Use Surveys May surveys are scheduled to begin as usual so PRow Inspectors will be busy during this month.</p> <p>England Coast Path Now entered stage 2 "Develop". NE are meeting with each individual landowner to look at route options and discuss the spreading room.</p>	ALL
4	Network Rail (NR)	
	<p>Steve Day, Nick Eddy & Andy Kenning of Network Rail gave a presentation on the Anglia Level Crossing Reduction Strategy.</p> <p>The time period covered is control period (CP) 5 4/2014 - 3/2019. This covers phases 1 & 2 and the reduction will be by extinguishments and alternative routes. There is no budget for bridges / infrastructure works in phases 1 & 2. Phases 3 & 4, will be in CP6, and will include a budget for major infrastructure works (e.g. bridges).</p> <p>There are 144 Footpath and User Worked Crossing in East of England – being Essex Suffolk Norfolk Thurrock Herts & Southend-on-Sea. 58 are in Essex. NR will publish which crossings they wish to alter in due course – information is not publicly available at present as NR are still consulting with landowners. NR will be able to provide site specific information for the next ELAF meeting on 12 July.</p> <p>Historically the 1980 Highways Act was used to implement diversions, bridging, downgrading of rights or extinguishment, which required Local Authority involvement. The new NR strategy is to use Transport & Works Act (T&W) Orders as a consistent and systematic way of progressing closure of many level crossings simultaneously. This will involve:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Stakeholder consultation • Public consultation • Diversity Impact Assessment • Environmental Impact Assessment • Transparency • Independent Public Inquiry • Compulsory powers <p>This will reduce demands on Highway Authority resources as decisions will be taken by the Secretary of State (SofS). The Order would cover all the changes proposed in a given county. If a formal objection is received after submission to SofS, then that crossing could be removed from the T&W Order.</p>	

	<p>The compulsory powers available under the T&WA, gives NR the power to require a landowner to dedicate land as a PRow. NR are not planning to buy any land.</p> <p>There are no proposals to downgrade Bridleways to Footpaths.</p> <p>Crossings will be extinguished where there is no onward route (e.g. 6 lane A12) or where NR consider that there is a parallel route. Where an alternate route is via a road then appropriate Road Safety audits are being done by external consultants.</p> <p>KE & GW asked if the risk assessment methodology being used was the same for rail and road. Steve Day explained that rail is measured against all other level crossings, so the method is not the same as the road risk assessments that are being carried out.</p> <p>GW asked if the information would be shared with Highway Authority (HA). There was some concern as to whether the road methodology was the same as the HA methodology. NR will share with the Highway Authority after review by NR.</p> <p>There are approximately 12 fatalities per year on 6000 level crossings over the whole country. Anglia is the highest risk area as it has a larger population. Crossings in the rest of SE England were largely consolidated in the 1930-1950s.</p> <p>The infrequency of trains can actually make railways more dangerous.</p> <p>KE noted that the requirement was to make crossings safer before closing them and asked about warning lights & locking gates – for example at Abbots crossing in Ardleigh. Locking gates have to be controlled from a signal box which is not possible.</p> <p>KE asked about Rochford FP17 crossing near Southend airport, which has been closed by a TRO. GW commented that aeroplane noise was not something new. NR stated that they had only recently been made aware of the problem of aeroplane noise drowning out the horn warning signal at the “Golf links crossing”. Now that they have been made aware they cannot ignore the problem. The crossing is close to a station & warning lights would be too expensive. The crossing will stay closed.</p> <p>KE asked about the closure of the non-PRow foot crossing at Hadleigh Country Park, which is ECC land. NR stated that crossings are sometimes closed due to maintenance issues. These crossings – Kersey 1 and 2 – are not included in the closure programme as they are not PRow crossings. The PRow crossing nearest Benfleet station is still closed by a TRO. The other PRow crossing is still open.</p> <p>KE commented that the drainage issues at cattle creeks between Roydon & Harlow would need to be addressed before they could be used as PRow.</p> <p>Linda Betchley requested that parapet heights are suitable for horse riders.</p> <p>Consultants Mott MacDonald, on behalf of Network Rail, are finalising plans, carrying out ecology surveys and contacting affected landowners.</p> <p>Timetable:</p> <p>Late May/June 2016 – Round 1 public consultation events at 12 venues: presenting context and options;</p> <p>July/August 2016 – Round 2 public consultation events: presenting more detail on single option solutions;</p> <p>Specific dates and times of consultation events will be provided to the LAF.</p> <p>This presentation will be circulated.</p>	MS
5	<p>Natural England (NE)</p> <p><i>Update by Giles Merritt</i></p> <p>England Coast Path (ECP)</p> <p>Maldon – Shotley Gate – NE are currently walking the route and meeting with landowners.</p> <p>Public meetings held in January & February 2016 were positive and additional landowners were contacted.</p> <p>NE has received lots of detailed input from the Ramblers.</p> <p>There will be a 2nd round of contact to discuss “roll back” routes. Roll back will happen where the sea wall may be breached or where there is “excepted” land (e.g. industrial sites).</p> <p>There is no plan to reinstate sea wall breaches / build sea walls back again – the route will be realigned inland.</p> <p>The final route is still being discussed and no new routes have yet been decided.</p> <p>NE will meet with stakeholders between now and September 2016.</p>	

	<p>A report will go to the Secretary of State in April /May 2017; then there will be 6-8 weeks of consultation.</p> <p>Burnham-on-Crouch to Shotley Gate is planned to open in 2018.</p> <p>SA reported that NE and ECC held a “visioning” event at Walton-on-the-Naze to involve local businesses and parishes to discuss how the ECP would be promoted.</p>	
6	Road Building	
	<p>A120 Braintree to Marks Tey KE gave feedback on the A120 forum - environment group that she attended with RB in February 2016. Key points from forum: Purpose of Forum is to inform and shape communications and engagement activity to engage environmental groups/interest. Overview of route sifting and environmental assessment will be discussed at the next meeting of the environment group</p> <p>As part of the national strategic road network the A120 is maintained by Highways England (HE). A route options study would normally be undertaken by HE. However ECC has been successful in reaching agreement with the Government to kick start the study with £5m ECC funding. The aim is to undertake a study of possible route options between now and 2017 such that Government can ask HE to process the scheme subsequently with it being included in the second Roads Investment Strategy period 2020 to 2025.</p> <p>Timetable: To Autumn 2016: Route option development; Winter 2016/17: Consultation; Winter/summer 2017: Analysis and responding to consultation; Autumn 2017: ECC recommendation of a preferred route option. Project website is www.a120essex.co.uk</p> <p>GW reported that he is scheduled to meet the consultants.</p> <p>A12 improvements Chelmsford to Colchester. RB reported that there is no current consultation. There are problems with room for slip roads.</p> <p>Lower Thames Crossing RB reported that he had attended an information meeting at Orsett in February 2016. There is a lot of disquiet with Option 3 which is the current preferred route and mainly affects Thurrock. ELAF will only be involved if Option 4 prevails.</p>	
7	Correspondence	
	<p>MS has written to thank Clement Takyi, ECC PROW & Records Data Analyst Highways, for his presentation at the last meeting.</p> <p>Amendments to Essex LAF constitution were returned by Jacqueline Millward of Essex Legal Services. The changes were discussed by RB/KE/LF/MT. MS has contacted Jacqueline Millward to ask for clarification.</p> <p>MS has sent a letter to the Cabinet member for Highway Delivery re Byway experimental closures. The letter & the reply from Cllr Eddy Johnson have been circulated. ECC has discussed the Kent Byway Permit Scheme with Kent Highways PROW officers. It worked well where there was Community Policing, but otherwise had limited success. It will not therefore be suggested in the ECC Interim report on the Experimental Byway Closures.</p> <p>Cllr Johnson has been invited to attend a LAF meeting but as yet we have received no reply.</p>	

	MS has responded to Uttlesford DC Consultation on Statement of Community Involvement asking that Essex LAF be included in the list of stakeholders. MS suggested that if other District Councils have similar consultations then she should be alerted so that we can attempt to raise our profile.	ALL
8	National and regional LAF updates	
	RB & MS attended the East of England Regional Meeting on 15 th December 2015. RB attended the LAF National Conferences on 1 st March 2016.	
9	Website, Social Media, Members Interests	
	MS asked for outstanding biographies for the website . RB has set up a Facebook page for Essex. RB urged members to link to it.	KE/DN/ MT/RG ALL
10	Huddle	
	Current topics include: Consultation on the draft cycling & walking investment strategy – available until 23 rd May 2016. Lost Ways / White Roads There is a new classification of roads that the Highways Authorities must implement from 1 st April 2016. There is a recommendation that it made available online, as there will be lots of queries leading up to the 2026 cut-off. Phil Wadley – author of “Lost Ways” has been invited to our next meeting. KE has attended a BHS course on identifying Lost Ways. KE proposed that the LAF acts as coordinator for the Lost Ways project in Essex – so that all data is a central repository and there is no duplication of effort. GW will need to consider if this is within our remit. We should present a formal proposal to GW.	RB/KE
11	Any other business	
	BD circulated copies of the Auto-Cycle Union Environment Policy. BD highlighted problems occurring on Byways – there are existing legal ways of stopping illegal usage without imposing closures. KE raised the question of the PRow hierarchy and the cutting of only 0.25 mile radius around built up areas. GW replied that the Cabinet Member was interested in category 2 paths outside the Urban network, which is a more expensive option than the original category 1 proposal. GW confirmed that “urban areas” includes settlements such as villages that are not as per the OS definition of an urban area.	
12	Public question time	
	Questions were raised at the User Group meeting that followed the LAF meeting	
	Date of next meetings Tuesday 12 th July 2016 at 2pm. Tuesday 11 th October 2016 10am followed by PRow User Group at 1.30pm. (NB These timings may change) Tuesday January 17th 2017 at 2pm.	ALL

APPENDIX H: Network Rail web page for electronic documentation (April 2017)

(1st) www.networkrail.co.uk → running the railway → our routes → Anglia → Anglia level crossings

URL: www.networkrail.co.uk/running-the-railway/our-routes/anglia/anglia-level-crossings

(2) → Essex and others → list of documents with clickable links including..
Essex and others TWAO - application documents- deposited on the 31 March 2017

(3) → Essex and others level crossing reduction order webpage
with its "archived - not updated" message

<http://archive.nr.co.uk/browseDirectory.aspx?root=&dir=%5cImprovements%5cEssex%20and%20others%20level%20crossing%20reduction%20order>

Screen snip

