



Joint Local Access Forum (JLAF)

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

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Ron Phelps, Deputy to Chairman and Vice Chairman

Reference: S:\Prow\JLAF\JLAF Meetings\JLAF13 upto JLAF14\2007-11-15 JLAF Multiuse advice.doc

Councillor Martin Veal
Chairman, Enterprise and Economic Development Overview & Scrutiny Panel
Bath & North East Somerset Council
Guildhall, High Street
BATH
BA1 5AW

This letter constitutes formal advice from the Joint Local Access Forum (JLAF) for Bath & North East Somerset, Bristol City and South Gloucestershire.

Bath & North East Somerset, Bristol City and South Gloucestershire Councils are 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.

Thursday 15th November 2007

Dear Councillor Martin Veal,

Pedestrian, cycle and equestrian access on multi-use paths.

I am writing to you as Chairman of the Joint Local Access Forum (JLAF) for Bath & North East Somerset, Bristol City and South Gloucestershire.

The JLAF has 20 members, one Councillor from each authority involved and 17 other members with a variety of interests, including those of land managers and of walkers, cyclists and equestrian users. We are a statutory advisor to the three Councils and Section 94 of the CROW Act 2000 defines our statutory function as being to:

“advise as to the improvement of public access to land in the area for the purposes of open air recreation and the enjoyment of the area, and to such other matters as may be prescribed”.

The authorities have a statutory obligation to have regard to that advice. I am writing this letter following a consensus to write to all three councils regarding multi-use routes at the JLAF's meeting of Friday the 2nd November 2007. I take this opportunity for the JLAF's advice to be considered at your Scrutiny Panel meeting on Tuesday 20th November 2007.

PTO

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The JLAF is a statutory body established by the three councils shown below, to provide advice as to the improvement of public access to land in the area of Bath & North East Somerset, Bristol City and South Gloucestershire for the purposes of open-air recreation and enjoyment of the area. Its views do not necessarily represent those of the three councils.



The JLAF advise that routes should be open to all users wherever possible, in order to increase the opportunities for walkers, cyclists and equestrians including horse riders and carriage drivers. Opportunities for disabled users should be considered at all times. This accords with the vision of the Councils' Joint Rights of Way Improvement Plan.

We recognise that there are statutory reasons to exclude some classes of users from particular routes. Any further limitations to use should be evidence based. Routes should be assessed on a case by case basis with a starting assumption of allowing access for all, taking into account the needs of all users.

Nationally and locally available evidence should be considered appropriately and the 12 month trial of equestrian use carried out by Bath & North East Somerset Council provides a useful means to collect such evidence for any existing and all new routes. The provision of access should be based on the actual results of such trials. If results are inconclusive the JLAF would support the continuation of such trials as well as the use of them in other council areas and on newly created routes.

Yours sincerely,

[submitted by email]

Mr Ray Newbigin, Chairman of the Joint Local Access Forum

pp Mr Robin Winfield, Vice Chairman of the Joint Local Access Forum
pp Mr Ron Phelps, Deputy to the Chairman and Vice Chairman of the JLAF.

Copy to: Councillor Charles Gerrish, Cabinet Member for Customer Services, Bath & North East Somerset Council.