



London & South East Region, South Downs

DEVILS DYKE LEISURE PATH OUTLINE PROPOSAL

December 2016

Introduction

This is intended to be a consultative paper setting out an outline proposal to improve pedestrian user access from Devils Dyke junction to The Dyke. This concept is not a new idea and has been discussed at various forums in the past but unfortunately never taken forward. Again it was resuscitated in early 2016 as a result of further approaches and pressure from a number of local user groups and interested parties in the area to do something about improving 'Access for all' to this important part of the South Downs and which has now prompted these enquires with the major stakeholders.



Fig.1

Sustrans 82 Route south of Junction



Fig.2

Start of proposed new Leisure Path

Background

A purpose built leisure / cycle pathway known as 'Sustrans 82' runs parallel with Devils Dyke Road from the main roundabout (near A27) but ends abruptly at the T junction adjacent the Dyke Golf course (see Fig.1). Up to this point the pathway provides a stable and clear unimpeded route for walkers, cyclists, ramblers and wheelchair users wishing to access the South Downs and The Dyke. However the pathway ends abruptly at the junction and it unfortunately does not extend the remaining distance up to the main Dyke car parking area. The reasons for this partial completion are unknown but were most likely down to a lack funding, (refer also to Appendix A – Satellite plan of the area).

Beyond the junction (due north) the remaining pedestrian routes to the Dyke are either via the road that has several hidden bends and is subject to access traffic to and from the main car parking area at the top and because of this is not the safest of pedestrian routes. Alternatively there is a verge running parallel to the roadway.

Purpose

The purpose of this paper is to raise the awareness of this issue within the stakeholder community and put forward a considered outline proposal for improving access to The Dyke from the junction for all who use this area.

Also in view of the wide cross section of stakeholders involved within the envelope of the scheme it is essential that we ascertain if there are any serious objections to its concept and obtain an 'agreement in principle' from each of the stakeholders concerned at this initial stage of the project in order to move forward positively and develop a fully integrated and agreed scheme. It should also be noted that full consultation will take place with all the stakeholder community as the scheme is progressed.

Proposed Scheme

To the north of the Devils Dyke Road junction (opposite the Sustrans 82 path) there is a verge with a single file track (see Fig.2). The track starts at the corner of the junction adjacent the field entrance gate and runs parallel with the road (northerly) up to the car park area near the Devils Dyke pub car park. This track is 'well trodden' and has neither been graded nor modified and undulates with the surrounding terrain. Although it is currently not classified as a 'right of way', clearly it has been used as an access route to the Dyke and the South Downs Way for many years.

In it's present condition this track is totally unsuitable for a significant cross section of users to who would otherwise wish to continue their journey beyond the lower Sustrans 82 path up to the South Downs Way and The Dyke, thus effectively denying their safe and reasonable access to these areas of beauty.

This proposal seeks agreement to upgrade and improve the track from the Devils Dyke Road junction up to the hard standing area adjacent the Devils Dyke pub Car Park by bringing it up to a standard consistent with the lower Sustrans 82 path.

Stakeholder commentary:

The following is a summary of the main stakeholders who appear to have an interest in this initiative together with a brief description of their involvement and should be read in conjunction with Appendix B – Annotated GIS plan.

National Trust

The National Trust is acting specifically as a lead agent in promoting, overseeing and coordinating this initiative and is not seeking to own or possess any additional areas of land identified in this proposal.

South Downs National Park

The proposed route is within the National Park. A preliminary meeting was held with the South Downs National Park Authority representatives 22nd September 2016 to review the concept of the scheme and received a positive reaction. Should planning consent be required it is understood that Mid Sussex District Council deals with planning applications on behalf of the National Park. Pre-advice on planning requirements for this scheme will be sought from MSDC Planning Officer.

West Sussex County Council – Property

With reference to Land Registry title documents the section of land on the verge for this proposal is owned by West Sussex County Council up to the point at which it becomes National Trust. Permission will be required from WSCC to upgrade the verge to incorporate the leisure path.

West Sussex County Council – Highways

The road adjacent the verge is publically maintained as far as the turning head south of the hotel. The scheme does not intend to encroach on the public highway boundary however consultation with Highways Planning will be sought particularly with regard to any verge interface and access points with the roadway.

West Sussex County Council – ‘Rights of Way’

The proposed route would cross two public bridleways 13P and 15P (see also appendix B). Preliminary consultation has taken place with WSCC Rights of Way. Pending authorization the County Council would need to approve a specification before the bridleways could be disturbed and before any path closure to ensure public safety during works.

Scheduled Ancient Monuments (SAM)

An element of the proposed verge route falls within the curtilage of designated a Scheduled Monument and will therefore require consultation and consent from Historic England. It is intended that the nature of the works will be designed to be non intrusive i.e. to cover rather than excavate any sensitive areas.

This should assist with a scheduled monument consent application and aid in the separation of the new path from the adjacent road.

Natural England

In reference to NT GIS it appears that a very small proportion of the proposed verge route passes within an area designated as SSSI towards the end section of the route. Natural England will be contacted and consulted to determine if they would have any objection to this proposal.

South Downs Way

The proposed route intersects with the South Downs Way at a single point on the verge. Consultation with the South Downs Way Trail Officer with regard to verge interface and access points with the SDW.

Tenant Farmer

The land adjacent the verge is owned by Mr. C.D.Williams – Devils Dyke Farm (Land Registry Title No. WSX369722 refers). The proposed route runs along boundary to the field adjacent the verge and also intersects with the entrance to the field at the junction of Devils Dyke Road. Consultation will be sought with regard to the design and configuration of access to the verge in this area.

Summary:

In summary this consultative document outlines a proposed scheme for the improvement of pedestrian access for all up to The Devils Dyke car park area from Dyke Road junction and has been prepared to test the water to establish if there are any serious objections or obstacles to developing this initiative further.

The document has sought to define all the major stakeholders involved and will be circulated to these parties for review and comment in order to achieve 'agreement in principle' as an initial step in taking this initiative forward. In this respect full cooperation is requested from all stakeholder to achieve a positive and successful outcome.

Appendix A





Appendix B Devils Dyke - Leisure Path



0 30 60 120 Meters
1:4,400 on A4

