

Record of officer decision

Decision title:	Proposed Diversion Footpaths ZC85 (part) and ZC86 (part) in the Parish of Leominster
Date of decision:	25 th November 2021
Decision maker:	Interim Service Director, Highways, Environment & Waste
Authority for delegated decision:	<p>Directorate scheme of delegation: updated 22 October 2021</p> <p>Directorate: Economy and Place, section 75.</p> <p>To act on behalf of the council in respect of the legislation specified in the foregoing:</p> <p>Traffic Management Act 2004, Road Traffic Act 1988, Cycle Tracks Act 1984, Highways Act 1980, National Parks and Access to the Countryside Act 1948, New Roads and Street Works Act 1991, Road Traffic Regulation Act 1984, Town and Country Planning Act 1990, Town Police Clauses Act 1847, Traffic Calming Act 1992, Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981</p>
Ward:	Leominster South
Consultation:	<p>Consultations undertaken by the included: -</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Prescribed organisations as per Defra Rights of Way Circular 1/09 – There was no objections to the proposal • Local Member – Cllr. Marsh – No objection to the proposal. • Leominster Town Council - No objection to the proposal. • Statutory Undertakers – No objections received
Decision made:	<p>(a) Public path diversion orders, for definitive footpath ZC85 and ZC86 in the parish of Leominster, are made in accordance with section 119 of the Highways Act 1980 as shown in the draft orders and plans D519 and D532 in Appendix 1 and 2 to this report; and</p> <p>(b) In the event that there are no unwithdrawn objections to the formal advertising of these orders, it is then confirmed as satisfying the criteria in sub section (6) of the above section, for such confirmation.</p> <p>(c) If sustained objections are received, the matter can be passed to the Secretary of State for a decision.</p>
Reasons for decision:	To consider a proposal under the Highways Act 1980, Section 119, to make two public path diversion orders to divert parts of Public Footpaths ZC85 and ZC86 in the parish of Leominster.
Highlight any associated risks/finance/legal/equality considerations:	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Herefordshire Council, who are the applicants, have made the application to divert ZC85 to follow a line that is regularly used and goes over an existing farm bridge. The bridge on the current legal line between points A and B has collapsed and would require replacement at a cost exceeding the cost of the diversion. The proposed route of ZC85 also avoids another water course crossing and two flights of steps all of which are difficult to negotiate and require ongoing maintenance. 2. The landowner requested C-E-B be added as part of the proposal to take the path along an existing track and to avoid a busy compound area. 3. The proposed route is generally flatter and avoids any stiles and

steps and is considered more convenient.

4. The Landowner, Mr. J. Davies, requested the minor diversion of ZC86 to align it with the current approved development at Brierley Court.
5. The costs of processing the diversions and any advertising costs will be met by the budget allocated to the Public Rights of Way service. The landowner will be requested to sign a compensation waiver form prior to an order being made.
6. The Local Member, Cllr. Marsh has no objections.
7. The proposed diversion meets the specified criteria as set out in Council policy and Section 119 of the Highways Act 1980, in particular that: -
 - The proposal is expedient as it benefits the owner of the land crossed by the existing path.
 - The proposal does not alter the point of termination of the path.
 - It is expedient to confirm the order, given the proposal is not substantially less convenient to the public, and it is expedient, having regard to the effect which (i) the diversion will have on the public enjoyment of the path as a whole, including any compensation which becomes payable (ii) the coming into operation of the order would have as respects other land served by the existing right of way and (iii) any effect the new public right of way created by the order would have as respects the land over which the new right is created, including any compensation payable.

Community impact

8. A comprehensive pre-order consultation has been carried out by Balfour Beatty Living Places which included Leominster Town Council, local user groups and statutory undertakers to which there were no objections. See Appendix 2 for response summary.

Environmental Impact

9. This decision / proposal seeks to deliver the Council's [environmental policy commitments](#) and aligns to the following success measures in the County Plan.
 - Improve residents' access to green space in Herefordshire
 - Increase the number of short distance trips being done (can't really change this as it is HC standard wording) by sustainable modes of travel – walking, cycling, public transport

Equality duty

10. The existing route of ZC85 has two flights of steps and five stiles and two narrow bridges along the route and is approximately 690 metres in length. The proposed route has no stiles, has one wide bridge, is level and is approximately 815 metres in length. The proposed and existing routes of ZC86 are the same length and neither have any stiles. Therefore, it is considered there is a positive impact on Herefordshire Council's Equality duty.

Under section 149 of the Equality Act 2010, the 'general duty' on public authorities is set out as follows:

A public authority must, in the exercise of its functions, have due regard to the need to -

- (a) eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other conduct that is prohibited by or under this Act;
- (b) advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it;
- (c) foster good relations between persons who share a relevant

	<p>protected characteristic and persons who do not share it.</p> <p>Resource implications</p> <p>11. The cost of replacing the broken bridge is approximately £27,000. The cost of the diversions is approximately £2,000 plus staff time. If the matter has to be referred to the Secretary of State, the costs associated with any inquiry or hearing will be met by the budget allocated to the rights of way service through the annual plan.</p> <p>Legal implications</p> <p>12. The Council has a discretionary power under Section 119 of the Highways Act 1980 to make diversion orders in relation to public paths where it is 'expedient' to do so. This power is exercisable if it is in the interests of the owners, lessees or occupiers of land to do so or of the public and provided that the termination point of the path is onto the same highway or a highway connected to it. In making such an order the Council must consider any material provisions of its Rights of Way Improvement Plan.</p> <p>13. It is considered that the criteria under Section 119, referred to in paragraph 7 above, are met. Once an order is made it must be advertised as prescribed in Schedule 6 of the Highways Act 1980 and in accordance with the Public Path Order Regulations 1993. A minimum of 28 days must be given for objections to be made from the first publication of the notice of order.</p> <p>14. If no objections are received to the formal advertising of the order, or any received are withdrawn, then the Council may itself confirm the order, provided that it is satisfied that the criteria in Section 119(6) (a) of the Highways Act 1980 are met. These are listed in paragraph 7 above.</p> <p>15. If there are objections which are not withdrawn, then the order will be referred to the Planning Inspectorate which will act on behalf of the Secretary of State to determine the order. The Secretary of State will appoint an Inspector who will either hold an inquiry or hearing or deal with the matter by way of written representations before making a decision on whether or not to confirm the order.</p> <p>Risk management</p> <p>16. Risk/ opportunity</p> <p>There is a risk that if the Order is made as proposed, it may receive objections. If objections are so received, the matter must then be referred to the Secretary of State for a decision, which will place an increased demand on officer time and resources. The costs necessary for this referral cannot be passed onto the applicant.</p> <p>17. Mitigation</p> <p>A comprehensive pre-order consultation has been carried out by the applicant, to which no objections have been received and, therefore, the risk of receiving objections at Order-making stage is relatively low.</p>
Details of any alternative options considered and rejected:	Under the provisions of Section 119 of the Highways Act 1980 the Council has the discretionary power to make diversion orders but has no duty to do so. The Council could therefore reject the application on the grounds that it does not contribute sufficiently to the wider ambitions and priorities of the Council. As the application meets the tests set out in Section 119 of the Highways Act 1980 it may be considered unreasonable for the Council to not make an order.
Details of any declarations of interest made:	N/A