

KCC Countryside Access Service comment on the Shornecliffe Garrison Masterplan (Transport Strategy).

The Countryside Access Service (CAS) within Kent County Council is responsible for the protection and enhancement of public rights of way and open green space in the county. As such the following comments are made with the following areas in mind in conjunction with national, regional and local policies:

- Local transport systems
- Quality of life, health and well being.
- Tourism

Pedestrian and Cycling Links

The report recognises the importance and relevance of the locally important recreation walking and cycling routes.

Public Bridleways

All key bridleways have been correctly identified. The popular and promoted Elham Valley Way is also referenced. The CAS however requests that the Masterplan includes provision for direct link to this route for the enhanced residential population. An East West link would greatly enhance the recreation opportunities of the area and facilitate access to the North Downs.

Public Footpaths

All public footpaths appear to have been identified within the area referred to as “Western Edge”.

A number of footpaths exist along the peripheral boundary of the “Central area”, South East of Shornecliffe Camp have not been mentioned.

It should be noted that existing footpath HF43 between Pond Hill Road, heading towards Valebrook Close, is a “dead-end” route and there is therefore a necessity to provide a connection.

The main primary objectives mentioned are fully supported.

The Key elements of the strategy are broadly supported with a few comments. These being;

- Provide strong east-west and north-south pedestrian and cycle routes through the development, along green corridors.
- Improve footpath routes across the Backdoor Training Area down into the Seabrook Valley.

- Upgrade the pedestrian bridge over the railway line at Horn Street.
- Upgrade the route between Royal Military Avenue and Cheriton High Street, across the railway line, with CCTV, new paving and lighting.
- Upgrade Shorncliffe Road as a key cycle route between the masterplan area, Folkestone West rail station and the town centre.

Comment: The CAS would request a North/South connection between the current “dead end” footpath HF43 to connect with Cheriton Court Road.

As per the summary document, mention of the requested public footpath improvements between Church Road and Cheriton High St should be detailed here.

The provision to meet the needs of disabled people are again supported with additional comments. These being;

- Gradients kept to a minimum of 5% (8% where landings are provided);
- Drop / flush kerbs and tactile surfaces at appropriate locations;
- Handrails / guardrails on ramps and locations of high conflict;
- Minimal provision of street furniture and where it is required, it should be carefully sited;
- Use of seating at appropriate locations;
- Colour contrasting of street furniture and clear signing;
- Audible signals and tactile devices at crossing facilities.

Comments; The CAS would require details of any seating to be provided and would welcome a discussion on the possibility of the replacement of existing steps with ramps and drainage improvements on existing footpaths in the Seabrook Valley.

We would require that a public rights of way improvement plan be produced for the site to establish the exact nature of the changes being proposed. This could also act as a document of objectives.

Transport Strategy Summary

PROW Improvements – Est cost £55,000. Upgrade of public footpaths HF38/HF39 Church Road – Cheriton High St – Est cost £25,000.

The CAS as the relevant Highway Authority is fully supportive of these changes but would require input as to the exact details of the proposals.

Through past consultation the local community has requested a bridleway link through the “St Martins Plain” areas to connect with the promoted Elham Valley Way. The CAS would request that provision is made to incorporate this into the scheme to allow the increased residential population direct access to the countryside and North Downs via this regionally important route.

A plan of the CAS requested links to support the Masterplan objectives to provide a “continuous network” is attached.

All points are made in reference to the following planning guidance;

PPGN17

“ Rights of way are an important recreational facility, which local authorities should protect and enhance. Local authorities should seek opportunities to provide better facilities for walkers, cyclist and horse riders, for example by adding links to existing rights of way networks.”

“In planning for new open spaces and in assessing planning applications for development, local authorities should seek opportunities to improve the local open space network, to create public open space from vacant land, and to incorporate open space within new development on previously-used land. They should also consider whether use can be made of land which is otherwise unsuitable for development, or procure public use of privately owned areas of land or sports facilities.”

Vision for Kent KCC 2006 -.

The following aims of Kent’s Community Strategy should be put into a local context.

Making the coast, countryside and historic environment accessible to all and recognises its contribution to quality of life.

Reducing the environmental impacts of transport by promoting alternative fuels, public transport, walking and cycling.

Developing local rights of way so that they are more useful for trips to public transport stops, local shops, schools and services.

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