

## **LAF recommendations for RBWM Parks and Countryside : Improving the accessibility of walks and green spaces for People with Disabilities**

**December 2019**

### **Background**

A working group within the LAF was set up in October 2018 to advise the LAF on the accessibility (for people with disabilities) of popular walking routes and those with high amenity value within the borough. The main aims of the working group are

1. To make recommendations that
  - Feed into the 2020/21 Milestones Statement and Rights of Way Improvement Plan
  - Result in access improvements to the PROW network and green spaces in RBWM for people with disabilities. This also benefits older people and parents / carers with young children
  - Focus on practical achievements rather than the production of standards
  - Advocate for Inclusive Design in PROW and green space to be an integral part of the planning process
2. To identify key routes / sites in RBWM
  - Places with high potential for developing routes for people with disabilities
  - Popular / heavily used places
  - Start / finish point has good access to parking and/or public transport.

### The importance of information

Everyone planning a walk needs information to decide whether the route is suitable for them. Key aspects include distance, terrain and ground conditions together with other information such as access barriers and resting places of importance to parents with young children, people with disabilities and older people. A standard approach for footpath mapping and information, whether on-site, online or in hard copy, can provide potential users with key information.

### **Approval Process**

- The approach and top-level recommendations were presented by the working group to the Local Access Forum on 26<sup>th</sup> November 2019.
  - The recommendations were unanimously approved by the LAF.
- It was agreed that the next step would be for the working group to meet with Anthony Hurst of RBWM Parks and Countryside and discuss the recommendations

### **Recommendations**

1. RBWM to aim to establish a network of urban, semi-urban and highly used footpaths to be reasonably accessible for people with disabilities, older people and parents / carers with young children.
  - a. The initial six localities to be surveyed are Battlemead, The Green Way, Ockwells Park & Thrift Wood, Cock Marsh, Boulters Lock and the Thames at Old Windsor
  - b. Recommendations from the annual footpath surveys to be considered for inclusion in the annual Milestones Statement and Rights of Way Improvement Plan
2. RBWM to investigate best practice path surface materials that enable people with disabilities to use public rights of way and other footpaths.
  - a. RBWM to use the results to develop a list of suitable surfaces and the circumstances in which they might appropriately be used.

3. RBWM to adopt the signage and information approach used by South Downs National Park for all on line and hard copy maps of green spaces and accessible walks / routes.
  - a. Access for All / Many / Some
  - b. Mapping symbols include Gradients, Resting Places and Access Controls
  - c. Standard information templates
4. RBWM to consider the needs of people with disabilities in all footpath design and improvement programmes. Key aspects to consider
  - a. Access to the route / site
  - b. Appropriate footpath surfaces and width
  - c. Removal of access barriers
  - d. Resting places
  - e. Connections with other footpath / green spaces and transport (parking, bus stops)
  - f. Signage and Information
5. RBWM to develop a footpath survey template for use in areas where access for all or some routes are considered feasible. It should include the following elements
  - a. Footpath surfaces, gradients and condition
  - b. Obstacles (access barriers, stiles, gates, steps)
  - c. Hazards (Tree roots, overhanging or intrusive vegetation, barbed wire)
  - d. Signage and information
  - e. Resting places