READING BOROUGH COUNCIL

PUBLIC PATH DIVERSION AND DEFINITIVE MAP AND STATEMENT MODIFICATION ORDER 2021 - FOOTPATH 21A READING

STATEMENT OF REASON FOR THE ORDER

INTRODUCTION

Public footpaths, bridleways, restricted byways and byways open to all traffic are recorded on Definitive Maps and Statements. These Maps and Statements provide conclusive evidence of the existence of public rights.

Under Section 257 of the Town & Country Planning Act 1990, the Local Authority may make orders for the stopping up or diversion of a footpath, bridleway or restricted byway on receipt of an application. This type of application can only be made where the Local Planning Authority is satisfied that the diversion/stopping-up is necessary to enable development to be carried out in accordance with a planning permission.

BACKGROUND AND PROPOSALS

Footpath 21A runs on the north side of a channel of the canalised River Kennet, between Forbury Road to Gas Works Road. The path is presently at 2 levels, a higher, inland, level, and a lower level, adjacent to the water, which is accessed by steps at each end.

On 10th October 2018 planning permission was granted under planning application number 170509 for the erection of 765 residential units, 5 commercial units, various works to the public realm, including a new riverside square, landscaping, accesses, parking and associated works on the former Homebase/Toys R Us site. Works to the public realm opened up the opportunity for the tiered access between the proposed riverside square and the River Kennet resulting in modifications to the line and width of Footpath 21A. The approved plans incorporate a ramp between the lower and upper levels of the path (in the southwest corner of the site), representing an improvement to the existing arrangement, where step free access to the lowest area of the riverside is not presently possible. Non-material amendments to permission 170509 were approved on 8th February 2021 under planning application number 200888 to alter landscaping, access design and associated alterations.

The proposed alterations to the route provide improved connections to the north through the adjacent development, a replacement of the steps at the western end of the route with a ramp allowing greater accessibility to the river frontage and a greater surveillance for those walking along the route.

The Local Authority is satisfied that the alterations to the route is not substantially less convenient to use than the existing route, or result in a negative effect on public enjoyment of the footpath.

THE ORDER

The Order, if confirmed as made, will modify the Definitive Map and Statement to enable development to be carried out in accordance with the approved planning permission (Planning ref; 170509 and 200888 (Non-material amendments to permission 170509 to alter landscaping, access design and associated alterations).

The effect of the Order will be to divert that length of footpath running from the slope on the eastern boundary of Forbury Road, NE, E and ESE along the north side and abutting the River Kennet to the footway alongside Gasworks Road. Between points A – B, 4.0 metres and points B – E, generally 6.5 metres with an increase at point C to 7.0 metres Between E – F, 4.5 metres and F – H, 2.8 metres and H – J, 5.1 metres to Between point K (6m East of point A) to B, upper footpath, (approximately 12 metres in length), 3.5 metres in width Between point K (6m East of point A) to X, existing steps replaced by ramp to lower footpath (point C), (approximately 23 metres in length), 1.5 metres in width. Between point L to M (approximately 22 metres in length), min 3.0 metres in width Between point M to N, (approximately 31 metres in length), min 2.5 metres in width Between point N to O (approximately 29 metres in length), min 2.0 metres in width, Between point O to point D (approximately 12 metres in length), 2.5 metres width.

The Order will not come into effect until it is confirmed. If the Order is unopposed it may be confirmed by the Council and the Definitive Map and Statement will be modified accordingly and public notice of the confirmation will be given.

If the Order is opposed, the Council must refer the Order and the outstanding representations and objections to the Planning Inspectorate who will appoint an independent inspector to consider the Order and the representations and objections. A hearing or a public local inquiry may be held to hear the objections, or it could be dealt with by written representations. The Inspector may confirm the Order with or without modifications or may decide that the Order should not be confirmed.

OBJECTIONS/REPRESENTATIONS

Any representation about or objection to the Order may be sent in writing to Natalie Lucas, Reading Borough Council, Civic Offices, Bridge Street, Reading 2LU transport.developmentcontrol@reading.gov.uk by no later than 9th February 2022. If no such representations or objections are duly made, or if any so made are withdrawn, Reading Borough Council may confirm the Order as an unopposed Order. If the Order is sent to the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs for confirmation any representations and objections which have not been withdrawn will be sent with the Order.

Under the Local Government (Access to Information) Act 1985 this Council is obliged to make any representations received in response to this notice open to public inspection.