Order Decisions

Site visits made on 4 & 5 October 2016

by Susan Doran  BA Hons MIPROW
an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs

Decision date: 07 November 2016

Order Ref: FPS/M2460/6/10  (referred to as ‘Order A’)
- This Order is made under Section 26 of the Highways Act 1980 and is known as the Leicestershire County Council Public Footpaths M24, M28 and M35 (Parts) Parishes of Staunton Harold and Worthington Public Path Creation Order 2014.
- The Order is dated 24 October 2014 and proposes to create the public rights of way shown on the Order plan and described in the Order Schedule.
- There were 3 objections outstanding when Leicestershire County Council submitted the Order to the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs for confirmation.

Summary of Decision: The Order is confirmed

Order Ref: FPS/M2460/4/27  (referred to as ‘Order B’)
- This Order is made under Section 119 of the Highways Act 1980 and is known as the Leicestershire County Council Public Footpaths M1, M2, M3, M5 and M24 (Parts) Parishes of Breedon on the Hill and Staunton Harold Public Path Diversion Order 2014.
- The Order is dated 24 October 2014 and proposes to divert the public rights of way shown on the Order plan and described in the Order Schedule.
- There was one objection outstanding when Leicestershire County Council submitted the Order to the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs for confirmation.

Summary of Decision: The Order is confirmed

Order Ref: FPS/M2460/3/6  (referred to as ‘Order C’)
- This Order is made under Section 118 of the Highways Act 1980 and is known as the Leicestershire County Council Public Footpaths M4 and M1, M24, M25, M28, M35 (Parts) Parishes of Breedon on the Hill, Staunton Harold and Worthington Public Path Extinguishment Order 2014.
- The Order is dated 24 October 2014 and proposes to extinguish the public rights of way shown on the Order plan and described in the Order Schedule.
- There were 4 objections outstanding when Leicestershire County Council submitted the Order to the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs for confirmation.

Summary of Decision: The Order is confirmed

Preliminary Matters

1. These Orders made by Leicestershire County Council (‘the Council’) comprise a scheme which, they say, aims to provide alternative routes which will be more attractive to the public and enable tenants to manage the land more effectively. Such that, if confirmed, the Orders would result in a reduction of

www.gov.uk/guidance/object-to-a-public-right-of-way-order
the number of cross field paths and take paths out of farmyards and gardens, whilst retaining and in some cases improving the connectivity of the network. Both the Open Spaces Society (‘OSS’) and Melbourne Footpaths Group (‘MFG’), opposing the Orders, point out the routes are historic paths associated with the site of the medieval village of Scalacre.

2. The Orders have been presented as a ‘package’ by the Council. However, although they have been made concurrently none states it is dependent upon another being confirmed. Nevertheless, the Council seeks that the Creation Order be confirmed without modification only if the Extinguishment Order is confirmed. And, that the Extinguishment Order is confirmed without modification only if the Creation Order is confirmed. I shall consider the merits of the Orders against the relevant tests set out below.

3. A total of 4 objections were received to the Orders. None of the parties asked to be heard and the matter is being dealt with by way of the written representations procedure.

4. Order A proposes to create four paths. Of these, three objections concern two of the routes proposed to be created – path M28, points X-Y-Z, and M28, points a1-b1-c1.

5. Order B proposes to divert five paths. Of these, one objection concerns one of the routes proposed to be diverted – path M2, points J-K-L.

6. Order C proposes to extinguish eight paths. Of these, four objections concern six of the routes proposed to be extinguished – paths M4, points K-N; M1, points F-P; M24, points U-s1, points E-F and points C-D; and M28, points A-B.

7. I made an unaccompanied visit to the Order routes when I was able to walk them or view them from public vantage points.

The Main Issues

8. **Order A** is made under Section 26 of the Highways Act 1980 (‘the 1980 Act’) which requires me to consider whether there is a need for a footpath along the lines indicated on the plan attached to the Order and whether it is expedient to create it having regard to the extent to which the path would add to the convenience or enjoyment of a substantial section of the public, or to the convenience of local residents; and the effect the creation of the path would have on the rights of persons with an interest in the land, taking into account the provisions for compensation in Section 28 of the 1980 Act.

9. **Order B** is made in the interests of the owners of the land crossed by the footpaths. Section 119(6) of the 1980 Act therefore requires that, before confirming the Order, I must first be satisfied it is expedient in the interests of the owners of the land that the footpaths in question should be diverted; that the new footpaths will not be substantially less convenient to the public; and it is expedient to confirm the Order having regard to the effect which the diversions would have on public enjoyment of the paths as a whole, the effect which the coming into operation of the Order would have as respects other land served by the existing paths, and the effect which any new paths created by

---

1 Neither the Open Spaces Society nor the Melbourne Footpaths Group object to the proposed extinguishment of M24 (C-D)
the Order would have as respects the land over which they are so created and any land held with it, having regard to the provisions for compensation.

10. I must also consider whether the proposed diversion of Footpaths M2, M3 and M24 satisfy the test set out in Section 119(2) of the 1980 Act in that a diversion order must not alter the point of termination of a path otherwise than to another point which is on the same highway, or a highway connected to it, and which is substantially as convenient to the public.

11. Order C is made under Section 118 of the 1980 Act. This requires that, before confirming this Order, I must be satisfied it is expedient to stop up the footpaths proposed in the Order having regard to the extent that it appears that the paths or ways would, apart from the Order, be likely to be used by the public; and the effect which the extinguishment of the rights of way would have as respects the land served by the paths or ways, account being taken of the provisions for compensation.

12. In reaching my decision, I am required to disregard any temporary circumstances preventing the use of the paths when determining the likely use that might be made of them. In addition, a range of matters may be considered when addressing the expediency of stopping up the paths.

13. I note defra\(^2\) advice as regards the extent to which a creation or diversion order made in association with an extinguishment order would, if confirmed, provide an alternative way to that proposed for extinguishment. This may be taken into consideration in determining whether or not to confirm the extinguishment order\(^3\).

14. In determining whether or not to confirm each order, I must have regard to any material provision of a Rights of Way Improvement Plan (‘ROWIP’) prepared by any local authority for the area (Sections 26(3A), 119(6A) and 118(6A)). In this case no issues have been raised by the parties in this regard. However, I note that the proposals are consistent with the policies set out in the Council’s ROWIP\(^4\).

**Reasons – Order A**

**Whether there is a need for a footpath along the lines indicated in the Order**

Footpath M28 X-Y-Z and a1-b1-c1

15. Together, the lengths of path proposed to be created would provide a link from the west to the footpath network between Scotlands Farm and Staunton Lodge Farm to the east and beyond, and vice versa. Presently, walkers following the promoted recreational route the ‘Ivanhoe Way’ follow Calke Lane and head in the direction of Burney Lane and point E (Footpath M24) on the Order plan (and vice versa). This requires a crossing of the B587, Melbourne Road, where it forms a staggered junction with Burney Lane.

16. Whilst the OSS considers the proposed crossing between points Z and a1 to be subject to greater speed, thereby more dangerous and less likely to be used,

---

\(^2\) Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs

\(^3\) defra Rights of Way Circular (1/09) Guidance for Local Authorities Version 2 October 2009, paragraph 5.54

\(^4\) Section 7.6 ‘Moving Paths’, September 2006, in particular Policies D1, D2 and D3
the most recent data available to the Council\(^5\) is that the majority of vehicles travel at a speed of 55mph in either direction, both where the proposed path crosses the road and to the north of the junction with Burney Lane. There is no evidence of road accidents at the area concerned. Nevertheless, the closer to point B that a walker chooses to cross Melbourne Road, the closer they are to a bend (to the north) where visibility is reduced.

17. The lengths of path proposed to be created offer wide roadside verges where they meet Melbourne Road, good visibility in both directions, and a more direct crossing for onward travel. In addition, they reduce the length of ‘road walking’ along Calke Lane where there is no pavement and the verges are narrower.

18. Taking all of the factors into account, I consider there is a need for the footpath as proposed.

**Footpaths M24 (r1-s1) and M35 (W-k1)**

19. Both paths proposed are already in use on the ground and are waymarked and signed for public use, although neither appears on the Council’s Definitive Map. It is indicated that M35 (W-k1) has been in use in excess of 20 years and could be claimed as a public right of way under the provisions of Section 31 of the 1980 Act. However, I am not aware of any definitive map modification application, nor have I seen any evidence of claimed use in this regard.

20. Taking into account that these paths are already favoured by users, I am satisfied that there is a need for both lengths of path as proposed.

**Whether it is expedient to create a footpath having regard to the extent to which the path would add to the convenience or enjoyment of a substantial section of the public or to the convenience of local residents**

**Footpath M28 X-Y-Z and a1-b1-c1**

21. As stated above, the proposed footpath would provide a crossing point with good visibility in both directions and reduce the amount of road walking. In addition it would provide an alternative to the existing Footpath M28 (points A-B) (proposed to be extinguished) which passes through a working farmyard at Springwood Farm with agricultural and other vehicles entering and leaving at point B\(^6\). In addition, walkers would not need to cross Melbourne Road at a staggered road junction, and/or follow a narrow verge alongside the Farm to reach Footpath M24 (point C). The Staunton Ridgeway (a permissive path) crosses Calke Lane and meets the proposed route at point X, offering further opportunities for circular walks avoiding the road. I consider all of these factors would add to the convenience and enjoyment of path users.

22. Both the OSS and MFG point out that the field corner at point a1 is prone to waterlogging, even in summer months, with photographs provided by the OSS confirming this. Whilst there was no waterlogging at the time of my site visit, I note that the landowner is willing to carry out works to raise the proposed path to overcome this problem, in the event the Order is confirmed. In addition, there are ditches at point a1 and at Z where additional works such as bridges and possibly steps would be required: a matter the Council recognises.

---

\(^5\) 2002 being the date of their most recent survey

\(^6\) Notwithstanding that Footpath M28 (points A-B) is currently unavailable to users
23. The proposal provides a slightly longer route than following the existing one from point F on the Order plan. I also note the view expressed that it zigzags rather than following a direct route. In my view these factors would not significantly detract from one’s convenience or enjoyment whether taking a longer or shorter walk utilising the footpath network. Much of the proposed path follows hedgerows and I accept that this may reduce some views compared to those experienced on a cross field path, but hedgerows can add variety and interest to a walk.

24. Alternative paths are suggested for Footpath M28 (points X-Y-Z) following inside the hedge line either side of Calke Lane, although these would require a similar crossing of Melbourne Road as currently exists.

25. Overall, I consider the proposed creation is expedient for the reasons given above.

Footpaths M24 (r1-s1) and M35 (W-k1)

26. There is nothing in the submissions or from my site visit in this regard to suggest that it is not expedient to create these footpaths.

**Conclusions - Order A**

27. I conclude that the criteria have been met and that the Order A should succeed.

**Reasons – Order B**

*Whether it is expedient in the interests of the owners of the land that the footpaths in question should be diverted*

Footpaths M1 (S-R to q1-m1-R); M2 (J-K-L to J-p1-g1); M3 (M-Q to j1-h1-g1-Q); M5 (H-n1 to alternative H-n1) and M24 (F-G to d1-e1-f1-G)

28. The Order is made in the interests of the landowners to enable them and their tenants to manage the land more effectively. In addition, Footpaths M2 and M4 pass through the curtilages of Scotlands Farm and Scotland Cottage: at the former through an agricultural building and pond. The landowners wish to remove the paths from their gardens.

29. There is nothing to suggest the Order is not in the landowners’ interests, and I am satisfied it is expedient that the footpaths in question should be diverted in this regard.

*Whether the termination point of the diverted route of Footpaths M2 (from L to g1), M3 (from M to j1) and M24 (from F to d1) will be substantially as convenient to the public*

Footpath M2

30. The proposed termination point (g1) is some 20 metres from the existing one (point L) in the same field and, in that respect, I consider will be substantially as convenient to the public. However, it is not on an existing public right of way or other highway, rather it terminates on the proposed alignment of Footpath M3. Should I decide to confirm the Order in respect of Footpath M3, then I consider the test would be met as regards Footpath M2.

Footpaths M3 and M24
31. There is nothing in the submissions or from my site visit to suggest that the proposed termination points of these paths will not be substantially as convenient to the public. Indeed, as regards Footpath M3, whilst the termination at j1 is further along Burney Lane from the existing one, point (M), I consider it is more convenient for users as it is opposite Footpath M6, requiring only a short crossing of the road for onward journeys. For Footpath M24, point d1 is only a few metres from point F, the existing termination, and on the same footpath.

**Whether the new footpaths will not be substantially less convenient to the public**

**Footpath M2 (J-K-L)**

32. The new footpath would be some 17 metres shorter than the existing one at 323 metres rather than 340 metres in length. In terms of its direction of travel, the OSS considers it less convenient as it ‘pushes’ walkers around the edge of the field. However, it appears to me to follow a broadly similar direction, would be easy to follow on the ground, and in other respects similar to the conditions experienced on the existing route. I conclude it will not be substantially less convenient to the public.

**Footpaths M1 (S-R to q1-m1-R); M3 (M-Q to j1-h1-g1-Q); M5 (H-n1 to alternative H-n1) and M24 (F-G to d1-e1-f1-G)**

33. There is nothing in the submissions or from my site visit to suggest that these proposed paths will be substantially less convenient to the public as regards the direction of travel, length and difficulty of walking in terms of the surface, width and gradient.

**Whether it is expedient to confirm the Order having regard to the effect the diversions would have on public enjoyment of the paths as a whole; and the effect which the coming into operation of the Order would have with respect to the land served by the existing rights of way; and the effect which any new public rights of way created by the Order would have with respect to the land over which they are so created and any land held with it, having regard to the provisions for compensation**

**Footpath M2 (J-K-L)**

34. The OSS considers there would be a detrimental effect on enjoyment as the diversion takes users away from the direction of travel of the existing path, a south-westerly/north-easterly route. However, I find the proposed path to be broadly similar to the existing path in terms of direction. The main difference is that it skirts around the garden area of Scotlands Farm. Many users would find such a route more enjoyable than passing through a private garden where they may feel less comfortable. Elsewhere along the routes the views and gradients are similar, as is their length.

35. An alternative route is suggested that would avoid passing through the curtilage of Scotlands Farm to connect with Footpath M4 (J-p1-K). Whilst I can see some merit in this, I agree with the Council that walkers are more likely to take a diagonal route across the field from point p1 rather than head to K.

36. The area is said to be the site of a medieval village and Objectors consider the paths should be preserved as ancient routes of great historic significance.
Although the actual location of the medieval village is not stated, it is possible that some, many or perhaps all, of the footpath routes originated in this period. I appreciate that the history of an area can contribute to the enjoyment of users. However, I am not persuaded that any of the routes proposed to be diverted pass by historic features or follow routes of particular historic significance that would merit their retention on their current alignments.

37. No issues have been raised in respect of the effect of the proposal on the land.

Footpaths M1 (S-R to q1-m1-R); M3 (M-Q to j1-h1-g1-Q); M5 (H-n1 to alternative H-n1) and M24 (F-G to d1-e1-f1-G)

38. There is nothing in the submissions or from my site visit to suggest that the public’s enjoyment of these paths as a whole would be adversely affected. The land is within the same ownership and no detrimental effects have been identified in relation to it. The issue of compensation has not been raised.

**Conclusions - Order B**

39. I find it is expedient in the interests of the landowner that the footpaths be diverted. Putting to one side for a moment the issue regarding the termination point of Footpath M2, I conclude that the other criteria are satisfied in respect of all the paths, such that the Order should be confirmed. Consequently, I find that since the proposed diversion of Footpath M3 meets the tests, I further conclude that point g1 of Footpath M2 will therefore terminate on a highway. It follows that the Order should be confirmed as a whole.

**Reasons – Order C**

**Whether it is expedient to stop up the footpaths in question having regard to the extent to which it appears that the paths would, apart from the Order, be likely to be used by the public**

Footpath M1 (points F-P)

40. Presently points F-P form part of a direct footpath linking Melbourne Road and Burney Lane. For the first section from F, through an arable field, the degree of use was difficult to tell from observing the ground at the time of my site visit. The second section to P passed through a recently worked field where there was almost no evidence of footfall. It is a path that the OSS and MFG say is well or regularly used on the ground.

41. Users currently have a choice from points F or P of using this path or existing Footpath M5 (points F-n1-H-L) and Footpath M2 (points L-P) and the proposed alternative route for Footpath M5 (points n1-H). Thus Footpaths M5 and M2 offer an alternative route which many will find convenient. However, the OSS considers Footpath M5 offers both inferior views and surface conditions compared with Footpath M1 which is higher, affording wider views. I agree that the views are more open on Footpath M1 and this may be a factor for users to choose it as a route. However, there is no information about the actual levels of use of either this path or its alternative by way of comparison.

42. Had the Order not been made, there is nothing to suggest to me that the public would not use the footpath. On the evidence available to me and from my observations on site, I consider that likely use would be low to moderate.

Footpath M4 (points K-N)
43. Footpath M4 provides a link from Burney Lane and Footpath M7 to the north from Breedon and Wilson, with the network of footpaths south of Scotlands Farm. The Council says the existing line is not being used, as confirmed by the tenant of the land, and its few users tend to follow the hedgerow and head south along Footpath M3. Parts of the route are presently unavailable for use. However, it is evident that use is taking place alongside the hedge from point N to point h1, where there is a stile. The OSS and MFG refer to the path’s ancient origins and that it is an attractive and enjoyable much needed route with views towards Breedon-on-the-Hill Church.

44. There is an alternative route created by the proposed diversion of Footpath M3 (h1-j1) for those heading south towards Staunton Farm, and with Footpath M2 (j1-p1-g1-h1) which users may find convenient to reach Burney Lane, although this requires a little more road walking along Burney Lane in the other direction to link with Footpath M7.

45. Had the Order not been made, and were the path fully available, there is nothing to suggest to me that the public would not use part or all of it. Again, on the evidence available to me and from my observations on site, I consider any likely use would be low to moderate.

Footpath M24 (points U-s1)

46. Presently points U-s1 form part of a direct footpath linking Nottingham Road and Burney Lane. It provides a link with existing Footpath M35, via Nottingham Road and Long Hedge Lane, and with proposed Footpath M35, although currently it is unavailable for use.

47. Staunton Lodge Farm, located to the west of the footpath, is a Grade 2 listed 16th Century moated site and can be seen from the path, which MFG say is an ancient route. The Farmhouse is a reason why the OSS considers the path should be retained for public use, albeit with a diversion to link opposite proposed Footpath M35 which they, MFG and Mr Peters consider would form a more suitable route. In addition, the path crosses a stream which can add interest to a walk. I noted at my site visit that part of the Farmhouse can be seen from Footpath M25.

48. There is an alternative route from proposed Footpath 35 and along the wide grass verge beside Nottingham Road to Footpath M25. This is a longer route exposed to traffic noise; although the same is true for walkers proceeding from point U to point V in the direction of Worthington, which itself is a greater distance, and requires retracing one’s steps back to point W when following the footpath network. The Council says the distance between point k1 on proposed Footpath 35 and Footpath M25 is just over half that from point U to Long Hedge Lane, and 90 metres between proposed Footpath M35 and point U.

49. It is my view that given the choice some users might prefer to follow Footpath M24 if proposed Footpath 35 were created, as this a more direct route. However, others may prefer to follow the surfaced Footpath M25 avoiding the arable and pasture fields of Footpath M24 which may be muddy at times, although the verge alongside Nottingham Road can be uneven. I consider that likely use of the path would be low to moderate.

Footpath M24 (points C-D, E-F) and Footpath M28 (points A-B)
50. Footpath M24 (points E-F) forms part of the Ivanhoe Way, and is described by the OSS as a well-used path which remains dry in winter, and by MFG as heavily walked ancient route offering pleasant views. Footpath M24, points C-D, does not form a continuation of the promoted walking trail. However, together the paths form part of a much longer direct route from Nottingham Road across Burney Lane to Melbourne Road. Footpath M28, points A-B, is a natural continuation for the Ivanhoe Way although is presently unavailable, walkers following Calke Lane as a continuation of the recreational route.

51. There is an alternative to Footpath M24, points F-E and C-D, and Footpath M28, points A-B in the proposed Footpath M28, points X-Y-Z and a1-b1-c1, and which the Council comments would serve the same purpose.

52. It is suggested that the reason for extinguishing Footpath M24 (points E-F) is to enable housing development in the field. However, there is other legislation to deal with public rights of way that may be affected by planning matters, and I have not attached weight to this argument in my consideration of the route.

53. I note the need for the path expressed by Mr Stacey who lives alongside it and whose family use it regularly for dog walking.

54. Footpath M24 (points C-D) is, in my view, unlikely to be used to any degree, if at all: it takes users away from the direction of travel to a bend in the road which reduces visibility when crossing for onward journeys on the footpath network. Footpath M28 (points A-B), if made available, passes through a working farmyard which some users may find agreeable, but others not. I consider its likely use would be low. However, I consider Footpath M24 (points E-F) since it forms part of a local long distance walk, would be likely to be used to a moderate extent.

Footpath M35 (points V-W)

55. This footpath connects Footpath M35 with Long Hedge Lane and is presently unavailable at point V. The Council believes it is not being used, and it does not link directly with the footpath network at its southern end. However, both the OSS and MFG consider it is used and forms a circular route for users from nearby Worthington, for example for dog walking and jogging. This was not evident at my site visit. MFG further argues that it would be needed in the event the underpass, which carries the A42 overhead, through which the proposed route of Footpath M35 passes, became structurally unavailable. There is no evidence to support this view.

56. I consider likely use of this path would be low.

Footpath M25 (r1-T)

57. This path provides a short link between Footpaths M24 and M25. There is nothing in the submissions to indicate that it is used by the public, and no objections to its extinguishment have been made. Apart from the Order (and subject to Footpath M24 (points s1-T-U) being confirmed), I conclude any use is likely to be minimal.

The effect which the extinguishment would have as respects land served by the paths, account being taken of the provisions as to compensation

---

7 I understand the landowner is willing to offer Mr Stacey private access to the footpaths to the south, should the Order be confirmed.
58. Confirmation of the Order would enable the landowners and their tenants to manage the land more effectively having regard to the stated aims (paragraph 1). No adverse effects on the land served by the Footpaths have been identified. The issue of compensation does not arise.

The effect of the creation and diversion orders

59. A range of arguments have been put forward by the OSS and MFG in particular as regards the proposed extinguishments and I note their concerns about the cost of altering the network, that some of the paths proposed, in particular by Order A, are considered less congenial than those they would in effect replace, and the view that the existence of a possible alternative path should not be a reason to extinguish another.

60. In reaching my decision I do not have to be satisfied that the paths proposed for extinguishment are not being, or are not likely to be used in order to conclude they are not needed for public use. I could confirm the Order if I concluded that a path was likely to be used to a limited extent but was not actually needed for public use. Furthermore, as noted above, I can give consideration to the extent to which a concurrent creation order (Order A) and/or diversion order (Order B) would provide an alternative path.

61. If the Order were to be confirmed then there would be a cost and a period when maps and walks publications would not reflect changes that had come into effect on the ground. However, this in my view can be overcome by sensitive way-marking and informed guidance on the ground. Nevertheless, the package as proposed would not result in a lack of continuity in respect of the local long distance walk (the Ivanhoe Way). The 1980 Act provides for paths to be created, diverted or extinguished, subject to the necessary tests being met. That routes which are the subject of this Order may be promoted as forming part of a long distance walk is not necessarily, in my view, reason enough not to confirm it.

62. I have concluded above that all the paths proposed to be extinguished would be likely to be used by the public to a greater or lesser degree, in some cases if made available, and were it not for the Order itself. In finding that there would be such use would, ordinarily, lead to the conclusion that it is not expedient to extinguish the paths. However, I have concluded above that Order A, the creation Order should be confirmed. In considering the Orders together, as a package, I consider that the paths proposed to be created provide satisfactory alternatives to those proposed to be extinguished, achieving the same purpose and offering similar experiences for the user.

63. It follows, in my view, that the public would not be disadvantaged by the extinguishment of the footpaths as proposed.

Conclusions - Order C

64. In view of my findings above, I conclude that the Order should be confirmed.

Overall Conclusions

65. Having regard to these and all other matters raised in the written representations, I conclude that Order A should be confirmed; Order B should be confirmed; and Order C should be confirmed,
Formal Decisions

Order A
66. I confirm the Order.

Order B
67. I confirm the Order.

Order C
68. I confirm the Order.

S Doran
Inspector