

Leeds Local Access Forum

Tuesday, 15th May, 2007

PRESENT: Councillor Willison in the Chair

Councillors C Fox, Phillip Maude and
Dorren Lawson

IN ATTENDANCE: Laura Pilgrim, Governance Services
Joanne Smyth, Parks & Countryside
Roger Brookes, Parks & Countryside
Paul Bowers, Legal Services

29 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies were received from Mr. Fred Hirst.

30 ELECTION OF CHAIR AND VICE-CHAIR

Dr. M. Willison was elected as Chair of the Leeds Local Access Forum for the period covering May 2007 to May 2008.

Doreen Lawson was elected Vice-Chair of Leeds Local Access Forum for the period covering May 2007 to May 2008.

31 MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING

The minutes of the last meeting of the Leeds Local Access Forum held on Tuesday 20th February 2007 were approved as a correct record.

RESOLVED - That the minutes be approved.

32 MATTERS ARISING

i) Parlington

Joanne Smyth advised the Forum that it had not been possible to withdraw the objections in relation to this matter. The local authority was not also able to use concurrent Extinguishment/Creation Orders as they were illegal. An option for the local authority was to look at the issue from scratch.

ii) Annual Report

The Annual Report was now available on line on the Leeds Local Access Forum Website.

iii) Open Access Natural England

The Chair advised that he had emailed Hilary Scott, Natural England's LAF co-ordinator for Yorkshire & Humber attaching a copy of the letter from the Forum sent and a revised bid to the Access Management Grant Scheme, asking her to enquire why the Forum had not had a reply. A response had yet to be received. An update would be made at the next meeting.

RESOLVED – That the updates be noted.

33 RE-APPOINTMENT OF MEMBERS OF THE FORUM WITH NEW REGULATIONS AND DEFRA GUIDANCE

The Forum considered a report presented by the Secretary which advised Members of the details of terms of office and information relating to the re-appointment. The report also advised of the changes to the regulations which related to local access forums and new guidance published by the Department of the Environment, Farming and Rural Affairs (DEFRA).

The Local Access Forum (England) Regulations 2007 (Regulations 2007) and the Forum's Terms of reference state that before appointing a member the appointing authority must advertise the vacancy in a local or regional newspaper and their website. The appointing authority must also consult such persons as they consider appropriate. Every effort must be made to ensure a reasonable balance was maintained between all those who were eligible to be a member of the Forum. Members of the Forum who wished to continue their membership were requested to notify the Secretary. The Secretary had received notification that Fred Hirst had recently resigned from the Forum.

The Secretary advised that previous attempts to attract new members over the last year were unsuccessful and that it was a requirement of the Regulations 2007 that new members were appointed to fill vacancies.

Members of the Forum suggested the following organisations should be contacted to nominated members:

- Country Land Owners Association
- British Horse Riding Association
- Leeds Cycling Forum

It was also agreed that Parish Councils and Councillors should be contacted in order highlight the work of local access forums and to seek nominations for members. The Secretary agreed to work with officers to recruit new members and expand the interest areas involved in the Forum.

A nomination had been received from Mr. Steven Wood who was interested in becoming a Member of the Forum. Mr. Wood was a user of public rights of way and also had connections with parish/town councils. Joanne Smyth had met with Mr. Wood to discuss the role of the Local Access Forum and the work of Members

The Chair drew attention to the Regulations 2007 which were included for Members' information. Officers had made the necessary amendments to the Forums Terms of Reference to reflect the new powers and role of local access forums. The 'Guidance on Local Access Forum in England' issued by DEFRA had previously been circulated to Members for their information and assistance. The Chair particularly drew attention to Annex A which contained guidance on matters which forums could give advice.

RESOLVED -

- a) That Members of the Forum who wish to be re-appointed contact the Secretary.
- b) That the Secretary work with officers to recruit new members.
- c) That Mr. S. Wood be appointed as a Member of Leeds Local Access Forum.
- d) That the Local Access Forum (England) Regulations 2007 and 'Guidance on Local Access Forum in England' be noted.

34 PROPOSED AMENDMENTS TO THE TERMS OF REFERENCE

The Rights Of Way Improvement Manager presented the proposed changes of the Leeds Local Access Forum's Terms of Reference for approval. The changes to the Terms of Reference incorporated the Regulation 2007 and incorporated the guidance issued by DEFRA on local access forums. Changes had been made to the recruitment of new members to the Forum as it was felt that the previous method was too rigorous. New Members would now be selected by the Chair, the Secretary and the Countryside and Access Manager.

The Forum welcomed the changes to the Terms of Reference and recommended that in relation to section 9 the word 'represent' should be replaced with 'representative', as per the Regulations 2007. This would enable the Forum to recruit members from a wider base. The Secretary advised that it would be appropriate to add a quorum to the terms of reference and suggested that the quorum should be a third of the membership excluding vacancies.

RESOLVED - That the Terms of Reference be approved with the following amendments:

- a) That the quorum of the Forum will be one third of the membership excluding vacancies.
- b) That paragraph 9 be amended to replace the word 'represent' to 'representative'.

35 GATING ORDERS

The Forum received three separate reports from the Director of Neighbourhoods and Housing concerning requests to implement Gating Orders at the following locations:

- Back Nowell Terrace / Back Nowell Crescent Burmantofts, Leeds
- Back Ashville Avenue / Back Ashville Grove / Back Ashville Terrace / Back Ashville Road, Burley, Leeds
- Back Sanduhurst Grove / Back Chatsworth Road, Harehills, Leeds

Members hear that the Orders would have the effect of temporarily closing the public highway at the three sites by installing gates across footpaths / carriageways due to high levels of crime and anti-social behaviour in the locality. As a prescribed consultee in relation to the making of Gating Orders, the views of the Forum were sought.

Discussion then ensued around the following points:

- There was little objection to the planned gating orders and widespread support from the residents.
- The crime statistics were not robust and required further information in line with section 129A (3) (b) of the Highways Act 1980.
- The reports referred to an 'affected area' but did not specify what this meant or what the affected area was.
- As Gating Orders were temporary the Forum requested further information on the procedure to review such Orders.

The Forum noted the information contained in the reports and raised no objections to any of the Orders. The Forum requested that the Secretary should write to the appropriate officer to address the issues raised.

RESOLVED –

- a) That the Gating Orders be approved.
- b) That the Secretary write to the appropriate Officer to address the concerns raised.

36 ANNUAL REPORT 2006/07

The Forum received the Leeds Local Access Forum the Annual Report of the Leeds Local Access Forum for 2006-2007 for comment and consideration. The Annual Report was a requirement of DEFRA Guidance and conformed to the recommended structure. Its purpose was to outline the work of the Forum over the last year. Members' comments were requested for inclusion in the report. In the discussion of the items the following comments were made:

- The period which the report covered should be April 2006 to March 2007 and not March 2006 to March 2007.
- In paragraph 10. no information with regard to Gating Orders had been included. Members requested that further information was added such as Gating Orders were temporary.
- Paragraph 6. on Vacancies highlighted that the recruitment procedure was too bureaucratic.
- With regard to attendance, information should be provided on when attendees were called to the meeting and not just when they attended.

Officers agreed to take these comments on board and make the necessary changes to the document.

RESOLVED – That the comments of the Forum be noted and the Annual Report 2006-2007 be noted.

37 PRESENTATION FROM THE BRITISH CANOE UNION ON THE RIVER ACCESS CAMPAIGN

The Secretary advised the Forum that a representative was unable to attend. Arrangements would be made to ensure the presentation would be made at a future meeting.

38 WEST LEEDS COUNTRY PARK AND GREEN GATEWAYS DRAFT MANAGEMENT PLAN

The Forum received, for consideration and comment, the first draft of the West Leeds Country Park and Green Gateways Management Plan. The long term visions of the West Leeds Country Park and Green Gateways Initiative was to preserve greenspace within the West Leeds Country Park and Green Gateways area, and to make the area accessible for public recreation. The Management Plan aimed to support this vision by identifying the key sites which were currently owned or managed by Parks and Countryside together with the Public Rights of Way within the project area. The aim was to explore what made them special and identify existing and potential threats. Action plans would be proposed based on consultation and site assessment.

Discussion ensued around the following points:

- Didy Metcalf attended Focus Group meetings on behalf of the Forum.
- Elaine Hill, the Project Officer, was in the process of producing six leaflets on the six compartments the Management Plan covered and was working in conjunction with Officers involved in the Rights of Way Improvement Plan (ROWIP).
- The Local Development Framework was not included in the Plan.
- The Plan highlighted areas for further joint work with ROWIP and that both plans should link up.
- The minutes, leaflets, draft plans etc should be included in the Council's website.

- There should also be greater interface with other plans such as the Local Development Framework, West Leeds Green Gateway Plan. The inclusion of transport and access to the areas covered would also be beneficial.
- The Plan gave the potential to focus on areas with a view to work closer with local communities. For example the Ranger Service had 6 Rangers which worked with over 107 groups which had the potential for a significant number of voluntary hours available. The Rangers had also worked with the police in a number of areas, such as off road motorbike riders. One Sunday there had been 35 Fixed Penalty Notices issued in relation to this matter.

The Forum welcomed the Plan, in general, as a positive step forward in improving access and quality of green spaces in Leeds. A formal response would be agreed with the Chair and sent to the appropriate Officer. An invitation to attend a future meeting of the Forum would be extended to Elaine Hill to provide a presentation on the development of the Plan.

RESOLVED –

- a) That the Plan be noted and supported.
- b) That a formal response be sent to the appropriate officer.
- c) That Elaine Hill be invited to a future meeting of the Forum.

39 RIGHTS OF WAY IMPROVEMENT PLAN

Joanne Smyth tabled the Draft Rights of Way Improvement Plan for consideration. The Forum was advised that the ROWIP was more than a transport plan and could not be funded through the Local Transport Plan. The document would be nearing completion to go out to consultation. Local authorities would have to be robust and creative in attracting funds to projects. There were some instances where local communities could tap into funds that were not available to the local authority. It was hoped that the Council could work with community groups to access funds. Members were requested to submit their comments to Joanne Smyth for inclusion in the consultation as soon as possible.

In the discussion of the item the following issues were raised:

- There were alterations and typos to be correct before consultation.
- Appendix 10 outlined the number of Definitive Map Modification Order (DMMO) issues. Not all authorities were in the position to reach their target as there were an average of five DMMOs dealt with a year at a cost of c.£3,500 each with a level of high input from officers.
- The main problem of the backlog of DDMOs was that it could prevent development. It would be advisable to lobby the Government to look at this issue.

Joanne Smyth advised the Forum that the final draft of the consultation document would be distributed to Members. The Document would be submitted to Director and Lead Members before a 12 week consultation period . Copies would be available online, on request and in libraries etc.

RESOLVED – That any amendments and comments on the Draft Rights Of Way Improvement Plan be submitted to Joanne Smyth as soon as possible for inclusion in he consultation document.

40 ITEMS FOR THE NEXT MEETING

The following items were proposed for the next meeting of the Local Access Forum:

- Local Development Framework
- British Canoe Union and River Access Campaign
- Forward Work Programme
- Rights of Way Improvement Plan
- West Leeds Country Park and Green Gateways Management Plan

41 DATE AND TIME OF THE NEXT MEETING

The next meeting of the Leeds Local Access Forum will be held on Tuesday 17th July 2007 at 6.30 p.m.

(Note: The meeting opened at 18:35 and closed at 22:25)