

Leeds Local Access Forum

Tuesday, 9th October, 2007

PRESENT: Dr. Mike Willison in the Chair

Councillor J Dunn, Councillor C Fox,
Doreen Lawson, Didy Metcalf and Steven
Wood

IN

ATTENDANCE:

- Paul Bowers, Principal Legal Officer
- Roger Brooks, Rights of Way Development Officer
- Bob Buckenham, Assistant Countryside Access Manager
- David Feeney, Head of Planning and Economic Policy
- Laura Pilgrim, Governance Services Officer

52 Apologies for Absence

Apologies were received from Phillip Maude.

53 Chairs Opening Remarks

The Chair welcomed two new Members to the Forum, Mr. Steven Wood representing users of local rights of way and Councillor Jack Dunn who had been appointed by Leeds City Council. The Chair also welcomed David Feeney, Head of Planning and Economic Policy and Bob Buckenham, Definitive Map Planning Officer who were also in attendance.

54 Minutes of the Previous Meeting

The minutes of the last meeting of the Leeds Local Access Forum held on Tuesday 17th July 2007 were approved as a correct record.

RESOLVED – That the minutes be approved.

55 Matters Arising From the Minutes of the Last Meeting

There were no matters arising from the minutes of the last meeting which were discussed.

56 Leeds Local Development Framework

The Forum received a presentation from David Feeney, Head of Planning and Economic Policy on an overview of the Local Development Framework (LDF), its background and position in relation to other policy documents.

The Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 introduced the LDF following the changes prompted by the National Legislation Planning Green Paper 'Planning – Delivering a Fundamental Changes' (December 2001). The Act 2004 introduced the LDF to replace the Unitary Development Plans (UDPs). The LDF was intended to consist of a series of plans with a greater emphasis on spatial awareness and the environmental, economic and social impact of development. UDPs had previously focused on land usage issues. The LDF was constituted of a number of policy documents a number were compulsory such as the Core Strategy, Statement of Community Involvement and the Annual Monitoring Report. Other documents such as Supplementary Planning Documents and Area Action Plans were optional.

The Head of Planning and Economic Policy then went on to outline the position of the LDF in both national and regional strategies such as within Regional Spatial Strategies (RSS) which were to replace Regional Planning Guidance. The Forum was advised that the policies set under the UDP would continue to be used until the policies under the LDF were gradually phased in. Due to the high level of public interest in the LDF the consultation process and the introduction of new policies was taking a long time.

There was currently a consultation on the Regional Plan proposed for the area which would close in December 2007. Under this Consultation the proposed housing allocation for Leeds had increased significantly to 4300 dwellings to meet Government targets. This figure was calculated taking into consideration issues such as housing need and economic performance.

A number of Area Action Plans (AAPs) had been developed for Leeds. Action Plans were in different stages in development for areas in need of urgent regeneration: the City Centre, Aire Valley, East and South East Leeds and West Leeds Gateway. All required a period of public consultation. The East and South East Leeds Area Action Plan had completed its 'Preferred Options' consultation stage and the Aire Valley Area Action Plan was shortly to complete the same consultation which would close in November 2007. West Leeds Gateway would open for public consultation on preferred options early in 2008.

The Core Strategy aimed to set out the Council's vision for Leeds for the next 20 years and was the principal document of the LDF. The Issues and Alternative Options document which had been prepared would open for consultation in October for a six week period. The Core Strategy looked at Leeds in a series of thematic ways and provided consultees with a number of future scenarios on development in the future. The Consultation documentation included a series of questions which asked respondents to consider environmental protection, social inclusion and economic development.

In the discussions which followed a number of issues were discussed:

- The Guidance on Local Access Forums in England advised of the areas where the Local Access Forum should be consulted. As the Core Strategy was covered in the areas outlined in the Guidance the Chair proposed to convene a Special meeting of the Forum to discuss in greater detail the LDF Core Strategy and to produce a response on behalf of the Forum. With the agreement of the Forum and officers the date was confirmed as 20th November 2007.
- Area Action Plans also looked at housing need in the areas and improving interaction and accessibility between different areas.
- During the consultation period there would be a number of 'drop-in' days for both the LDF Core Strategy and the AAPs to address any concerns.
- The Forum raised its concerns over the proposed increase housing allocation for Leeds and the probable impact it may have on green spaces and the Green Belt.
- The UDP, which was currently in operation, did identify green spaces which were mapped. These areas would be protected until the LDF became operational. It was hoped that these areas would be protected and enhanced under AAPs.

RESOLVED:

- a) That the Head of Planning and Economic Policy be thanked for his presentation.
- b) That a Special Meeting of the Leeds Local Access Forum be convened for 20th November 2007 to discuss the Local Development Framework Core Strategy Consultation Document.

57 West Leeds Country Park and Green Gateways Management Plan

Members noted that the Officer had not been able to attend the meeting and that an update would be provided at the next meeting.

RESOLVED – That an update on the West Leeds Country Park and Green Gateways Management Plan be provided at the next meeting of the Forum.

58 Open Access and Rights of Way Improvements Plan Update

Open Access

In relation to Open Access there was little progress to report to the Forum and officers were still limited in what funds were available to them as identified in the letter from Natural England contained in the agenda. Officers were working with BTCV with regard to Hawksworth Moor pathways. A joint meeting had been held with Bradford City Council to develop a Comprehensive Management Plan for Moorland in which Bradford would be taking the lead.

Regarding the suggested Bridleway at Rombals Moor Officers were still waiting for action from Bradford City Council. It was hoped that the Riever Reservoir footpath link would be developed wide enough to be upgraded to a multi-user path in the

future however the path was currently isolated as it led to footpaths only at the moment.

Rights Of Way Improvement Plan (ROWIP)

The Forum noted that the ROWIP consultation document had not been published as expected as the Chief Recreation Officer and the Executive Member for Leisure Services had not met to approve the document. The consultation document had been available for approval since the last meeting of the Forum and with the statutory requirement of a 12 week consultation period the ROWIP would now fail to meet the statutory deadline for completion. Members of the Forum wished to have their concern and disappointment regarding the inability to approve the document and the significant delay its progress minuted. The Forum also resolved that their concern in this matter be conveyed in a letter to the Chief Recreation Officer and the Lead Member for Leisure Services. The Chair also requested that all future agendas of the Forum were sent to the Chief Recreation Officer and the Lead Member to ensure that they were up to date with the work of the Forum in all matters including ROWIP.

RESOLVED:

- a) The Forum noted the delay in approving the ROWIP for consultation.
- b) The Forum wished their concern and disappointment in the failure to approve the ROWIP Consultation Document be to the Chief Recreation Officer and the Lead Member for Leisure Services.
- c) That the Chief Recreation Officer and Lead Member for Leisure Services be sent all future agendas for the Local Access Forum to keep them up to date with the work of the Forum

59 E-Bulletin Number 5 - Discovering Lost Ways

The Forum received and noted an E-Bulletin from Natural England on Discovering Lost Ways. The Forum also welcomed Bob Buckenham, Assitant Countryside Access Manager, who had attended the meeting to provide Members with an update on the process in Leeds in discovering lost ways. Definitive Map Officers (DMOs) were not only involved in the discovering of Lost Ways but also dealt with appeals made regarding Lost Ways. All work in this area was targeted at the Government deadline of 2026 where any rights of way which were not identified by local authorities would be extinguished.

Alongside the work in Lost Ways officers were also undertaking a Parish Review of public rights of way and were in the process of completing reviews of Boston Spa and Arthington Parishes. Officers had completed reviews of smaller parishes first in order to gain experience for the larger areas. The Review was also a mechanism for identifying lost ways.

Interested parties had become involved in the work of Lost Ways such as the Archaeological Society following a presentation by officers and the work also attracted interest form local users of public rights of way. Officers were restricted

somewhat in the work which was completed due to resources. As both the reviews could unearth a number of issues and require a significant amount of work from officers the process could be lengthy and sometimes expensive.

The Forum welcomed the work completed by the officers and noted its impact on improving access and knowledge of public rights of way. The Forum in particular noted that there were no additional funds set aside by the Government to complete either of these tasks. Every effort was being made by officers to identify areas of funding for their work which the Forum supported.

RESOLVED:

- a) That the update be noted.
- b) That Officers be supported in their effort to obtain funding in order to complete their work by the 2026 deadline.

60 Open Access Natural England

Members of the Forum considered a correspondence received from Natural England in relation to a letter dated 15th November 2006 regarding grants under the Access Management Grant Scheme for 2006/07. The Forum was advised that Natural England had made limited funds available but with new priorities: Monitoring, Fire Planning, Essential works in relation to nature conservation, public safety where management would enable the implementation of the 'least restrictive option' for fire restrictions and staff to support these activities.

Leeds City Council Parks and Countryside Service had made an application for funding under the new priorities but were yet to receive a response from Natural England. Some work which had planned to be resourced from the original grant such as information leaflets had been undertaken under existing resources. Alternative sources of funding would be sought for other projects.

RESOLVED: That the update be noted and that any future developments in funding be reported to the Forum.

61 Items for the Next Meeting

A Special meeting of Leeds Local Access Forum was convened for Tuesday 20th November 2007 at 6:00 p.m. to discuss the consultation document on the LDF Core Strategy.

The next ordinary meeting of the Leeds Local Access Forum would be held on Tuesday 5th February 2008. Items proposed for the meeting were:

- Modification Orders in relation to Planning.
- Rights of Way Improvement Plan Update.

Members were requested to advise the Secretary of any items they wished to be included on the agenda for the next meeting.

RESOLVED: That the items identified for the next meeting of the Leeds Local Access Forum be noted.

62 Date and Time of Future Meetings

The date and time of the next ordinary meeting of the Forum would be Tuesday 5th February 2008. Future meeting were also provisionally set for the 13th May 2008 and 15th July 2008.

A Special Meeting of the Forum was agreed to be held on Tuesday 20th November 2007 at 6:00 p.m.

(Please Note: The meeting opened at 18:30 and closed at 20:10)