

Leeds Local Access Forum

Tuesday, 13th May, 2008

PRESENT: Dr. M. Willison in the Chair

Mrs. D. Metcalf, Mr. S. Wood, Councillor
J Dunn and Councillor C Fox

IN ATTENDANCE:

- Paul Bowers – Legal Services
- Bob Buckenham – Assistant Countryside and Access Manager
- Julian Kelly – East North East Homes
- Rob Kirton – Crime Reduction Co-Ordinator
- Laura Pilgrim – Governance Services

78 Apologies for Absence

Apologies were received from Mr. P. Maude, Mrs. D. Lawson and Mr. R. Brookes.

79 Chair's Opening Remarks

The Chair welcomed all Officers and Members of the Forum to the Meeting.

80 Minutes of the last meeting

The minutes of the meeting held on 5th February 2008 be approved.

RESOLVED: That the minutes be approved.

81 Matters Arising from the last meeting

The Chair provided all Members of the Forum with a response which he had provided on a recent consultation on the West Leeds Gateway Area Action Plan. The consultation period on the Draft Area Action Plan had taken place in between meetings of the Forum.

RESOLVED:

- a. That the Chair's response be noted.
- b. Minute 72b) Letter to Natural England outstanding
- c. Minutes 72e) Journals to be circulated
- d.

82 Gating Orders

The Chair agreed to change the order of the Agenda to consider the applications for Gating Orders before considering the item on the Review Process for Gating Orders.

Aysgarth Estate

Mr. Julian Kelly from East North East Homes presented a report to the Forum on an application for a Gating Order for the Aysgarth Estate, East End Park, Leeds. Mr. Kelly informed the Forum that there had been a high level of crime and anti-social behaviour in the area which had led to the increased fear of crime by local residents. Initial consultation with the police indicated that there had been 182 crimes reported in the vicinity which was a rather large figure. Further liaison had taken place with local residents, local ward councillors and relevant officers of Leeds City Council. One of the main problems was that the Estate was not very well designed and that it had many alleyways to access different areas. It was proposed that there would be nine gates installed in total and some areas would be closed off by the use of fences where the highway was not required to be closed off. The Emergency Services had been consulted in relation to this and had supported the proposed scheme. As with all Gating Orders a review in to its effectiveness would be carried out after 12 months of operation.

The Forum considered the application and resolved to support the application for a Gating Order for the Aysgarth Estate, East End Park.

White Laithe Garth, Whinmoor

The Forum then went onto consider a report presented by Mr. Rob Kirton in relation to an application for a Gating Order for White Laithe Garth, Whinmoor. As outlined in the report local residents had been the victim of crime and anti-social behaviour in the area which had led them to make strong representations to a number as relevant parties such as the police and local councillors. It was believed that the path would have a positive impact for the residents living in the area by restricting access to the rear alleyway.

A Number of issues were addressed in the questions to Mr. Kirton:

- The Highways Department had initially thought the problems in the area were of little concern. However, since the initial consultation had taken place the situation had deteriorated so much so that it was now a concern for the Community Safety Team.
- The Ramblers Association had not been consulted on for this application. Mr. Kirton informed the Forum that Officers were still learning things from the Gating Order process and would certainly look into including the Ramblers Association in future consultations along with any other footpath user groups.
- The report did not list any actions which had taken place to resolve the problems in the area before reaching the decision to obtain a Gating Order. Members of the Forum advised Mr. Kirton that it would be beneficial that the reports included this information in the future.

After considering the report and the verbal information presented to them the Forum resolved to support the Gating Order for White Laithe Garth.

Nancroft Mount, Armley

The Forum then considered the application for a Gating Order for Nancroft Mount, Armley. The application differed from previous Gating Orders as although the highway was not adopted, the path had been open to the public for over 20 years. In circumstances such as this Rights of Way Passage could be established and it could be established that highway status existed over the land leading to the requirements of a Gating Order. Gating had already taken place as indicated in the report in March 2008 without following the Gating Order procedure. However further legal advice was obtained and it was recommended that a Gating Order should be applied for as there was a 'grey area' over whether highway status existed or not. There was one resident in the area who had a longstanding complaint with the Council in relation to the gates. There had been a consultation exercise as with all Gating Orders and there had been only one objection.

The following issues were addressed by the Officer:

- Although there was lighting near the path lighting sometimes attracted anti-social behaviour which was the case in this instance.
- There was ambiguity over the ownership of the path and in instances such as this there were often multiple unknown owners.
- There were gates in existence however the Gating Order was required to temporarily close the highway

The Forum resolved to support the Gating Order for Nancroft Mount, Armley.

RESOLVED: That the Gating Orders for Aysgarth Estate, East End Park, White Latihe Garth, Whinmoor and Nancroft Mount Armley be supported.

83 Proposed Review Process for Alleygating Leeds

Members of the Forum received an update on the proposed review process for Alleygating in Leeds for both pre and post Gating Order legislation.

The following issues were raised:

- The Ramblers' Association and the Emergency Services would need to be included in any further consultations on the review of Gating Orders.
- Officers from the Community Safety Team were working with PCSOs in the areas where there were Gating orders.
- Members requested that any reviews of Gating Orders should also be presented to the Forum. As there was a rolling programme of reviews the Forum would receive regular updates.
- There was the possibility of the gates being removed under the review process but other alternatives such as anti-climb paint could also be used as a deterrent in areas.
- There was a cost implication in the installation of gates which had been supported by various Leeds Area Management Boards. Gates were made so that they can be reused in other areas.
- Many of the Gating Orders were for 24 hour periods however time limited Orders were also possible if required.

- The Forum requested clarification as to how many Gating Orders there were in place in Leeds as the numbers provided in the report were inconsistent with those stated in the Safer Leeds Partnership Plan 2008-2011.
- Any gates which had been installed prior to Gating Order legislation would come to the Forum to have the formal Gating Order as part of the review process.

RESOLVED: That the report be noted and that all points raised by the Forum are considered by Officers.

84 Rights of Way Improvement Plan Update

The Draft Rights of Way Improvements Plan was to be considered by Leeds Executive Board on 14th May 2008. If the document received the Executive Board's Support it would be submitted for the statutory 12 week consultation period. Whilst Members of the Forum welcomed the recent progress in the Draft Plan they once again expressed their concern regarding the significant delay in completing the Rights Of Way Improvement Plan. In particular, the Forum expressed concern that the final date of 30th September 2008 for comments to be received meant that the main summer holidays would come in the middle of the consultation period. Members would be updated on any future development at future meetings.

RESOLVED: That the update be noted.

85 Open Access

The Forum noted that the Access Management Grant Scheme was still frozen however some work had been completed at Reva Reservoir to improve access generally.

Mrs. Metcalf informed the Forum that a Forum had be created for Rombalds Moor. Officers were unaware as to whether Leeds City Council Officers had been invited to attend and agreed to make further investigations into the matter.

RESOLVED: That the update be noted.

86 Natural England - Handbook for Local Access Forum Members

Members of the Forum received a copy of the 'Natural England – Handbook for Local Access Forum Members'. The Chair highlighted a number of paragraphs which would be of interest to Leeds Local Access Forum Members and in particular the section on Access Forums which covered cities.

Members were requested to consider the document and come to the next meeting with suggestions for items for the Forum to consider. These items would be added to forward plan for the Forum.

RESOLVED: That the Handbook be noted and Members to propose items for future meetings.

87 Rights Of Way Circular - Guidance for Local Authorities

The Assistant Countryside and Access Manager advised the Forum that due to a change in recent legislation DEFRA had issued a new Rights of Way Circular (1/08) which superseded a number of other circulars including 2/93. The officer outlined the contents of the circular and noted that the circular was a good reference document.

The Chair raised the issue of Liaison groups on page 9 of the Circular and asked if there was any progress on the reestablishment of the Public rights of Way Forum. The Assistant Countryside and Access Manager advised that the situations had not advanced and would provide the Forum with an update at its next meeting.

RESOLVED: That the Rights of Way Circular (1/08) be noted.

88 Discovering Lost Ways - E-Bulletin

The Forum received a copy of the most recent E-Bulletin on Discovering Lost Ways Review. Members would be updated on any future developments in this area.

RESOLVED: That the update be noted.

89 Access Newsletter

The Forum received the latest Access Newsletter from DEFRA for information

RESOLVED: That the Access Newsletter be noted.

90 Date and Time of Next Meeting

RESOLVED: That the next meeting of the Leeds Local Access Forum would be on 15th July 2008 at 18:30