

Leeds Local Access Forum

Thursday, 14th May, 2009

PRESENT: Dr. M. Willison in the Chair

M. P. Maude and Mr. S. Wood

IN ATTENDANCE:

- Roger Brookes – Public Rights of Way Development Officer
- Bob Buckenham – Assistant Countryside and Access Manager
- Laura Pilgrim – Governance Services

51 Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Fox and Mr. J. Pearlman.

52 Chair's Opening Remarks

The Chair noted that the meeting had begun inquorate however Members and officers agreed to proceed with the meeting. The meeting later became quorate.

RESOLVED: That the opening remarks be noted.

53 Declarations of Interest

No declarations of interest were declared.

54 Minutes of the last meeting

The minutes of the last meeting of Leeds Local Access Forum held on 17th February 2009 were agreed as a correct record subject to one minor amendment.

RESOLVED: That the minutes be approved.

55 Matters arising from the minutes

The Forum was advised that since the last meeting a new Member, Mr. J. Pearlman, had been appointed to the Forum. More efforts to recruit be Members would be made over the summer.

RESOLVED: That the update be noted.

56 England Access Forum

The Forum received the minutes of the last meeting of the England Access Forum (EAF) held on 11th March 2009. Members noted that Gating Orders had been discussed and noted that the Policy which existed in Leeds required that Gating

Order were reviewed annually and presented to the Leeds Local Access Forum for consideration.

The following issues were addressed:

- In terms of Diversity and Equality Members were advised the Leeds did have policies in place for disabled vehicle access to public rights of way and that certain types of vehicle were considered as having the same rights as pedestrians.
- There were a number of issues when addressing disabled access including using access gates and not stiles, slopes, surfaces and terrain.

RESOLVED: That the minutes be noted

57 Regional Access Forum

The Forum received the an update on the last meeting of the Regional Access Forum (RAF) held in March 2009 which both the Chair and Mr. Wood attended as representatives of Leeds Local Access Forum. There were 22 representatives from 12 Local Access Forums in the Yorkshire and Humberside area and any feedback was passed on to the England Access Forum. Representatives present were requested to share their successes and challenges. The Hull and East Yorks LAF reported that it had a working group to deal with specific area such as grass verges and that major road schemes and planning applications came to the Forum. Its challenges included equestrian links in urban areas and how to engage with younger age groups e.g. through a Junior LAF. Working groups in the Yorkshire Dales LAF were proving to be successful. Barnsley LAF had funding to spend on projects as it saw fit. Wakefield LAF reported that it had recently completed a self-assessment. North Lincs. LAF noted a lack of funding in relation to rights of way which could be linked to a decrease in landfill and business tax. Rotherham LAF reported it appointing authority had a CRoW Act Officer with a budget of £25k but was challenged by not spending the budget in 12 months. Mid Linc. LAF reported success with on-line mapping that included not only definitive route but also whether was is a roadside verge or footway. The North York Moors LAF is well-supported by the National Park Authority; all new members receive an information pack and shadow an officer. Its main challenge was not being pro-active.

There had been presentations on Disability and Access to the Countryside, and Coastal Access in Yorkshire and the Humber Region

Members were reminded that in relation to disabled access there were statutory requirements which officers had to adhere too. It would be expensive to complete an access audit of all routes within the authority which excluded the cost of fixing any of the problems which were identified. There were sources of information such as Open Country which was a charity providing information on levels of accessibility of public rights of way. Members suggested that the information published on line with the Definitive Map should include where paths were suitable for disabled access. However Officers stated that the Definitive Map was a legal record and not for recreational use however there were other possible areas where the information could be provided. Access Gates had been installed in Golden Acre Park as a cost of £450 each and the local authority had worked with the Wildlife Trust in funding

these gates. The Forum suggested that the either the RAF or the EAF should develop a toolkit for local authorities and other groups which identified alternative sources of funding.

RESOLVED: That the update be noted.

58 Site Visit - St. Aidan's

The Leeds Local Access Forum had arranged access to the St. Aidan's site prior to its completion. Members were advised that a specific date and time would be confirmed once officers had agreed access with the site warden. The proposed date was the 8th or 9th July 2009 and Members could meet at the Red Hall Offices at 18:00 hours or at an agreed point on the site at 18:30 hours. Confirmation of the arrangements would be made once the date had been confirmed and maps of the site would be provided to Members also. Members raised the issues as to whether members of the local community should be invited to the site. Officers informed Members that there may be issues in relation to access for a large number of people to the site and also obtaining the consent for access for UK Coal would have to be sought. There were local community groups in the area who had been in regular contact with UK Coal in relation to the site.

RESOLVED: That confirmation of the details of the site visit will be circulated to all Members.

59 Rights of Way Improvement Plan

Members of the Forum were provided with an update on the Rights of Way Improvement Plan (ROWIP). Officers advised that the document was available electronically however there was still a delay in sending the document to be printed. There was currently no existing budget which had been allocated to the work identified in the ROWIP. Members agreed that the Forum should receive regular updates on the progress of any works completed which were covered under the ROWIP to ensure that the document was acted on. It was also agreed that a letter from the Forum be sent to Planning Policy advising that the ROWIP should be acknowledged in the Local Development Framework (LDF) documents

RESOLVED: That the Forum receives regular updates on work completed which are covered under the Rights of Way Improvement Plan. That a letter from the Forum be sent to Planning Policy advising that the ROWIP be acknowledged in LDF documents.

60 Leeds Local Access Forum Website

The Forum Secretary provided Members with information in relation to the Leeds Local Access Forum website which required some updating. There were some pieces of information which had been identified which were missing or which were out of date. Officers would replace and add the documents identified such as recruitment to the Forum and the Annual report and also agreed to look at obtaining a more user friendly page name. Members also looked at the information available

on other Forum's websites and were asked to advised whether there was specific information that they would like to see on the Forums' website.

RESOLVED: That the website be updated to contain the correct information and that Members advise the Secretary of any other pieces of information which they would like to see on the site.

61 Forward Work Programme

Members identified the following items as possible items for future meetings of the Forum:

- ROWIP
- Invite speakers i.e. Open Country, Natural England
- Leeds Core Cycle Strategy
- Gating Order Reviews

62 Date and Time of next meeting

RESOLVED: The date and time of the next meeting of the Leeds Local Access Forum was agreed as 14th July 2009 at 18:30 hours, Civic Hall, Leeds.