

Leeds Local Access Forum

Wednesday, 30th September, 2009

PRESENT: Dr. M. Willison in the Chair

Mr. P. Maude, Wood, C Fox and
J Illingworth

IN ATTENDANCE:

- Mr. R. Brookes, Principal Development Officer
- Mr. R. Buckenham, Assistant Countryside and Access Manager
- Miss. L. Pilgrim, Governance Services

17 Apologies for Absence

There were no apologies for absence.

18 Chair's Opening Remarks

The Chair welcomed Members and visitors to the meeting and noted that the agenda was slightly lighter than usual.

RESOLVED: That the opening remarks be noted.

19 Declarations of Interest

Councillor Illingworth declared an interest in Agenda Item 7 as he had an allotment which neighboured part of the proposed path.

RESOLVED: That declarations of interest be noted.

20 Minutes of the last meeting

The minutes of the last meeting of the Leeds Local Access Forum held on 14th July 2009 were agreed as a correct record.

RESOLVED: That the minutes be approved.

21 Matters Arising

In relation to minute 7 Councillor Fox noted that he had attended a meeting of the Development Plan Panel where the consultation on the Local Development Framework (LDF) Core Strategy had been discussed. Particular reference had been made in relation to the importance of incorporating the Rights of Way Improvement Plan (ROWIP) into the LDF which the Forum welcomed. Members requested that they received details of the exact wording of the reference to the ROWIP and noted

that the wording did not reflect the fact that the ROWIP had now been approved. The Secretary to the Forum agreed to inform the relevant officer of this fact.

Members had expected a report from the Alleygating Coordinator on the Review of Gating Orders in Leeds. The Secretary informed Members that there had been a delay in the collection of information and that a report would be presented to the next meeting of the Forum.

The Assistant Countryside and Access Manager informed Members that with regard to the St. Aidan's site visit a meeting would be held on 13th October 2009 with UK Coal to progress some outstanding matters with regard to the necessary Public Path Orders. One issue which remained unresolved was that of the cross-slope of certain parts of the path network. Officers were to seek disability access group as recommended by the Forum. The discussions with UK Coal were still on going and there was sufficient time to arrange access to the site by a suitably qualified person to advise on the cross-slope. It was also planned that the path in question would be surveyed and it was anticipated that matters could still be resolved..

Following discussions at the previous meeting regarding the advertising for new Members, the Secretary to the Forum informed Members that an advert in the next edition of About Leeds had been reserved for the next edition due to be published in December. About Leeds was a Council publication which was circulated to every household within the authority. It was anticipated that a short article would be placed explaining the role of the LAF and advising that the Forum was seeking new Members. The Forum also suggested that adverts should be placed in local libraries and a mention about the Forum should be made at the Parish Council's Annual Conference. The Secretary agreed to make steps to ensure that this action was followed up and that further investigations in to recruiting landowners to the Forum would also continue.

RESOLVED:

- (a) That the matters arising the minutes be noted.
- (b) That details of the Local Development Framework's wording in relation to the ROWIP be circulated to Members.
- (c) That the relevant Officer be advised that the ROWIP was no longer a draft document.
- (d) That further work be undertaken to increase the membership of the Forum.

22 Draft Leeds Local Access Forum Annual Report 2008/09

The Forum received a draft copy of the Annual Report for 2008/09 for their comments and consideration. The Secretary informed Members that the document was very much in their hands and that Members should identify goals/items of business for the next year.

Members raised the following points:

- That an annual report on the progress of the ROWIP and Enforcement Action be presented to the Forum every year at either the May or July meeting.
- That the procedures used by officers when dealing with enforcement action should be brought to the next meeting of the Forum for consideration. The

procedures were currently not publicly advertised and Members suggested that Officers considered whether the information should be published like other authorities did.

- Officers informed Members that it would be difficult to compare enquiry numbers each year as the number of enquiries was dependent on a number of issues including the weather. It was agreed that in addition to an annual report on enforcement that information on enforcement action would be presented to the next meeting of the enforcement.
- Members also suggested that the Forum could be used by Officers as a tool to help resolve issues with persistent offenders or complicated cases.
- Throughout the past year the Forum had suggested that different groups were invited to speak to the Forum. The Secretary agreed to write to the RSPB and Natural England to invite them to a future meeting of the Forum.
- Members noted the report and agreed to provide the Secretary with any amendments to the document. The final copy of the Annual Report would be presented to the Forum at the next meeting before being published online.

The Assistant Countryside Access Manager provided Members with an update on the Parlington Estate. The Council had received a letter from the land agents, Strutt and Parker, who whilst supportive of the proposals, had requested that the matter be held in abeyance. As part of ongoing dialogue with the landowners a meeting was to be planned between officers and the land agent to discuss the necessary works and the likely need to rescind the two Public Path Orders in the light of outstanding objections. The works had been costed and it was anticipated that the scheme would be partly dependent on the availability of Local Transport Plan funding. An update would be provided to Members at the next meeting of the Forum.

RESOLVED:

- (a) That the Members advise the Clerk of any amendments to the Annual Report.
- (b) That the items outlined above be added to the work programme of the Forum.
- (c) That the RSPB and Natural England be invited to future meeting of the Forum.
- (d) That an update on the Parlington site be provided at the next meeting of the Forum.

23 Proposals for Improved footpath/cycleway in Armley, Kirkstall and Horsforth Wards

The Forum considered a proposal from Councillor Illingworth on a proposal to create a riverside route between Horsforth (Newlay) and Leeds city centre. Colour copies of the proposed route were provided to Members. Councillor Illingworth informed Members that it had been a personal ambition of his to create this footpath since he became a councillor in 1979. The Councillor provided Members with a detailed explanation of the path and areas where specific works had been identified to ensure that the paths were brought up to standard. Some paths would need to be diverted away from the waterways, a footbridge would need to be installed and certain sections of the path would require negotiation with the land owner. Leeds Metropolitan University had already carried out a credibility report into the path and Councillor Illingworth hoped that funding from areas such as section 106 Agreement money could be identified to carry out some of the works.

The following issues were discussed:

- Councillor Illingworth had discussed the possibility of upgrading the existing path network to a cycle path which Officers advised would need the involvement of the team responsible for cycle paths within the authority.
- Some parts of the path required the use of land which had been used for or is currently used for services such as sewage and electricity which had their own cost implications.
- The proposed network had missed the opportunity to be included in the ROWIP but this did not mean that the proposals could not be considered especially if funding could be identified. Some parts of the proposed network fell inside the excluded area and could be covered once the area was mapped.
- Large sections of the path were owned by Leeds City Council but negotiations would have to take place with individual owners for some sections of the path including the Home Office.
- The proposed network would require working with a number of different parties and possibly identifying funding from different sources such as Sustrans.

Members thanked Councillor Illingworth for his presentation and recommended that a letter of support for the path should be written to the Chief Recreation Officer and relevant Area Management Board stating that the Forum would welcome a feasibility study in to the proposed path network.

RESOLVED: That a letter of support for the path be written to the Chief Recreation Officer and relevant Area Management Board stating that the Forum would welcome a feasibility study in to the proposed path network.

24 Rights of Way Improvement Plan and Open Access Update.

Members were advised that the final copy of the Rights of Way Improvement Plan had been subject to a further delay in the printing process. It was hoped that a final document would be circulated to Members shortly. Copies of the document would also be circulated to Town and Parish councillors, local councillors, relevant bodies, local libraries, one stop shops and neighbouring authorities. An electronic version of the final document would also be available on the Council's website once work had been completed to compress the file. The Chair of the Forum suggested that, due to the size of the document, the electronic version should be available to download and not to open as a new page. There were also problems with the current online version in relation to the navigation of the document which would need to be addressed before the final version was published. Members also suggested that Officers bring a regular update to the Forum on works carried out on projects within the Action Plan. Officers agreed to bring Members a report to the next meeting and other future meetings of the Forum on the progress of projects identified in the Action Plan.

RESOLVED: That a report be brought to the next meeting and other future meetings of the Forum on the progress of projects identified in the Action Plan.

25 Date and Time of the Next Meeting

RESOLVED: That the next meeting of the Leeds Local Access Forum be agreed as Tuesday 1st December 2009.