

Leeds Local Access Forum

Tuesday, 5th February, 2008

PRESENT: Dr. M. Willison in the Chair

Councillor C. Fox, Phillip Maude, Didy Metcalf and Steven Wood

IN ATTENDANCE:

- Bob Buckenham - Assistant Countryside and Access Manager
- Brent Brady – Alleygating Coordinator
- Roger Brooks - Rights of Way Development Officer
- Laura Pilgrim – Governance Services Officer

66 Apologies for Absence

Apologies were received from Councillor Dunn and Mrs. D. Lawson.

67 Chair's Opening Remarks

The Chair welcome all Members and officers to the Forum and proposed that the order of the agenda be varied to take Agenda Item 7 'Gating Orders' first.

RESOLVED: That the agenda be varied to take Agenda Item 7 'Gating Orders' first.

68 Gating Orders

The Forum received a report of the Director of Neighbourhoods and Housing on proposed Gating Orders for Wellington Mount / Wellington Terrace and Back Stratford Terrace (Middle and Upper Sections). The Alleygating Coordinator advised the Forum that the proposed gating order for Back Sandhurst place had been withdrawn.

Wellington Mount / Wellington Terrace

The Alleygating Officer informed the Forum that the proposed gating order for this area covered two small paths which linked three streets in the Bramley area. The specific area had witnessed an increase in anti-social behaviour which included vehicle crime and criminal damage to residents' property. The two paths were used by youths moving to and from the St. Catherine's estate. Frequent damage was caused such as smashing windows but there had also been two serious incidents which had occurred in the area.

The following issues were discussed in questions to the Officer:

- The Community Safety Coordinator for the area had carried out the consultation with the residents of Wellington Grove, Wellington Terrace and Wellington Mount.
- The proposed gates would mean that instead of using the paths pedestrians would be redirected through Broad Lane which was very well lit and a quicker route.
- In relation to the respondents of the consultation the majority of the residents were in support of the Gating Order. There was one objector to the proposed Order but the Officer felt that she was not aware of some of the problems which many residents, especially those at the gable end of the street, experienced. The objection did not also refer to access issues.
- Some palisade fencing which was located along the path and around the school grounds had been pulled away. This would be fixed to ensure that no access to the path could be obtained.
- The Officer had not consulted directly with the Ramblers Association but agreed to review the list of consultees for all Gating Orders.
- In relation to potential problems with fly-tipping in the area if the gates were installed the Officer advised the Forum that the path was an area adopted by the local authority and would be maintained. Residents would have keys to access the paths and should report any fly tipping to the Council.
- A faulty street light near 35 Wellington Grove had been fixed but this had created an area for youths to congregate around.
- There were arguments for and against cutting back the shrubbery on the paths. If the area was cut back it could be used by people to hide in and one woman had been approached by someone who had hidden in the shrubbery and threatened with assault. However if the area was cut back it provided a larger area for littering and fly-tipping. The area had not been maintained very well by Highways however, officers were working with all relevant agencies and the Area Managements Board for the area to ensure that the paths were maintained appropriately.
- All Gating Orders were subject to a review after 1 year. There were currently no Orders which were subject to review as all gates had been installed less than a year. The Forum requested that the Officer bring a report to the next meeting of the Forum to advise what the review process would consist of so that their feedback could be incorporated into the procedure. The Officer advised the Forum that the procedure would have to contain some form of consultation with local residents as it was not appropriate to look at crime statistics in isolation.

After considering the contents of the report and the answers provided by the Alleygating Officer the Forum resolved to approve the Gating Order for Wellington Terrace / Wellington Mount.

Back Stratford Terrace

The Forum was advised that the back road of Stratford Terrace was split into three parts and the lower end of the back road had been subject to a Gating Order due to anti-social behaviour, traffic issues and crime for a number of years. The Gating Order had seen a noticeable difference in the improved security of the gated area. However, the anti-social behaviour, traffic and crime had shifted to the upper two

sections of the back lane. The Forum was advised that there was an additional problem in the area as English was an additional language for many of the residents who were unable to understand the importance of locking the gates. Warning letters had been sent but work was also underway to resolve this including the use of pictorial leaflet which was yet to be used in the area. The gated areas had seen an improvement in crime and disorder but the area continued to be a crime hotspot and required further Gating Orders.

The following issues were discussed in questions to the Officer:

- A Member of the Forum raised their concern that the Gating Orders were being used in a way that they were not intended to be used. The back street had been used as a rat run and the crime and disorder in the gated area had been displaced further up the back street. Also issues such as the high levels or burglaries in the area seemed to relate to people not locking their premises. The Officer advised that further education was required in the area but the gates would operate as a short term measure to help prevent the problems in the area.
- There was little evidence from other local authorities that the installation of gates resulted in a displacement of crime and disorder to another area. Although this had happened in one area in Leeds but the general consensus with other local authorities was that there was no displacement. There were no neighbouring backstreets which officers could anticipate that crime could displace to .
- The back street was used as a means of escape for many crimes and to enclose the area would force people to use the main street which was busier and better lit in an evening.
- There was also an issue in the area that crime was often unreported or that once reported there was little information supplied by people in the locality. It was therefore very important to speak to local residents when the Gating Order was reviewed as the statistics could not be relied on entirely.

After considering the contents of the report and the answers provided by the Alleygating Officer the Forum resolved to approve the Gating Order for Back Stratford Terrace (Middle and Upper sections).

RESOLVED –

- a) That the Gating Order proposed for Wellington Terrace / Wellington Mount and Back Stratford Terrace be approved.
- b) That the Alleygating Officer provide a report to the next meeting of the Forum on the proposed Annual Review of Gating Orders.

69 Minutes of the last meeting

The minutes of the meeting held on 9th October 2007 were approved subject to the following amendments:

- Minute 58 was amended so that the second paragraph read:

'Regarding the suggested Bridleway at Rombalds Moor Officers were still waiting for action from Bradford City Council. It was hoped that the Reva 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.'

- Bob Buckenham's correct job title was Assistant Countryside Manager and Councillor Proctor was the Executive Member of Leisure Services.

The minutes of the meeting held on 20th November 2007 were approved as a correct record.

RESOLVED –

- a) That the minutes of the meeting held on 9th October 2007 be approved subject to the above amendments.
- b) That the minutes of the meeting held on 20th November 2007 be approved.

70 Matters arising from the minutes of the last meeting

Minutes of the meeting held on 9th October 2008

The Rights of Way Development Officer advised that in relation to the Asset Management Grant Scheme the local authority had been led to believe that a grant would be received for an outstanding application. However it was now the officer's understanding that the grants had been frozen once again.

71 Rights of Way Improvement Plan Update

At the last meeting of the Forum Members resolved to write to the Executive Member for Leisure Services and to the Chief Recreation Officer to express their concern that the Draft Rights Of Way Improvement Plan (ROWIP) had yet to be approved. A response which had recently been sent to the Chair was tabled for Members. The letter explained the reason for the delay in approving the Draft Plan for consultation. The Executive Member for Leisure Services Councillor Proctor had been briefed on the Plan in January 2008 and following this meeting the Councillor advised that the matter would have to be submitted to the Council's Executive Board for approval. It was anticipated that the ROWIP would be considered by the Executive Board in April 2008.

Members of the Forum raised their concerns that this was a further delay in the progress of the ROWIP and questioned Officers as to whether or not there were any legal sanctions for a local authority as the November 2007 had not been met. The Rights of Way Development Officer advised that there were no sanctions contained in the relevant legislation. The Officer also added that the ROWIP was an advisory document and there was no requirement for the Council to carry out any of the work included in the Plan or to commit any finances to it. The delay in the progress of the ROWIP had not affected the work of officers in this area and applications for money continued to be made. The document was also referred to in the Local Transport Plan.

In the discussion which followed the Forum proposed to write a letter to the Acting Chief Recreation Officer, Executive Members for Leisure Services and to the Chair of the Executive Board to emphasise the Forum's disappointment at the delay in progressing the ROWIP and to reiterate the need to ensure that the Plan is dealt with by the Executive Board as soon as possible.

RESOLVED: That the update be noted and that a letter be written to the Acting Chief Recreation Officer, the Executive Member for Leisure Services and the Chair of the Executive Board to re-emphasise The Forum's disappointment and urge the Executive Board to deal with the matter as soon as possible.

72 Correspondence

a) National Access Forum

The Forum received a letter from the Chairman of West Yorkshire Pennine Local Access Forum in relation to the establishment of a National Access Forum. A further update from the Chair of Cumbria LAF, Duncan Graham, following a meeting of 16 LAF chairs and representatives from Natural England was tabled at the meeting. The Forum noted from the second letter that an agreement had been reached for a National Access Forum to be established and the basic purpose and structure had also been agreed. The Forum welcomed the establishment of a National Access Forum and looked forward to receiving further information regarding the Forum.

RESOLVED – Noted.

b) Ramblers' Association

The Ramblers' Association had written to the Forum requesting that the Forum write a letter of support for the Asset Management Grant Scheme (AMGS) to Natural England. The Rights of Way Development Officer had previously updated the Forum that he believed that the AMGS had been frozen. The Forum resolved that the current situation should be clarified and a letter of support in the scheme should be written to Natural England.

RESOLVED – That support of the Asset Management Grant Scheme be conveyed the Natural England once the current situation was established.

c) British Horse Society

The British Horse Society had written to the Forum seeking a response to questions which related to the list of streets maintainable at public expense prepared under section 36(6) of the Highways Act 1980. The Forum was advised that in relation to question 1 the current review of the Definitive Map and Statement included checking the List of Streets on a regular basis. Officers also had extensive historical resources open to them including information held by the West Riding of Yorkshire as well as being in regular contact with street registration. In relation to questions two and three in the letter the Assistant Countryside and Access Manager would not be able respond accurately without looking at each individual file. The Forum wished to

respond to the Society to express that Lists of Streets was an issue officers were sensitive to.

RESOLVED – That a response be provided to the British Horse Society regarding the List of Streets.

d) Equestrian Access Forum

The Equestrian Access Forum had circulated to all Local Access Forums a letter sent to Natural England regarding Discovering Lost Ways. A Member of the Forum advised that she was aware that it may be the case that the Government removes the 2026 deadline for Discovering Lost Ways.

Whilst supportive of the work done to discover Lost Ways the Forum also welcomed the work done by Sustainable Transport (Sustrans) to establish new and more meaningful routes to link the city with other areas within Leeds. These routes were included in the Local Transport Plan and the ROWIP and the Forum's remit may cover some of the new routes.

RESOLVED – Noted.

e) Waymark

The Forum received information from the Institute of Public rights of Way Management regarding subscription to their journal 'Waymark'. The Chair recommended that the Forum saw previous issues of the journal before subscribing to the publication. The Rights of Way Development Officer advised that there was also an alternative publication which could be circulated to Members produced by the Byways and Bridleways Trust which may also be of use.

RESOLVED – That previous copies of 'Waymark' and Byways and Bridleways Trust Magazine be circulated to Members

f) Minister of Marine, Landscape and Rural Affairs

The Forum received an introductory letter from Jonathon Shaw MP, Minister for Marine, Landscape and Rural Affairs and Minister for the South East. The letter was noted by the Forum.

RESOLVED - Noted

g) Natural England

The Forum received details of a presentation provided by Natural England to the Institute of Public Rights of Way which outlined various sources of funding for public rights of way and open access. The Forum noted that organisations such as 'Friends of' groups were able to apply for funding which was not available to the Council, and officers in Leeds were working with outside bodies to access this funding. For organisations, including parish councils, who wanted information of what funding was available to them Sustrans would be able to advise them.

RESOLVED – Noted

73 West Leeds Country Parks and Green Gateways

The Forum received the minutes of the last meeting West Leeds Country Park and Green Gateways and details of the draft phase four leaflet covering Woodhall Lake to Cockersdale. The minutes were noted by the Forum who then went onto discuss the draft phase four leaflet. Members were please to see that other routes would be included in the map including Leeds Country Way and Calverley Millennium Way. The Forum highlighted that it would be useful to have contact details of Leeds Metro included on the leaflet to assist people in using public transport to access the area.

The Rights of Way Development Officer advised the Forum that there were some areas of land within the area which the Council had leased from the owner to ensure that there would be open access. Some areas of land were not managed in this way and would be reviewed as part of work for Leeds Bradford Connectivity .

RESOLVED – That the report be noted

74 Access Newsletters

The Forum received copies of Defra's 'Access Newsletter' for their information.

RESOLVED: That the Newsletters be noted.

75 Consultation Responses

The Forum received, for information, details of the response of the Chair to the Forum to a recent consultation on the Aire Valley Area Action Plan. There would be further consultation on all of the Area Action Plans with which the Forum would be kept up to date.

RESOLVED – That the report be noted.

76 Items for the next meeting

The following items were identified for the next meeting of the Forum:

- ROWIP Update
- Gating Order Review Process

Members of the Forum were requested to contact the Forum's Secretary with any items they wished to be discussed at the next meeting of the Forum.

77 Date and Time of Next Meeting

RESOLVED – That the agreed date of the next meeting of Leeds Local Access Forum was Tuesday 13th May 2008 at 18:30 p.m..