

## **Leeds Local Access Forum**

**Tuesday, 15th July, 2008**

**PRESENT:** Dr. M. Willison in the Chair

Mrs. D. Maude, Metcalf, Wood and C Fox

**IN**

**ATTENDANCE:**

- Roger Brookes – Public Rights of Way Development Officer
- Paul Bowers – Legal Services
- Bob Buckenham – Assistant Countryside and Access Manager
- Brent Brady – Alleygating Coordinator
- Laura Pilgrim – Governance Services

### **1 Apologies for Absence**

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor J Dunn and Mrs. D. Lawson.

### **2 Election of Chair and Vice- Chair of the Forum**

Dr. M. Willison was elected as Chair of the Leeds Local Access Forum for the period covering July 2008 to July 2009. The Forum resolved to adjourn the election of a Vice-Chair to the next meeting of the Forum when it was hoped that Mrs. Lawson, the current Vice-Chair and any new Members would attend.

**RESOLVED:** Dr. M. Willison in the Chair.

### **3 Chair's Opening Remarks**

The Chair welcomed all parties to the meeting.

### **4 Declarations of Interest**

No declarations of interest declared by Members of the Forum. Due to the fact that Members represented either Owners and Occupiers of Land or Users of Public Rights of way further clarification was sought on whether that interest should be declared at the beginning of each meeting. The Secretary agreed to provide further guidance for Members. It was also suggested that a register of Members' Interests be maintained along with a form for Members to complete when they declared an interest.

**RESOLVED:**

- a. That further guidance be produced on declarations of interest
- b. That a Register of Members Interests be maintained and a pro forma for registering declarations of interest also be kept.

## 5 Minutes of the Last Meeting

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**RESOLVED:** That the minutes of the last meeting of the Leeds Local Access Forum held on 13<sup>th</sup> May 2008 be approved as a correct record.

## 7 Matters Arising

In relation to minute 82 Mr. Bowers informed the Forum that Mr. Kerrigan, owner of a property in Nancroft Mount, was in attendance. Mr. Bowers reminded Members that as a consultative body the Forum had considered a report at the previous meeting which proposed a Gating Order for Nancroft Mount in Armley. Mr. Kerrigan made a brief representation that he felt that he had been kept in the dark by Leeds City Council Officers in relation to the process for Gating Orders and other pieces of information. Mr. Bowers provided Mr. Kerrigan with an explanation of the remaining process for the approval of a Gating Order and informed that Forum that the Highways Board considered the application, including all representations on the matter, on the 20<sup>th</sup> June 2008. The Board approved the Gating Order and requested that Legal Services advertise the notices of intention to make the Gating Order. There would be a period in which representations could be made. All representation would be considered before the final decision is taken on whether or not the proposed Gating Order should be made. Notice had been served on Mr. Kerrigan and he was yet to make a representation on the matter.

As the nature of Mr. Kerrigan's complaint was outside the remit of the Local Access Forum the Chair proposed that Mr. Kerrigan expressed his concerns in writing to the appropriate officer.

In relation to minute 87 Officers advised the Forum that whilst they were not against the idea of the re-establishment of the Rights of Way Forum (ROWF) staff resources at this point in time would not be able to service such a meeting. Officers informed Members that whilst the ROWF was not in existence much of the work it carried out was still conducted by officers in their day to day work. Important issues, such as Parlington, were also brought to the attention of the Forum. Members of the Forum reiterated that they felt that the ROWF was a useful tool for users of rights of way and owners and occupiers and that many Forum Members would be happy to serve on both Forums. The Secretary advised Members that the number of meetings may have to increase to accommodate the work of the ROWF. It was proposed that officers compared the terms of reference of the ROWF to the Guidance for Local Access Forums in England to see if any of the work could be absorbed by the Local Access Forum either as part of the Forum's work or as a Sub-Group of the Forum. Officers also agreed to return to the issue of the ROWF should staffing and resource issues improve.

With regard to minute 86 all correspondence had been sent to the relevant parties.

**RESOLVED:** That a report be brought back to the next meeting of the Forum on the Rights of Way Forum.

## 8 Gating Orders

The Chair agreed to change the order of business to consider agenda item 8 – Gating Orders before any other items. The Forum considered a report of the Director of City Services and the Director of Development on a proposed Gating Order for Back Nowell Mount/Back Nowell Place, Burmantofts, Leeds. The Alleygating Coordinator reminded Members that they had previously been consulted on Gating Order in relation to the two nearby streets Back Nowell Crescent and Back Nowell Terrace. In relation to the application before the Forum there had previously been two strong objections to the schemes from local residents however these had now been resolved.

The Neighbourhood Policing Team in the area were aware of high levels of criminal damage, anti-social behaviour, burglary and the crime domain was 1,645 which was ranked in the worst 6% in England.

The following issues were addressed:

- Back Nowell Place had suffered greatly from not having gates installed when other gates were placed on the two nearby back street. Back Nowell Mount had not suffered so much as it was a smaller street and there were more private homes. It was hoped that the installation of the gates would resolve many of the problems experienced by local residents.
- Everyone who required access to the alleys, e.g. residents of the street, would be given keys.
- The gates had been working well in the area and there had only been a small problem with access when the refuse vehicles changed size. The gates were relatively well maintained and locked.
- The comments of the Forum would be fed into the next stage of the Gating Order process as indicated in paragraph 3.2.9.
- The Ramblers' Association had been consulted on two applications for Gating Orders and their comments would be incorporated into the reports which would be submitted to the Forum.
- There had been no objections raised in relation to the Gating Order before Members.
- Officer reported that they had received a large number of requests for gating ginnels from local ward Councillors which led Officers to believe that more information needed to be passed to Councillors in relation to the Gating Order process. The Forum agreed to write a letter to the Area Management Boards to explain the process of obtaining a Gating Order.

### **RESOLVED:**

- a. That the Gating Order for Back Nowell Mount/Back Nowell Place be supported.
- b. That a letter be written to all Area Management Boards in relation to the Gating Order Process.

## **9 England Access Forum**

The Forum received the minutes of the first meetings of the England Access Forum (EAF) held on 15<sup>th</sup> May 2008. The minutes were noted and Members requested a copy of the EAF constitution. Members also requested to continue to receive regular updates from those in the region who attend the EAF.

**RESOLVED:** That the minutes be noted.

## **10 Rights of Way Improvement Plan Update**

The Public Rights of Way Development Officer advised the Forum that the Draft Rights of Way Improvement Plan (ROWIP) had been approved by Leeds City Council's Executive Board. Following this it was decided that the document should be made more presentable and so was amended to include more diagrams and graphs etc. A copy of the amended version was circulated for Members. The document was in the process of being printed and the document would also be made available on CD. It was anticipated that the document would be ready for circulation by the end of the week and that the 12 week consultation period would start the week beginning the 21<sup>st</sup> July 2008. The Consultation would be advertised on the internet, would have a press release and would be included on the Council's consultation page. Copies of the Draft ROWIP would be circulated to Members when it became available. Members noted that after the consultation period had been completed the results would be reported back to the Forum before being sent to the Executive Board for final approval. It was hoped that the results of the consultation could be accommodated at one of the planned meetings of the Forum but noted that an additional meeting may have to be called.

The Forum noted the progress of the Draft Plan and hoped that there would not be any further delay in completing the approval of the document. Members were concerned that the consultation period fell over the summer period when many people may have missed the launch of the consultation as they were on holiday. Officers were satisfied that the consultation period was sufficiently long enough to enable all those who wanted to respond to do so.

**RESOLVED:** That the update be noted and that the results of the consultation be reported back to the Forum.

## **11 Open Access**

In relation to Reva Reservoir, the Rights of Way Access Manager provided the Forum with photos of the work completed on paths in that area. A Creation Agreement was yet to be created with Yorkshire Water but this was anticipated to be a formality. The work had been completed in conjunction with the BTCV NVQ Training scheme which meant that the labour was free. Other costs amounted to approximately £1,000. The Officer had also attended the Rombalds Moor Forum recently.

**RESOLVED:** That the update be noted.

## **12 Forum Matters**

The Secretary to the Forum provided Members with an update on some outstanding administrative matters. Some Members had requested information about how to claim expenses. The Secretary advised that the Local Access Forum (England) Regulations 2007 allowed for Members to claim certain expenses. The issues had been raised with the appropriate Officer and Members would be provided with an update at the next meeting.

In relation to Membership it was hoped that an advert would be placed in a local newspaper over the summer period to recruit new Members. A press release would also be made on the Council's Website with a link to the Local Access Forum's website. Letters would also be written to specific bodies and organisation seeking nominations for membership.

Once new Members were in place it was proposed that some training for all Forum Members took place with the possibility of inviting Natural England to the training also. An update on all Forum matters would be brought to the next meeting of the Forum.

**RESOLVED:** That the update be noted.

## **13 Consultation Response - Leeds City Council Natural Resources and Waste Development Plan**

The Members of the Forum received details of the response made by the Chair on behalf of The Forum the Leeds City Council Natural Resources and Waste Development Plan. The consultation period fell in between the last two meetings of the Forum.

**RESOLVED:** That the consultation response be noted.

## **14 Access Newsletter**

The latest Access Newsletter from DEFRA was noted.

**RESOLVED:** That the Newsletter be noted.

## **15 Forward Work Programme**

The following items were identified for future meetings of the Forum:

- Annual Report
- Enforcement of Public Rights of Way
- Rights of Way Forum
- Rights of Way Improvement Plan Update
- Details of Important Diversion Orders
- Large Scale Development (eg minerals) with impacts on rights of way
- Local Development Framework Consultations
- British Canoe Union Presentation
- Environment Agency – Flood Defence Work Within Leeds

- Site Visits to St. Aidan's Restoration Site and to a Gated Area
- Invite British Waterways and Natural England to speak

## **16 Date and Time of Next Meeting**

**RESOLVED:** That the next meeting of the Leeds Local Access Forum would be on Tuesday 16<sup>th</sup> September 2008.