

Leeds Local Access Forum

Tuesday, 17th February, 2009

PRESENT: Dr. M. Willison in the Chair

Mr. P. Maude, Mrs. D. Metcalf and Mr. S. Wood

IN ATTENDANCE: Brent Brady – Alleygating Co-ordinator
Roger Brookes – Public Rights of Way Development Officer
Paul Bowers – Legal Services
Bob Buckenham – Assistant Countryside and Access Manager
Claire Tregembo – Senior Definitive Map Officer

41 Apologies for Absence

Apologies were received from Councillor J. Dunn and Councillor C. Fox.

42 Declarations of Interest

None were declared.

43 Chair's Opening Remarks

The Chair welcomed the members of the public who were in attendance and also welcomed Claire Tregembo, Senior Definitive Map Officer, to her first meeting since recently joining the Council.

44 Minutes of the Last Meeting

Subject to the correction of some typographical errors the minutes of the last meeting of the Leeds Local Access Forum were held on 11th November 2009 were approved as a correct record.

RESOLVED: That the Minutes be approved.

45 Matters Arising from the minutes of the last meeting

In relation to minute 37 the Chair advised the Forum that the next meeting of the Regional Access Forum (RAF) will be held in Hull on 25th March 2009. The Leeds Local Access Forum had been requested to send two members to the RAF and Members were requested to contact the Forum Secretary if they wished to attend.

46 Gating Orders

The Forum considered a report in relation to the proposal for a Gating Order for Back Cross Green Lane, Leeds. The Alleygating Co-ordinator provided Members with a brief background to the application. Back Cross Green Lane was a short carriageway and back street. The intention was to gate both ends of the lane and provide keys to the residents who remained on the two streets which backed onto the lane. The area had a reputation for crime and anti-social behaviour and many residents had left the area.

The following issues were addressed in questions:

- Members raised their concern that gating this particular street may have a knock on effect for other streets in the area and displace the crime and disorder. The Alleygating Officer informed Members that Cross Green Crescent had also been referred for a Gating Order however as the budget stood there was only sufficient funding to install gates at back Cross Green Lane. Officers had agreed to consult and obtain planning permission for both street incase the finances became available.
- Officers had not received any complaints from the emergency services in relation to accessing gated areas. All services were provided with ample sets of master keys.
- The area had historically been a crime hotspot for years and there had been an incident for arson on the street. Officers and other agencies had explored alternative options in the past including moving residents, increasing patrols of neighbourhood policing teams and police and community support officers. Many of those involved in crime in the area in the past had moved and problems had temporarily improved however new residents had moved in and problems had arisen again.
- Some parts of the area had been demolished including Cross Green Avenue which still appeared on the map and the Officer was unsure whether further demolition would take place in the area. However a new link road that had recently been built may lead to the regeneration of the are in the long term.
- The police were aware that the Gating Order would only work if patrols and their support continued.
- There had been costs associated with the replacement of locks on gates throughout the authority and particularly Richmond Hill.
- There was no hard evidence to suggest that the Gating Orders displaced crime and disorder however the Officer was not aware of any investigations in to this area.
- The area had seen an increase in the number of private landlords purchasing properties in the area and this had led to the establishment of a Residents Association.
- As with all Gating Orders the order will be reviewed in one year. Members of the Forum will be informed of the reviews which take place.

Members of the Forum thanked the Officer for the report and issued no objections to the application.

RESOLVED: That no objection be issued to the application.

47 Rights of Way Improvement Plan

The Public Rights of Way Development Officer provided Members of the Forum an update on the developments in the approval of the Rights of Way Improvement Plan. Members were advised that since the last meeting the Plan had moved on significantly. Minute 37 of the minutes of the last meeting had mentioned a letter from DEFRA to the local authority however at the time neither the Chair or Officers were aware what the content of the letter was. The letter was subsequently forwarded to Joanne Clough and advised the Council that the ROWIP had to be published by the 31st March 2009 or the authority could find themselves liable to Judicial Review. In order to meet this deadline the ROWIP was submitted to the Council's Executive Board for approval on Friday 13th February 2009. Members were contacted prior to the Executive Board meeting to ask for their comments.

The ROWIP was approved at the meeting and all corrections would be included in the revised report. The next step was to edit the glossy version and the officer would be working with the designer to work on the final document. The final document would be available as a paper copy, on CD and electronically via the LCC Website.

The Chair advised the Forum that he had raised concerns that the ROWIP had referred to the publishing date for the online version of the Definitive Map was 2015 which he felt that it could be published earlier. The Senior Definitive Map Officer informed the Forum that work was underway which explored the various options for the digitised version of the Definitive Map. There were two options currently being investigated. One was to use and amend the current GIS system which the Council currently used. This could be published fairly quickly with a disclaimer stating that the map was a representation of the Definitive Map. The alternative solution was to specifically designed for their needs which would take longer to develop and potentially be more costly. A business plan would have to be put together and submitted to IT services in order for the project to progress and be costed. There were advantages and disadvantages to each option however officers were initially in favour of using the existing system however more work was required to ensure that the end result met the authority's legal obligations and provided meaningful and useful information for members of the public. Officers had been concerned that publishing the Definitive Map online before it could be checked properly could create problems if the paths were not located correctly on the map however it was anticipated that many of the concerns and problems which could be experienced would be addressed prior to application.

RESOLVED: That the update be noted.

48 Practice Guidance Note 1- Consultation on Changes to Public Rights of Way and Definitive Maps

The Assistant Countryside Access Officer provided members with a copy of the updated DEFRA Guidance on Consultation on Changes to Public Rights of Way Improvement Plan for their information. The Chair informed Members that in comparison to the previous edition there were a few changes. The Chair added that the inclusion of the variety of voluntary bodies to be consulted should be applauded. Members noted the Local Access Forums were included within this section however

in Leeds only major or sensitive schemes were brought to the Forum. Officer informed Members that the number of requested for Diversion Orders etc. had decreased in the last 12 months due to the effect of the current economic problems. Officers added that there was a list of standard consultees who were consulted for all applications under the Town and Country Planning Act and other pieces of legislation and that there was no problem with adding the LAF to the list.

RESOLVED: That the update be noted and the Leeds Local Access Forum be added to the list of standard consultees.

49 Forum Matters

The Secretary informed the Forum that following the last meeting there had been four applications for membership of the Forum from people with interests in disability access, walking and trail riding. Interviews were to take place over the next month and it was anticipated that there would be new Members to the Forum at the next meeting. However the Forum was lacking in representatives from owners or occupiers of land in Leeds and other interest areas. Officer and Members suggested contacting the managers at Bramham Park, Yorkshire Water, the RSPB, Wildlife Trust and Biodiversity Access Group. The Secretary agreed to continue to recruit new Members.

RESOLVED: That the update be noted.

50 Date and Time of the Next meeting

The date and time of the next meeting will be Thursday 14th May 2009.