

LEEDS LOCAL ACCESS FORUM

ANNUAL REPORT 2008-09

INDEX

<u>Chairman's Introduction</u>	1
1) <u>Background</u>	2
2) <u>Dates of Meetings</u>	2
3) <u>Business of the Forum</u>	2
4) <u>Election of Chair and Vice-Chair</u>	2
5) <u>Vacancies</u>	2
6) <u>Annual Report 2006/07</u>	3
7) <u>Rights of Way Improvements Plan</u>	3
8) <u>Site Visits</u>	3
9) <u>Gating Orders and Dog Control Orders – Response to Consultations</u>	3
10) <u>Responses to Consultations</u>	4
11) <u>England Access Forum</u>	4
12) <u>Forward Work Programme</u>	4
13) <u>Relevant Documents</u>	4

CHAIRMAN'S INTRODUCTION

This is the fifth annual report of the Leeds Local Access Forum.

The focus of the Forum this year, as last year, has been the Rights of Way Improvement Plan (RoWIP) and gating orders.

The RoWIP was eventually approved by the Council's Executive Board on 13th February 2009 following the 12-week statutory period of public consultation. Despite having well-missed the statutory November 2007 deadline for publication, the Plan – the culmination of much hard work by officers in Countryside and Access – nevertheless, has clear Statements of Action and a detailed Action Plan for addressing the identified deficiencies in the public rights of way network. It is important that the RoWIP is given weight in the Local Development Framework land use planning process, not least because of possible funding opportunities through section 106 agreements.

Five proposals for gating orders came before the Forum. None of the proposals were contentious and all received the Forum's support.

The year has seen a number of changes to Forum membership. Mrs Didy Metcalfe, representing the interests of horse riders, and Mrs Doreen Lawson, representing landowners and occupiers, both resigned from the Forum. On behalf of the Forum, I would like to thank them for their contributions and support. Mr Jerry Pearlman, representing the interests of walkers, joined the Forum.

Recruitment of new members has again exercised the Forum, particularly in relation to owners and occupiers of land within the Leeds Metropolitan District, the area covered by the Forum. This has not been helped by the lack of clarity as to whether there is a budget available within the council for advertising forum vacancies, a requirement of the regulations governing local access forums. The Guidance on Local Access Forums in England states that *the Government provides funding to meet the cost of running forums through the revenue support grant paid to local authorities... It is for appointing authorities to ensure that they set aside adequate financial and administrative resources for running the forum*. The Forum hopes that this matter can soon be resolved so that the council, as appointing authority can meet its statutory obligations.

Finally, I should like to thank Forum members for their contributions during the past year, and to Council officers, in particular Bob Buckenham in Public Rights of Way and Laura Pilgrim in Governance Services, for the smooth running of Forum meetings.

Mike Willison
Chairman, Leeds Local Access Forum

September 2009

1. Background

The main focus of attention for the Leeds Local Access Forum (LLAF) has been the Rights of Way Improvement Plan, Open Access and Gating Orders. The Forum now contributes to the Regional Access Forum and the England Access Forum.

2. Dates of Meetings

Meetings were held on:

- 15th July 2008
- 16th September 2008
- 11th November 2008
- 17th February 2009
- 14th May 2009

Details of the record of attendance at all meetings is attached at [Appendix 1](#).

3. Business of the Forum

The following is a record of the main items of business dealt with by the Forum; further details can be obtained by referring to the minutes of the meetings.

Particular reference is made to items which gave rise to discussion and to items where the Forum agreed that specific advice be made to Natural England and the Government.

4. Election of Chair and Vice-Chair

Dr. Mike Willison was re-elected as Chair and Mrs. Doreen Lawson was elected Vice-Chair of the Forum for 2007/2008.

5. Vacancies

Whilst the Forum was able to appoint Mr. J. Pearlman as a Member of the Forum there were also resignations from Mrs. D. Lawson and Mrs. D. Metcalfe over the same period. There was also a change in the appointments from the local authority with Councillor J. Illingworth replacing Councillor J. Dunn. Various organisations and individuals had been invited to become Members however this had a limited response. The Forum's Membership was still below the level required by the Regulations and owners and occupiers of land were no longer represented on the Forum. Whilst the Regulations required that the appointing authority should advertise for new Members no budget was available for this. The situation continued to be unsatisfactory and appropriate resources, stipulated by the Local Access Forum Regulations, will need to be identified by the appointing authority.

6. Annual Report 2007/08

The Annual Report 2007/08, which outlined the work of the Forum for the year, was approved. The report and previous annual reports are available on the LLAF's website.

7. Rights of Way Improvement Plan

Following a delay in the consultation arrangements the Rights Of Way Improvement Plan was approved by Leeds City Council's Executive Board on Friday 13th February 2009. The Forum resolved to ensure to monitor and review the document on a regular basis and to ensure that the document was included in any future relevant policies such as the Local Development Framework. There had been a delay in the printing process of the documentation and in the way that the document was presented on the Council's website. The Forum will continue to work with the local authority and other agencies/organisations operating in the area to ensure that the document is at the forefront of future policies and funding allocations

8. Site Visits

On 8th July 2009 the Forum conducted a site visit to the St. Aidan's former open cast mine which is currently in the process of being returned to public use following the cessation of mining. Members were initially driven around part the site but were also given the opportunity to walk along some of the proposed paths. The Forum made recommendations in relation to further consultation with disability access groups in relation to the suitability of some paths. The Forum also considered the idea of further site visits over the forthcoming year to areas where Gating Orders were in force

9. Gating Orders and Dog Control Orders – Response to Consultations

The Forum considered reports on Gating Orders for the following areas:

- Back Nowell Mount/Back Nowell Place
- White Laithe Garth, Whinmoor, Leeds (application to withdraw a Gating Order)
- Brooklands Court/Easedale Mount, Seacroft
- Somerfield Green/The Oval, Killigbeck
- Oakham Way, Osmondthorpe
- Cross Green Lane, Leeds

No objections were raised

In line with Leeds City Council's Policy on Gating Orders the Forum will receive, throughout the next year, reports in relation to the Annual Reviews of Gating Order in Leeds.

No Dog Control Orders were considered by the Forum.

10. Responses to Consultations

The Forum responded to the consultation Rights of Way Improvement Plan and the Leeds City Council Natural resources Waste development Plan

11. England Access Forum and Regional Access Forum

The Chair of the Forum, Mr. M. Wood and The Countryside and Access Manager attended the first meeting of the Regional Access Forum (RAF) in October 2008. The RAF would feed into each authority's Local Access Forum and also into the England Access Forum which has also been established. The Chair and Mr. Wood also attended the RAF in March 2009. It was hoped that the attendance at the RAF would assist the work of the Forum and provide a forum for all LAFs to communicate with both DEFRA and Natural England.

12. Forward Work Programme

In line with good practice the Forum a Forward Work Programme consisting of reports, site visits and presentations. Members identified that an annual report on rights of way, including details of works completed under the ROWIP Action Plan and a summary of enforcement action, should be presented to the Forum.

13. Relevant Documents

- [DEFRA – Guidance on Local Access Forums in England](#)

The following documents can be obtained by contacting Laura Pilgrim – Secretary to the Forum on 0113 2474359.

- Leeds Local Access Forum Terms of Reference
- Minutes and Agendas of the Leeds Local Access Forum

LEEDS LOCAL ACCESS FORUM ATTENDANCE RECORD

Name	15/07/08	16/09/08	17/11/08	17/02/09	14/05/09
Dr. M. Willison (chair)	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Mrs. D. Lawson (Vice-Chair)	Apologies	Apologies	Apologies		
Mr. P. Maude	Yes	Apologies	Yes	Yes	Yes
Mrs. D. Metcalfe	Yes	Yes	Apologies	Apologies	
Mr. S. Wood	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Cllr. C. Fox	Yes	Yes	Yes	Apologies	Apologies
Cllr. J. Dunn	Apologies	Apologies	Yes	Apologies	
Mr. J. Pearlman					Apologies