

Notes of an inquorate meeting of the Leicestershire Local Access Forum held at County Hall, Glenfield on Thursday 2 October 2008.

Present

Mr. R. J. Denney (in the Chair), Mrs. R. Camamile CC, Mrs. L. Forman, Mr. M. Parr, Mr. B. Sutton, Mr. P Tame, Mr. S. J. Warren.

Officers in attendance

Mr. E. McWilliam, Mr. A. Poole, Mr. P. Williams, Mr. P. Lindley, Ms. J. Bailey.

ACTION BY

239. Chairman's welcome

The Chairman welcomed members to the meeting.

It was noted that as only seven members were present the meeting was inquorate, and that therefore any recommendations made would require endorsement at the next meeting. Edwin McWilliam confirmed that the County Council was reviewing vacancies on the Forum.

240. Apologies for absence

Apologies were reported on behalf of Ms. V. Allen, Mr. H. Eppel, Mr. T. B. Kirby, and Mr. J. M. Law.

241. Minutes of the previous meeting

NOTED:

The minutes of the meeting held on 12 August 2008, and that it would be necessary for the next quorate meeting of the Forum to confirm these as a correct record.

242. Matters arising from the minutes

(i) Minute 228: Publicity

The Chairman commented that he had not received any offers to produce articles for the newsletter.

(ii) Minute 230: Subgroups

Edwin McWilliam advised that the full revised programme of schemes would be circulated to the LTP subgroups with the minutes of the subgroup meeting.

EMcW

(iii) Minute 232: Ditch clearance

Peter Williams confirmed that the Highways, Transportation and Waste Management department had been made aware of the invitation and would send a representative to attend meetings of the Forum where appropriate.

PW / SW

243. Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest in respect of items on the agenda. Mr. P. Tame subsequently declared a personal, non-prejudicial interest in the matter discussed at minute 254 below as a member of the NFU.

244. Urgent items

The Chairman agreed to take the following urgent items -

- Green Infrastructure
- Grants, volunteers
- Access to maps

Members agreed to take the first two items at item 8 on the agenda (minute 246 below refers) and the third at item 13 (minute 252 below).

245. Departmental Restructuring

Peter Williams reported on the detail of recent restructuring in the Community Services Department, and explained which officers now worked in the new Countryside team which came under a new Environmental Management Group within the Department*.

Peter reminded members that Footpath Inspectors worked in the Highways, Transportation and Waste Management Department, but liaised closely with Community Services - the Rights of Way Improvement Plan was a joint policy document. Although different services sometimes had different priorities officers did work closely together and the Council always sought to improve internal communication.

NOTED:

The new Departmental structure.

**Note: names and contact details are appended to these notes.*

246. Local / Multi Area Agreements update

Peter Williams gave an oral report on Leicestershire's second LAA (referred to as 'LAA2') which had been finalised in June 2008 and covered the period up to 2011. He advised that the LAA2 was the delivery plan for the wider Sustainable Community Strategy (delivered by Leicestershire Together). It comprised a set of 35 targets, derived from National Indicators and government targets, and 10 locally identified priorities. All partner organisations had a duty to reflect the priorities in their own strategies and to involve local communities in decisions and service delivery, and all had committed to achieving certain targets.

Peter explained that the Multi Area Agreement (MAA) had a similar function to the LAA but covered a wider area - MAAs were intended to change the way that local authorities and government agencies worked together sub-regionally. It was very much economically focused, hence the creation of the Economic Development Company (EDC) between Leicestershire County and Leicester City Councils.

The Chairman said that concerns had been expressed that the LAA would result in a loss of funding to existing activities and projects, and that it appeared to diminish local authorities' role in decision-making.

Peter said that the Government's intention was for local authorities to place greater focus on what residents wanted, and it was inevitable that funding would move away from low priorities. However the LAA should also be seen as an opportunity and it was hoped that the Forum would feel able to support Leicestershire Together's work. He said that Sharon Jefferies had been appointed by the region as Green Infrastructure Development Co-ordinator, based at County Hall. She would be invited to attend LAF meetings.

SW

The Chairman referred to a scheme in Hampshire which had given relatively modest amounts of funding to a number of voluntary projects, and Peter undertook to investigate this and report back to the Forum. He noted that a key target for the SCS was to encourage volunteering. Mr. McWilliam undertook to outline draft proposals for voluntary involvement in Rights of Way work for the next meeting.

PW

AGREED:

- (a) That the information about the LAA and MAA be noted;
- (b) That a report on voluntary involvement in Rights of Way work would be brought to the next meeting.

EMcW

note: information about Leicestershire Together can be found at http://www.leicestershiretogether.org/index/sustainable_community_strategy.htm

247. Change to the order of business

The Chairman sought and obtained the consent of members to vary the order of business as set out in the agenda.

248. Walking Festival 2008

Andrew Poole circulated a report regarding the 2009 Leicestershire Walking Festival proposals, a copy of which is filed with these notes.

Members commented on the preferred time of year (taking into account the likely weather, holidays etc) and the organisations which might wish to be involved.

AGREED:

That the matter would be considered further at a future meeting.

AP

249. Bardon Quarry - proposed extension to works

The Chairman reported that it was likely that Bardon Aggregates would submit a planning application in 2009 to expand current workings at Bardon Quarry. This would affect public rights of way in the area, and Bardon Aggregates had indicated that it would appreciate the Forum's views. Peter Williams added that the County Council had not yet been formally notified about the proposals.

Members considered information which had been provided to Mr. Denney by Bardon Aggregates, noting that the proposed new excavations would affect land to the north of the A511 and west of Copt Oak Road, near Old Rise Rocks. Piers offered to set up a workshop meeting for a number of Forum members to look at the proposals in more detail.

AGREED:

That a meeting would be arranged for Forum members to consider the proposals and to formulate comments to be sent to Bardon Aggregates.

AP

250. M1 Widening

Edwin McWilliam gave an oral report on progress with the proposals to widen the M1 in Leicestershire. He explained that the Government was currently undertaking a review of proposed major highways schemes in view of constraints. A range of options was being considered.

NOTED:

The current position with regard to M1 widening and that an update would be brought to a future meeting of the Forum.

EMcW

251. Sub-groups

There was no news to report.

Edwin McWilliam said that he had received a communication from Edwin Knight regarding the Barrow LTP scheme and would forward this to the relevant members.

EMcW

252. Correspondence

- (i) Coastal Access - the paper on coastal access authority audits was noted (a copy, marked 'B', is filed with these notes).
- (ii) Natural England - Edwin McWilliam said that a letter had been received from Ms. Jan Tilsley advising that the new contact for the East Midlands region was now Carolyn Lloyd.
- (iii) Definitive Map - Edwin reported that the up-to-date Definitive Map was now available to partner organisations as a pdf file on CD. This made it much easier and cheaper to distribute and update (it would be sent to libraries, District, and Parish Councils). It was yet to be decided how often updates would be issued, perhaps annually. He cautioned that whilst the 'zoom' feature could give a much enhanced view on screen the maps were designed to be viewed at a certain scale and would not necessarily be accurate to the metre if enlarged.

NOTED:

The correspondence received, and the production of the Definitive Map on CD.

253. Gating Orders update report

Piers Lindley presented a report on the proposals for a County Council policy on Gating Orders, a copy of which, marked 'C', is filed with these minutes.

Piers said that he would remind the Scrutiny Review Panel of the Forum's views, and reminded everyone that the questionnaires (which could also be accessed online) could be submitted up to 10 October. He said that he would highlight this with user groups.

PL

NOTED:

Proposals for a Gating Order policy.

254. Eco-Town Pennbury Workshops

Mr. McWilliam advised that workshops organised by the Co-operative Group had taken place and had been attended by Ms Allen and Mr Kirby, who would hopefully be able to report to the next meeting of the Forum.

VA / TK

Edwin added that he had also attended; the workshops had tended to focus on what people would want from the development should it take place. As the Forum was formally engaged in the consultation it would receive feedback from the Co-op.

Mr. Tame confirmed that he had attended a meeting of the Scrutiny Review Panel on the Eco-Town the previous Monday (he declared a personal, non-prejudicial, interest in the issue as a member of the NFU which included a number of Co-Operative Group members).

NOTED:

That feedback on the workshops would be brought to a future meeting of the Forum.

EMcW

255. Temporary Closures (i) L 87, Donington (ii) I 20, Barrow-upon-Soar

The Forum considered reports on temporary path closures at Donington (L87) and Barrow upon Soar (I20) copies of which, marked 'D' and 'E' respectively, are filed with these notes.

Piers Lindley explained the options which were being considered to address the situation at Barrow. The County Council accepted that it was a complex situation but would want to see evidence that Network Rail was working to resolve the issue at the earliest opportunity.

AGREED:

That the reports be noted.

256. English Access Forum update

The Chairman reported that it had been decided that the Lincolnshire representative should chair the EAF. He had also suggested that the meetings of LAF Chairs were held in their respective localities and that some representatives of their Local Access Forum should also be invited to attend.

NOTED:

That the Constitution and minutes of the EAF meeting would be circulated to Forum members with the minutes of the meeting.

SW

257. Open Forum

There were no matters for discussion.

258. Agenda items for the next meeting

Andrew Poole advised members of an issue raised by a Mr. Warwicker at Donisthorpe woodlands and outlined the circumstances. The Chairman asked officers to consider the issue, having regard to the Forum's strategic role, and to report to the next meeting if it was considered necessary.

AP / PW

259. Date of next meeting

NOTED:

That the next meeting would take place on Tuesday 25 November 2008, at County Hall, Glenfield.

6.00pm - 8.20pm
2 October 2008