

LEICESTERSHIRE LOCAL ACCESS FORUM – 18TH MAY 2010

REPORT OF THE DIRECTOR OF ENVIRONMENT & TRANSPORT

STEPPING FORWARD REPORT

Purpose of Report

1. To inform members of the publication of 'Stepping Forward' a report by the Stakeholder Working Group on unrecorded public rights of way.

The Background

2. The Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000 (CROW) introduced a 'cut-off date' of 2026 beyond which any pre-1949 public rights of way not recorded on the Definitive map of public rights of way would be extinguished. Government funded the Countryside Agency to trial the systematic collation of evidence to ensure that useful historic rights of way could be captured before this deadline. The 'Discovering Lost Ways' project was established in 2001 to capture evidence about unrecorded rights of way before the cut off date. This had a troubled history. In addition, Natural England and a number of other parties concluded that the length of time necessary under current law and procedures to process cases meant that the deadline of 2026 was not a realistic proposition.
3. In March 2008, Defra endorsed Natural England's recommendation that it should close the 'Discovering Lost Ways' project and instead challenge the key national interests to develop a consensus about the best way to remedy the well-publicised deficiencies of the definitive map processes. A Stakeholder Working Group was established.
4. The group was independently chaired and comprised representatives of three key interest groups – land managers/business, users and local authority rights of way staff - to develop a consensus about how to find a way forward. This new report "Stepping Forward" is the outcome of this process.
5. Natural England has forwarded the Group's 32 recommendations to Government, which will now consider its findings.

Recommendation

6. That members note the final report.

Appendices

Appendix B – 'Stepping Forward Report'

Officer to Contact

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