

(Meeting held at Rutland County Council Offices, Oakham)

PRESENT: COUNCILLOR BRIAN MONTGOMERY (CHAIRMAN)

Representing Lincolnshire County Council: - Councillor David Brailsford.

Representing Independent Members: - Ian Cox, William Cross, Alan Gibbon, Rosemary Harris, Alec Hill, Graham Law, Audrey Morley and John Williams.

Officers: - Stuart Crook (Public Rights of Way Officer, Rutland County Council), Chris Miller (Countryside Access Manager, Lincolnshire County Council), Andrew Savage (Senior Countryside Access Officer, Lincolnshire County Council) and Graham Watts (Democratic Services Officer, Lincolnshire County Council).

John Law, member of the Leicestershire Local Access Forum, was also in attendance.

16. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Bryan Bowles, George Keeping and Councillor Ray Wootten.

17. MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING HELD ON 6 JULY 2011

RESOLVED

That the minutes of the previous meeting of the South Lincolnshire and Rutland Local Access Forum held on 6 July 2011 be confirmed and signed by the Chairman as a correct record.

18. THE DRIFT – SEASONAL TRAFFIC REGULATION ORDER

Lincolnshire County Council's Senior Countryside Access Officer introduced this item and informed the Local Access Forum of developments relating to 'The Drift' and the establishment of a seasonal Traffic Regulation Order.

Members were informed that Natural England had reported an improvement in the condition of the lane, despite the continued use of the lane by small number of motor vehicles.

**SOUTH LINCOLNSHIRE AND RUTLAND
LOCAL ACCESS FORUM
12 OCTOBER 2011**

The proposal was for a seasonal Traffic Regulation Order to be imposed from 1 October to 31 March. A number of objections had been received from motorcyclists across the country as part of a public consultation process. Further to this, comments had also been received from the Byways and Bridleway Trust in support of the seasonal closure, subject to the closure period being adjusted by a month to 30 November to 30 April.

It was noted that the public consultation was due to close at the end of the month, therefore, the Local Access Forum would be able to provide its views as part of the formal consultation process. Discussion ensued on the proposed Traffic Regulation Order, further to which the following points were raised: -

- adjusting the closure period by a month, as suggested by the Byways and Bridleways Association, was supported as this would provide more time for the lane to dry out and repair following bad weather in the winter;
- there was evidence of fly tipping on the lane, which the Senior Countryside Access Officer agreed to report to the relevant District Council;
- the Highways Manager from Lincolnshire County Council should be invited to attend a future meeting of the Local Access Forum and provide members with an update.

RESOLVED

That the above comments be forwarded to the County Council's Highways Manager.

19. EAST MIDLANDS LOCAL ACCESS FORUM CHAIRMEN'S MEETING

The Chairman informed members that he attended the East Midlands Local Access Forum Chairmen's meeting on 27 September 2011.

One of the main issues raised at the meeting was an online tool that had been introduced by Natural England known as 'Huddle'. This would be introduced in the format of an online forum, which Local Access Forum members and officers could use to upload and share documents, such as annual reports and minutes of meetings, discuss issues of common interest or share methods of good practice. The 'Huddle' concept had been tested with pilot authorities and an officer from Natural England's People and Partnerships Team had been appointed to work with Local Access Forums covering the areas of Derbyshire, Lincolnshire, Nottinghamshire and Rutland to support use of the 'Huddle' facility.

It was agreed that the officer from Natural England should be invited to attend a future meeting of the South Lincolnshire and Rutland Local Access Forum.

**SOUTH LINCOLNSHIRE AND RUTLAND
LOCAL ACCESS FORUM
12 OCTOBER 2011**

RESOLVED

That the update be noted.

20. RIGHTS OF WAY IMPROVEMENT PLANS

The Local Access Forum was provided with updates on the Rights of Way Improvement Plans from Lincolnshire County Council and Rutland County Council, as follows: -

i) Lincolnshire County Council

A report by the Senior Countryside Access Officer was considered, which provided members with an update on progress made in relation to the implementation of the Lincolnshire Rights of Way Improvement Plan. A comprehensive overview of the implementation progress of core tasks was appended to the report.

In terms of network management, the highways divisions had continued to make general improvement through maintenance and enforcement works. In the period April 2007 to July 2011 these included the following: -

- 669 stiles provided or repaired;
- 1161 new roadside signs;
- 1480 routes waymarked;
- 393 gates provided or repaired;
- 285 new bridges;
- 245 stiles replaced with kissing gates;
- 209 stiles removed.

The fifth year improvement programme for the Rights of Way Improvement Plan had commenced and improvement schemes were currently being implemented. Efforts were being focused on improving paths in close proximity to villages and towns and improving paths which formed part of promoted routes. A breakdown of completed improvement schemes and additional improvement schemes scheduled to be undertaken was included in the report.

It was reported that two new railway walk leaflets had been published for Metheringham and Sleaford and further leaflets were under preparation for the Lincolnshire Coastal Country Park and Limewoods area. Countryside Access Education packs had been published and distributed to all schools in the county, copies of which were circulated at the meeting.

The redevelopment of the County Council's countryside microsite was also nearing completion and the following updates were noted in relation to the Lindsey Trail: -

**SOUTH LINCOLNSHIRE AND RUTLAND
LOCAL ACCESS FORUM
12 OCTOBER 2011**

- maps had been completed;
- access improvement works had been completed;
- surface improvement works were nearing completion;
- Willingham Woods interpretation boards were currently being developed;
- a permissive path agreement had been made with the Forestry Commission to enable the use of Willingham Woods by carriage drivers and horse riders;
- work was underway to produce a trail leaflet and interpretation panels.

ii) Rutland County Council

Consideration was given to a report by the Public Rights of Way Officer from Rutland County Council, which explained the proposed format and approach to be taken in developing the second Rights of Way Improvement Plan for Rutland.

It was proposed that the format of Rutland's second Rights of Way Improvement Plan would follow that used in the third Local Transport Plan. As part of this it would contain a core long term strategy with much shorter implementation plans. The document itself would be structured around seven strategic aims, which resulted from a consultation exercise conducted by the Local Strategic Partnership whilst writing the Sustainable Community Strategy. These were noted as follows: -

- maintaining high levels of employment and a thriving economy;
- improving access to services;
- creating a safer community;
- protecting the rural environment;
- promoting good health and wellbeing;
- increasing the cultural, sport and recreational offer;
- creating a brighter future for all.

The Strategic Management Team would be briefing staff and attempting to embed Rutland County Council's corporate priorities and a new set of core values. As the second Rights of Way Improvement Plan developed the Council would coordinate its work with the Local Transport Plan team to ensure the effects of these changes were handled consistently across both documents.

The next stage in the development of the plan would be to take a look at the action plan contained in the original document and apply some rationalisation. The Council was seeking to retain what worked well, particularly those actions that had improved the network, whilst also contributing towards helping the Council meet its strategic aims and core values.

**SOUTH LINCOLNSHIRE AND RUTLAND
LOCAL ACCESS FORUM
12 OCTOBER 2011**

In closing, it was noted that Rutland County Council's Definitive Map needed to be updated, therefore, any new applications for Definitive Map Modification Orders or Public Path Orders would be temporarily put on hold.

During discussion, and further to minute number 11(ii) of the previous meeting of the Local Access Forum, it was reported that the Rights of Way section at Rutland County Council was still experiencing difficulties in relation to its legal work, specifically the creation of Orders. It was noted that the Public Rights of Way Officer would meet with Rutland County Councillors to raise his concerns and address these issues.

RESOLVED

That the reports be noted.

21. DEFINITIVE MAP MODIFICATION ORDERS UPDATE

Members were provided with updates on Definitive Map Modification Order work in respect of Lincolnshire County Council and Rutland County Council, as follows: -

i) Lincolnshire County Council

A report by the Council's Countryside Access Manager was considered, which detailed the progress of Definitive Map Modification Order work since the inception of the current prioritisation policy, together with an overview of current caseloads following significant workforce change.

ii) Rutland County Council

Consideration was given to a report by the Council's Public Rights of Way Officer, which updated Members of the latest position in respect of Definitive Map Modification Order work in Rutland.

RESOLVED

That the reports be noted.

22. PUBLIC PATH ORDERS – UPDATE ON PROGRESS

Members were provided with updates on Public Path Order work in respect of Lincolnshire County Council and Rutland County Council, as follows: -

**SOUTH LINCOLNSHIRE AND RUTLAND
LOCAL ACCESS FORUM
12 OCTOBER 2011**

i) Lincolnshire County Council

The Forum received a report by the Countryside Access Manager, which detailed the progress of Public Path Order work in respect of the Council's power to divert, extinguish or create Public Rights of Way either of its own volition or following an application to do so from the public.

ii) Rutland County Council

An update report on those Public Path Order applications currently in Rutland County Council's system was provided to Members.

RESOLVED

That the reports be noted.

23. HIGHER LEVEL STEWARDSHIP ACCESS

This item was introduced by John Williams, who requested its inclusion on the agenda for this meeting.

As a Member of the Ramblers' Association, Mr Williams had been asked to report any Higher Level Stewardship paths to the Association that he felt were particularly useful. This was in response to Higher Level Stewardship schemes expiring due to the fact European Union funding could no longer be used for them. It was reported that a Member of the Mid-Lincolnshire Local Access Forum had undertaken similar work as he was also a Member of the Ramblers' Association.

Some paths on a Higher Level Stewardship scheme were extremely useful as they provided links to other parts of the Rights of Way network or diverted people from busy main roads. It was noted that both County Councils would welcome working with landowners to retain useful routes that were currently part of the Higher Level Stewardship scheme and would be lost as a result of the funding ending.

24. DRAFT NATIONAL PLANNING FRAMEWORK

This item was introduced by Alan Gibbon, who requested its inclusion on the agenda for this meeting.

Mr Gibbon reported that a consultation had been launched by the Department for Communities and Local Government on the draft National Planning Policy Framework. Paragraph 41 of the consultation, under the 'ensuring viability and deliverability' heading, stated the following: -

**SOUTH LINCOLNSHIRE AND RUTLAND
LOCAL ACCESS FORUM
12 OCTOBER 2011**

“Local planning authorities, parishes and neighbourhood forums should assess the likely cumulative impacts on development in their area of all existing and proposed local standards, supplementary planning documents and policies that support the development plan, when added to nationally required standards.”

It was reported that the Ramblers' Association, in its response to the consultation, had suggested that reference should be made to Local Access Forums in this paragraph alongside local planning authorities, parishes and neighbourhood forums.

In closing, Members were informed that the consultation ended on 17 October 2011.

25. DATES AND VENUES OF FUTURE MEETINGS

RESOLVED

That future meetings of the South Lincolnshire and Rutland Local Access Forum be held as follows: -

- 25 January 2012 at 2.00 p.m. in Lincoln;
- 18 April 2012 at 6.30 p.m. in Sleaford.

The meeting closed at 7.55 p.m.