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**MID-LINCOLNSHIRE LOCAL ACCESS
FORUM
23 JANUARY 2018**

PRESENT: CHRIS PADLEY (CHAIRMAN)

Representing Lincolnshire County Council: Councillors Bill Aron and Lewis Strange

Representing North East Lincolnshire Council: Apology received (see minute 106)

Representing Independent Members: Sheila Brookes, Ray Shipley, Colin Smith, Richard Graham and David Salkeld

Officers: Steve Blagg (Democratic Services Officer), Matthew Chaplin (Public Rights of Way Mapping Officer, North East Lincolnshire Council), Chris Miller (Team Leader for Countryside Services) and Catherine Beeby (Senior Definitive Map Officer)

105 QUESTIONS FROM THE PUBLIC

There were no questions asked by the public.

106 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Iain Colquhoun, Sandra Harrison and Helen Pitman.

Councillor Lewis Strange informed the meeting that he had permanently replaced Councillor Hugo Marfleet on the Forum.

107 DECLARATIONS OF MEMBERS' INTERESTS

There were no declarations of interest at this stage of the meeting.

108 MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING OF THE MID LINCOLNSHIRE
LOCAL ACCESS FORUM HELD ON 24 OCTOBER 2017

RESOLVED

That the minutes of the previous meeting held on 24 October 2017, be approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

109 PROPOSED HOUSING DEVELOPMENT IN THE WESTERN GROWTH
CORRIDOR, LINCOLN - NEED FOR RIGHTS OF WAY AND CYCLE
ROUTES (MINUTE 94 (A))

The Chairman confirmed that he had submitted the Forum's response agreed at the last meeting in connection with the need for rights of way in the proposed Western Growth Corridor, in the City of Lincoln and no feedback had been received to date. The next stage of the development was awaited. Officers stated that County Council officers had made representations about the need for rights of way similar to those of the Forum. Officers stated that the connection of the A46 to the proposed development was another issue which would need to be considered.

A member commented that recent statistics from the Department of Transport stated that walking had declined in the last ten years and that cycling had increased. Another member stated that those countries with high cycling rates were normally countries where the national government had been heavily involved in developing cycle routes.

110 GENERIC ADVICE TO PLANNING AUTHORITIES (MINUTE 95)

The Forum was informed that responses had been received from District Councils to the letter sent on behalf by the Chairmen of both Local Access Forums on 18 July 2017, expressing concern about the effects of planning applications on rights of way.

The Forum welcomed the positive response received and noted that some District Councils had requested that the Chairman and appropriate officers should attend their planning training sessions to explain rights of way.

The Forum discussed Parish Council Neighbourhood Plans and agreed that the Forum should be a consultee in the preparation of the Plans to enable them to provide advice about rights of way. The preparation of Neighbourhood Plans was explained in the National Planning and Policy Framework and planning authorities were required to take them into consideration.

The Forum wished to be kept informed about Neighbourhood Plans in the capacity of a consultee. The Forum noted that Cherry Willingham Parish Council's Neighbourhood Plan had referred to rights of way in view of proposed residential development near the River Witham. Officers agreed to send Cherry Willingham's Neighbourhood Plan to members and agreed to keep members informed of future Neighbourhood Plans. Officers stated that rights of way in Parish Plans were also linked in to the County Council's Rights of Way Improvement Plan.

Ray Shipley raised a problem of a blocked public footpath at Cliff Farm, Heighington and officers agreed to investigate this matter and respond to him.

RESOLVED

- (a) That the responses received from District Councils to the letter sent by the Chairmen of both Forums on 18 July 2017, on the effects of planning applications on rights of way, be noted.
- (b) That the request by some District Councils for the Chairman and officers to attend planning training sessions be accepted.
- (c) That officers send details of Parish Neighbourhood Plans to both Forums to allow them to respond as a consultee on rights of way.
- (d) That, in the meantime, officers send the Cherry Willingham Neighbourhood Plan to members in view of Cherry Willingham Parish Council's concern about rights of way access from a proposed development close to the River Witham.
- (e) That officers investigate the problems of a blocked right of way at Cliff Farm, Heighington and respond to Ray Shipley.

111 ENGLISH COASTAL FOOTPATH - UPDATE (MINUTE 96)

The Forum received a verbal update on the development of the English Coastal Footpath in Lincolnshire.

Officers stated that Natural England was proposing to open the first stretch of the footpath between Skegness and Mablethorpe at Easter 2018 and it was hoped that this first stretch of the footpath would be opened to coincide with the opening of the new Observatory in the Coastal Country Park.

Officers stated that an imminent announcement by Natural England was expected on the proposed route from Skegness to Sutton Bridge with the proposed use of the Drainage Board's bridge at Gibraltar Point looking the best option for a right of way and being maintained by the County Council.

Officers stated that Natural England was examining the proposed route of the footpath from Mablethorpe to the Humber with the likelihood that the route would have to come inland to avoid the seal sanctuary at Donna Nook. Officers stated that they were speaking to landowners in this area and while not expecting too many objections it was likely that there would be one objection from a landowner who preferred walkers to be kept on the bank itself.

RESOLVED

That the report be noted.

112 LOCAL ACCESS FORUMS ANNUAL REPORTS

The Forum was informed that a communication had been received from Natural England in connection with the Local Access Forum Annual Report 2016/17 and

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2017/18. Natural England had decided that because of limited resources and the need to reallocate responsibility of operational work, it had been decided not to run the usual Local Access Forum reporting process. Natural England had stated that they would gladly receive any completed reports but were prepared to leave it to the discretion of LAFs to submit one or not and would look to implement the updated process for 2017/18.

The Forum agreed that as Natural England was being reorganised they would not want to receive annual reports at this time as there was no one there to allocate them to.

RESOLVED

That the communication received from Natural England in connection with Local Access Forums Annual Reports be noted.

113 COUNTRYSIDE FOR ALL

The Forum received a report from John Law, a representative on the South Lincolnshire Local Access Forum, in connection with Countryside for All.

Richard Graham stated that he had attended the "Inclusive Countryside Access Course" on 23 November 2017, as detailed in the report and had found the course very useful especially the use of rights of way for disabled people. Richard Graham stated that gradient changes to rights of way should be given more consideration when planning routes for disabled people and explained the three categories of disabilities.

Members discussed rights of way for disabled people, including types of disabilities, the importance of rights of way to help improve mental health, the benefits of rights of way for public health and helping to improve the lives of people living on their own through community walking. A member informed the Forum that there was an organisation called CALM (Countryside Access for the Lesser Mobile) who took disabled people out into the countryside in vehicles.

RESOLVED

That the report be noted.

**114 NORTH EAST COUNTRYSIDE AND RIGHTS OF WAY IMPROVEMENT
PLAN (ROWIP 2)**

Officers stated that North East Lincolnshire Council was currently updating its Rights of Way Improvement Plan 2, drafting its user needs survey and examining areas of interest to be included in ROWIP2.

RESOLVED

That the report be noted.

115 LINCOLNSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL'S DEFINITIVE MAP MODIFICATION ORDERS

The Forum received a progress report from Lincolnshire County Council on their Definitive Map Orders.

Issues highlighted included:-

- Coningsby (Case 182) – The Public Inquiry had been rescheduled due to the objector being ill. Officers would attend the Inquiry and were in the process of reviewing evidence.
- Middle Rasen (Case 72) – The Chairman stated that he was a party to this case and added that the Parish Council had received a letter from the County Council which had been circulated to all parties including the Planning Inspectorate.
- There was a brief discussion about Lost Ways with the Forum noting that there had not been any increase in applications; that Lost Ways were only likely to be of interest to communities where there was knowledge that a route had existed but had disappeared; that some Rambling areas had shown little interest in investigating their disappearance; the British Horse Society had shown some interest but it required individuals to undertake the investigation work. Officers stated that they would be writing to Parish Councils about Lost Ways.
- A member commented about the ending of the High Level Stewardship Scheme and its implications for rights of way. The Forum was informed that the Government was examining a new countryside policy following the decision to leave the EU and now was the time to lobby the Government about rights of way and access. Officers stated that the Secretary of State for the Environment, Food and Rural Affairs had recently made an announcement about the future of farming and the countryside including public access to the countryside. Lobbying groups had highlighted access to the countryside.
- Officers hoped that the Rural Payments Agency would continue as it would help enforcement of rights of way across agricultural land.
- It was important to get the wider public on the side of those wishing to see rights of way and access to the countryside protected.
- A record of Higher Stewardship footpaths was retained by Colin Smith.
- Officers stated that they were examining whether to publish Definitive Map Modification Order decision reports on-line which would help the public to understand the implications of any proposed changes.

RESOLVED

That the report be noted

116 NORTH EAST LINCOLNSHIRE COUNCIL'S DEFINITIVE MAP MODIFICATION ORDERS

The Forum received a report from North East Lincolnshire Council on the progress of its Definitive Map Modification Orders.

RESOLVED

That the report be noted.

117 LINCOLNSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL'S PROGRESS OF PUBLIC PATH ORDERS

The Forum received a report from Lincolnshire County Council in connection with the progress of its Public Path Orders.

Issues highlighted included:-

- By diverting certain routes in the Coastal Country Park area it was hoped to provide better routes for walkers.
- Following an enquiry about a footpath in Woodhall Spa, officers stated that they were seeking to divert this route but discussions were on-going with the landowner and there was also the need to examine the width of the footpath.
- Following an enquiry about the difficulties of the proposal by the Council to develop a provisional Public Path Order Policy, officers stated that they were currently examining this matter but the outcome of the De-Regulation Act needed to be known before they could undertake this task.

RESOLVED

That the report be noted.

118 NORTH EAST LINCOLNSHIRE COUNCIL'S PROGRESS OF PUBLIC PATH ORDERS

The Forum received a report from North East Lincolnshire Council in connection with the progress of their Public Path Orders.

Officers stated that a report was due to be submitted to the Planning Committee in January 2018, in connection with Stallingborough FP21 recommending that the footpath should be diverted.

RESOLVED

That the report be noted.

119 DATE AND TIME OF THE NEXT MEETING**RESOLVED**

That the Summer meeting of the Forum be arranged for 2.00pm on Tuesday 10 July 2018, at Huttoft Village Hall.

(Post meeting note: The date of this meeting has been re-arranged for 2.00pm on Tuesday 3 July 2018. The venue remains the same.)

The meeting closed at 3.15 pm

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