

Borough of Bedford Local Access Forum

Minutes of meeting held on 19th November 2015 at
Borough Hall commencing at 6.30pm

<u>Members</u>	<u>Observers</u>
Bob Wallace	Phill Fox – Bedford Borough Council
Nigel Jacobs	Zaria Beattles - Bedford Borough Council
Steve Bumstead - Chair	Andrew Prigmore – Bedford Borough Council
Barry Ingram	Apologies
David Mitchell	Brian Cowling
	James Russell
	Ann Kennedy
	Mark Fitzpatrick

1.	<p><u>Welcome by Chairman</u></p> <p>Steve Bumstead lead the meeting of the Forum and welcomed everyone.</p>
2.	<p><u>Minutes of previous meeting held in September 2015 to be agreed</u></p> <p>These were signed as a true and accurate record by the Chairman.</p>
3.	<p><u>Matters arising from previous minutes</u></p> <p>The Clerk confirmed that the Forum's comments on the recent EastWest Rail public consultation had been submitted.</p> <p>Regarding the update on BBC's consideration to move a ProW PF reported that the latest is the local authority have drafted a planning permission for the site, this document was shared with Members. It showed that the Council wish for the path to be diverted. Members asked for confirmation that when the planning application has been formally submitted that the Forum is alerted so they can view the documentation and make comments of they wish. It was also</p>

	<p>expressed that individuals would be welcome to make comments if they wanted as well to the planning application.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Action PF/AP</p> <p>The latest information on the staff structure is the team continues to work well, there are still budget cuts expected within the department budget, however, these will not impact in terms of staff levels, which the Forum were pleased to hear. From 1st April there will be a new team structure, it is expected that from this point their will be multi tasking skills of Officers, which will be reviewed to ensure that their appropriate training in place for combined rights of way and highways skills. It was asked where should rights of way issues be logged with the Council, AP detailed that these need to go through the Highways Helpdesk to allow for ease of tracking items.</p>
4.	<p><u>Updates from Bedford Borough Council</u></p> <p>4.1 Deregulation Act update on local authority progress</p> <p>PF had provided members with an update on the Deregulation Act as a summary document and possible Right Of Way Definitive Map implications, which will be taken forwards as part of the whole teams work plan. It was asked that these documents be circulated electronically so all Forum members could be updated.</p> <p>Action PF</p> <p>It is evident that there will be implications for the Officers in terms of increased workload as well as maintaining the technical side of the process as well, this is being built into the future priority of the team, which will move to a more prioritised workload approach. Members asked about the 'right to apply' term within the summary document, the landowner has the right to appeal and is the lead in the process, the local authority have to respond within a specified time, which it was noted is yet to be determined as the final regulations are expected to be published in April 16. There was an example talked through, of a back garden area which needs to be moved, this can be moved by the landowners, and the new site provided by the resident/landowner, however, they have not done this yet. In terms of public notices, these do still have to made, and are published in the local newspaper at a high cost to the local authority. There are alternative ways being looked at to minimise the cost of the public notices it was noted. Further updates on the progress of this work will continue to be shared with the Forum. Members expressed that if there is extra work needed on this then the local authority have to look at planning in appropriate additional resources, with it being suggested that there is a further review in mid April.</p> <p>4.2 Definitive Map update</p> <p>There was an updated prioritised list circulated to Members, some specific items discussed were:</p> <p>Wilden F6 which is in a back garden is going to be reviewed and will be looked at independently as well to make sure a sensible conclusion can be reached.</p> <p>Wootton there had been feedback given by local groups when part of a path was reviewed, it was suggested it would be more economical to do more parts in one go, or do multiple paths belonging to the same landowner so there is more joined up liaison. AP detailed that this was a good suggestion and this would be taken forwards.</p> <p>There was discussion on a Wilstead path within the list, it was questioned if any further</p>

	<p>consultation was actually needed, so this will be looked at again.</p> <p>It was noted that there are a number of Ravensden paths owned by the same landowner and it was hoped that this could be resolved with the landowner as a collective through their agent.</p> <p>PF always welcomes any Members to talk through any of the particular paths on the list directly with MB. Members commented that it would be good to see a list of completed ones as a way of sharing good news and promoting the great work, including it being encouraged by Members that they are put on the local authority website. The Forum reiterated that it is always helpful for users to have such updates, know what is happening and that improvements have been made.</p> <p>It was asked if there was an update on the Pinchmill Bridge works, these had started late but work is ongoing and will be dependant on the weather conditions so it is expected that this is now more likely to be completed in the New Year.</p>
5.	<p><u>Break</u></p> <p>Members took a brief break at this point</p>
6.	<p><u>Local Nature Partnership Work update</u></p> <p>BW reported that he had attended the recent meeting and work is progressing, with BW's role to be the Local Access Forum representative and bring their view point. There has been an Open Spaces and Well-being group set up from a health perspective, where it is planned to have an event with GP's in attendance to promote this aspect of healthy exercise. There is also plans for work within Luton to promote the use of outside space for low level health matters and if this is successful then this can be widened across the county. As there are lots of excellent facilities across the whole county, it is being explored how best to encourage people to use rights of way and open spaces. The Bedford Borough Citizen Panel will also be having a 'what prevents you going to open spaces' question on their next questionnaire.</p> <p>In the next few months it is planned for the work to reach grass roots levels and engage with as many groups as possible to get them out onto countryside sites.</p> <p>The Local Nature Partnership have no specific projects it was added.</p> <p>It was asked if there has been any feedback on the success of the Walking for Health groups in the local authority, PF detailed they are proving to be very popular and are being well used. Members felt it would be helpful to know the number of participants taking part in the groups.</p> <p style="text-align: right;">Action PF</p> <p>BF added that going forwards he will be the main point of contact for the Lets Go! Website which continues to go from strength to strength, with over 4k hits every month and sometimes up to 6k a month. This is not only very pleasing but means that it is guaranteed that the website is viable for at least two more years.</p>
7.	<p><u>Local Plan 2032 public consultation</u></p> <p>This public consultation link had been circulated to members, it was discussed that the document focuses predominately on development, so it was felt on balance at this stage it would not be relevant for the Forum to submit comments to the consultation.</p>

	<p>It was asked by a Member if Planning Officers ask about constraints on sites relating to rights of way, Members hoped Officers are proactive in discussing this with Rights Of Way Officers about the impact of sites put forward in the 'call for sites' process and consider the impacts on any rights of way nearby.</p>
8.	<p><u>Administrative matters</u></p> <p>8.1 Annual Report</p> <p>This had been circulated to members, awaiting SB's input for the Chairman's comments. Action SB and Secretary</p> <p>8.2 LAF Membership</p> <p>It was asked that ME be contacted to ask if he is unable to attend meetings, could he suggest an appropriate replacement representing landowner views, the Secretary to contact.</p> <p style="text-align: right;">Action Secretary</p> <p>It was felt it would be useful to invite a representative from the Cycling Forum and discussed about how to have a representative with a family perspective.</p> <p>It was noted that the National LAF Conference has been confirmed as being in February 2016, the local authority would pay travel expenses so all Members to consider whether they would like to attend or not.</p>
9.	<p><u>Any Other Notified Business</u></p> <p>None was received.</p>
10.	<p><u>Next Meeting</u></p> <p>Thursday 14th January 2016 at 6.30pm - Borough Hall, Bedford.</p>

Signed:

Date: