



Bedfordshire and Luton Joint Local Access Forum

Minutes meeting 30 24th February 2009

Members

David Simkins - Chairman
Brian Golby
James Russell
Tom Chevalier
David Mitchell
Christine Crouch
Peter Hollick
Bob Wallace

Observers

Phill Fox – JLAF Secretary
Jonathan Woods - Bedfordshire County Council
Chris Nicol - Bedfordshire County Council
Richard Thompson – Bedfordshire County Council
Keith Dove – Luton Borough Council

Apologies

Les Geary
Andy Gerrard
Andy Knight
Clive Beckett
Steve Bumstead

1. Public Questions

No members of the public attended the meeting.

2. Apologies

See above.

3. Matters arising from minutes of last meeting

a. Let's Go outdoor access web site – confirmation from both new Unitaries following JLAF meetings with them about LGR that they will both contribute £1500 to maintain the project in the short term.

Phill Fox – JLAF Secretary 01234 276070

Action

Talk to Luton BC to seek financial contribution to Let's Go project. Review web site content. Could include new areas such as Archives and Heritage. **JLAF Secretary and Appointing Authorities**

- b. Structures policy – final version ratified and will be adopted by the Unitary authorities. Copies shared with JLAF members. JLAF very pleased with this initiative and were proud to have made a significant contribution to its development. They thanked Stuart Harrison and his colleagues for their hard work.
- c. National ROWIP Awards - Bedfordshire OAIP has been nominated for an award in the most innovative and enterprising category. JLAF Chairman and Beds CC Officers will attend awards ceremony in Leicester on March 19th.

Action

JLAF Chairman to attend awards ceremony – **JLAF Chairman**

4. Any other business

- a. JLAF members are invited to the Chilterns Conservation Board (AONB) access conference on Thursday 5th March.
- b. 'Close to home' an outdoor access website is being developed by the Chilterns Conservation Board as an evolution of their current web site maps. This will target access in the Chilterns only and Central Bedfordshire will be a partner in this initiative.
- c. Cambridgeshire LAF have written to the JLAF to seek opinion on the loss of permissive routes as a result of changes to the Countryside Stewardship scheme and payments to farmers. JLAF requested information on current situation the county and what are the impacts as agreements come to an end. What are the opportunities for funds for farmers to continue to maintain these permissive routes?

Action

Information required for JLAF on extent of permissive routes as a result of Stewardship in Bedfordshire required. Information on Higher Level payment schemes for access Draft response for Cambridgeshire LAF and Natural England – **JLAF Secretary and ROW**

- d. Luton BC ROWIP now completed. Presented to committee in July 08 some changes made and it was published and approved in November 08. ROWIP document is currently being printed and will be made available to public and on website shortly.

5. Gating Orders in Luton

Keith Dove Luton Borough Council explained that the Gating policy had been approved by the committee and that community safety issues were the underlying

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driver for the policy. JLAF members felt that the Forum needs to be included in all consultations and this could be made clearer in any Member/Officer guidance and the policy itself. JLAF members welcomed the two stage process and felt Luton BC could make thoughtful/reasonable use of the policy.

JLAF members felt that Luton BC needs to begin work on resolution of 'Excluded' areas issues in the Borough to produce a 'Definitive Map' which will inform the Gating orders process better. Neighbouring Highway authorities could provide advice on resolution of these legal and technical matters.

Action

Start programme of raising awareness of JLAF functions and promotional campaign for Local Authorities and wider public. **JLAF Secretary and Appointing Authorities**

6. Bridge Programme 2008- 2009

Chris Nicol Contracts Officer for CAS Bedfordshire gave a presentation on the PROW Bridge programme for 2008- 2009. This featured the large bridges programme but also gave an indication of the diversity of crossings in the county and the challenge of finding suitable solutions to maintain safe and easy access.

Bids have been made to the Unitary authorities' capital funding programmes to carry on further works.

Action

Details of capital funding allocations for all Councils Countryside and Access works 2009 - 2010 to be shared with JLAF. **JLAF Secretary and Appointing Authorities**

7. Rights of Way issues and recent projects - Central West area

Richard Thompson Rights of Way Officer for Bedfordshire Central West area gave a presentation which outlined various PROW issues and recent projects. Key issues in his area were the A421 re-alignment, Ridgemont bypass, Linslade Western bypass, Brogborough landfill restoration and Heath and Reach quarry restorations.

Recent access improvement projects were the resurfacing of Sandy Lane (Aspley Heath), clearance of Rock Lane (Leighton Buzzard), resurfacing of FP7 (Woburn) and resurfacing of Spinney Lane Aspley Guise.

8. Feedback from Bedford Borough Council meeting

JLAF members attended a meeting with Stewart Briggs (Director of Environment) and Steve Tomlin (AD Environment and Community) at Bedford Borough Council on January 8th. Bedford BC confirmed it would support a tripartite JLAF subject to an agreement on funding levels. JLAF members suggested that this would be a new area of work for Bedford BC but were confident that Stewart and Steve would show good leadership on outdoor matters. JLAF felt that they had a role to play in making sure that

the new Unitaries would maintain high standards in their support for the Forum in the future. There was good news on the capital funding for ROWs and Outdoor recreation from Bedford BC who have made commitments in excess of £500,000 for 2009 – 2010.

9. JLAF and Local Government Reorganisation

Jonathan Woods (JW) advised JLAF members that Luton BC would continue to support the Forum with a £22,000 contribution but would be looking for an equitable split on funding in the future. JW is producing a costed scheme on future funding for the JLAF and requested ideas from the JLAF on what could be future funded items. JW suggested continuing with 6 meetings a year, more task group meetings, development of JLAF guidance and policy statements, better engagement with other bodies, marketing and promotion of the JLAF and identifying issues for a future JLAF work programme.

JLAF members asked for a breakdown of current costs to maintain the Forum. Will attendance of Council Officers be charged for? Members were wary the Forum costs were being overly built up and could appear too costly to run. JLAF members felt that the Forum should have its own web site. JLAF members wish to have a defined work programme and to allocate time accordingly. Members would like to have more 'hands on' matters such as the path rationalisation project which was explored a couple of years ago and to get out and make more site visits. JLAF members suggested that they have a plan in the Outdoor Access Improvement Plan and that this can be a focus for work.

The JLAF Secretariat will be hosted by Central Bedfordshire from April 1st 2009 and the next meeting of the JLAF will be 23rd April 2009 at the Forest Centre Marston Moretaine.

Actions

JLAF requested that staffing structures from all Unitaries are shared with members.

Future funding items for JLAF – ideas to JW

Share information on current costs of JLAF with JLAF members

JLAF Secretary and Appointing Authorities

10. Outdoor Access Improvement Plan

JLAF members were reminded that the current plan is 5 year action plan and that by August 2010 a new document has to be submitted to converge with the Local Transport Plan 3 (LTP3) for March 2011.

Links with the current LTP2 and future LTP3 is important as Luton BC LTP actually covers Dunstable and Houghton Regis as well already. A more holistic view will be taken with LTP3 and this links nicely with the current broad themed approach taken by the OAIP

The new Unitary authorities have adopted the OAIP into their strategic documents but

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will have to maintain commitment and align it with their other plans and emerging needs.

New versions of the OAIP could incorporate policy statements; identify new and revised targets, further consultation with JLAF itself and involvement in process.

JLAF members would like details of the timelines for production of these new plans

Actions

Share LTP3 guidance with JLAF

Involve JLAF in all 3 ROWIPs

Provide JLAF members with details of the timelines for production of these new plans

JLAF Secretary and Appointing Authorities

11. Dogs and Open Countryside Project Training day feedback

JLAF member Christine Crouch attended the training day for site managers on Dogs and Open Countryside funded by Natural England Access Management Grant Scheme. Steve Jenkinson Access Officer for the Kennel Club provided the training which explored issues on changing behaviours of dog owners when on sites and also provided a better understanding of what measures can be taken to improve the recreation experience for people and to mitigate and prevent dangers to wildlife and life stock. As a Dog owner Chris felt a bit on her own but enjoyed learning about some of the innovative ways these issues can and will be dealt with in Bedfordshire Open Country

Date of next meeting

JLAF members thanked Phill Fox for all his Secretariat support to the Joint Local Access Forum over the last 6 years.

Tuesday 23rd April 2009 – Forest Centre Marston Moretaine - Full meeting starts at 7.30 p.m.

ACTIONS FROM JLAF MEETING 30 ON 24th February 2009

1. Talk to Luton BC to seek financial contribution to Let's Go project.
Review web site content. Could include new areas such as Archives and Heritage.
2. JLAF Chairman to attend awards ceremony

**JLAF
Secretary
and
Appointing
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JLAF**

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3.	Information required for JLAF on extent of permissive routes as a result of Stewardship in Bedfordshire required. Information on Higher Level payment schemes for access Draft response for Cambridgeshire LAF and Natural England	Chairman JLAF Secretary and ROW
4.	Start programme of raising awareness of JLAF functions and promotional campaign for Local Authorities and wider public.	JLAF Secretary and Appointing Authorities
5.	Details of capital funding allocations for all Councils Countryside and Access works 2009 - 2010 to be shared with JLAF.	JLAF Secretary and Appointing Authorities
6.	<p>JLAF requested that staffing structures from all Unitaries are shared with members.</p> <p>Future funding items for JLAF – ideas to JW</p>	JLAF Secretary and Appointing Authorities
7.	<p>Share information on current costs of JLAF with JLAF members</p> <p>Share LTP3 guidance with JLAF</p> <p>Involve JLAF in all 3 ROWIPs</p> <p>Provide JLAF members with details of the timelines for production of these new plans</p>	JLAF Secretary and Appointing Authorities