

STOCKPORT LOCAL ACCESS FORUM (OUTSIDE BODY)

Meeting: 15 March 2021

At: 6.00 pm

PRESENT

Debbi Hall (Vice-Chair) in the chair; Dave Butler, Kathy England, Phil Featherstone, David Gosling, Liz Morgan, David Sedgwick and Chris Walsh.

1 MINUTES

The Minutes (copies of which had been circulated) of the meeting held on 19 March 2021 were approved as a correct record.

2 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

There were no apologies for absence.

3 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Members of the Forum were invited to declare any interests which they had in any of the items on the agenda for the meeting.

No declarations were made.

4 APPOINTMENT OF A MEMBER TO THE STOCKPORT LOCAL ACCESS FORUM

With regret, the Secretary reported that he had received notice of the resignation of Dr Edgar Ernstbrunner as Chair and Member of the Forum. It was further noted that the Ramblers Association had nominated Phil Featherstone to the consequent vacancy on the Forum.

Members of the Forum expressed their appreciation to Dr Ernstbrunner for his significant contribution to the work of the Forum over a number of years, and in particular in his role as Chair of the Forum for the past four years, and wished him well for the future.

RESOLVED – (1) That it be noted that Phil Featherstone had been appointed as a member of the Stockport Local Access Forum.

(2) That the Secretary be requested to write to Dr Ernstbrunner expressing the thanks and gratitude of the Forum for his contributions to its work.

5 MATTERS ARISING

Consultation on Rights of Way affected by New Developments (Minute 12 of 6 July 2020 refers)

It was noted that at the last meeting of the Forum, it had been requested that the Senior Public Rights of Way Officer discuss with the Chief Planning Officer the potential for the

Forum or the Public Rights of Way Forum to be included in the list of consultees when a development application had a consequential impact on a right of way.

It was commented that there was not yet a response on this issue, however it was anticipated that there would be an update that could be provided to the Forum on this matter at its next meeting.

PSPO Reviews (Minute 9 of 19 November 2020 refers)

It was commented that this matter had originally been placed on the agenda at the request of the Chair which had subsequently been deferred in the absence of an associated written report accompanying the item.

It was suggested that an update be secured for members at the next scheduled meeting of the Forum.

6 STATUTORY REGISTERS

A representative of the Strategic Head of Service (Legal & Democratic Governance and Monitoring Officer) submitted a report (copies of which had been circulated) providing an update on the Council's progress in creating and maintaining such a register.

The following comments were made/ issues raised:-

- Disappointment was expressed that the matter of Statutory Registers had been before the Forum on a number of occasions without being properly addressed.
- Members of the Forum had fed back example of good practice elsewhere through the Senior Public Rights of Way Officer and clarity was sought on whether this information had been duly considered. In response it was stated that work had taken place to understand how other authorities discharged their duties in this regard and the amount of additional information that was provided to supplement that which was statutorily required on the register.
- It was stated that progress on the matter had been slower than hoped due to the significant pressures being faced by the Legal Services department. A commitment was given that work would take place to address the statutory registers and that the Forum would be advised as soon as they had been updated and presented in the appropriate format on the Council's website.
- Concern was expressed that the information needed to maintain the registers was either incomplete, inaccurate or alternatively so much time had passed that resolutions of committees to give effect to modifications were now so old that they could no longer be relied upon.
- There had been a significant period of transition within the Public Rights of Way Team in recent years, and work was now taking place in collaboration with Legal Services to ensure that appropriate record-keeping measures were place.
- It was commented that the renewed approach and drive to making inroads into the existing issues within Public Rights of Way was to be welcomed and it was hoped that the results of this would be able to demonstrate an impact over the coming months.
- Work was taking place to understand the backlog of work and the resources needed to complete this.

RESOLVED – That the report be noted.

7 MODIFICATION ORDERS

A representative of the Strategic Head of Service (Legal & Democratic Governance and Monitoring Officer) submitted a report (copies of which had been circulated) detailing the progress of applications for modification orders made to the Council, and on modification orders made by the Council.

The following comments were made/ issues raised:-

- Concern was expressed that the list of modification orders detailed on the Council's website did not appear to represent the totality of those that members of the Forum were aware of.
- New claims now being made were being processed appropriately, however work was still taking place to progress those resolutions that had previously been passed by the Council.
- It was commented that members were aware of a number of orders where the appropriate resolutions had been passed by the relevant area committee providing approval, but whose status was now listed as under investigation and clarity was requested on the implications of this.

RESOLVED – That the report be noted.

8 CONSOLIDATION OF THE DEFINITIVE MAP AND STATEMENT FOR STOCKPORT

A representative of the Strategic Head of Service (Legal & Democratic Governance and Monitoring Officer) submitted a report (copies of which had been circulated) outlining the action already taken, and to be taken in the future, to consolidate the Definitive Map and Statement for Stockport.

The following comments were made/ issues raised:-

- The Public Rights of Way Team will hold a draft set of maps that would record ongoing changes to the definitive map and statement for ready reference. However, until these were sealed and dated they couldn't be referred to as the Definitive Map and Statement for Stockport.
- The fact that the map and statement were only being consolidated on a relatively infrequent basis meant that there should be a renewed focus on ensuring that the registers were up to date.
- It was commented that it was important that the publicly available online map of rights of way also needed to also be kept up-to-date and it was suggested that there were a number of outstanding changes that needed to be made to this such as alterations made following the construction of the A555 route through Woodford. It was stated that it needed to be noted that any online map was only a representation of the Definitive Map and Statement.
- The Definitive Map and Statement for Stockport is available for inspection at the Town Hall along with previous iterations of the map, however sections of copies of the map were currently being supplied upon request.

- It was queried whether the Council's asset register contained information on access controls on public rights of way and whether this information could be made more widely available. In response it was stated that the Council did not have a comprehensive record of the various access controls on the public rights of way network, however additional resource was being sought to accurately record and identify these so that this data could be made more widely available. It was requested that a report identifying progress towards achieving this be brought to a future meeting of the Forum.
- It was confirmed that temporary closures of rights of way did not appear on the online mapping resource, however there was a section of the website that identified temporary closures that should be kept up-to-date.

RESOLVED – (1) That the report be noted.

(2) That the Corporate Director (Place) be recommended to submit a report to a future meeting of the Forum detailing progress towards identifying and mapping access controls on the rights of way network.

9 DATES FOR FUTURE MEETINGS

RESOLVED – That meetings of the Forum take place as follows:-

- Monday, 19 July 2021
- Tuesday, 16 November 2021
- Monday, 14 March 2022

The meeting closed at 7.10 pm