

STOCKPORT LOCAL ACCESS FORUM (OUTSIDE BODY)

Meeting: 18 July 2022

At: 6.00 pm

PRESENT

David Gosling (Chair) in the chair; Kathy England (Vice-Chair); Dave Butler, Edgar Ernstbrunner, Phil Featherstone, Debbi Hall, Liz Morgan and Councillor Mark Roberts.

Also in attendance

Jamie Cockerham	- CSS Officer (Democratic & Electoral Services)
Damian Eaton	- Service Manager (Democratic Services)
Gillian Heyworth	- Transport Strategy Team Leader

1. ELECTION OF CHAIR

RESOLVED – That David Gosling be elected Chair of the Stockport Local Access Forum for the period until the next Annual Council Meeting.

David Gosling in the Chair

2. APPOINTMENT OF VICE-CHAIR

Kathy England and Debbi Hall were nominated for appointment to the office of Vice-Chair of the Stockport Local Access Forum for the period until the next Annual Council Meeting.

For Kathy England – 4

For Debbi Hall – 3

RESOLVED – That Kathy England be appointed Vice-Chair of the Stockport Local Access Forum for the period until the next Annual Council Meeting.

3. MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting held on 14 March 2022 were approved as a correct record.

Concern was expressed in relation to the timeliness of the publication of the minutes of the previous meeting. It was commented that these should be circulated to members, where possible, as soon as practicable after the meeting had taken place.

4. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received on behalf of Chris Walsh and Zoe Smith.

5. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

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

No declarations were made.

6. MATTERS ARISING

- (i) Establishing a Volunteer Footpath Clearance Group (Minute 13 of 19 July 2021 refers)

The Chair reported that progress had been made since the last meeting, as The Conservation Volunteers organisation had cleared the necessary insurance and safety regulation hurdles in relation to conducting clearance work on local footpaths. It was stated that it had been proposed that the volunteers conduct a pilot case on path 49 (Hazel Grove and Bramhall). It was reported that this site had been chosen as funding was available for the scheme from the Mirrlees Fields Friends Group. It was stated that, provided the pilot scheme was a success, the Forum could work with the volunteers to look at other areas and funding available to conduct footpath clearance work.

- (ii) A555 Public Rights of Way Update Report (minute 10 of 19 July 2021 refers)

It was commented that a further meeting between the Rights of Ways Team and Legal Services would be taking place in the week following the meeting to finalise the publication of the updated routes.

- (iii) Notification to PNFS, Ramblers and BHS of any rights of way affected by current planning applications (Minute 11 of 19 July 2021 refers)

The Chair stated that he had received notification of some planning applications, and therefore believed that the relevant organisations were now receiving notification of current planning applications. It was stated that there had not been many applications within the last month, but if Members had been receiving notification prior to this, they could assume that the system was now working.

Members requested that applicants should be required to submit maps of the relevant public rights of way as part of the application process, as the current position necessitated cross-referencing with the Stockport definitive map in order to identify which rights of way could be affected by the application.

- (iv) Access Control Measures Statement (Minute 5 of 14 March 2022 refers)

The Chair reported that he had been advised that the comments made at the last meeting of the Forum had been taken into account in the final draft of the Access Control Measures Statement, although Members had not seen the final draft prior to the meeting. It was stated that significant amendments had been to the final draft by Legal Services, and officers were awaiting the publication of the final version.

- (v) Review of the Definitive Map and Statement for Stockport (Minute 8 of 14 March 2022 refers)

It was noted that this was an ongoing project that work was still being conducted on, and that the definitive map continued to be reviewed.

7. 2021/22 WORKS SUMMARY AND AIMS FOR 2022/23

Gillian Heyworth (Transport Strategy Team Leader) attended the meeting to provide a presentation on 2021/22 Works Summary and Aims for 2022/23.

The presentation outlined works that had been conducted throughout 2021/22, including works related to: trees; vegetation clearance; fly tipping; infrastructure and sealed surfaces. The presentation also outlined aims for 2022/23, including: capital works such as bridge and sealed surface repairs; the dedication of new public rights of way and finding solutions to ongoing path issues.

The following comments were made/issues raised:-

- Members expressed frustration that, in relation to path 1195 Cown Edge Way, the issue causing flooding had previously been identified as a blocked drain but work was yet to be carried out to resolve this. It was commented that the solution to the problem had yet to be identified, and that this was currently with the Flood Team to identify an appropriate resolution.
- Members commented that the Bridleway Association and British Horse Society should have been consulted in relation to the works on bridleway 127M.
- In relation to path 62, it was noted that members of the public were still using the footpath despite it having been closed for 2 years. Members requested a timeframe for when work could be expected to be undertaken on this path. It was commented that officers were awaiting the results of a hydrology report before work could be undertaken, and that the public rights of way officer would be notified of the continued usage of the path.

RESOLVED – That the report be noted.

8. UPDATE ON PROGRESS ON STATUTORY REGISTERS FOR RIGHTS OF WAY

The Chair reported that this item had been placed on the agenda at his request.

It was stated that there had been a presentation from the IT Team at the Public Rights of Way Forum in relation to the statutory registers for rights of way. It was noted that Stockport Council had not been fulfilling its legal duties in publishing the statutory registers for some time, and that the Forum were pushing for this issue to be resolved.

The following comments were then made/issues raised:-

- Members noted that they had previously seen the skeleton of a new statutory register website, but that it was not evident that this had now been implemented on the Council website.

- Concern was expressed that the current format of the register continued to be in PDF files, which were not optimal for displaying and accessing the published information.
- It was commented that officers had discovered that the new online format required a more comprehensive update to the website than was originally thought, which had brought about the delay in the launch of the new statutory register.
- Members questioned whether other Local Authorities had been consulted with regard to their systems for publishing statutory registers. Whilst it could not be confirmed whether this had been done, Members suggested examples such as Bury Council as a model for how the publication of statutory registers could be done.
- Forum Members would be happy to be consulted on a trial of the new system before it was launched for public usage.

RESOLVED – That the position be noted.

9. PLANS FOR CYCLE LANES IN STOCKPORT

The Chair reported that this item had been placed on the agenda at his request.

The Chair stated that the Local Access Forum considered all forms of access and that, while footpaths and bridleways had been widely discussed at the Forum, cycle paths had not been widely discussed in recent times. It was noted that the Council was in the process of introducing a number of new cycle paths throughout the borough, and that it could be of benefit to the Forum to receive a report at a future meeting on plans for cycle lanes in Stockport.

The following comments were then made/issues raised:-

- Any report to the Forum could be based around the borough Walking and Cycling Plan, which had been published in 2019 and would cover the period up to 2029.
- It was commented that members of the public needed to be encouraged to use new cycle lanes, as members had observed cyclists continuing to use roads and pavements in areas where dedicated cycle lanes had been introduced.
- It was suggested that different types of cyclists, such as commuters and recreational cyclists, should be consulted prior to the introduction of any further cycle lanes in order to ensure that they would fulfil their purpose and be used by cyclists.
- Any consultation on proposed routes should not just include details of the overall route, but also information on issues such as the proposed surfacing and the impact on driveways.
- It was noted that the uptake of cycling infrastructure was often gradual and would improve over time as awareness increased. For instance, it was suggested that the cycle path on Jackson's Lane could receive increased usage in the new school term by students using the path to commute to school.

RESOLVED – That the position be noted.

The meeting closed at 7.11 pm