

STOCKPORT LOCAL ACCESS FORUM (OUTSIDE BODY)

Meeting: 13 March 2023

At: 6.00 pm

PRESENT

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

Also in Attendance

Emily Brough - Strategy Growth and Improvement Manager

Carol Hargreaves - CSS Officer (Democratic & Electoral Services)

1. MINUTES

The minutes (copies of which had been circulated) of the meeting held on 15 November 2022 were approved as a correct record.

2. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

There were no apologies for absence received.

3. 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 such declarations were made.

4. MATTERS ARISING

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

The Chair reported that this was still an ongoing issue. The Chair had requested a meeting with rights of way officers but this had not yet occurred. The Chair would continue to press for this.

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

The Forum was advised that Officers were continuing to work with the legal team, there remained some issues to address in relation to the elements of the side roads order. Officers were working on this to ensure that amendments were made so that they could be correctly put on the map. Members of the Forum were advised which amendments still needed to be worked on. There was progress being made but this was not a speedy process.

The Chair requested that this information be put into a future report which could come to the next meeting of the Forum.

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

This was being continually worked on and errors were being searched out and corrected. Again, this was not a quick process.

Members commented that the statements should be properly written and explicit, at the moment they were far too terse. Challenges to rights of way in particular would need to have a clear statement of location, direction and any furniture on it.

A short discussion took place relating to how and when the updated map and statements would be likely to be made public.

Members suggested that maybe one approach was that work be carried out area by area. This would be suggested to the legal team.

Further Matters Arising

Members raised the issue of progress on the register and advised that this was discussed at the rights of way forum. Members asked whether this had been taken forward by the IT team. In response, the Forum was advised that the IT had a number of competing priorities. Officers understood the needs around improving the website and specific pages on it and had made plans to progress this. It was suggested that the register be placed on the agenda as a permanent item as it was felt that the Council needed to provide some detail as to how the register was going to be achieved.

A brief update was provided in relation to the transport strategy.

5. ACCESS CONTROLS POLICY PRESENTATION

A representative of Sue Stevenson (Head of Highways and Transportation) provided an update on the Access Control Measures Policy Statement.

The following comments were made/issues raised:

There is an access control map and link for the whole of Greater Manchester which is available.

- Members of the Forum were pleased that this policy was now in place and looked forward to further progress being made.
- Some concerns were expressed relating to the lack of formal consultation on this issue. Concerns related to the mixing of cyclists and livestock, disturbances at night and self-closing gates. In response, the Forum was advised that advice had been gathered from various sources including the British Horse Society. When the detail was drawn up, there would be further consultation with user groups.
- Carriage drivers had been omitted from the restricted byways.
- The Chair advised that anybody with further comments should send them to Emily Brough.

RESOLVED – That the report be noted.

6. SUSTRANS ACCESS CONTROLS SURVEY PRESENTATION

The Network Development Manager (North West), Sustrans attended the meeting to provide an update on the Sustrans Access Controls Survey.

The following comments were made/issues raised:

- Members commented that they had found the presentation both useful and interesting.
- A question was raised regarding whether horse stepovers would be removed also as there was a risk of slipping. Further information would be provided on this.
- Members supported taking a route based approach.
- A strategic and systematic approach would be required in considering the matter of getting through barriers with an electric bike.

RESOLVED – That the report be noted.

7. EQUESTRIAN ACCESS & MULTI-USER INCLUSION

The Strategy Growth and Improvement Manager gave a verbal presentation which gave an update on equestrian access and multi-user inclusion.

The following comments were made/issues raised:

- It was suggested that a discussion be held in order to determine what a future report on this topic would contain.
- Stockport Bridleways has been working on this strategy, and one of the areas that they have been covering is identifying any footpaths within Stockport which have been labelled as good for upgrade to multi user status and which ones could potentially be upgraded. This will be presented to the Forum in the near future.
- It was suggested that it would be a big help if access barriers could be removed as riders were being forced more frequently onto the roads. Surfacing was also a huge issue.
- The chair suggested that representatives from other groups could be recruited.

RESOLVED – That the verbal presentation be noted.

8. DATES FOR FUTURE MEETINGS

Monday, 17 July 2023

Tuesday, 14 November 2023

Monday, 11 March 2024

The meeting closed at 7.30 pm