

## **STOCKPORT LOCAL ACCESS FORUM (OUTSIDE BODY)**

Meeting: 17 July 2023

At: 6.00 pm

### PRESENT

Councillor Grace Baynham, Jonathan Broad, Dave Butler, Kathy England, Edgar Ernstbrunner, Phil Featherstone, David Gosling, Debbi Hall, Kieran McMahon, Elizabeth Jane Morgan

#### Also in attendance

Emily Brough	- Strategy Growth and Improvement Manager
Anthony Finch	- Transportation Officer
Jacqueline Kramer	- Secretary

### **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.

### **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 – 2

For Debbi Hall – 4

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

### **3. MINUTES**

The minutes (copies of which had been circulated) of the meeting held on 13 March 2023 were approved as a correct record.

### **4. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Apologies for absence were received on behalf of Rick Burgess 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 this was still an ongoing issue. The Strategy Growth and Improvement Manager stated that this had been raised with the Rights of Way Officer who had been asked to contact the Chair. It was requested that a meeting between the Rights of Way Officer and the Chair take place soon.

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

The Chair reported that he had received a report with an update on side orders, including a map. He stated that he would circulate the report to members of the Forum.

## **7. RIGHTS OF WAY UPDATE**

The Strategy Growth and Improvement Manager gave a verbal update in relation to Rights of Way including:-

- Following a request from members of the Forum in relation to whether information about public rights of way could be included on an online open data map, this had been requested through the Council's GIS team and a response was awaited.
- 10 routine vegetation jobs had been commissioned and a major vegetation removal job had been placed for the Padden Brook footpath (No. 86 Bredbury & Romiley).
- Four tree clearance jobs had been resolved, with a further having recently been logged.
- Two incidents of fly-tipping had been cleared.
- Five minor infrastructure jobs for surfacing repairs had been submitted.

The following comments were made/ issues raised:

- It was noted that clearing of vegetation, along with a detailed inspection of wildlife was required on Merseyway footpaths.
- An update to outstanding work required on pathways on the River Goyt was requested for the next meeting of this Forum.
- It was reported that part of the pathway along the River Goyt was blocked and flooded. Despite barriers, walkers had accessed that part of the pathway which had led to extremely dangerous situations, including a person falling into the river and requiring CPR. It was suggested that the likely cause of damage to that part of the footpath had been work carried out on the other side of the river which had changed the flow of the water. Council officers were urged to deal with this problem.

RESOLVED – That the update be noted.

## **8. DEFINITIVE MAP MODIFICATION ORDERS HANDLING/ PROGRESS**

The Strategy Growth and Improvement Manager gave a verbal presentation which gave an update in relation to Definitive Map Modification Orders Handling/ Progress. It was

stated that some improvements had been made to the website to separate out some of the various types of order, however there remained work outstanding to finalise this.

The following comments were made/ issues raised:

- It was stated that In relation to footpath 39 (Marple) the correct orders for the confirmation of the change were due to be ready later in the week following the incorrect orders having initially being posted.
- It was stated that it was not proposed to amend the appearance of the pages on the council's website in relation to Definitive Map Modification Orders, but rather to ensure that the information contained within the pages would be updated.
- Concern was expressed that it remained the case that there were a large number of orders that had been agreed by area committees, in some cases up to a decade ago, for which legal orders had not yet been made by the Council.
- A member of the Forum stated that he had contacted the Assistant Director for Legal & Democratic Governance in February 2023 in relation to the Section 53 register to request that consideration be given to providing a flowchart for the legal process that was followed in making an initial application to the making of the order, as it appeared the process in Stockport wasn't sufficiently transparent. It was stated that response to this was insufficient and it was suggested that the Council's Legal Services department should provide a summary for the next meeting on the current position.
- It was suggested that further consideration be given to how other local authorities report on the same issues and to provide a summary of the timeframe for each DMMO at the next meeting of this Forum.

RESOLVED - That the update be noted.

## **9. SMBC 2023/24 BUDGET PLANS**

The Strategy Growth and Improvement Manager submitted a report (copies of which had been circulated) outlining the Council's Budget Plans for the 2023/24 financial year in relation to the maintenance of Public Rights of Way.

The following comments were made/ issues raised:

- Members queried whether improvements to sealed rights of way would include a renewal of non-slip surfaces.
- In response it was stated that the team considered a list of defects and had a risk matrix in order to determine priorities.
- One of the areas of work for this municipal year was the replacement of signage. Members queried whether signage could be paid for from the highways budget.
- It was commented that an overall budget of £50,000 for the municipal year seemed relatively small compared to the scale of the Highways budget at £32 million. It was commented that the council should invest further into encouraging residents to travel more actively around the borough as well as reduce congestion and improve public health.
- In response it was stated that the level of funding available as part of the council's budget had been subject to year-on-year reductions, but that it should be more proactive in securing extra funding for the maintenance of public rights of way.

- Members requested confirmation that Stockport was getting a fair allocation of funding from GMCA for public rights of way.
- The Cabinet Member for Parks, Highways and Transport Services stated that she was now a member of the GM Bee Network Committee and would raise any concerns of the Forum at that meeting.
- Members queried the feasibility studies undertaken for new paths and which schemes had gone ahead and which had not as a result of those studies. Members stated that they were interested in the overall strategy in terms of how it was decided which projects would be taken forward.

RESOLVED – That the report be noted.

#### **10. GREATER MANCHESTER COALITION OF DISABLED PEOPLE PRESENTATION**

RESOLVED – That consideration of this item be deferred to the next meeting of the Forum.

#### **11. FORWARD PLAN**

Members and officers were invited to suggest agenda items for future meetings of the Forum.

The following agenda items were proposed:

- An item from the Disabled Ramblers.
- Consideration of modifying/ removal of access controls.
- An update on the progress of the Rights of Way Improvement Plan (ROWIP).
- An update from the council's Legal Team on the progress of definitive map modification orders.

RESOLVED – That the Secretary be requested to make arrangements for the inclusion of the above items on the agenda for future meetings of the Forum.

The meeting closed at 7.34 pm