

Feedback from LAF Satisfaction Survey

Q1. What is your opinion about how well the Forum is operating?

- a) Excellent, nothing needs changing
- b) Good, but some aspects could be better = 5
- c) Poor, lots of aspects need attention = 2

Comments to Q1:

“There was 100% opposition against closure of the RoW Liaison Group but we were assured that the LAF would fulfil the same role and retaining both groups would be a duplication of work. This has proved to be incorrect. Bucks County Council have retained their RoW Liaison Meetings where specific problems can be addressed. Our LAF might achieve more by being a little more flexible.”

“I feel that the Forum is at times being used as a platform to attack the Council. That is not our brief. It seems to me that the Council finds the Forum a nuisance. Members are self elected and are not accountable. There is clearly an atmosphere of ill will between the two bodies.”

“The Forum works well but there is always room for improvement.”

“Some of the improvements are already in place like the LAF response team which should help to streamline future meeting agendas as in the past, some meetings have been quite lengthy, in my opinion.”

“More local landowners should be invited to join (Copas, Rayners Farms etc). At the moment they regard the Forum as antagonistic.”

“There has been a tendency to dwell on past issues that for one reason or another have not or only been partially resolved and this tends to take up time without going anywhere. On the whole however I consider the Forum is a useful vehicle in representing user groups on local access.”

“Is it achieving anything? Without being too critical, this is due to the rules it's under.”

“Been on Forum 3yrs now and feel it's not counter productive enough. We come to you with problems and we try to solve it. I feel we are spending too much time on the Millennium Walk Project, this is still not complete and there is still no crossing at the railway line. Legalities we know nothing about. There is an element of not knowing what's going on.”

Q2. What, in your opinion, do you think could be changed in order to make the Forum better?

Comments to Q2:

“The RBWM LAF is not allowed to be an independent body.”

“Failure to achieve even one Path Improvement project in the past 6 years, is proof of the ineffectiveness of the LAF.”

“If the Secretary is barred from organising the replacement of dangerous stiles on common land, what confidence can there be in the Council's genuine commitment to improving access?”

“Rational, sensible and achievable improvements are opposed on political grounds.”

“Although a statutory advisory body to the Council, important recommendations are ignored or not made known to the members making the decisions.”

“The Forum’s advice on leaflet production and checking was ignored, resulting in more leaflets being produced with a large number of errors.”

“LAF members have been banned from making site visits to fact find for themselves. The Secretary has been unable to explain his decision when questioned by email by the Civic Society, or at the meeting on 30 June.”

“The Council is selective in what the LAF is allowed to be consulted on.”

“All LAF members should be expected to demonstrate by word and deed that they support the aims of the LAF. This applies to all 9 councillors on the Forum.”

“An effective and successful Forum will attract new members.”

“Past recommendations to publicise the work of the LAF in the Press and “Around the Borough” have not yet been implemented.”

“Genuine partnership and transparency, as enjoyed in other areas, especially concerning S.106 support, is the most essential need for a better Forum.”

“Forum members need advance warning of the details of issues to be discussed so that a wider more balanced conclusion can be drawn.”

“Senior Officers should visit the Forum from time to time and explain their problems including restrictions because finance etc.”

“Remove the contravene element from meetings.”

“I think more meetings would be better – quarterly would be good. Also more site visits to help see problems and discuss possibilities.”

“It is not clear how the recommendations made by LAF are effectively communicated to the Council members who make the decisions. To get the most out of LAF, communications should be in two directions. As well as the LAF recommendations going to the ROW panel we need feedback from the Panel on how decisions are made. Better understanding from both parties would make LAF more effective.”

“I think that the LAF forum should have more emphasis on improving walks around our towns rather than in the countryside. We are very lucky in already having many footpaths in the Borough but the ones around towns could be more fully developed such as making them into nature trails or walks suitable for the SMILE Groups and then advertising them more widely such as GP surgeries as well as on our website. I think that this is important if we want to encourage more residents to take up walking for health.”

“Because the LAF Forum members are not all familiar with the ROW the forum may not be the best place to prioritise footpath maintenance and enforcement issues. Instead a separate FP liaison meeting?”

“Site visits can be very beneficial to LAF members in showing the practical considerations and resource implications in dealing with access issues. Worth having these as often as is practicable to demonstrate the approaches taken and what worked or didn’t work. Visits to land by bodies like the NT, WT, etc should be easy to arrange.”

“Sometimes a different weekday may be useful to hold a LAF meeting – I’ve had diary clashes for several LAF meetings on Tuesday evenings for a while now!”

“There could be some issues or agenda items that could be better addressed sometimes outside of the meeting. This is happening to some extent already.”

“I think the (draft) fast response team of the LAF is a good idea in dealing with consultations etc.”

“Better mapping of existing RoW with dates and definitions of footpaths, bridleways, carriageways etc.
Informative walks from certain spots i.e. railway stations, bus terminals, parish councils and ramblers may help with these.”

“Possibly a few more ‘field’ visits to see and discuss first hand particular issues where and when appropriate.”

“Certain issues are not addressed that affects Landowners properties, ie. gates, livestock, stiles etc being damaged by others that use the rights of way paths over private land. Need to hear from Landowners point of view.”