

## RIGHTS OF WAY & HIGHWAY LICENSING PANEL

3 MARCH 2015

PRESENT: Councillors John Stretton (Chairman), Maureen Hunt (Vice-Chair), James Evans, Mohammed Ilyas, Gary Muir and John Penfold (sub for Wisdom DaCosta).

Also Present: Steve Conway.

Officers: Anthony Hurst and Tanya Leftwich.

### PART I

#### 15/14 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies were received from Councillor Wisdom DaCosta.

#### 16/14 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Councillor James Evans declared a personal interest in Item 5 on the agenda (Path Progress Report) as he was the applicant for Windsor claimed footpath 502 (para 4.5 on page 35 of the agenda).

#### 17/14 MINUTES

**RESOLVED: That the minutes of the meeting of the Panel held on 15 December 2014 be approved.**

#### 18/14 MILESTONES STATEMENT 2014/15

The Chairman asked the Principal Rights of Way Officer, Anthony Hurst, to outline the report to the Panel.

The Principal Rights of Way Officer explained to Members that the report sought the Panel's approval for the "Milestones Statement 2015/16" attached in Appendix 1 which set out the Council's objectives, priorities, targets and service standards for public rights of way work in the coming year.

In the ensuing discussion the following points were noted:

- ❖ Members were referred to the budgets on page 7 of the agenda – it was noted that the main revenue (£60,000) and capital budgets (£40,000 Rights of Way general & £20,000 Rights of Way bridges) were unchanged. Additionally this year there was a budget for the Thames Path riverbank repairs / improvements totalling £375,000.
- ❖ That six bridges had been repaired or replaced this year and the £20,000 in the Capital Rights of Way Bridges budget had covered the costs.
- ❖ Photos of Hurley Footpath 1 which had been badly eroded were shown to Members (before and after photos). It was noted that the funding for the repair work had been from the Government Flood Restoration Fund.

Members were informed that the 2015/16 £50,000 funding would be used elsewhere.

- ❖ That a lot of work had been done by the Conservation Volunteers. Photos of Hurley Footpath 29 were shown to Members (before and after photos). The Panel requested that their thanks be recorded to the Conservation volunteers who they felt were invaluable.
- ❖ That the RBWM had worked with the Pinkney Green Scouts for the first time this year and were planning to work with the Girl Guides in the future.
- ❖ Members were referred to the nine Milestone Targets for 2015/16 on page 9 of the agenda which had already been endorsed by the Local Access Forum in December 2014.
- ❖ That the RBWM write to the volunteers thanking them for their work.
- ❖ That there were currently six fence encroachment issues outstanding – the Principal Rights of Way Officer agreed to update Members by way of a list following the meeting.
- ❖ Members were referred to pages 22-24 of the agenda which showed the Achievement of Milestones Targets 2014/15.
- ❖ The Principal Rights of Way Officer stated that it was good to have challenging targets in place to aim for.

Councillor James Evans proposed to support the recommendation which the Vice-Chair seconded. It was requested that the good progress with many of the targets and the valued work with volunteers be noted.

**RESOLVED: Unanimously that;**

- (i) The Panel approved the “Milestone Statement and Public Rights of Way Improvement Plan Annual Review 2015/16”.**

The Chairman, on behalf of the Panel, thanked the Principal Rights of Way Officer and his team for all their hard work and dedication over the past six months.

## 19/14 PATH PROGRESS REPORT

The Principal Rights of Way Officer explained to Members that the report (for information only) updated the progress made with regard to Public Rights of Way issues during the six months from August 2014 to February 2015.

It was noted that the number of outstanding reported problems on public rights of way had fallen from 85 to 78.

Members were referred to page 36 of the agenda (changes to the network) – 5.2: Eton Footpath 51 (Thames Path at the Brocas, Eton) and 5.4: Maidenhead Footpath 53 (Thames Path at Ray Mead Road). Photos were shown of the Maidenhead Footpath 53 (before work started approximately two weeks ago, work in progress and the completed work) it was noted that the existing dropped kerb had been retained which enabled access to parking spaces, and the new footpath enabled people to avoid walking in the road.

The Principal Rights of Way Officer explained that one of Councillor James Evan’s residents, Mr Conway, had concerns about the way in which the DMMO for Windsor

claimed footpath 502 had been processed. The application had been amended by Councillor James Evans, but objections had been received and the opposed Order was now going to the Planning Inspectorate. It was noted that the Council had received the application in March 2014 and had considered all the evidence. The Council decided to make the order in December 2014 and the applicant was notified on the 5 December 2014. There had then been a statutory 42 day consultation period up until the 23 January 2015. A number of objections had been received with regard to the width of the footpath rather than the principal of the footpath. Members were informed that as a result of the objections the Planning Inspectorate would now review the evidence and decide whether the order would go ahead as it stood, whether it would be amended or whether it would be cancelled. Members noted that the Planning Inspectorate was a non borough related body (reporting to the Secretary of State) and as such was totally independent of the Council. Members were informed that the Planning Inspectorate generally worked to a six month timetable for such cases and as this was referred to them at the end of January a decision was expected by the summer / end of summer. It was noted that a copy of the entire file, including the application, supporting documentation, and all objections had been sent to the Planning Inspectorate, so that a decision can be taken on the basis of all the available information.

Mr Conway thanked the Panel for their time and stated that he had originally found the process to be unclear. Mr Conway left the meeting.

Members congratulated the Principal Rights of Way Officer and his team for reducing the number of outstanding problems on public rights of way in the borough during the six months period covered by the Progress Report.

**RESOLVED: Unanimously that;**  
**(i) The Panel noted the report.**

#### 20/14 DATES OF FUTURE MEETINGS

- Monday 20 July 2015.
- Thursday 17 September 2015.
- Monday 7 December 2015.

The Panel thanked the Clerk, the Principal Rights of Way Officer and his team for their hard work over the last year.

The Vice-Chair thanked the Chairman as this was his last meeting for all his work.

The Panel suggested that photos of the volunteers work be published to encourage more people to come forward and volunteer their services to the Council.

#### 21/14 MEETING

The meeting, which opened at 6.30pm, closed at 7.10pm.