

Local Access Forum

Purpose:

Constitution

The Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000 requires local highway authorities to establish Local Access Forums to advise the authorities about improvement of public access to land in their area for open-air recreation. The Local Access Forum shall operate in accordance with the Local Access Forums (England) Regulations 2007, which set out procedural rules for the establishment and the administration of the Forum.

Terms of Reference

To work in partnership with the Royal Borough of Windsor and Maidenhead as to the improvement of public access to land within the Borough for the purpose of open-air recreation and enjoyment.

To work in partnership with the Royal Borough of Windsor and Maidenhead on all matters relating to Public Rights of Way in the Borough.

To help with the preparation, development and implementation of a Rights of Way Improvement Plan for the Borough.

To comment on the preparation of maps of 'open access' land in the Borough and future management of any such land, having regard to the wishes and plans of the owners of the land.

To comment on national or local consultation documents relating to public rights of way or access to open countryside.

To work in partnership with neighbouring Local Access Forums on matters of shared interest, and with other groups or agencies with an interest in the Borough's countryside.

To comment on and have active involvement in the preparation of other Strategies and Plans being developed by the Borough Council, such as the Community Strategy, Local Transport Plan, Local Plan, Walking Strategy, Cycling Strategy etc.

Procedures

The meetings of the Forum shall be open to the public, subject to powers of exclusion to suppress or prevent disorderly conduct or other misbehaviour. Members of the public may speak at the Forum meetings about any item under consideration in accordance with the following procedure:-

- Anyone wishing to make representations under this procedure must contact the Rights of Way Team Leader at least 48 hours prior to the meeting.
- Where more than one representation is to be made on the same subject, the Rights of Way Team Leader may negotiate to combine them into a single

representation, where appropriate, so that views can be put to the forum in the most efficient way.

- Members of the Forum may question the person making representation for further clarification or information.
- In the interest of the orderly conduct of business no more than 10 minutes will be allocated for public representations on any agenda item. However the Chairman may exercise his discretion to alter this time limit dependent on the degree of interest shown.
- No one person may be allowed to speak on any item for more than 3 minutes.

Copies of agendas and reports for the meetings of the Forum shall be open to inspection by the public at least five clear working days before the meeting, except that in very exceptional circumstances where the meeting is convened at shorter notice, the copies of the agenda and reports shall be open to inspection from the time the meeting is convened.

Urgent items may be considered at a meeting of the Forum without prior notice, at the chairman's discretion, but only by reason of special circumstances, which shall be specified in the minutes of the meeting.

Items for "Any Other Business" must be announced to the Chairman prior to the commencement of the meeting.

The minutes of the meetings of the Forum shall be open to inspection by the public.

The Council shall reimburse members of the Forum reasonable expenses incurred in connection with attendance at Forum meetings or other activities relating to discharge of the functions of the Forum, in respect of travelling expenses and expenses of arranging for the care of their children or dependants.

The Council shall support and fund appropriate training or development programmes for Forum members as identified by the Forum.

The Forum shall prepare an annual report, which shall be published by the Council.

The Council may alter or amend the Terms of Reference if required by the Forum provided that the Terms shall at all times comply with the Local Access Forums (England) Regulations 2007 or any replacement Regulations.

Membership

The membership of the Local Access Forum shall be appointed so that they shall represent the following groups:

- users of local rights of way or open access land (e.g. walkers, horse-riders, cyclists, carriage drivers, recreational vehicle users)
- owners and occupiers of land crossed by public rights of way or owners and occupiers of open access land
- 3 Councillors from the Royal Borough of Windsor and Maidenhead

- any other interests especially relevant to the borough, such as Parish Councils

The Council shall ensure that a reasonable balance is maintained between the number of members representative of users and the number representative of landowners or occupiers. The minimum number of members shall be 10 and the maximum number of members shall be 22.

The Forum Chairman and Vice-Chairman shall be appointed by election from amongst the members of the Forum.

Appointments to the Forum, including the Chairman and Vice-Chairman, shall be two-year appointments.

Members of the Forum may resign by giving notice in writing to the Council.

Members of the Forum may appoint substitute representatives to attend Forum meetings.

The Council may terminate membership in accordance with the provisions set out in the Local Access Forums (England) Regulations 2007.

Quorum: A meeting of the Forum shall be quorate if a minimum of 50% of members are present.

Frequency: The Forum shall meet at six-monthly intervals, with any additional meetings to be arranged by agreement of the Forum.