

LOCAL ACCESS FORUM REPORT - 06 Dec 2022  
AGENDA ITEM 1(c)

LOCAL ACCESS FORUM: 6<sup>th</sup> DECEMBER 2022

ACTIONS ARISING FROM THE MEETING

**PURPOSE OF REPORT**

To inform the Local Access Forum about the progress made on actions and issues arising from the Forum meeting held on 7<sup>th</sup> July 2022.

Key:

Completed items
In progress
Incomplete

Action owners:

GP	Geoff Priest (Chair)		Vacant Post (Parks and Countryside Team Leader)
SW	Sharon Wootten (Public Rights of Way Officer)	JW	Jacqui Wheeler (Parks & Countryside Access Officer/Secretary of the LAF)
LH	Lisa Hughes (Vice Chair)	MB	Laurence Ellis (Democratic Services)

**Agenda Item 1(d): Matters Arising**

Item	Action / Issue	Action Owner	Outcome
1.1	MH asked how much was spent on the formal consultation for the Diversion Order Cook/17 and part 59	JW	No costs incurred by the council. All costs involved in making an application for a diversion order are covered by the applicant including legal and advertising costs. Typically, admin and legal costs can be £2000 excluding advertising costs.
1.2	Training for LAF members – GP consulted members on scope of potential training and received feedback.	GP/LH/JW	JW arranged for LH to undertake the Access & RoW Level 1 training course run by the BHS suggested by Trisha on 6 <sup>th</sup> Nov to see if suitable for all LAF members. <b>LH to feedback.</b>
1.3	BCA had been identified as an organisation from which younger LAF members might be recruited.	GP/JW	GP has spoken with BCA – membership Item 2 – this action is on hold as BCA currently integrating with East Berkshire College.
1.4	Contact Youth Engagement Officer at Achieving for Children to recruit younger LAF member	GP/LH	LH to update under membership item 2.

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**Agenda Item 8: Subgroups - Accessibility Working Group**

Item	Action / Issue	Action Owner	Outcome
8.1	Create Walks For All online leaflets	AWG	Meeting held on 22 <sup>nd</sup> Aug 2022 with RBWM Together website admin to gain advice and training on building the webpages. Ongoing project
8.2	RBWM PRoW team to investigate the creation of an LAF webpage on the RBWM Together website	JW	Ongoing project when resources allow.

**Agenda Item 11: Quiet Lanes**

Item	Action / Issue	Action Owner	Outcome
11.1	JW would send an email out to Parish Councils, explaining Quiet Lanes and asking them for views/suggestions	JW	Ongoing
11.2	Info gathering regarding quiet lanes at LAF Joint Chairs meeting	JW/GP	See LAF Chairs meeting notes from 20 <sup>th</sup> July 22 in meeting papers. Potential further info to be gathered from Sustrans and CPRE to be continued.

**Agenda Item 13: LAF Chairs Meeting**

Item	Action / Issue	Action Owner	Outcome
13.1	LAF Chairs Meeting took place as a virtual meeting on 20 <sup>th</sup> July 2022. JW circulated notes from the meeting, and these are included in the papers for info.	JW/GP	The next virtual LAF Chairs meeting is due to take place on Weds 11 <sup>th</sup> January 2023.

## LAF CHAIR MEETING NOTES – 20<sup>th</sup> July 2022

### ATTENDANCE

Local Access Forum	Name
Bracknell Forest LCAF	Colin Bird (Chair) [CB] Graham Pockett [GP]
Mid & West Berks LCAF	Simon Pike (Chair) [SP] Elaine Cox [EC] <b>Apologies received</b>
RBWM LAF	Geoff Priest (Chair) [GP] Jacqui Wheeler (Secretary) [JW]
Surrey LAF	Elliot Cairnes (Chair) [EC] Joanne Porter (Secretary)[JP]

### 2. Summaries of LAF functioning:

#### Mid and West Berkshire LAF (Simon Pike – Chair)

Combination of 3 authority areas; Reading, West Berkshire and Wokingham with a range of perspectives; including urban, rivers and canal routes, countryside, AONB and statutory commons.

Meet 3 times p.a during the day which can cause difficulties for some members but is easier for officers.

Difficulty attracting landowner members, but do have user representation of walkers, equestrians, motor vehicle off road users (active group). Particularly active disabled working group which may be able to offer advice to other areas Forums if needed

The LAF is very active in responding to national public consultations eg; ELMS scheme, OffCom and The Law Commission as well as local comments submitted regarding the BLP.

#### Bracknell Forest CAF (Colin Bird – Chair)

Meets 3 times p.a in the evening via Zoom.

The remit of the Forum was expanded to cover countryside issues as well due to large areas of Crown Estate, SANGS and Parks as well as PRoW.

Bracknell CAF can focus on specific location issues as opposed to strategic/policy issues due to small geographic area.

Has 11 members with 3 Council officers regularly attending.

Is unable to attract any landowner members even from the Crown Estate due to changes in personnel.

Urban PRoW were historically extinguished so focus of Forum is on countryside areas.

Focus on increasing access provision from new developments with a long “wish list” of routes. Challenges are keeping up with the level of planning applications for larger developments, maintaining PRoW in good condition with decreasing resources eg; surfaces are deteriorating and costs are increasing.

### **Surrey CAF (Elliot Cairnes – Chair)**

County authority area.

Meets 4 x p.a during the day either face to face or via Zoom.

Has 23 members which is the maximum allowed membership with 15-18 members usually attending.

Focus is on countryside access and PRoW.

Covers a large area which has major road network, M25, M3 and major expansion of the A3 at Jct 10. Rivers and canals seeking to be rejuvenated, Surrey Hills AONB (2<sup>nd</sup> oldest in country) with expansion due as well as Surrey Heathlands.

Membership includes landowners, wildlife interests 4x4 trail bikes and cycling.

Difficulties recruiting reps for people with disabilities.

Challenges – Surrey has problem with illegal motorised use, liaison with MOD is a problem.

As a large county the Forum generally focuses on strategic issues unless a particularly controversial local issue arises.

### **RBWM LAF (Geoff Priest – Chair)**

Meets 2 x p.a face to face if possible and in the evening.

Membership includes landowners, walkers, cyclists, equestrians and one representative for people with disabilities.

Ais to be mainly strategic but will look at site specific project and suggested improvements where it is likely to be influential.

Has 3 working groups; Multi-User (equestrian) successful in pushing for a current trial of permissive bridleway access on council land, Accessibility Working Group working on a Walks4All mapping project of pilot paths to provide information on accessibility of specific routes to help people decide where to walk and a Cycling Subgroup vocal LCWIP preparation.

Challenges include responding to planning apps which are increasing due to recent BLP adoption, lack of council resources, monetary and staff and gaining attention of relevant contacts within council.

### **3. What should be the Region?**

All agreed to seek representatives to invite to the next meeting from Hampshire, Buckinghamshire and Oxfordshire LAFs. **Action - JW**

### **4. NE/Defra engagement/communication**

All agreed that there is a need for engagement with LAFs from central government via Natural England. Previously this had taken the form of dissemination of national and regional issues, hosting LAF meetings/conferences and support from NE Access staff at individual LAF meetings if requested.

Concern was shared that the LAF Guidance updated in 2009 was out of date and not necessarily in synch with how LAFs currently work.

Noted that Andrew Mackintosh, Senior Specialist Public Access, Recreation and Rights of Way of Natural England was quite positive that there would be funding for a

new LAF support role and replacement SharePoint style site for Huddle at the beginning of 2023. All agreed to hold off from writing to Lord Benyon, as the responsible Minister until next year to see if this NE support materialises.

SP agreed to share the Mid & West Berkshire LAF working methods document.  
**Action SP**

## **5. Active Travel/Climate Change**

Discussion about how each area has been involved in their areas LCWIP preparation and the possible adaptation that will be required going forward in achieving levels of biodiversity improvement required and how this will affect the management of countryside and PRow.

SP offered to share the Climate Change Adaptation Manual received from NE  
**Action SP**

## **6. Quiet Lanes question**

Information gathering topic from RBWM LAF to find out how Quiet Lanes are viewed in other LAF areas and if viewed as useful.

Quiet Lanes exist at Buckleberry Common in West Berkshire area, but no others known of, though there may be others. Sat nav's were noted as problematic sending drivers along unsuitable routes. SP advised that the CPRE who have previously published guidance on Quiet Lanes, has a Berkshire branch. He agreed to share the local CPRE contact info.

**Action SP**

**Date of Next Meeting: 11<sup>th</sup> January 2023 at 10am (MS Teams)**