

RIGHT'S OF WAY & HIGHWAY LICENSING PANEL

THURSDAY, 10 MARCH 2016

PRESENT: Councillors Maureen Hunt (Chairman), Clive Bullock (Vice-Chairman), John Collins, Mohammed Ilyas and Gary Muir

Officers: Tanya Leftwich and Anthony Hurst

APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies were received from Councillor Samantha Rayner (no substitute was available).

It was announced by the Chairman that the meeting was being recorded.

DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

None received.

MINUTES

RESOLVED: That the Part I minutes of the meeting of the Panel held on 7 December 2015 be approved.

MILESTONES STATEMENT 2016/17

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 2016/17" 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:

- ❖ That there was a total of 307km public rights of way in the Royal Borough which equated to 32% of total highway network (967km). It was noted that the vast majority of paths across Crown Estate land were not definitive Rights of Way.
- ❖ The list of current publications were made known to Members, a number had been displayed at the meeting.
- ❖ Members were referred to the budgets on page 16 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 it was hoped that the £60,000 would be boosted by £10,000 from Natural England for the Thames Path.
- ❖ That page 22 of the agenda broke down the 32 outstanding problems on Public Rights of Way. It was noted that the Rights of Way team was made up of two full-time officers and one part-time officer (a total of 2.7 FTEs).
- ❖ That a thank-you letter had been written on behalf of the Mayor to all voluntary groups to thank them for helping to reduce the number of outstanding problems to 32.
- ❖ That problems over five years old were moved into a cold case file.

- ❖ That the flooding in 2014 had caused erosion damage on the Thames Path in Hurley and Datchet of approximately 100 metres which had cost around £350k to repair, funded by central Government grant.
- ❖ The Chairman advised that the Local Access Forum was “*a partnership to promote and develop sustainable access for the growing benefit of the environment and all in our community*”. It was noted that the Forum had been established in 2003 and was a statutory advisory group which advised the Council on the management and improvement of public access to land in the Royal Borough for open-air recreation. The Chairman recommended that Members attended the Local Access Forum if they were available as she had found the meetings to be very informative and very helpful.
- ❖ That reference 49 in Appendix 7 to create a path from Ascot Station westwards parallel to the railway line to Kings Ride be re-looked at.
- ❖ Members were referred to the nine Milestone Targets for 2016/17 on page 18 of the agenda which had already been endorsed by the Local Access Forum. The Panel agreed to amend WP1: To produce 3 leaflets publicising access opportunities for targeted user groups to 1 as it was felt a more achievable figure.
- ❖ That discussions were ongoing regarding funding from the cycleway budget re: to create a new bridleway connecting the end of Hurley Lane with the eastern end of Bradenham Lane using existing highway land alongside the A404 northbound carriageway.
- ❖ Members were referred to pages 31-34 of the agenda which showed the Achievement of Milestones Targets 2015/16. It was noted that the target to produce 1 leaflet publicising access opportunities for people with special needs was hoped would be achieved by the end of March.

RESOLVED: Unanimously that the Panel approved the “Milestones Statement and Public Rights of Way Improvement Plan Annual Review 2016/17” subject to WP1: To produce 3 leaflets publicising access opportunities for targeted user groups being amended to 1.

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.

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 2015 to February 2016.

Photos of Public Footpath 19 Eton (Southfield) were shown to Members (before and after photos). It was noted that initially the footpath had not been marked properly but had since been sprayed.

Photos of Bridleway off Moores Lane, Eton Wick were shown to Members (before and after photos). It was noted that as a joint scheme / project with Slough the bollards had been replaced with new barriers which were helping to keep motorbikes from using the Bridleway.

Photos of Public Footpath 25 Hurley (near Channers cottage) were shown to Members (before and after photos). It was noted that this path had been considered

extremely muddy and that a new limestones scalping path had since been laid which could be used all year round.

Photos of Public Footpath 2 Old Windsor (Thames Path) were shown to Members (before and after photos). It was noted that this path had been widened and limestones scalplings used to provide an improved walking surface.

Photos of Public Footpath 48 Cookham (The Green Way) were shown to Members (before and after photos). It was noted that conservation volunteers had installed steps and levelled out the path which had made it easier to use by less abled walkers, although it was not accessible to disability buggies.. Councillor Muir stated that the work that had been completed looked very natural.

The Chairman thanked the Principal Rights of Way Officer for his before and after photos which she felt were excellent.

Members were referred to page 54 of the agenda which listed works due to be carried out in the next 2-3 months. It was noted that a map board was due to be installed at Hurley car park, surface improvements to Nightingdale Lane, anti-graffiti paint to be applied to the underpass in South Field, surface and drainage improvements to Uncles Lane and riverbank repair and path surfacing to the Thames Path (Cookham Footpath 55).

It was noted that five DMMO applications had been received in June 2009 for footpaths crossing land at Thamesfield in Wraysbury. A Village Green application was also received for the land crossed by these claimed footpaths, and the footpath applications were held in abeyance pending resolution of the Village Green application. The Village Green application was refused following a public inquiry held in November 2012. Following a Judicial Review, the Council's decision on the Village Green application was upheld in 2014. The footpath applications are currently being investigated. It was noted that footpath claims had no time limits and a delegation (Head of Legal Services and the Head of Highways) decided on the DMMO's, rather than the Rights of Way & Highway Licensing Panel.

The Principal Rights of Way Officer explained that FP501 Cookham (Strande Lane to Maidenhead Road) was not currently on the definitive map, but was being investigated. It was noted that whilst FPC 502 Windsor (Priors Road) had been agreed at a Public Enquiry last October the width of the path had not yet been decided.

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.

DATES OF FUTURE MEETINGS

Future meeting dates were noted to be as follows:

- 27 July 2016.
- 13 September 2016.

- 8 December 2016.
- 7 March 2017.

The meeting, which began at 6.30 pm, finished at 7.05 pm

CHAIRMAN.....

DATE.....