

**Meeting: Leicestershire Local Access Forum**

**Date/Time: Wednesday, 18 July 2018 at 5.30 pm**

**Location: Guthlaxton Committee Room - County Hall**

**Contact: Sue Dann Ext 57122**

**Email:**

### **Membership**

Mr John Howells (Chairman)

Mrs. C. M. Radford CC	Mr. R. Denney
Ms. H. Brown	Mrs. A. Pyper
Mr. C. Faircliffe	Mr. B. Sutton
Mr. M. Gamble	Mr. P. Tame
Mr. A. Hillier-Fry	Mr. S. Warren
Mr. T. Kirby	Ms. V. Allen

### **AGENDA**

#### **Item**

1. The Chairman's welcome and opening remarks
2. Apologies for absence
3. Minutes of the previous meeting.
4. Matters arising not otherwise on the agenda
5. Declaration of interest
6. Reports from committees and working groups:

(a) Planning and Travel Committee (Roy Denney)

(Pages 3 - 8)

We still await the hearing about the Barrow crossing and have prepared material to be ready for a public enquiry when it arises. We also responded to a request for opinions on a proposed new training ground for Leicester City FC but the final proposals largely ignore our suggestions. I am sure user groups will object to the formal application when made and we propose to reiterate our views at that stage. We also advised Charnwood BC on their local plan.

We have been advising Elmsthorpe Parish Council as regards the proposed Rail Freight Interchange between the village and Burbage Common. We asked to meet with the developers but had no response and will make our views known when the planning application is lodged. We have also been advising Elmsthorpe about the long standing problems with footpath U50 and Stan Warren and I met with their Clerk and Chairman.

Following the meeting three of us had a meeting with HS2 in Birmingham we now have the detailed proposal as they are to date for each crossing point. Whilst some reasonable diversions are included there are still issues we would wish to see addressed and we are working up a further advice which will be sent to them in the next few weeks. Members have now had a chance to go to their roadshows and talk with representatives.

They have agreed to further meetings as things develop and we may well wish to visit them to look at some of the specific designs of various junctions and when it affects a bridleway, one of our equine representatives can join us.

(b) Network Opportunities Committee (Chris Faircliffe) -  
Unrecorded Ways

The first phase work on unrecorded ways is now completed and we have staged such promotional roadshows as we can to find and recruit volunteers. Unrecorded Ways (URW) was a sub group of Network Opportunities but during this busy stage has been constituted as a separate committee but is now reverting to a sub group again. It is also now to be more structured to spread the load of work involved. Chris Faircliffe will Chair the parent committee, John Howells will act as Treasurer as regards the pot of money collected to cover research costs, I will provide the secretarial requirements and Stan Warren will be the archivist. Five LLAF members have been nominated to authorise payments of expenses. It is disappointing that after all our efforts we have only attracted a few volunteers but those we have are getting stuck in. John Howells, Stan Warren and I have been meeting with them individually or in small groups to track their activities and offer any needed assistance. Some of the volunteers have been co-opted onto the URW group and it may be that the active other ones also be invited to attend.

John Howells and I have been working on a path at Cotes assisted by Stan Warren and AP a member of the Ramblers and hope to present a claim shortly. I am also exploring the historic evidence for a path near Anstey again with assistance from Stan Warren and from BJ of the Leicestershire Footpaths Association. I have also looked into West Street in Glenfield but as yet have found no evidence of its status and that may need a claim based on usage. HH is working on paths in the Wigston area, DS those in the Hinckley area and MM in the Hugglescote and Donington-le-Heath

area. ST and GC are interested still and we are to meet with them early August. MB is actively involved and is a co-opted member and SG and SH are still showing interest and have been invited to meet with us.

It is proposed that we try and get all these together for an evening meeting to be arranged in October.

There is nothing else to report on Network Opportunities at this stage

7. Reports from outside bodies:

- (a) Heart of the Forest, Access and Connectivity Forum (Vicky Allen)
- (b) River Soar and Grand Union Canal Partnership (Christine Radford)
- (c) National Forest Access & Recreational Group (Roy Denney)

A lot of their endeavours continue to be the Charnwood Forest project but they are working on a new 25 year plan with a large focus on recreation and access

They are looking to fund an as yet unidentified large new plot on the Derbyshire / Leics border.

The next National Forest Walking Festival was held on 6/7/8 July and as yet the success has not been assessed although I have heard people saying they enjoyed their walk.

The Forest are looking at providing more short walking loops off the National Forest Way long distance trail.

The £1M Black to Green 3 year project is coming to a close and the celebrate it and launch the end result they are to have a big event on August 25th. Part of the project has been the erection of 7 large information displays in metal and amongst events on offer on the day an orienteering type treasure hunt may be staged using them. There will be walks and numerous other activities but this is still being worked up.

- (d) East Midlands Local Access Forum (EMLAF) Chairs meeting update (John Howells)
- (e) Charnwood Forest Regional Park Steering Group (Roy Denney)

I continue to serve as a member of the board of the regional park. I am also on the steering group of the Local Nature Partnership project looking to protect, promote and enhance the park.

Stan Warren, John Howells and I have had a meeting with Sam Lattaway of the National Forest, the lead partner in the project. We discussed in broad terms how the LLAF might be able to assist.

The steering group met in June and elected Sam Lattaway as Chairman. They looked at the make-up of the group and it was suggested that a number of sectors or groups could be represented on the steering group such as Woodland Trust, Environment Agency, health and education. There is a balance between keeping the group small to be effective in decision making and not missing potential partners and they agreed they would co-opt people with expertise to discuss specific projects rather than extending the membership of the Steering Group.

They will continue the Stakeholder meetings where all interested parties get together to discuss ideas etc but it was thought community representation is missing from the group and ways to achieve this were discussed specifically with reference to the diversity of communities in the project area. It was agreed that the Parish Councils should form the basis of this representation and that they should set up a separate Community Forum to input ideas, head off any objections and identify enthusiastic individuals.

The Projects Development Officer Julie Attard has suggested that I meet her in a month's time to develop the areas where the LLAF can get involved and the Chair of LLAF and Committee Chairs are invited to join us. The meeting will be in Leicester on August 8<sup>th</sup>.

- 8. Recruitment
- 9. Correspondence: (Pages 9 - 11)
  - (a) Responses, advices and comments sent by LLAF (Roy Denney)
  - (b) Received (Edwin McWilliam)
- 10. Annual Report - timeline and update (Page 12)
- 11. Requests for urgent items to be debated at the Chairman's discretion

12. Future meetings:

Forums:

25<sup>th</sup> October 2018 (5.00pm for 5.30pm) – Forum – County Hall  
(Workshop from 4.00pm)

8<sup>th</sup> January 2019 (5.00pm for 5.30pm) – Forum – County Hall  
(Workshop from 4.00pm)

Unrecorded Ways meetings:

22<sup>nd</sup> August 2018 – 2.30pm – 4.30pm – Executive Room, County  
Hall

2 or 4<sup>th</sup> October (evening volunteers meeting)

22<sup>nd</sup> November 2018 – 2.30pm – 4.30pm – Room tbc

6<sup>th</sup> February 2019 – 2.30pm – 4.30pm – Room tbc



Minutes of a meeting of the Leicestershire Local Access Forum held at County Hall, Glenfield on Tuesday 17<sup>th</sup> April 2018

## PRESENT

### Members

Mr John Howells (Chair)	Mr. A. Hillier-Fry
Mr R. Denney	Mr. T. Kirby
Mrs. C. Radford CC	Mr. S. Warren
Ms. V. Allen	Mrs. A.F Pyper
Mr. C. Faircliffe	Mr. J. Law
Mr. M. Gamble	

### Officers

Mr. E. McWilliam (LCC)	
Mrs. S. Dann (LCC)	Miss. H. Hudson

### Guests

Mr. S. Lattaway (National Forest)	Ms. J. Attard (National Forest)
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#### 1. The Chairman's welcome and opening remarks

The Chairman began the meeting by welcoming a new member of the forum; Mrs Christine Radford who is the Cabinet Support Member for Environment and Transport. Mrs Radford advised that she has an active interest in Rights of Way and was nominated for the forum in order to provide support.

The Chairman introduced Mr. S Lattaway and Ms. J. Attard from the National Forest who are in attendance for item 6 and will be doing a presentation on the Charnwood Forest Development Project.

The Chair asked Members to go round the table and introduce themselves.

#### 2. Apologies for absence

Apologies were received from Mrs. H. Brown, Mrs. H. Edwards, Mr. P. Tame and Mr. B Sutton.

#### 3. Minutes of the previous meeting

The Chairman went through the minutes and the matters arising from the minutes.

#### **Agenda Item 8b**

Point 8 should read 'tapping rail', not 'tipping'.

#### **Agenda Item 9b**

Mr Law said that it was Mr McWilliam who provided the update, not himself.

Mr Howells agreed that these changes will be made and revised minutes will be kept on record.

No other changes were made and the minutes were approved as a true record of the meeting.

4. Matters arising not otherwise on the agenda

The Chairman advised that he, Mr Denney and Mr Warren visited HS2 recently at their offices in Birmingham. They were pleasantly surprised by the high powered team meeting them and the amount of local knowledge those people had already acquired. The work that Mr Denney and Mr Warren presented was very professionally put together and HS2 appreciated it; very positive feedback. Mr Faircliffe said that it was important to be involved from the start and was constructive for the LLAF.

5. Declarations of interest and any items which the Chairperson has agreed to take as urgent

The Chairman asked Mr McWilliam to give an update on the membership of the River Soar and Grand Union Canal Partnership and who attends from this Forum. Mr McWilliam advised that now Mr. Law is standing down it is required that another member of the Forum attends as an observer. Mr. Law advised that Mrs. H. Edwards attends. It was suggested that another member is nominated and this was agreed by the Forum. It was also agreed to add Recruitment to this agenda, together with an item on Future Works.

6. Charnwood Forest Development Project (Sam Lattaway)

Mr Lattaway provided a presentation to the group on the Charnwood Project.

Mr Lattaway explained that the area is unique due to its geology and social history. He also advised that the 5-year project was lottery funded and it will be millions of pounds.

The group were shown a map detailing routes stretching from Loughborough to Beacon Hill and Quorn to Woodhouse Eaves and Beacon Hill.

Mrs Allen asked if there would be a barrier between the road and horse track. Mr Lattaway said that it was too early for those types of detail.

Mr Kirby asked whether there would be any changes to bus routes and Mr Lattaway advised that this project could not provide new bus services, but that they would be trying to influence the existing services and are looking into a feasibility study for Arriva. He also stated that the transport provision around the area would be looked at.

Cllr Radford added that the County Council have an open Public Transport Consultation and suggested that the Forum feed into this consultation. Mr Denney confirmed that the members had already done this (copy of response tabled at the meeting).

Mr Lattaway told the group that he intended to keep coming back to the LLAF to share information, i.e. about paths. Mr Denney asked if they would be able to use the small grants scheme to enhance permissive paths, too. Mr Lattaway said that they would struggle to do this under the grant scheme as they have to prove the heritage, but that there are other ways; have to get the right things funded in the correct way.

Mr Lattaway highlighted that after 5 years when the project ends it would need sustainability and will need for local business to provide support, small and often.

The Chair stated that the LLAF were fully supportive of the project and would like an active part in making sure that the project gets to the second round.

Mr Lattaway advised that there was a date for the first steering group meeting, where they will; set up a timetable for the next 18 months, identify where the LLAF can help.

Mr Denney reminded the guests that within the group there was lots of expertise on footpath networks and public transport and that member came from a number of different organisations.

## 7. Reports from committees and working groups

- (a) Planning and Travel (RD) – The Chair highlighted the sheer amount of work Mr Denney had done in this area and felt this needed to be recognised. Mr Denney thanked the members for their support and contributions. Mr Denney summarised the highlights:
- Print-outs on the Passenger Transport and Kirby Muxloe Consultations had been circulated. SW asked when the deadline for the consultation was and JH advised that it was around the end of May/beginning of June
  - Trip to HS2 head office - RD said that there were a lot of sound ideas and they had some informative discussions. RD also stated that he was impressed with HS2's knowledge and that they were equally impressed with that of the LLAF members. They identified and discussed some of the issues and RD said that it was possibly one of the most positive contributions in the history of the Forum
  - CR recommended that JA write in focusing on the park especially and what is required i.e. bus routes. She also said that they should stress the importance of the public health aspect
  - VA advised that a lot of the roads around the park are very narrow and have no parking and when there are events, parking issues are created by spectators which irritates the locals. She said that they need to be careful about what is promoting the park doesn't damage it. SL responded that they were focusing on sustainability
- (b) Network Opportunities (JL) – The Chair started by reiterating that this was JL's last meeting and that his standing down from the meeting was a big loss for the Forum. He thanked JL for the huge amount of work he had done over the years and that there are people out there who lead better lives because of the work JL has done. He told JL that whatever he does in the future, to let us know if there is anything that the Forum can do to support him. JL thanked the Chair and then went on to provide the highlights:



- JL advised that they had been looking to produce 3 route leaflets but did not have the funding. He said that someone who is willing to fight for this needs to take over; and that the base work is done
  - RD asked how this sits with the Charnwood project and SL said that he would need to look at it in more detail and look at gaps in provision. He said it was an opportunity to share information with people
  - JL replied that they'd had similar promises before where nothing came of it. SL stated that they didn't have the money before but now they do
  - JL went on to say how he had visited an event recently and that people were really impressed with the leaflets available. Unfortunately, there was nothing from Leicestershire. He explained that the maps are valuable as they show people where disabled toilets and benches are, for example. JL said that it was in all of their interests as everyone is getting older and may need to use a wheelchair
  - JL then informed the group that while some disabled toilets were of a fair size, some are not big enough for changing place toilets and advised that he wanted to put in some equipment
  - JL also said that adaptive bikes can prove invaluable in helping people with disabilities get around and access areas they otherwise wouldn't be able to
  - CR suggested that they consider using media (i.e. Facebook, Twitter) to publicise this information
  - VA said that funding for the leaflets could probably be found and asked if it was the time it took to work out the route that was more of an issue. JL replied that it does take a long time to survey the route and write-up/design the leaflets
  - The Chair thanked JL again for all of his good work
  - RD then proposed that CF replace JL as Chair of this committee and he was duly elected
- (c) Unrecorded Ways (SW) – Before the update, RD said that SW had been doing a sterling job. SW advised that they were currently sifting through volunteers and asking them what support they can provide in order to move forward. He said that there was nothing else to add.

## 8. Reports from outside bodies

- (a) Heart of the Forest, Access and Connectivity Group (VA) – VA said that the group met last month and that she will circulate the minutes in due course.
- (b) River Soar and Grand Union Canal Partnership (JL) – discussed earlier in the meeting.
- (c) National Forest Access & Recreational Group (RD) – RD stated that he had didn't have anything else to add to his report that was in the pack. The next meeting is in June.
- (d) East Midlands Local Access Forum (EMLAF) Chairs Meeting Update (JL) – Nothing to report.
- (e) Charnwood Forest Regional Steering Group (RD) – Have not met yet.
- (f) Other meetings and groups – already covered.

The Vice Chair observed that detailed minutes from meetings of outside bodies are not required and that a précis of points relevant to the Forum is more helpful.

9. Correspondence

- (a) Responses, advice and comments sent by LLAF (RD) – RD confirmed that copies of everything sent out by the Forum is enclosed in the pack. SW asked about the Hinckley Freight Interchange and RD said that the group have been informed as to where they are at and he will be providing the suggested routes to the Parish in due course.
- (b) Received (EM) – None other than those circulated via email.
- (c) Orders – VA praised Ellen for her work on E13A. SW asked about Great Glen and whether this was from user evidence. Mr McWilliam confirmed that it was user evidence.

10. Obstruction Report (SW)

Mr Warren advised that he has responded, as required, in reference to logging obstructions on the website.

The Chair referred to item 12 and the website being unfriendly to use.

Mr McWilliam informed the group that the information sent in is useful and will form part of a wider project to improve the site. Cllr Radford said that the Councillors have issues with the website too and it is definitely being looked at.

11. Annual Report – timeline and update

The Chairman advised that the last annual report on the County Council website is from either 2014 or 2015. The information for this would be the highlights from the minutes.

The Chairman agreed that each year the framework for the Annual Report can be discussed at the July meeting. The draft Annual Report will then be approved by members at the October meeting and signed off at the January meeting of the following year.

The Chairman agreed to take on the responsibility for the 2018 Annual Report.

12. Leicestershire County Council – website

Mr Denney asked if there could be a library of advice and responses from the previous meetings.

Mr Gamble queried whether there was a visitor counter for the website and Mr McWilliam confirmed that this information could be provided.

13. Agriculture and Brexit

Noted – part of the responses.

14. Any other items which the Chairperson has decided to take as urgent

Works Programme:

- The Chair proposed that HS2 and Rights of Way are added to the programme and RD went on to suggest that Unrecorded Ways and Annual Report should also be added. SW then recommended that the Charnwood project also be included.

Recruitment:

- It was noted that with JL leaving and other members not in attendance there is a need for additional members. EM said that advertising for members has worked in the past and suggested that he and JH meet to discuss how to tackle this going forward. CR requested that she be included in this meeting.
- JH said that they were supposed to be representing the community but that they weren't diverse enough. MG asked what it was that he wanted and RD suggested someone with an environmental background and people from the ethnic minorities. AP stated that they were short of people from a health background, too.
- JH confirmed that he will discuss a way forward in terms of recruitment with EM.

15. Future Meetings

FORUMS: 18<sup>th</sup> July 2018 (5.00pm for 5.30pm) – Forum - County Hall (Workshop from 4pm)  
 25<sup>th</sup> October 2017 (5.00pm for 5.30pm) – Forum – County Hall (Workshop from 4.00pm)  
 8<sup>th</sup> January 2019 (5.00pm for 5.30pm) – Forum – County Hall (Workshop from 4.00pm)

UNRECORDED WAYS:

23<sup>rd</sup> May 2018 (2.30pm to 4.30pm) – Executive Room, County Hall  
 22<sup>nd</sup> August 2018 (2.30pm to 4.30pm) - Executive Room, County Hall  
 October – TBA  
 22<sup>nd</sup> November 2018 (2.30pm to 4.30pm) – Room TBC  
 6<sup>th</sup> February 2019 (2.30pm to 4.30pm) – Room TBC

Meeting concluded at 19:20.

# Agenda Item 9

12

Plans, Policies and Place-Making Team, Charnwood Borough Council

Via email - localplans@charnwood.gov.uk

The Leicestershire Local Access Forum (LLAF) has advised numerous authorities on their plans and feels it can contribute to your present exercise. The LLAF is an independent statutory body, set up as a result of the Countryside and Rights of Way Act (CROW) 2000, and exists to represent the interests of everyone concerned with access to the countryside and the public rights of way network including footpaths, bridleways and byways, cycleways and areas of open access. We take access to include the adequate provision of sustainable and public transport and travel opportunities.

Section 94 of the CROW act makes it a statutory function of the forum to give advice to a range of bodies, including local authorities, on access issues in respect of land use planning matters. The Secretary of State advised that in particular forums were to focus on the impact and options for minimising possible adverse effects of planning policies and development proposals, in respect of future public access to land. Forums are tasked with identifying and expressing support for opportunities to improve public access, or associated infrastructure, which might be delivered through planning policies or new developments.

We will only be commenting on those aspects which fall within our remit or have an impact of our areas of involvement.

We would first make some general observations. All authorities have not only to satisfy their housing needs but to also have a plan in place which demonstrates the availability of land to meet targets for the future. Without this not only do you fall down on provision but you can have developments imposed upon you where you would deem them inappropriate.

Charnwood does have some particular problems. The area is cut by major roads (M1, A512, A6, A46 etc) and the Leicester and Leicestershire 'Strategic Growth Plan' advocates an infrastructure led approach to development with a new A46 proposed eastern distributor road to connect the A46 to the north east of Leicester to the M1 at a new junction to the south of the city which will also impact on part of the borough. The area is also cut by the river valleys and associated flood plains and has the historic Charnwood Forest Regional Park at its heart. The Park and the watercourses do need protection and give the authority challenges but they also give you the opportunity to make Charnwood a very desirable place to live, work and visit. Planning to meet the housing need will not be easy while at the same time protecting the in places unique environment

Open spaces are invaluable for many reasons and whilst grass pitches are needed for organised sport e.g. for Rugby, Hockey, Soccer, and Cricket etc., you must provide green space which can be enjoyed for general recreation. Allotments, golf courses and school playing fields can offer wildlife oases and improve the visual aspect from nearby paths or indeed paths crossing them. Similarly cemeteries and graveyards can provide pleasant environments for taking quiet relaxation and as such open space needs to be viewed in all its entirety.

From our experience informal natural and semi natural green spaces serve the needs of more of the population than organised parks and of course cost far less to maintain. To enjoy these there must be an adequate network of paths and cycleways and many paths themselves provide linear open access land especially when fringed by natural growth. Green spaces of whatever designation also help to provide wildlife corridors improving the general biodiversity in the area.

Green wedges and Area of Local Separation afford many opportunities for such considerations. They also help keep distinct communities rather than urban sprawl

Improving the rights of way network to ensure that there are appropriate linkages between key open space sites and settlements in the district would improve access and promote more sustainable forms of transport. You cannot create new land and the only privately owned land which might become available as amenity land invariably only happens as part of a large development which itself usually means a loss of farmland. The best way to get more benefit from what is already there is to improve access and links and to an extent, public transport.

We are firmly of the view that housing needs should be satisfied by major schemes with all the needed infrastructure rather than constantly bolting a few more properties onto the edge of small communities whose services are already badly stretched. Charnwood has many picturesque villages which have retained their strong sense of identity and these must not be subsumed into larger conurbations. In addition given that the rivers systems flood regularly impeding traffic flows badly, we are against small piecemeal developments as they do not have the scope and scale to make the needed improvements to the low lying roads

One final consideration but a very important one is that of air quality. Many parts of Leicestershire have problems with this and any new housing being considered should whenever possible not be downwind of major traffic junctions or industrial units. One benefit of large schemes is that they afford space to plant trees to act as a buffer against pollutants but also space to create off road routes well away from motorised traffic.

LOUGHBOROUGH – in looking at Charnwood we feel that Loughborough needs to be treated as a stand alone situation without decrying its importance to the larger area as the main shopping and service centre. A vibrant and diverse economy provides many employment opportunities for local people which help keep communities together. With the strength of the science and education sectors in Loughborough these jobs include higher skilled, better paid jobs. That does mean people need housing and adequate transport and leisure areas which will impact on the nearby Soar Valley and Forest Park and we would like to see an enhanced off road network of routes giving access to these. We also feel a lot of the potential housing should be centred in or on the edge of Loughborough as it does have the services to support this growth. There appear to be several brown

field sites available. Expansion is probably most justified to the west, towards the M1 and Shepshed although some green separation should be maintained in addition to the M1. There is also a need to accommodate the growing student numbers although we do feel these should be spread throughout the community rather than creating student areas.

SOAR VALLEY - Thurmaston and the Watermead Regeneration Corridor offers another opportunity for a good contribution to the housing requirement. It would involve some loss of countryside and the extension of the urban area, which will make non-motorised access to the remaining countryside more difficult for existing residents and must increase the need and temptation to take the car to reach a pleasant walk, or just exercise the dog. Watermead Country Park should however never be far away and we would suggest more access points over the canal/river. Thurmaston itself is rather 'tired' and badly cut by road and rail but old warehousing units and other brown field sites could be replaced by a well balanced range of housing facing towards the park and making Thurmaston a more attractive place with a more balanced community. Economic and commercial sites would have to be provided to replace these older units and that presumably would mean in the nearby countryside.

OTHER LARGE CENTRES – Charnwood's other larger settlements; Shepshed, Birstall and Syston have services and facilities that could support some additional housing but Syston in particular has roads close to capacity. Anstey similarly has a distinct services and retail heart but is currently seeing major housing addition and the centre has roads that are highly congested. There seems little scope for expansion here as it almost conjoins Cropston now and you have approved housing on the edge of Glenfield. Barrow upon Soar is not as well served but could possibly see a little expansion but with all these distinct communities we would wish to see green separation zones to maintain their independent identities and a network of off road routes allowing passage between them without using vehicles.

Sileby is a smaller community without the services to sustain much growth but we would wish to see this kept separate from Barrow.

The old A6 corridor is seeing infill and there is the real risk that Rothley, Mountsorrel and Quorn will lose their separate identities

LEICESTER – Some housing could be located on the edge of the city to rely on that city for services etc. At the same time this should not effectively bridge existing communities leading to a loss of their identities. The area between Leicester and Thurmaston may offer opportunities but we would not like to see Barkby with Barkby Thorpe lose identity

HOUSING – Looking beyond the boundaries of the borough the cities of Leicester, Derby and Nottingham add to the pressure for development. Even discounting any need for Charnwood to help neighbouring authorities who are struggling to meet their targets it would seem the borough needs close to 1000 new homes a year for the period under review.

We think that evidence elsewhere suggests that the needs should be met by major 'new' developments giving the authority a chance to develop those communities holistically. We have already commented on the proposals for Garendon and Broadnook and in general we support those sorts of projects whilst having issues with some detail. The smaller villages have few services available and we see no real benefit in moiré housing in these other than to fill gaps in the provision

Places like Barkby, Burton, Hathern, Queniborough, Rearsby, Cossington, Seagrave, Wymeswold and Thrusington might need a few smaller homes for people to retire into or start up from, to keep the communities together. The families of residents in Newtown Linford and Swithland would struggle to find start up homes to remain near their relatives. We feel that Woodhouse and Woodhouse Eaves could be viewed as one community and properties there are a bit more mixed but there are gaps in the balance. There is a need for affordable homes, both social housing for people that can not access housing through the open market and small properties for purchase because of a growing older population and more single people.

OPEN AREAS – Wherever housing is to be located will determine where the green separation zones will be and our prime interest is in the protection of those and the maximising of public and environmental benefit which can be had from them. To the east you have Wolds and the Wreake Valley; through the centre the Soar and to its south, Watermead; and to the west the Forest Park and to its southern edge the Rothley Brook. These are a wonderful areas; ecologically and environmentally valuable and for reasons of their topography, little developed and therefore of historic interest.

We are not entirely sure how you define an Area of Local Separation as opposed to green wedge but we are generally supportive of any protected separation zones. We certainly would wish to see a gap between Loughborough and Quorn, Syston and Queniborough and Barrow and Sileby and do think there should be a gap between Rothley and Birstall but should that not be between Wanlip and Rothley and Wanlip and Birstall as we take Broadnook to be part of Wanlip

SUMMARY - When considering new developments, the design of our neighbourhoods is key to promoting healthy travel habits, with local facilities such as shops, doctors, schools and other services being located to encourage routine walking and cycling. The benefits of the footpath, bridleway and cycleway networks are multi-dimensional and have impacts on sustainable travel, green infrastructure, recreation, tourism, local economies, health and general well-being. They are an essential mechanism for linking communities and facilities if we are to reduce motorised transport and the carbon emissions that ensue and they play a major part in the development of the recreational potential of any area. These benefits have to be balanced against the need to protect and enhance the ecology and landscape and enable regeneration and economic growth. These should not be viewed simply as competing demands but as a challenge to use best practice and/or innovative approaches to achieve good quality outcomes to meet each of the aspirations.

We need to ensure that in the planning of our communities, access to basic amenities and services is not dependent on car ownership but is always available to those on foot, bicycle, wheelchair and public transport.

If we are to encourage walking we need attractive places to visit. Green open spaces are great for wildlife and provide an outlet for residents to enjoy. If trees feature they are also 'lungs' helping counteract air pollution. The presence of, and access to, green areas and the natural environment can help increase activity and reduce obesity. Daily physical activity is essential for maintaining health; inactivity directly contributes to 15% of deaths in the UK.

Larger developments are required to leave green oases but these are often overly manicured. Sewn and fertilised 'parks' are good at absorbing rainwater but rough grassland is over four times more effective and trees improve things further. Such wilder 'semi-natural' areas are also much better for wildlife. We must plan for more absorbent habitats especially in the flood plains. Wetlands and woodlands are ideal at holding back floodwaters and also provide a varied landscape for residents to access and enjoy.

It can be a win-win situation. If we create wetland and woodland areas and green corridors linking them, we can help wildlife to migrate between populations keeping them healthier and introducing them to our gardens; can create ideal walking possibilities for the health and general well being of the population and cut down the risk of flooding all at the same time.

We would just broadly summarise our take on the issues by saying that whatever direction future housing development takes it must ensure appropriate provision of facilities such as schools, local shops, public amenity / recreation spaces and adequate off road routes between them. In as far as you can encourage private enterprises you must facilitate adequate transport facilities and opportunities of employment as close to residential areas as possible

We trust you find our observations of help

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**Annual Report of the Leicestershire Local Access Forum (LLAF) 2018**

During the last year we have offered advice to a number of local authorities and major developers to try to secure the best possible outcomes for all users of rights of way and open spaces. We continue to be represented on various relevant organisations, widening our sphere of influence and invite major organisations, developers, etc., to our meetings to facilitate positive discussions.

Our advice to local government is on their strategic plans and substantial planning applications which could impact on rights of way or afford opportunities to improve the network

We have also continued to promote and encourage more people to use rights of way and open spaces for their general health and wellbeing, and sustainable travel to the benefit of the environment.

Most of this work is dealt with by our **Planning and Travel Committee**. A lot of its work can be tedious and time consuming but it is important to pick up on and react to potential threats to the network.

We continue to monitor the Network Rail crossings situation and have objected formally to a number of potential closures and await a public enquiry in to one at Barrow. We have sent suggestions to HS2 and have met with them on two occasions and they continue to engage with us as the project unfolds and whatever individual members think of the overall project it is important to work with them to mitigate the impacts as it will cut over 40 rights of way in Leicestershire.

We have also given advice to major freight interchange developers speaking at public enquiries when necessary

We also have a **Network Opportunities Committee** and for the last year also an **Unrecorded Ways Committee**. The Network Opportunities Committee works to enhance the network of the public rights of way as opportunities arise and monitors open access land, county owned farms and higher level stewardship schemes. The unrecorded ways project was created to identify unrecorded ways and ensure sufficient historic evidence is available to submit an application for a route, to enable it to become a permanent public right of way. We set up to set up the processes and collected the base data and have staged training taster events to encourage volunteer researchers. Thus was during this period of intense activity dealt with by a separate committee but has now been returned to Network Opportunities. We have a team of volunteers researching specific areas or routes and these people have been recruited from various user groups and organisations. The main players have been co-opted onto a sub group to meet from time to time.

This group has a budget for research purposes made up of donations from several user groups with a contribution from the County Council. One member of the LLAF acts as the archivist to this project another provides the secretarial requirements and a third is responsible for the funds. Payment from the fund requires the authority of 2 from 5 named members of the LLAF.

The Deregulation Bill was passed in 2015, but are still awaiting the guidelines from the Department for Environment, Food and Rural which may well simplify the process for claiming routes but with the cut off date approaching we are proceeding under the old regulations.

The Forum seeks to be representative of all users of the countryside and landowners and environmentalists but whilst we can have up to 21 members some sectors are not represented. Members the Forum wear many hats and we are all interested in the environment but we do not have anybody directly involved with groups working in that field. We are also short at the moment of people particularly interested in motor sport; members of the ethnic minorities or the less able sector.

We meet about five times a year formally so it is not a great demand on members' time although members with the time do work between meetings on the various projects and work of the committees