



Minutes of a meeting of the Leicestershire Local Access Forum held at County Hall, Glenfield on Tuesday 9th January 2018

PRESENT

Mr. R. Denney (Chair)

Ms. V. Allen

Mr. C. Faircliffe

Mr. M. Gamble

Mr. S. Warren

Mr. J. Law

Mr. A. Hillier-Fry

Ms. H. Edwards

Mr. T. Kirby

Ms. H. Brown

Mr. E. McWilliam LCC

1. Chairman's welcome and opening remarks

Mr R Denney began the meeting in the Chair, as Vice Chair, and advised that the meeting would begin with a presentation by representatives from HS2 and that the agenda was revised accordingly.

2. Apologies for absence

Apologies were received from Mr. J. Howells, Mr P. Tame, Mr. B. E. Sutton and Mrs. A.F. Pyper.

Mr Denney then advised that the first matter was to elect the Chair and the Vice Chair.

3. An Officer of the Appointing Authority takes Chair for the election of Chairman & Vice Chairman

Mr McWilliam asked if anybody was proposing themselves or others. Mr Denney stated that Mr Howells was happy to continue as Chair and asked if the members were in support of this. This was proposed by VA seconded by TK.

He advised that the Vice Chair should represent different areas of interest and asked if anybody would like to put themselves forward.

Mr Denney, who serves as an elected member, was proposed by CF and agreed to continue. This was seconded by TK.

4. Guest speaker – Bernie Ibekwem (HS2)

Mr Denney then invited the representatives from HS2 to update members on the current status of the HS2 project. He advised that members would like to establish a dialogue with HS2 representatives for localised issues such as the removal of paths, for example.

Bernie Ibekwem (Engagement Manager) introduced himself and thanked the forum for the invite to the meeting. He advised that his team were currently in the process of engaging with key stakeholders to help move the project along. His associates then introduced themselves; Neil Coleman (Transport Planning Manager), Keith Smith (Senior Engagement Advisor) and Lucy Colls (Engagement Advisor). Mr Ibekwem advised that James Paddon (Transport Planning Manager) had sent his apologies as he had not been able to attend, as originally planned.

Mr Ibekwem asked if members were happy to save questions until the end. He then gave his presentation.

Mr Ibekwem gave members the timeline for the project. He confirmed that the phase for our area, Birmingham to Leeds had started in July 2017. He also said that more information on Property Schemes was to be sent out, as it had a huge impact on local businesses and residents.

Mr Ibekwem stated that the Hybrid Bill Design (now to 2019), was a period of time to talk to stakeholders and gain local information which will help with the design process.

Mr Coleman advised that a number of surveys had been undertaken during the August Bank Holiday, as this was deemed to be one of the busiest periods for public rights of way (PRoW). He said that they wanted to work with the forum to provide a different viewpoint on routes proposed.

Mr Coleman also informed members that an Environment Impact Assessment will be submitted with the Hybrid Bill.

He also reported that it was important for information to be gained on the usage of all routes and advised that more surveys will be conducted in the spring.

Mr Coleman requested information from members that could not be obtained from surveys, such as planned changes to PRoW and unrecorded PRoW. He confirmed that the unrecorded road information was particularly important especially if they are heavily used and that they need to collect as much information as possible about the routes.

Mr Denney confirmed that LLAF members had identified 52 places where the route crossed PRoWs.

Mr Coleman stated that by summer/autumn 2018, they hope to have a better understanding of the options and will then share these with the LLAF members.

Following the presentation, Mr Denney asked how members are to engage with HS2 officers; i.e. meetings, emails etc.

Mr Ibekwem confirmed that they would be happy to attend future meetings of the LLAF if required. Mr Denney suggested that they attend the Forum again in 6-12 months. Mr Ibekwem agreed that this would be the best way to engage and share information.

Mr Smith stated that the key areas of information to assist them at this stage would be the details of the 52 PRoW crossings and the main issues. This would allow

them to identify any potential problems at an early stage and, if necessary, set up some working groups to work through them.

Mr Ibekwem suggested that members could also contact them by phone for occasional updates.

Mr Denney confirmed that members would provide the information on the 52 locations to HS2 officers within the next couple of weeks.

Mr Coleman asked who to send survey locations and other information to; Mr Denney agreed that he would be the main point of contact for this.

Mr Denney advised that the Hybrid Bill in Warwickshire had given powers to start diversions as much as a mile from the track as a point of information. Mr Coleman agreed that this was possible. He also advised that they don't want to generate increased journey times and therefore will limit the number of crossings where possible. He added that they will keep horses away from the line.

Ms Allen disputed the need for this and confirmed that, in her experience, horses are fine to be close to the line. This was discussed at length and Mr Ibekwem concluded that a discussion will be held with their Phase 1 colleagues to look at these aspects.

Mr Denney raised issues in other areas, such as Kegworth, which have been decimated by road works and requested that this be considered a chance to address mistakes already made by previous developers, if they work together. Mr Ibekwem agreed to work with members towards this aim.

Mr Denney asked Mr McWilliam for any comments on behalf of County Council officers. Mr McWilliam confirmed his satisfaction with what had already been discussed and that County Council officers had already provided information and data to HS2 officers.

Ms Allen asked for information on the timescales for construction and the length of time roads would potentially be closed.

Mr Coleman responded that there is no aim to suspend any PRoW and will provide diversions instead. He advised that in Phase 1 there were no suspended PRoWs.

Mr Ibekwem confirmed that the whole project would take 10 years.

Ms Allen asked for details on the phasing of the construction and whether it would be in stages, or whole areas in one go. Mr Coleman advised that this information was not available yet but he could confirm that work would not be in one place for 10 years. He surmised that it was likely that each area would take 6 months to a year with diversions in place.

Mr Denney added that members may be able to suggest better diversions, where necessary and would be keen to liaise with HS2 on this aspect.

Mr Smith informed members that the designs are still being finalised and would encourage members to feed into the design process.

Mr Warren commented that the Hybrid Bill gives details of where the diversions will be but changes may happen with time. Mr Ibekwem agreed with this and explained the importance of keeping an open dialogue.

Mr Denney thanked the HS2 representatives for coming and they left the meeting.

5. Minutes of the previous meeting

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

Agenda Item 5a

Should read 'JL' instead of 'RD'.

Agenda Item 8a

States that Ms Allen will respond to Gates and Stiles. Mr Denney advised that as a rule, this should go through the Chairman. Ms Allen confirmed that she hadn't done it.

Last page of the minutes

Typo 'jTerms'.

Mr Denney 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.

Mr Gamble asked if there was a log of LLAF achievements. Mr Denney advised that the minutes are published once finalised.

6. Matters arising not otherwise on the agenda

None.

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

None.

8. Reports from committees and working groups

- (a) Planning and Travel (RD) – Circulated update prior to meeting.
On the subject of the Barrow crossing extinguishment order EM said that there had been a number of objections, but not that many, and that the closing date was 10/01/18. They will have a strong objection from the forum.
- (b) Network Opportunities (JL) – Circulated prior to meeting.
JL informed the members of the highlights:
- Joint meeting with disabled officers three times per year
 - Not many voluntary organisations
 - Raised that disabled people feel left behind. Money is no excuse; need to look after disabled people and give them guidance

- HE and JL went to Mosaic Charity Trust – previous experience wasn't very good but this time they met with the Director. Focus was on promoting a narrowboat for the disabled
 - JL asked if he could deliver his presentation on the leaflets but due to time constraints, RD asked if this could wait until the next meeting
 - Changing Places toilet location letter – JL asked if RD would sign in JH's absence. All members have agreed to wording. RD said that he wouldn't sign it as such, but that JL could put his name to it
 - Choice event (April at Tigers Stadium) – asked EM if LCC would fund a table. EM asked for details of cost etc. and said that he would be happy to pursue this. SW and JH felt that we promoted Leicester City LLAFF and questioned whether they should be asked to contribute funding. Asked if the Chair should write to LC asking them to sponsor a table. RD advised they should consider contacting Adam Clarke first. Suggested that JL put together a letter and then they'll look at it.
 - Watermead Country Park – issues concerning lack of visitors, the kissing gates/radar keys, removal of the tipping rail and mis-management of certain areas. A discussion ensued as to whether the issues had been reported to LCC and JL confirmed that they hadn't. RD suggested that JL report any issues to LCC and give them a chance to rectify them. EM said that he would arrange a meeting between JL and the lead ranger in order to visit the park and address any issues
 - Dementia Awareness – grant given by LCC – only a 50% take-up; no district councils. Blaby DC didn't take it up despite saying that they are dementia aware
 - Visit England Accessibility guides – no time at this meeting, so will update at next meeting
- (c) Unrecorded Ways (SW) – SW advised that a meeting had taken place and the report states the way they should be going. Nothing else to add. There was a presentation for around 40 people which will be sent out with the minutes. RD briefly went through the presentation for members.

9. Reports from outside bodies

- (a) Heart of the Forest, Access and Connectivity Group (VA) – Nothing to add. VA asked Members to email her if there were any questions.
- (b) River Soar and Grand Union Canal Partnership (JL) – Report on canal and rivers – good progress made in promoting tourism. They have produced a draft leaflet with maps of the areas.
- (c) National Forest Access & Recreation Group (RD) – Confirmed that the members have the report and that there was nothing new to add.
- (d) Lost Ways Training (RD) – Nothing to add.
- (e) East Midlands Local Access Form (EMLAF) Chairs meeting update (JH) –
- (f) Charnwood Forest Regional Steering Group (RD) – Confirmed that the bid had been successful. RD has produced a letter to send which has been circulated to the members for approval.

It offered continuing support and the suggestion of improvement to the permissive route along Wood Brook and demonstrated a feasible timetable for a bus route to serve the Forest.

VA suggested that they should be looking at more general improvements but RD confirmed that they have already done that and now need to look at specifics. RD asked members to agree to the letter being sent – all agreed.

(g) Other meetings and groups – None.

10. Committees for the coming year and their brief

- (a) Planning and Travel (RD) – to continue with its present brief and RD happy to continue as Chairman, all members being considered part of the committee and exchanges primarily by email.
- (b) Network Opportunities (JL) – to continue with its present brief and JL happy to continue as Chairman, all members being considered part of the committee JL said help could primarily be by email.
- (c) Unrecorded Ways (SW) – to continue with its present brief and SW happy to continue as Chairman. SW asked if anyone wanted to be on the committee. JL asked to be removed. PT has asked to be kept on. Otherwise unchanged.

11. Appointment of representatives to outside bodies (Representatives/Observers & Deputies)

- (a) Heart of the Forest, Access and Connectivity Group (VA) – VA and JH as deputy happy to continue.
- (b) River Soar and Grand Union Canal Partnership (JL) – JL/HE joint but they are to seek formal membership.
- (c) National Forest Access & Recreation Group (RD) – RD to continue, with VA as deputy.
- (d) Charnwood Forest Regional Steering Group (RD) – RD and JH to continue.
- (e) The Local Nature Partnership (RD) and the Leicestershire Parks, Open Spaces and Countryside Partnership (VA, RD) – RD requested that members agree that they drop these from the list due to lack of involvement.

12. Orders Updates

Mr Denney asked Mr McWilliam for an update on orders. Mr McWilliam requested that this be deferred to the next meeting.

Ms Allen asked how LCC were progressing through the backlog. Mr McWilliam informed members that things were moving quicker and that they were keeping things in check.

13. Correspondence

- (a) Responses, advice and comments sent by LLAF (RD) – Barrow members have seen. No new items.
- (b) Received (EM) – None.

14. Obstruction Report (SW)

Mr Warren stated that he was aware of a number of on-line complaints regarding the obstruction form. He advised that a key element of reporting obstructions was identifying the location, but that this is difficult as footpaths are not shown. Mr Warren also raised an issue with regards to file size when uploading supporting photographs.

Mr Denney asked if anyone else has experienced issues to detail these in an email to Mr Warren.

Mr McWilliam asked that all faults be reported, this will ensure they are dealt with and that the system is improved.

15. Recruitment and Quoracy

Mr Denney stated that the forum has good attendance and asked Mr McWilliam if there is an on-going attempt at recruitment. Mr McWilliam confirmed that nothing had happened since the last meeting.

Mr Hillier-Fry suggested that retention should be the focus rather than recruitment, Ms Allen responded that the forum had been stable for the past year.

Mr Denney concluded that the forum was short of 6 members and added that it would be nice to get some new members.

Mrs Faircliffe suggested that representation is requested from the minority groups and Mr McWilliam asked that members encourage others to apply.

16. Annual Report

Mr Denney stated that this was ongoing.

17. Future Work Programme

Mr Denney confirmed that they should have a work programme but that this would need to be deferred to a future meeting.

18. Future Meetings

FORUMS: 17th April 2018 (5.00pm for 5.30pm) County Hall (Workshop from 4pm)
18th July 2018 (5.00pm for 5.30pm) County Hall (Workshop from 4pm)

UNRECORDED WAYS: (To be agreed initially in February)
It was suggested having four meetings a year (2.30pm – 4.30pm)

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

None.

Meeting concluded at 19:35.