

Luton Local Access Forum (LLAF)

Meeting 1, minutes

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Date and time

Wednesday 9 October 2024 at 6.30pm

Venue

Luton Town Hall, committee room 4

Attendees

Chris Godden (CG) (Luton Council)
Russell Cartwright (RC)
Councillor Javed Hussain (JH)
Mamnun Khan (MK)
John Mardle (JM)
David Oakley-Hill (DO)
Michelle Titmus (MT)
Louis Upton (LU)
Neville Williams (NW)

Secretary

Sarah Smart (SS) (Luton Council)

Apologies

Roy Mccrudden (RM)
Cherry Newbery (CN)
Graham Simpson (GS)
Abeda Uddin (AU)
Sam Willis (SW)

Objectives

To agree terms of reference and a forward plan.

To discuss on-going rights of way and access matters.

1. Welcome and apologies

CG welcomed everyone, and introductions were made.

2. Election and appointments

The council appointed the following as forum members:

Russell Cartwright
Councillor Javed Hussain
Mamnun Khan
John Mardle
David Oakley-Hill
Michelle Titmus
Louis Upton
Neville Williams

Roy Mccrudden
Cherry Newbery
Graham Simpson
Abeda Uddin
Mortuza Ali

Sam Willis (SW) is to be a corresponding member.

Election of chair

Nominee: Mamnun Khan

Proposed by: Louis Upton

Seconded by: John Mardle

Election of vice-chair

Nominee: John Mardle

Proposed by: Councillor Javed Hussein

Seconded by: Russell Cartwright

David Oakley-Hill joined the meeting at 6:35pm.

3. Terms of reference

CG led a discussion on the terms of reference (ToR). Amendments to the draft were agreed as follows:

- Meetings will be quorate when one third of the current members are present.
- LLAF will maintain a shared email distribution list. Membership of LLAF will be on the understanding that members agree to sharing their email address.
- Sharing of email addresses will only be amongst LLAF members and only for use on LLAF business. LAF emails will not be forwarded to other parties or published in any way so the email addresses will remain confidential within the LLAF membership.

The ToR were agreed subject to the amendments given above.

Action SS to amend the ToR and circulate with minutes.

4. Rights of Way Improvement Plan (RoWIP)

SS presented a paper giving an update on the status of RoWIP and the review. This was followed by a brief discussion and the following points were raised:

- The requirement is not to review the RoWIP, but to publish a new one. What is the plan for creating the new RoWIP and does the council have the resources to make it happen?
Action CG to seek clarification on the procurement process used in 2015 and would request a budget for a review, for next meeting.
- An interactive map on the council website would be useful for users, so they can explore and get better visibility of where these rights of way (RoW) exist. Currently these rights of way are obscure to the public, which acts as a barrier to access and the benefits of our surrounding environment.
- Any interactive map needs to state that it is not the definitive map.
Action CG to present the survey of paths in the excluded area conducted in 2019 and a map of walking and cycling routes at the next meeting.
Action CG to investigate putting the map onto the website and report at next meeting.

- Users may be able to assist with the review by providing information about RoW.
- Social media would be a good way of disseminating information about the RoW network. The Step forward Luton app shows green spaces and might be utilised to show RoW.
- The revised RoWIP could be a smaller document of no more than ten pages focusing on the themes for improvement.
- A simple mechanism on the website for reporting problems with RoW would be useful. The current mechanism for reporting problems is not clear to the public.
- A sixth theme of conservation and environment was suggested for consideration.
- We need to work holistically and be aware of the work neighbouring councils are doing that impacts on RoW, including the M1 A6 link road and the Luton East development.

5. Public path orders (PPOs)

CG presented a paper informing members of public path diversion order number 1/2024. He also mentioned the public path diversion order for the cemetery extension. A brief discussion followed, and the following points were raised:

- The Newlands footpath does not appear on the OS Map; the reason is not clear.
- Once the work is complete, will the path be walkable?
Action: CG to check whether the Newlands path is walkable during his next site visit.
- There is also a footway cycling route along the border of Stockwood Park, which may well become the preferred route for the public.
- Paths need to have a destination and a purpose.

6. Definitive map modification orders (DMMOs)

SS presented a paper on definitive map modification orders including the DMMO for footpath L075. A brief discussion followed, covering the following points:

- As a LAF, it is not for us to judge the case; applications like this facilitate walking by providing shorter, more pleasant routes, which is beneficial.
- There will be a public enquiry into this DMMO on 5 and 6 December 2024 and notices will be posted.
Action SS to circulate the notice with the minutes.
- Anyone who knows the path and wishes to give evidence to the public enquiry can do so, but it is not appropriate for the LLAF to submit evidence.

A second discussion about another DMMO application, by the British Horse Society (BHS), near Keech Hospice, took place.

- This RoW is to be included as part of the M1 to A6 corridor application by Central Bedfordshire Council (CBC) but that has not received funding.
- It was requested that the route be properly signed and maintained.

7. Landowner register

SS presented a paper on the recent registration of land at Copt Hall & Someries Farm. A brief discussion followed; key points were as follows:

- The registration is for a small parcel of land within Luton, but there are larger registrations by the same landowner for the adjoining areas in Central Bedfordshire.
- The parcel of land does not contain any footpaths and currently only a statement has been registered. There has been no declaration.

8. Forward work programme

CG led the discussion of the forward work programme. The programme was agreed as follows:

- RoWIP should be a standing item.
Action SS to amend forward work programme and circulate with the minutes.
- A pre-applications list should be a standing item.
Action SS to amend forward work programme and circulate with the minutes.
Action JH to speak to the head of planning about getting this information to CG.
- Information about the Local Plan will go onto the website on 14 October.
- Only applications impacting on local access and RoW are important to the LAF.

As part of the discussion on planning applications, the plans for the football stadium were discussed, as follows:

- The River Lea will be diverted, partly in a culvert. A riverside path, rather than in a culvert might be more user and environmentally friendly. The plans are available on the planning portal and the LLAF needs to decide whether to submit a letter of advice. The deadline is 29 October 2024.
Action SS to share email addresses of those present and ask those members not present if they are happy to also share emails solely within the LAFF, with minutes.
Action LAF members to look at the football stadium plans, before 29 October.
Action DO to draft a letter of advice on the football stadium plans and circulate for comment. If agreed, submit a letter of advice from the LAF by 29 October 2024.

Date of next meeting

Wednesday 11 December 2024 from 6:30pm to 8:30pm in the Town Hall.

The meeting closed at 8:30pm.

Actions

SS to amend the ToR and circulate with minutes.

CG to seek clarification on the procurement process used in 2015 and request a budget for a review, for next meeting.

CG to present the survey of paths in the excluded area and a map of those paths, plus those already on the definitive map, at the next meeting.

CG to investigate putting the map onto the website and report at next meeting.

CG to check whether the Newlands path is walkable during his next site visit.

SS to circulate the notice with the minutes.

SS to amend forward work programme and circulate with the minutes.

JH to speak to the head of planning about getting pre-application information to CG.

SS to share email addresses of those present and ask those members not present if they are happy to also share emails solely within the LAFF, with minutes.

LAF members to look at the football stadium plans, before 29 October.

DO to draft a letter of advice on the football stadium plans and circulate for comment. If agreed, submit a letter of advice from the LAF by 29 October 2024.