

Local Access Forum

Friday 28<sup>th</sup> February 2025

1100 – 1330 hrs Conference Room 1, Herefordshire Council, Plough Lane

Attendees	Name	Initials	Position
Chair:	Arthur Lee	AC	LAF Chair
Note Taker:	Natasha Thomas	NT	Note Taker
HC Officers:	Ed Bradford	EB	Head of Highways and Traffic
	Leigh Whitehouse	LW	Group Manager - Streetscene, Public Rights of Way and Traffic Management
	Callum Bush	CB	TRO and PROW Team Leader
	Stephen Organ	SO	Public Rights of Way Volunteer Development Officer
LAF Members:	Joannah Weightman	JW	LAF Deputy Chair
	Ian Carr	IC	LAF Member
	Angela Martin	AM	LAF Member
	Cllr Peberdy	JP	LAF Member
	Duncan Green	DG	LAF Member
	Malcolm Louch	ML	LAF Member
	Peter Newman	PN	LAF Member
	Sue Enfield	SE	LAF Member
Other Attendees:	Chris Marsden	CM	Member of Public
	Peter McKay	PMcK	Member of Public
	Cllr Highfield	RH	Ward Member
	Tim Hardie	TH	Member of Public
	Andy Parr	AP	Member of Public
	David Irwin		Member of Public
	Wendy Bannerman		Member of Public
	John Jones		Member of Public
	Chris Fowler		Member of Public
Apologies:	Nicola Short	NS	LAF member
	Viv Burden	VB	LAF member
	Cllr Price	PP	Cabinet Member Transport and Infrastructure

	Item	Led by	Papers / Verbal Update
1.	<b>WELCOME AND APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE</b>  Apologies received from Cllr Price, Nicola Short and Viv Burden	Chair	<i>Verbal</i>
2.	<b>MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING</b> <b>2.1</b> The minutes of the meeting held on 22 <sup>nd</sup> November 2024 were agreed. <b>2.2</b> At request of DG all agreed that in future all actions have a deadline applied	Chair  SO	
3.	<b>MATTERS ARISING/ACTION POINTS</b> <b>3.1</b> CB would provide the promised update on Greenways at our next meeting. Tom Fisher would be invited. <b>3.2</b> SO was progressing the recruitment of new LAF members. <b>3.3</b> LAF members endorsed the current ROWIP for good policy and practice. The ongoing focus of LAF was to review the PROW improvements action plan, we needed	Action: CB  SO	Verbal

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	<p>regular updates on progress and indicative dates for tasks outlined.</p> <p><b>3.4</b> A meeting to progress the DMMO problem would be held with Jessie Norman to discuss the ongoing issues and very slow process. Noted surprise boxing day scrapping of the recently extended deadline (to 2031) for delivery of modification orders to definitive maps. The huge backlog remained a big issue. CB to approach Jessie Norman and Ellie Chown to help as our MPs and also other local authorities. Update will be given at next meeting.</p> <p><b>3.5</b> DG awaited feedback re OS PSGA licences. CB provided an update and explained that a purpose/use is required. CB agreed to provide a further update to DG asap.</p> <p><b>3.6</b> JW requested help to enable a first LAF Annual Report to be prepared for the next meeting. She also noted she could not attend on proposed date of April meeting.</p> <p><b>3.7</b> DG requested database of all unsurfaced/ unclassified roads data. EB to provide at next meeting</p> <p><b>3.8</b> The promised report showing expenditure on bridges over recent years and number/type of bridges installed was outstanding. EB and CB agreed to provide financial update with regard bridges, both proposed and actual. RoOD links to be shared. EB/ CB. To show current and 2 previous year's spending also for bridges.</p> <p><b>3.9</b> DG requested priority matrix to be shared with LAF members for bridges and bridge repairs/ replacements. CB gave verbal update around bridges on capital list. CB to share example of scoring system.</p>	<p>All</p> <p>Action: CB</p> <p>Action: CB</p> <p>Action: JW</p> <p>Action: EB</p> <p>Action: EB &amp; CB</p> <p>Action: CB</p>	
4.	<p><b>WELCOME TO NEW GROUP MANAGER – LEIGH WHITEHOUSE</b></p> <p><b>4.1</b> LW was introduced as the new Group Manager and set out his initial thoughts. An early task had been investigation of D Howeski's complaint passed up from the LAF on behalf of all concerned regarding the ongoing deterioration of the county's rights of way despite much effort, apparently, by many members of the PROW team</p> <p><b>4.2</b> Leigh was asked to set out what the problems were behind this and present a performance improvement plan for discussion/approval at the next LAF meeting.</p>	<p>Action: LW</p>	
5.	<p><b>RECRUITMENT OF NEW MEMBERS</b></p> <p><b>5.1</b> To publicise the LAF and assist in recruiting new members LAF members requested that Hereford Times be approached with an article to attract attention. Keen to engage with land managers.</p> <p><b>5.2</b> Agreed to keep the paperwork, etc relevant and straight forward. Existing and potential members would be asked to indicate their special interests to ensure as comprehensive mix as pos.</p>	<p>Action: SO</p> <p>Action: SO</p>	

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	<p><b>5.3</b> SO agreed to circulate the recruitment documents/text to LAF members for any comment. The LAF requested that adverts and appointments occur in time for the next LAF.</p> <p><b>5.4</b> Ratio of lay members of LAF vs Councillors had to be maintained so Cllr Highfield's request to join could not be implemented until lay membership increased, as per LAF Terms of Reference.</p>	Action: SO	
6.	<p><b>FEEDBACK ON MARCH THE MARCHES ACCESS FORUM</b></p> <p><b>6.1</b> JW and AL had attended a special March the Marches meeting for chairs of the 4 Local Access Forums forming a cross-county border group of four. It was convened by a consultant, commissioned by Powys on behalf of the group, to consider scope for joint working on borderland rights of way as tourist attractions.</p> <p><b>6.2</b> This had come out of the blue and lessons could be learned re communication. CB had also been involved in a similar meeting around the same time, we heard. CB told the meeting our representative at the overarching partnership group steering this Marches initiative is Jonathan Lester.</p> <p><b>6.3</b> JW had rapidly responded and involved all LAF members in producing a letter with our proposals in time for the meeting. It would be circulated with the minutes.</p> <p><b>6.4</b> The consultant had been invited to this meeting but first had to report back to Powys. He would be invited again.</p> <p><b>6.5</b> It was requested joined up working with Herefordshire County Bid and Visit Herefordshire and Eat Sleep Live Herefordshire.</p> <p><b>6.6</b> Ongoing consultation to be provided by JW &amp; JP via The Leader.</p>	<p>JW</p> <p>Action: JW &amp; SO</p> <p>Action: AL</p> <p>Action: JP</p> <p>Action: JW &amp; JP</p>	Verbal
7.	<p><b>RIGHTS OF WAY REPORT</b></p> <p><b>7.1</b> CB explained work relating to Highways Act and Town and Country Planning Act diversions was zero cost as all diversions were paid for by the applicant.</p> <p><b>7.2</b> CB explained why so little progress was evident regarding the DMMOs and at the request of the LAF it was agreed to provide an information item on the process for a future meeting. Not urgent.</p> <p><b>7.3</b> The report showed the current situation regarding enquiries/defects/jobs.</p> <p><b>7.4</b> DG requested a trial of managing outstanding jobs via PFO's with specific parishes to lead.</p> <p><b>7.5</b> It was agreed that as requested all proposed documents regarding the work of PFOs be shared with them for consultation, prior to publication- SO to share at final draft stage.</p> <p><b>7.6</b> Success depended on partnership working and the ability of willing PFOs to manage the work and specific jobs. SO to explore current software capabilities.</p>	<p>PRoW Team</p> <p>Action: CB</p> <p>Action: SO</p> <p>Action: SO</p> <p>Action: SO</p>	<i>Presentation</i>

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	<p><b>7.7</b> Demo of Confirm requested, to highlight how officers complete day to day tasks.</p> <p><b>7.8</b> LAF requested an annual update showing year by year the complete overview of work achieved compared to previous and set against the allocated budget with regard to all work areas: defects, bridges, DMMOs, etc.</p> <p><b>7.9</b> Also we required a report on how the Parish Grant funding was allocated and what it had achieved.</p> <p><b>7.10</b> A regular report on how accessibility issues were being addressed to extend access to people with disabilities at every opportunity would also be welcome.</p> <p><b>7.11</b> As previously agreed the PROW reports must reach all members before the meeting.</p>	<p>Action: EB</p> <p>Action: CB</p> <p>Action: EB</p> <p>Action: CB</p> <p>Action: CB</p>	
8.	<p><b>ENFORCEMENT/IT SUB-GROUP REPORT</b></p> <p><b>8.1</b> DG shared Enforcement sub-group minutes it had met on 10 Feb. DG &amp; JP requested EB give comment on HC reluctance to follow RoWIP policy with regard Enforcement procedure</p> <p><b>8.2</b> JP to take question of enforcement to Cabinet and provide feedback.</p> <p><b>8.3</b> EB to complete actions from Enforcement Sub-group</p>	<p>DG</p> <p>Action: JP</p> <p>Action: EB</p>	<i>Written</i>
9.	<p><b>ANY OTHER BUSINESS &amp; QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC</b></p> <p><b>9.1</b> As “any other business”, JW noted that the latest guidance on funding for landowners and farmers under the Countryside Stewardship scheme offered money to incentivise new permissive paths. She asked if the Council had plans to promote this initiative with local farmers. This was not something the Council Officers were aware of. Possibly only limited to very specific farms already established as part of the scheme. JW would seek more info and circulate to others present.</p> <p><b>9.2</b> WB representing British Horse Society enquired How does the council propose to allocate the £695 additional funds for PROW and drainage? EB would circulate details when established.</p> <p><b>Other questions from the public:</b></p> <p><b>9.3</b> WB acknowledged that there was insufficient time to address these at the meeting but asked for a reply in due course:</p> <p><b>9.4</b> How does the council propose to address long standing issues (2 years plus) where enforcement is needed to enable the public to exercise their right of way? Examples: Aymestry RB24, HN19</p> <p><b>9.5</b> How does the council propose to address long standing issues (2 years plus) where drainage, clearance and structures are needed to enable the public to exercise their right of way? Examples: Cefn Road RB Craswall 46, Wigmore RB 11</p>	<p>Action: JW</p> <p>Action: EB</p> <p>Action: SO</p>	<i>Written/Verbal</i>

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	<p><b>9.6</b> How does the council propose to address long standing issues (2 years plus) where there is evidence of injury to the public and the likely cause eg obstruction, surface out of repair has not been resolved? Examples: WA66, WA39</p> <p><b>9.7</b> CM requested, why is there no apparent Enforcement of the TOTAL obstruction to ALL users, of the incredible, hidden, historic resource, classified as unsealed unclassified roads on the List of Streets? This is despite many, many promises to respond.</p> <p><b>9.8</b> Examples are, DEAD WOMANS LANE (U91613), MACADAMS LANE (U71229), BROWN'S LANE (U75235), QUEBB ROAD (U90617). All Reported Multiple times. All promises to respond are broken. Why? The Council has the DUTY and the POWERS to deal, yet never issue s137 Notices. Why?</p> <p><b>9.9</b> CM then went on to inform the group that he had been informed on the day of the meeting that some, if not all the above examples had been earmarked for TRO's and expressed that this is not how they should be resolved.</p> <p><b>9.10</b> The meeting noted that neither EB or LW or any of the Councillors present were aware of the commencement of the TRO Consultation.</p> <p><b>9.11</b> PMcK - Will HLAF consider advising Council to consider arranging for the flags (location markers) on the public right of way and road defect progress webpage maps to automatically go red if not resolved within say 2 years of being logged to highlight any that have been overlooked or are long-term defect problems, and to provide the LAF with a regular report on progress resolving long-term defect problems? SO informed PM that we are looking into the IT and it would be something that we could look at in future</p>	Action: SO	
10.	<p><b>DATE OF NEXT MEETING</b></p> <p><b>10.1</b> 25 April 2025, Conference Room 1, Plough Lane, Hereford.</p>		