

# Plymouth Local Access Forum

Monday 16 March 2015

## PRESENT:

Mr Fairchild, in the Chair.

Mr I Stewart, Vice Chair.

Mr Curno, Councillor Sam Davey, Councillor Ken Foster, Mr Harvey, Mrs Hitchens, Mr Pawley and Councillor Wheeler.

Apologies for absence: Mr Attrill, Mr Emery and Mr Skinner.

Also in attendance: Robin Pearce (Public Rights of Way Officer), Rosemary Starr (Smarter Choices Manager), Kat Deeney (Natural Infrastructure Manager), Professor Jon Shaw (Head of Geography at the University of Plymouth) and Helen Rickman (Democratic Support Officer).

The meeting started at 10.30 am and finished at 12.25 pm.

*Note: At a future meeting, the committee will consider the accuracy of these draft minutes, so they may be subject to change. Please check the minutes of that meeting to confirm whether these minutes have been amended.*

## 45. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

The following declaration of interest was made in accordance with the Code of Conduct –

Name	Subject	Reason	Interest
Mr Pawley	South West Coast Path Update	Representative for the South West Coast Path Association	Personal

## 46. MINUTES

Agreed that the minutes of the meeting held on 15 December 2014 are confirmed as a correct record.

## 47. CHAIR'S URGENT BUSINESS

The Chair advised Forum Members that Hillary Winter (Regional Coordinator for the South West Region Local Access Forums) was due to vacate her role at the end of March 2015 as Natural England was withdrawing the position.

Local Access Forum's in Devon, Cornwall, Dartmoor, Torbay and Plymouth would instead be supported by John Holmes, Area Manager for Devon Cornwall and the Isles of Scilly.

Agreed that –

- (1) the Chair would thank Hillary Winter, on the Forum's behalf, for her dedication to the role of Regional Coordinator for the South West Region Local Access Forum's;
- (2) the Chair, whilst noting that Natural England have observer status on all LAFs, would invite John Holmes to a future meeting of the Local Access Forum.

#### 48. **TRACKING RESOLUTIONS**

Members were provided with an update on the Forum's tracking resolutions and were advised that:

- (a) an update on the Local Nature Partnership, deferred from the 15 December 2014 LAF meeting, had been added to the agenda and Kat Deeney (Natural Infrastructure Manager) would be in attendance;
- (b) several Forum Members met on 29 January 2015 to walk footpaths in the vicinity of St Budeaux; it was confirmed that two of the three sections of the footpath belonged to the Kloof and that they were not a public right of way;
- (c) with reference to minutes 39 'Huddle Hot Topics' and 41 'Work Programme' from the 15 December 2014 LAF meeting, the Vice Chair confirmed that he hadn't yet contacted Dean Blagdon (Community Physical Activity Worker) regarding the Walking for Health Scheme however would do so shortly;
- (d) with reference to minute 43 'Issues Arising from Forum Members' from the 15 December 2014 LAF meeting, Mr Harvey confirmed that he was a potential candidate for the Chairmanship of the South Devon Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty Partnership Committee therefore had not yet ascertained the future plans for local AONB groups. Mr Harvey highlighted the importance of the relationship between LAFs and AONBs, especially during a period of significant funding cuts, and questioned the impact this was having on other organisations such as the National Trust. A suggestion was made that a representative from the Dartmoor National Trust was to be invited to a future LAF meeting to advise Forum Members how budgetary cuts were affecting their service.

Agreed that the Chair would contact the Dartmoor National Trust to invite a representative to a future LAF Meeting to advise Forum Members of the affect budgetary cuts was having upon the service.

#### 49. **JON SHAW - PROFESSOR OF TRANSPORT GEOGRAPHY - PLYMOUTH UNIVERSITY**

Professor Jon Shaw, Head of Geography at the University of Plymouth, introduced himself to Forum Members and advised them of his role and the way in which the LAF and the University could work together in the future.

Forum Members were advised that –

- (a) Professor Jon Shaw was a Lecturer in Transport Geography at Plymouth University. Approximately 160 students graduated in geography every year at the University spanning the full range of both human and physical geography;
- (b) the University had an 'expert directory' of which Forum Members were welcome to use if they required advice or an opinion regarding a specific issue such as footpath erosion or access to the countryside; Members simply had to contact the University's switch board and speak to the press office who in turn would transfer calls to the appropriate person;
- (c) for larger issues Plymouth City Council had launched a research connection with the University of Plymouth; for transport related research Phil Heseltine was the Council's main point of contact;
- (d) undergraduate and postgraduate students were required to undertake large scale dissertation projects; it was considered that approximately 20 dissertations each year related to transport issues or an area which might be of interest or use to LAF Members. The Forum itself could be highlighted to students to benefit the work of both;
- (e) a series of public lectures were due to be advertised on the big screen on North Hill, near the University, relating to the issue of improving transport links, specifically the HS2 railway line and how this would benefit Plymouth; the lecture was scheduled for 20 October 2015.

In response to questions raised it was reported that –

- (f) undergraduate students undertook a one year dissertation project whereas postgraduate dissertations were shorter starting in January with completion by September; it was considered that the LAF and students working on their dissertations could work together to mutual advantage;
- (g) the transport lectures would be properly advertised once the University's timetabling had been completed; regular interested parties, including local MPs, would be invited to attend. Information relating to the lecture would be circulated with the minutes of the LAF meeting;
- (h) Professor Jon Shaw confirmed he was not aware if and how the UK National Ecosystem Assessment 2011 affected Government Policy;
- (i) ecologists and environmental scientists formed part of the Geography remit;
- (j) Rosie Starr (Smarter Choices Manager) had already spoken to University students regarding Plymouth's Local Access Forum however the University was willing to facilitate another meeting with new students in September 2015 at the start of the academic year. Rosie advised Members that the Plymotion Team had a stall at the University's Fresher Fair and LAF Members would be

welcome to be affiliated with the stall, or have their own, to promote the LAF and its aims;

- (k) research areas and areas of knowledge for students as well as the University 'expert directory' exceeded Plymouth's boundary;
- (m) the Council had non-formal 'open discussions' with Professor Jon Shaw regarding transport decisions in the city; he had a good working relationship with the Council and its officers;

The Chair thanked Professor Jon Shaw for his attendance at the meeting and looked forward to working with him in the future.

## 50. **LOCAL NATURE PARTNERSHIP**

Kat Deeney (Natural Infrastructure Manager) provided Members with an update on the Local Nature Partnership.

Members were advised that –

- (a) a briefing note upon the Local Nature Partnership (LNP) was submitted to the 15 December 2014 LAF meeting;
- (b) Local Nature Partnerships were set up as part of the Natural Environment White Paper 2011; the intention of the Partnership was to be a strategic lead for local environmental issues;
- (c) there were 43 LNPs across the country, each having had to apply to DEFRA for approval. There was a huge variety in LNPs across the country as some were larger covering a number of different regions whereas Plymouth's was one of the smallest. It was considered that all LNPs worked very differently as they were locally determined;
- (d) Plymouth's LNP had a mixed partnership with a representative of Plymouth City Council currently acting as interim Chair. Other members included representation from the Environment Agency, South West Water and Plymouth Marine Institute; it was hoped that Public Health would be represented on the board shortly;
- (e) Plymouth's LNP meetings were scheduled quarterly; the focus of the LNP itself was to be the Champion and Strategic Lead for the Partnership's three themes: growth, water and health & wellbeing;
- (f) the LNP had a good link with the Local Economic Partnership; it was considered that this link provided greater influence on local projects, especially the Growth Plan;
- (g) Kat Deeney (Natural Infrastructure Manager) and a representative from Somerset LNP had secured a seat on the Leadership Group of which they shared and alternated their attendance;

- (h) policies included in the Plymouth Plan had been proofed by the Local Nature Partnership; planning authorities were required to engage with LNPs;
- (i) South West Water had invested £120m for the water treatment works at Roborough in Plymouth. The current focus was the modelling work for the project with the end product of significantly increasing the quality of water in the Sound by 2020;
- (j) the health themed focus of Plymouth's LNP concentrated upon linking with the Health & Wellbeing Board to target the reduction in activity levels of Plymouth residents; it was considered that the natural environment had a huge role to play in improving this issue. A joint bid for funding with Public Health for the Active Neighbourhoods Lottery Scheme had successfully achieved stage 1 and it was considered that there was approximately a 75% chance of receiving funding at stage 2; the outcome would be announced in September 2015.
- (k) Plymouth LNP was currently working on a short film detailing the role of the Partnership; it was expected that this would be completed within three to four months' time.

In response to questions raised it was reported that –

- (l) LNPs were not provided with funding from Government, unlike Local Enterprise Partnerships, therefore resourcing of the Partnership was an issue. Plymouth City Council provided the secretarial role and representation at meetings however this was provided in-house;
- (m) the Assistant Director for Strategic Planning and Infrastructure was the interim Chair on Plymouth's LNP;
- (n) the LNP focused on the natural environment when proofing the Plymouth Plan; the next stage of the plan would provide more detail regarding site allocations for green space, development and housing. A refresh of the green space evidence base was due to be undertaken in April 2015;
- (o) the local green space designation planning policy framework consultation was due to commence in Summer 2015; Kat Deeney confirmed she would keep the Chair of the LAF updated on the progress of the consultation;
- (p) when Plymouth's LNP was put forward for adoption by Defra, the boundary of the LEP also had to be included;
- (q) there was potential for the LAF to engage with the officer group of the LNP; the next board meeting was scheduled for 15 April 2015;
- (r) the three key milestones for the LNP were (1) securing representation on the Leadership Board, (2) having so many organisations together on one Board and (3) working with South West Water to secure additional funding which

would help improve water quality in Plymouth;

- (s) work was ongoing with the Saltram Plan; meetings didn't take place regularly however Kat was due to meet the new manager in a few weeks' time to ensure that the Masterplan was embedded.

Members noted the update and thanked Kat for her attendance.

Agreed that Kat Deeney would update the Chair of the LAF on the progress of the Green Space Designation consultation that was due to commence in September 2015.

51. **PLYMOUTH PLAN**

Robin Pearce (Public Rights of Way Officer) provided Forum Members with an overview of the Plymouth Plan consultation event organised for the LAF. Members were advised that comments raised, as part of the Group's meeting on this subject, had been submitted.

Forum Members thanked Robin for his help with the Plymouth Plan.

52. **SOUTH WEST COAST PATH UPDATE**

Mr Pawley (representative for the South West Coast Path Association and Member of the LAF) advised Members that –

- (a) the South West Coast National Trail had experienced significant funding reductions; this was having an affect upon the role of its Members;
- (b) he was responsible for monitoring 10-14 miles of the South West Coast Path however others had 60-70 mile stretches to cover;
- (c) This is work previously carried out by Mark Owen however splitting the work amongst volunteers saved money;
- (d) Mark Owen designed a framework for surveying the coast path; this model also assessed the coast path furniture, including benches and signposts, all of which had to be inspected on an annual basis;
- (e) Cattedown Rail Spur had been strimmed recently; officers were unaware as to why this site had been cleared;
- (f) the damage to the Breakwater Hill wall had been cleared and repair works appeared to have commenced

Members noted the update.

53. **MODIFICATION ORDERS UPDATE**

Robin Pearce (Public Rights of Way Officer) advised Members that there were six Modification Order reports underway including Hooe Lake, Stamford Lane, The Kloof, Plymstock School, Venn Close and Elizabeth Cottage. It was expected that these Modification Orders would be submitted to the Planning Committee from June 2015 onwards. Members highlighted the benefit of attending the Planning Committee when these Orders were to be discussed as a training event for LAF Members.

Under this item Mr Pawley informed Members that Cornwall County Council had produced a digital accessible map of Cornwall which enabled users to zoom in and access most paths, not including permissive paths. This was published on Cornwall County Council's website.

Agreed that –

- (1) Forum Members would be contacted when the modification orders were due to go to the Planning Committee;
- (2) the LAF Secretary would publish the electronic link to Cornwall County Council's digital accessible map as part of the Forum's minutes for meeting.

<http://map.cornwall.gov.uk/website/ccmap/index.html?layerName=Public%20Rights%20of%20Way>

54. **HUDDLE HOT TOPICS**

Members noted the Huddle Hot Topics February 2015 update.

55. **WORKING GROUPS**

Rosemary Starr (Smarter Choices Manager) confirmed that she would contact Kat Deeney (Natural Infrastructure Manager) with regards to the timing for the green spaces site allocation stage to ensure that all known green spaces were accounted for in the Plymouth Plan (Stage 2).

56. **WORK PROGRAMME**

The Forum reviewed its work programme for 2014/15.

Rosemary Starr (Smarter Choices Manager) advised Members that the information, as discussed at the 15 December 2014 LAF meeting, regarding public slipways on the Council's website was still in progress. An update on this issue, as well as an update on the waterways exercise, could be provided at a future LAF meeting.

Agreed that an update on the waterways exercise as well as information relating to public slipways would both be included on the Forum's work programme and scheduled for a future LAF meeting.

57. **CORRESPONDENCE**

There were no items of correspondence.

58. **ISSUES ARISING FROM FORUM MEMBERS**

Robin Pearce (Public Rights of Way Officer) informed Members that a landowner in Plympton had dedicated a new footpath in Greenacres Woodland; this was an entirely new route and approximately £20,000 had been spent undertaking necessary improvements.

Members were also advised that improvement work had been completed in Ham Woods along the route of the Co-operative Way; at the Mowhay Road end of the route the path was eroded however resurfacing and edging works were undertaken to significantly improve the area.

Members noted the update.

59. **DATES OF FUTURE MEETINGS**

Members were advised that the calendar of future committee meetings would be submitted to the March 2015 Full City Council meeting.

Under this item the process for planning committee application updates being provided to Forum Members. Members were advised that initially the LAF Secretary had forwarded emails to Members from the planning department, advising them of planning updates, however Members were now able to register themselves to the planning updates mailing list to receive automatic updates.

Agreed that the LAF secretary would email Members with the link to planning updates mailing list.