

DUDLEY BOROUGH LOCAL ACCESS FORUM

Tuesday, 5th March, 2013 at 6.00pm in Committee Room 4
at the Council House, Priory Road, Dudley

PRESENT:

Ms T Boothroyd (Chair)
Mr R J Brooks (Vice-Chair)
Mr D Bates, Mr R Burgess, Mr P Greenaway, Mr N J Williams and Ms S Yeadon.

Officers:

Mr D Jacobs – Project Engineer, (Traffic and Transportation), Mr D Keeley – Countryside Manager, (Both Directorate of the Urban Environment), Mr C Meagher – Property Surveyor and Miss K Fellows Democratic Services Officer (Directorate of Corporate Resources).

37. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence from the meeting were submitted on behalf of Mr A Cutler, Mrs J Lea, Ms A Nicholls and Councillor Woodall.

38. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Ms S Yeadon and Mr R Burgess declared an interest in Agenda Item No. 4 – Coombeswood Green Wedge, as the Chair of Friends of Coombeswood Wedge and as a Member of Friends of Coombeswood and a Member of Coombeswood Canal Trust respectively.

39. MINUTES

AGREED

That the Minutes of the Forum held on 20th November, 2012, be approved as a correct record.

40. COOMBESWOOD GREEN WEDGE

Mr Keeley, Countryside Manager gave a brief verbal update in relation to the progress regarding the matters being dealt with by Mr C Meagher, Property Surveyor for the Council.

Mr Meagher joined the Meeting and continued with the verbal update, advising that it had been agreed with St Modwen that except for water and drainage services no other services would cross the site.

He also indicated that negotiations were continuing in relation to erecting a catch wall on the service road adjacent to the site in order to prevent materials falling onto the roadway.

It was stated that in relation to the fencing of the site negotiations were continuing with St Modwen on this point, as fencing could not remain if the site was to be declared as a nature reserve.

AGREED

That the information reported on at the meeting be noted.

41. PLANNING APPLICATIONS

(a) PLANNING APPLICATION NO: P12/1042 – PORTERS FIELD TOWN SQUARE, DUDLEY.

Mr D Jacobs, Project Engineer, Traffic and Transportation referred to the plan of the area that had been circulated at the meeting, referring to the proposed new development for the area around the Dudley bus station.

Mr Jacobs referred to access to the area which would include pedestrian access indicating that Section 247 Orders would need to be obtained in order to deal with all types of highway.

Issues were raised in relation to shared surface areas and Members were generally in agreement that such areas were not safe especially for those with disabilities suggesting that the Council did not agree to planners installing these on the new site.

(b) PLANNING APPLICATION NO. P12/1627 – PROPOSED RESIDENTIAL DEVELOPMENT OFF MODEN CLOSE/VALE STREET, UPPER GORNAL.

Mr D Jacobs, Project Engineer Traffic and Transportation referred to the Design and Access Statement that had been circulated to Members at the meeting, advising of the Orders that would be required in order to deal with the diversion of paths.

Mr Jacobs also advised that the proposed development would face the open space.

AGREED

That the information reported on at the meeting be noted.

42. ACCESS/RIGHTS OF WAY ISSUES – FOOTPATH IN WOODSETTON

A report of the Woodsetton Charitable Trust was submitted on the Woodsetton footpath.

Mr D Bates presented the report submitted outlining the current position in relation to a Section 106 Agreement that had been entered into by the original developers in relation to the provision of two footpaths.

The location of the footpaths was referred to together with the history of the matter, which included the sale of the site to several developers resulting in the Section 106 Agreement failing to be enforced.

The Chair confirmed that she had spoken to Council Planners regarding this matter and requested Mr Bates provide them with the original planning application numbers in order that this may be investigated.

The Democratic Services Officer confirmed that the report of the Woodsetton Charitable Trust had been forwarded to the Council's Principal Development Control Officer for consideration and a response would be presented to a future meeting of the Forum.

Mr Bates also advised that some of the footpaths on the site were impassable and the Countryside Manager confirmed that he would identify the paths in order that these could be added to the Rights of Way Improvement Plan.

AGREED

- (a) That the information reported on at the meeting be noted.
- (b) That Mr Reed, Principal Development Control Officer be requested to attend a future meeting of the Forum to provide a response regarding possible enforcement of the Section 106 Agreement in relation to the Woodsetton footpath.
- (c) That the Countryside Manager be requested to investigate the position in relation to the impassable footpaths on the Woodsetton site and add these to the Rights of Way Improvement Plan.

43. GATING ORDER – MARION CLOSE, QUARRY BANK

Mr Jacobs, Project Engineer, Traffic and Transportation confirmed that a report had been prepared in relation to the possible gating of Marion Close, Quarry Bank, which included the views of the Forum and following consideration of this by the Cabinet Member for Transportation and Community Safety a Gating Order had been made.

AGREED

That the information reported on at the meeting be noted.

44. RIGHTS OF WAY IMPROVEMENT PLAN

Mr Brookes confirmed that he would request Ms K Perkins, Transportation Officer to circulate details of the Rights of Way Improvement Plan to Members including the order of priority for dealing with the individual rights of way.

A discussion took place in relation to the Local Transport Plan and the consultation that would take place in relation to this.

Following a recommendation of the Chair, the Countryside Manager confirmed that he would enter into discussions with Wardens in relation to clearing rights of way so that the resources of the Rights of Way Improvement Plan could be used for other purposes.

Ms Yeadon advised Members of a litter pick that had taken place and praised Mr D Wesson, Team Manager, Street Cleansing for arranging to remove the litter that had been collected. She also advised that litter pickers could use blue refuse sacks which would be collected during their usual refuse collections.

Mr D Jacobs, Project Engineer, Traffic and Transportation reported that there was a meeting at Himley Hall on 14th March, 2013 with the Environment Agency in relation to funding that they had to improve access next to watercourses.

Mr Burgess requested that the following path be added to the Rights of Way Improvement Plan:-

- H13 – Coombeswood. The Northern part of Monarch's Way that leads from the proposed nature reserve to Gorsty Hill, Halesowen.

Mr D Jacobs, Project Engineer, Traffic and Transportation stated that he would arrange to meet with Mr D Wesson, Team Manager, Street Cleansing at Pottery Farm in order to investigate a blocked pathway.

AGREED

- (a) That the information reported on at the meeting be noted.
- (b) That Mr R Brooks be requested to refer path H13 – Coombeswood to Ms K Perkins, Transportation Officer requesting that this be added to the Rights of Way Improvement Plan.
- (c) That Mr D Jacobs, Project Engineer, Traffic and Transportation be requested to advise the Forum of the position in relation to the blocked pathway at Pottery Farm.

45. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

Mr N Williams reported on a misleading sign that had been erected at Leasowes Park by the owners of the adjoining Golf Club.

Mr D Keeley, Countryside Manager advised that he would instruct the Council's Legal Services to write to the Golf Club in relation to the sign and would update the Forum at the next meeting.

Mr N Williams requested that signage be put in place at both Coombeswood Green Wedge and Leasowes Park advising visitors of the routes and paths.

Mr Burgess requested that the paths through Coombeswood and Leasowes be ratified as permissive paths.

The Chair requested that the Forum support the installation and repair of all future styles to an ambulant style standard and Members supported this.

Mr Burgess requested that public rights of way footpaths at Coombeswood be numbered.

It was suggested that a Canal and River Trust representative be invited to the next meeting of the Forum.

AGREED

That Members support the installation and repair of all future styles within the Dudley Borough to an ambulant style standard.

46. DATE OF FUTURE MEETINGS

Noted, that the next meetings of the Forum would be held on:-

- Tuesday 14th May, 2013
- Tuesday 16th July, 2013

All meetings to start at 6.00pm

The meeting ended at 8.05 p.m.

CHAIR