



Hertfordshire Local Access Forum



73rd Meeting Minutes

March 2022

(via Zoom)

Present

Liddy Lawrence, Chair (LL), Ian Gregory, Vice-Chair (IG), Chris Hall (CH), Debbie Hougie (DH); Brian Worrell (BW), Cllr Mark Mills-Bishop (MMB), Paul Christian (PC), Rosemary Gilligan (RG); Russell Huffer (RH);
- Richard Cuthbert, CRoW Service (RC).

Welcome

John Featherstone (BHS), Dr Phil Wadey (PW) (BHS).

Apologies; Diana Collingridge (DC), Cllr Chris Lloyd (CL), Laura Frey (LF);

- Tony Bradford (TB) & Lee Tyson (LT) CRoW Service,
- Chris Beney, (OSS / BADFA), David Keeley (STAAF).

Matters Arising from Minutes of last meeting

BW – Ongoing issues with S106 agreements not being open to LAF nor public scrutiny nor transparent as a local authority procedure?

BW - LCWIPs guidance from DfT includes horses – are all teams in HCC aware?

BW - Roads in Herts – LAF on consultees list to see draft

PW - Apps in Herts not getting through without objections comment (by RC) – perhaps because of the scoring system pushes all of the controversial cases come to the top.

CH - agreed where access is restricted they will object.

LL – collate availability for field trip dates

Member Updates

DH - Aldenham Reservoir Definitive Map case, thanks to Angela Simpkins (CRoW DM Team) for work, as documents now being sent to PIns.

BW – Ridgway National Trail Delivery Group - next meeting in May & will update us after that.

RG – Hertsmere BC have shelved their Local Plan due to 20k+ local responses, mostly negative, bringing risks of inappropriate development getting through

CH - Defra Landscapes review – question of legislating for motor vehicle recreation mentioned, and TRF working to have it rejected.

- **Deadline 08 04 2022**

- **CH to send details on email**

LL - Regional LAF Meeting – E Anglian part of England coastal path, Crown properties and badgers causing problems. Cambs lots of new developments around Cambridge inc solar farms, causing concerns for Cambs LAF. Chalk Streams mentioned. Surfacing issues of what is best – differs across all counties.

BW - Solar farms near Hemel Hempstead planned, concerns for equestrians from glare onto nearby bridleways. **DH** - look at one refused in Hertsmere; DH will circulate link.

Environment and Transport Dept & CRoW Team News:

Recent changes to the Corporate Structure of HCC have seen changes to the Department that hosts Countryside & Rights of Way service. In recognition of the priorities of the new HCC political Leader (Councillor Richard Roberts) a new Sustainable Growth Department has been formed as a Sister to the Environment and Transport Dept. CRoW remains in the E&T Dept but will have strong ties to the teams in the Sustainable Growth Dept.

CRoW Land Management Team have significant knowledge and operational capability required by HCC to deliver against several objectives within the Sustainable Hertfordshire Strategy and the ambitions in the Tree and Woodland Strategy for the county. The team will be recruiting 3 new staff in the new financial year to increase operational capacity in this area.

Health Walks Good News: CRoW have been successful in securing a further agreement with Public Health for the development of the Hertfordshire Health Walks initiative. The HHW team that coordinate the volunteers and programmes have been able to restart 50% of the walks previously being delivered pre Covid19. The team are in the process of recruiting and training more volunteers as they aim to re-generate the walks programmes further. The team will be aiming to attract residents who are inactive and /or living with one or more long-term health conditions – in particular they will target areas where communities are living with higher levels of health inequality.

HHW Bad News – Megan Pinner – Projects Officer for HHW will be leaving in April to relocate elsewhere on the planet.

Service Level Agreement with Highways includes planning for and delivering improvements to some of Hertfordshire's redundant railway lines, advising on changes to green infrastructure management to deliver benefits for biodiversity and design and provision of interpretation panels in proximity to major schemes.

Access team news.

The good news – funding bid successful to support increased staff to address planning workload. The bad news – Julia Clarke has decided to move on from her role in the access team. We are considering the best options to take forward recruitment to address both of these.

Winter capital clearance programmes (9 lots) have now been completed, in advance of bird nesting season. Clear up operations following the recent storms are underway but ongoing.

BW – did clearance inc Old Bourne?

Covid recovery funds

Many work packages for small scale local improvements now coming to delivery/completion, mainly surfacing and structure improvements. In addition a major upgrade to unsealed surface along the Ayot Green Way, strategic off road route between Wheathampstead and WGC is due to commence before the end of the month. Procurement of a similarly large package of signage improvements is ongoing, this will see a significant number of roadside finger posts renewed, repaired or replaced over the next 6 months. Unfortunately one of our additional FT staff (Michelle) is leaving us at the end of March, the remainder of her contract has been

added to our other member of staff (Hester) so she will now be with us for the full summer/autumn seasons.

BW – does AGW works include Why is it not recorded as an RB?, against Permissive Paths in principle as could be removed? Do not want to see same as CGW.

Capital works

Ongoing programme of improvement works planned and delivered in parallel to C19 funds. 2 significant bridge replacements are in design for delivery this year and another coming forward. Budget for next 12 months at or above this year, so good progress being made.

Active Travel

Oliver Ayto in post and developing projects for future delivery/funding applications inc. substantial route circa £900k in Bishops Stortford linking town centre to the new housing developments to the north.

Agency Agreements

New agency agreements being finalised with Dacorum and Broxbourne Borough Councils for 2022-27. These seek to establish a more collaborative approach to deliver and reflect more fully the HCC current approach on engagement of volunteers and capital funding application.

CRoW / E&T news & recruitment update

- High street recovery & HCC Highways involvement – **TB to circulate update after meeting.**

DM&E Team – News & Updates – c/o RC

- DM&E news & updates 2026 cut-off gone, Right to Apply coming – possibly worst of both worlds for LHAs.
- PDW, apps will continue of Defra don't repeal 2026, so no reduction on workload.
- Neighbourhood plans – **RC to circulate update after meeting**
- Major development sites list & map & Impacts on CRoW Service - [Environment and Sustainable Growth Viewer \(arcgis.com\)](#) – **RC correct weblink**
- **RC** outlined process, issues and where to find the data, potential new post in the CRoW Service
- **PDW** – RoWIP good for small developments, for major dev'ts changing entire landscape need to get involved in Master Planning stages e.g. for HGGT orbital routes away from roads and spokes which interconnect all 7 villages.
- **DH** - Pinch good practice on comments on Master Plans from Cambs, Essex or others. **LL** can certainly ask and share any responses. **DH** – knowing what we want to influence needs criteria that we are working towards. **RC** – Roads in Herts & CRoWS MR documents will help. **DH** – Planners Workshop done by LAF a few years ago of relevance, needs revitalising.

PTROs Review - Motor vehicle notices for PTRO routes – 6 months process possibly including Committee.

Ensure KM invited to Field Trip – PTROs.

Tykeswater Lane – find local venue.

All to confirm availability for choice of dates circulated.

Dates of 2022 meetings:

- **Field Trip** early May – RC to do a Poll for dates.
- Tues **14th June** – Zoom
- Weds **14th September**
- Tues **6th December**