NOTTINGHAM LOCAL ACCESS FORUM – TERMS OF REFERENCE

1.0 Title

1.1 The Forum, as defined by the administrative boundary of the City of Nottingham, shall be known as the Nottingham Local Access Forum.

2.0 Role and Responsibilities

2.1 Section 94 of the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000 places a duty on local highway authorities to establish advisory bodies known as Local Access Forums.

2.2 The role of the Nottingham Local Access Forum (hereafter referred to as the "Forum") shall be to advise Nottingham City Council as local highway authority (hereafter referred to as the "City Council"), and other bodies as appropriate, on the improvement of public access and public rights of way to local amenities and land within Nottingham for the purpose of open-air recreation, enjoyment, improving health and well being and quality of life, in ways which address social, economic and environmental interests.

2.3 Members of the Forum will be expected to demonstrate a commitment and an inclusive approach to the improvement of public access and public rights of way, engaging in constructive debate and seeking consensus wherever possible.

2.4 The Forum will be consulted on:
- (i) the preparation of the Rights of Way Improvement Plan and related transport and planning documents;
- (ii) relevant legislation or guidance given from time to time by the Secretary of State or others;
- (iii) other relevant matters as appropriate.

2.5 The Forum may provide advice on for example:
- (i) strategies and plans proposed to improve access to and enjoyment of public rights of way, such as the Rights of Way Improvement Plan, Local Transport Plan and other related transport and planning documents;
- (ii) the extent to which equality and fair provision of access is made for all current and potential users, and reflects the needs of local people and businesses;
- (iii) how public access to land within Nottingham should be managed so as to reduce the impact of access on agriculture, conservation or land management, or to reduce the risk to public safety;
- (iv) the means by which information to the public on local access restrictions and opportunities should be provided.

3.0 Membership

3.1 The Forum should consist of a minimum of 10 and maximum of 14 members, of which no more than two shall be elected Councillors of the City Council, and should be a balanced representation of -
- (a) users of local rights of way including walkers, cyclists and horse riders;
- (b) owners and occupiers of access land or land over which local rights of way

subsist; and

(c) any other interests that may be relevant to Nottingham.

3.2 Members shall be appointed by the City Council following a selection process which is designed to ensure that members are able to make an informed and constructive contribution to improving local access provision.

3.3 Members shall be appointed for not less than one and not more than three years, however, they may be eligible for reappointment for a further period or periods of up to three years or as agreed with the City Council.

3.4 Before appointment, members shall confirm -

(a) their commitment to working within the Terms of Reference and achieving the purpose of the Forum through constructive working with other members; and

(b) their ability to devote the necessary time to attend Forum meetings, to attend training sessions, and to network with a wide range of interests outside meetings.

3.5 A member of the Forum may resign by giving notice in writing to the Secretary.

3.6 The City Council shall terminate the appointment of a Forum member where he or she has become an elected Councillor of the City Council, and as a result, rule 3.1 (above) is not complied with.

3.7 The City Council may terminate the appointment of Forum member if, without the consent of the City Council, he or she –

(a) has been absent from all meetings of the Forum for a period of one year; or

(b) has failed to comply with rule 4.4

4.0 Proceedings of the Forum

4.1 The Forum shall hold a minimum of two meetings every year.

4.2 The Forum shall have a Chairman and a Vice-Chairman, who shall be appointed on an annual basis by election from amongst the members of the Forum.

4.3 To maintain a reasonable balance, wherever possible the Chairman and Vice-Chairman should not represent the same interest group.

4.4 Members should disclose the nature of any direct or indirect interest in any matter brought up for consideration at a meeting of the Forum.

4.5 The City Council shall provide a Secretary responsible for the administration of the Forum who will also advise the Chairman and other members of the Forum on any technical and other matters as appropriate.

4.6 The Secretary may be neither a member of the Forum nor an elected Councillor of the City Council.

4.7 Meeting agendas should be agreed following discussion between the Chairman and Secretary.

4.8 Members of the Forum will be entitled to submit agenda items to the Secretary a minimum of 30 days prior to the meeting.

4.9 The Secretary shall distribute to members the agenda and any reports for consideration a minimum of 14 days prior to the date of a meeting.

4.10 The quorum necessary at a meeting for business to be dealt with shall be seven members.

5.0 Access to Meetings

5.1 The Forum meetings shall be open to the public. However, the chairman or vice-chairman in his/her absence reserves the right to exclude a certain individual or individuals in order to prevent disorderly conduct or other inappropriate behaviour at a meeting.

5.2 Members of the public may only speak at a meeting with the approval of the chairman.

5.3 The Chairman, with the agreement of the Vice-Chairman, may also invite observers to participate in meetings, such as officers from the City Council or other bodies as appropriate.

5.4 Details of each meeting should be publicly advertised in advance and it should be made known where the minutes, agenda and reports are available for inspection.

6.0 Training

6.1 Members of the Forum should consider what training they may require and discuss with the Secretary ways of meeting those needs, particularly in terms of developing skills and improving technical knowledge.

7.0 Payment of Expenses

7.1 All reasonable expenses incurred by members of the Forum for attendance at meetings, site visits or other related business of the Forum, in respect of travel and subsistence costs or arranging for the care of their children or dependants shall be met by the City Council.

8.0 Annual Report

8.1 The Forum shall produce an annual report on its work which should be agreed by the Forum members, prepared in draft by the Secretary and published by the City Council.