Nottingham Local Access Forum (LAF) Annual Report

Reporting year	2011/12
Name of LAF	Nottingham Local Access Forum (NLAF)
Name of LAF secretary	Matt Leek Technical Officer and John Lee Rights of Way Officer, Traffic Management
Number of LAF Members	11

Review of Current reporting year

Were you successful in meeting the achievements set out in your Annual Report or LAF work programme? Please provide supporting information.

This is only the second Annual Report since the NLAF formed in 2004. This is due to prioritising resources which has been balanced against other key priorities such as developing working sub groups.

This report will provide the benchmark to assess achievements against the Forward Work Programme for 2012/13 and priorities.

Since 2004, the NLAF sub groups have been instrumental in developing the City Council's

- Two Rights of Way Improvements Plans (one of which won a national award for its integration with the Local Transport Plan (LTP2)
- Guide to Public Rights of Way, Planning and Development
- Statement of Policy on the use of Barriers on Rights of Way

As well as responding to local consultations on the Local Transport Plan (LTP2 and 3) and the Local Development Framework documents.

Other sub groups include:-

- Gating Orders
- Planning applications
- Definitive Map and Legal Event Modification Orders

Members comment; "*the Nottm LAF has been very active during this last year, and I have been very pleased to see that we have a sub group involved with gating orders, careful consideration is given to looking at Planning applications that could effect a rights of way*".

How many Open Access Restriction cases have you been informed about/involved with?

NONE

Give up to three examples of advice given by your LAF to section 94 bodies:

We responded to:-

1. Home Office proposals to consolidate gating orders into Community Protection Orders.

2. Consultation by Richard Benyon MP on the future of LAF's

3. Help Shape Your City – Planning, development and land use consultation for the Local Development Plan Framework

Can you indicate the number of national and/or local consultations you have responded to:

- Rights of Way Improvement Plans (ROWIP1 and 2)
- All proposed Gating Orders
- Local Transport Plans (LTP2 and 3)
- Local Development Framework
- Home Office (Community Protection Orders)
- Richard Benyon MP
- Equestrians using cycle tracks

Give up to three examples where you have encountered difficulties; explain what mechanisms could be put in place to alleviate this issue:

Generally, getting past the stigma that forums are no more than a frustration/hindrance to the processes and can actually help contribute in a positive way to develop constructive ideas and resolve problems. For example getting involved in the pre-application / design stage for proposed developments. Being given more opportunities to get involved would help alleviate this problem.

Do you have any issues with recruitment of members from particular interest groups? Does this hinder your work in any way?
Yes, being a forum within a predominantly urban area where the appointing authority is the land owner of most of the open spaces / areas crossed by public rights of way, we do not have representation from private landowners. Also, we do not have members from black or minority ethnic backgrounds or members in the 20 to 40 age group.

Comments from appointing authority
Within all voluntary groups there are the “movers and the shakers” and those that leave everything to others and the NLAF is no different. This said, we have a dedicated group of members that are passionate, enthusiastic and willing to give up their spare time to keep public rights of way on the agenda and improve public access to and through Nottingham. Members comment; “wi*th the introduction of the various sub groups set up with more promised i.e. modification orders, this shows commitment and responsibility and a willingness to achieve*”

Forward Look

What are your priorities for next year (list up to 3)

- Raise the profile / work of the NLAF
- Get more involved in pre-planning applications discussions and integrating public rights of way into the development
- Give all NLAF members a shared responsibility and involvement

What support/training will you need to be able to deliver these priorities?
Ongoing training into planning, development and land use and implications for public rights of way and how to influence the processes for the benefit of public access and sustainable development.

Do you perceive any barriers to delivering your priorities?
In these times of austerity and local government cut backs, there is a concern that the appointing authority may not be able to sustain the current level of resources necessary to help keep inspiring and coordinating us. Being volunteer's, who all have other commitments, is an obvious barrier.

Any other comments
We have really benefited from having a regional coordinator, for example keeping everyone in the loop and sharing ideas and good practice. It is a concern for the future role of LAF's that this role is no longer being funded. We look forward to the future and will keep helping the Council deliver and promote improvements to the local rights of way network.