



Minutes of meeting held on 31 October 2023 in Borough Hall commencing at 6:30pm

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Members present:	Apologies received:
Bob Wallace (BW) – Chair of the meeting David Mitchell (DM) Ann Kennedy (AK) Barry Ingram (BI) Nigel Jacobs (NJ) Cllr Martin Towler (MT) Mark Poxton (MP)	James Russell
In attendance/Observers:	
Andrew Prigmore - Bedford Borough Council April Quinn – Bedford Borough Council	
Clerk: Andrea Niblett (AN)	

1.	<u>Welcome by Chairman</u> The chair welcomed everyone to the meeting. Confirmed 3 membership forms not yet received. Action - Secretary to re-send further copies for members. Completed. Minutes from July agreed and signed.
2.	<u>Apologies</u> As above.
3.	<u>Item 2 – Review of outstanding issues</u> a) LCWIP (Local Cycling & Walking Infrastructure Plans) Presentation by Peter Simons of the Transport Policy Team about the Bedford Borough local plan and consultation process.

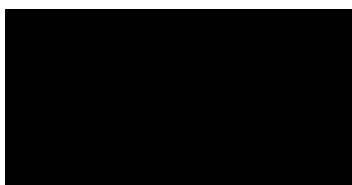
	<p>Peter explained that Bedford Borough Council is developing a new strategic plan for walking and cycling routes, called a Local Walking and Cycling Infrastructure Plan (LWCIP).</p> <p>The plan will be based on evidence of use to determine a priority list of cycling and walking routes that with government grant funding, will enable more people, including those who have not cycled before, to ride confidently and safely on local roads.</p> <p>Peter advised that feedback provided as part of a cycling and walking public survey, analytical tools and stakeholder engagement would be used to develop a plan identifying the best routes that should be improved over the next ten years. Improvements will include segregated cycle routes on main road routes, and lighting for all hard surface routes.</p> <p>Peter advised that routes will be mapped.</p> <p>It was noted that as there is no direct connection between LCWIP routes and NCN51.</p> <p>Peter advised that a first consultation involving 18 stakeholders will be taking place shortly. The consultation period will be 2 weeks. Each LAF member will be contacted individually. Members can expect to receive a consultation document mid-November.</p> <p>It was agreed that members responses should be emailed to Georgina, BoBLAF Secretary to collate.</p> <p>A Public Consultation will follow in the Spring.</p> <p>Update to be provided by Peter at next LAF meeting.</p> <p>b) NCN51 Kempston to Wootton Status</p> <p>It is intended to link Bedford to Forest Of Marston Vale and vice versa. Andrew advised that £400,000 S106 money had been secured so that work on the Kempston to Wootton section of the route could start. Works are expected to be completed before the end of summer 2024.</p>
4.	<p><u>Item 3 – Funded Opportunities-Can BoBLAF help/advise ?</u></p> <p>a) UK Shared Prosperity Fund</p> <p>Cllr Towler advised that the UK Shared Prosperity Fund, is a government-allocated fund intended to boost and support communities and businesses in rural areas. He has recently been appointed a member of the UKSPF project committee and understands that expressions of interest funding requests had already been made by two village halls.</p> <p>An email from Anne Papé, UKSPF Project Co-ordinator had been circulated regarding a planned ‘Explore your Borough’ project for which some of the UKSPF funding will be used.</p> <p>It was agreed a meeting would be arranged for Bob, Andrew and Mark to meet with Anne Papé, to establish how the LAF can get involved.</p>

	<p>It was agreed that Anne Papé should be invited to give a briefing at the next LAF meeting.</p> <p>b) Active Rural Grant</p> <p>Funding from the Rural England Prosperity Fund (REPF) has been secured by Bedford Borough Council. This is a top-up fund to the UK Shared Prosperity Fund to support activities that specifically help address particular challenges faced by rural areas.</p> <p>It was agreed that Anne Papé should be asked to explain the funding in more detail at the next LAF meeting.</p>
5.	<p><u>Item 4 – ROWIP (Rights of Way Improvement Plan)</u></p> <p>It was agreed that no further amendment would be required to the latest version circulated to members. The addition of a Foreword from Bob and Cllr Jim Weir would assist finalise the ROWIP.</p> <p>Mark advised that although he did suggest that QR codes might make RoW easier to navigate, a test of the QR codes used by another Local Authority had proved successful, but were subject to scam QR codes being overlaid over the original.</p> <p>It was agreed that the addition of QR codes should be left out.</p> <p>Action - Foreword to be added by Bob and Cllr Jim Weir</p> <p>Andrew to provide an update at each meeting to advise which ROWIP on action points achievements.</p>
6.	<p><u>Item 5 - Countryside and Public Access Team Update</u></p> <p>It was noted that a significant number of the objections made to PPO work had been received from Open Spaces Society (OSS). Andrew explained that OSS Local Correspondents continue to delay and attempt to deter the council from making PPO's in line with the OSS guidance notes given to their local correspondents. The PPO process was discussed and questions raised as to whether the council could apply for a costs order against the OSS.</p> <p>Update received on the DMMO Dag Lane, Riseley case - PINS have just confirmed BYWAY NO. 71 as a restricted Byway.</p>
7.	<p><u>Item 6 – Volunteering</u></p> <p>Members confirmed they had all received a copy of Barry's update on volunteer work carried out across the Borough and thanked Barry for his valued, hard work.</p> <p>Barry pointed out one update to the schedule to be noted – That actually 8 posts had been replaced, not 7 as stated!</p> <p>Mark expressed an interest in joining the volunteer group and Barry said he would add Mark to his volunteer email list.</p>

	<p>Ann commented that a new volunteer group for Keysoe & Bolnhurst was in the process of being set up and that she had registered her interest in joining, with the group organiser.</p> <p>Cllr Towler added that there are active volunteers in Thurleigh parish and Dean & Shelton parish. Ward funding had been made available to set them up with equipment.</p>
8.	<p><u>Item 7 – Meetings Attended</u></p> <p>None attended. Bob advised that the LAF Eastern Region Meeting will take place in January 2024.</p>
9.	<p><u>Item 8 – AOB</u></p> <p>a) East West Rail</p> <p>There are no updates to report, since the announcement by National Audit Office (NAO) that it will be launching an investigation into the East West Rail (EWR) project following concerns raised by MP Richard Fuller regarding its 'flawed business case'.</p> <p>b) Planning – 2040 Plan/SPD South of Bedford Borough</p> <p>Andrew to provide an update next meeting.</p> <p>c) Reporting procedures for ROW issues</p> <p>Any issues arising on a PROW can be logged on the Borough Council Website, via the Rights of Way page by clicking the 'Report a problem on a public right of way' link.</p> <p>Borough Boundary Walk</p> <p>Barry shared with members a Bedford Borough circular walk that he has devised. The 80 mile route starts and finishes in Bedford and follows PROW through 31 villages.</p> <p>Cllr Towler said he would be pleased to share the route with the Mayor who is looking to promote such a walk encouraging residents to explore their neighbourhood to enhance good physical and mental health. And a possible award scheme for young people that get involved.</p> <p>Barry was thanked for his contribution.</p> <p>Solar Farm - East Park Energy Proposal Planning Application</p> <p>Ann shared a copy of the site plan with members, raising concerns that a significant number of ROW are affected. Ann advised that she will submit a planning response on behalf of BHS.</p> <p>Following discussion, it was agreed that BoBLAF should also submit a response to planning to highlight concerns.</p>

	Action - Members to circulate individual comments by email. Ann/Bob to draft. Response to be sent by Georgina, BoBLAF Secretary. Completed.
9.	<u>Item 9 – Next LAF Meeting</u> Next Meeting date: Tuesday, January 23 2024 - Committee Room 1

Signed



Dated 23 January 2024