

## Local Access Forum (LAF) Annual Review Form: April 2013 to March 2014

Name of LAF: Slough Local Access Forum

Name of LAF Chair: David Munkley

Name of LAF Secretary: Jacqui Wheeler

Number of LAF members: 8

Number of LAF vacancies: 2

### 1 - Involvement and Representation

What interests does your current membership cover? cycling, walking, accessibility and environmental

What skills, sectors, interest groups, experience are missing? horse riding, local business, landowners, and representatives with mobility problems

Describe any difficulties you had recruiting members from particular sectors: difficulty in recruiting in general and particularly equestrian due to urban nature of area.

### 2 - Operation of LAF

What procedures (e.g. expense claims, new applications, monitoring of Huddle etc) do you follow that help you work effectively? Are these effective? new applications for membership are dealt with via a recommendation from the LAF Secretary to the delegated officer and there is the normal council procedure for expense claims, though no set procedure for Huddle at present

How do you ensure that your members are able to work as a team? A small membership means informal meetings and members have met between meetings for specific items

In what ways do you reach consensus? A general consensus is usually reached by the use of an informal and fully participatory debate on the issue in question, summed up by the Chair. A general consensus is usually accepted by the members but if that is not the case the Chair would take the matter to a formal vote. To date, a formal vote has rarely, if ever, been required and members have been happy to accept informally reached consensus where, if a minority view is strongly held, that is recorded in the minutes and presented alongside the majority view to whomever the LAF is responding

How do you ensure proper conduct and/or resolve any conflicts? There have not been any occasions of improper conduct and conflicts are generally resolved through discussion at the meeting

Give up to 3 examples of where you have encountered operational difficulties (e.g. lack of resources); explain what mechanisms could be put in place to alleviate such issues:

1 - There is still a difficulty in the LAF being proactive as this is dependent on the time that the Support Officer can devote to the LAF between meetings.

2 - There is always a time pressure at meetings which have to be held in the evenings due to work commitments of members. An effort is being made to hold more frequent meetings with shorter agendas.

3 - The LAF has no funding of its own, derived from the local authority or independently, and so ideas that it might like to pursue are not always feasible. However, the LAF would be concerned if dedicated funding from the local authority or Government was not to a set and

## Local Access Forum (LAF) Annual Review Form: April 2013 to March 2014

prescribed formula since anything other than such objective funding might be used to compromise the independence of the LAF

### 3 - Partnership and Progress

Do you work well with the access authority? If not, why not? yes

Do you work well with your planning authorities? If not, why not? yes

Have you established a clear role for the LAF in the local area? The LAF role is becoming more apparent and the motivation to make it clearer is there in the way the LAF concentrates its agenda on a variety of local issues.

Main or notable achievements? The LAF has been able to develop a clearer focus on issues it considers important, such as the development and improvement of the Slough Arm of the Grand Union Canal. Two notable organisations attended the Slough LAF this year. Firstly the EA attended to give insights into the way the flood alleviation scheme is run as well as how the area is managed and promoted as a local leisure destination and the way it can be developed in future as a "Country Park". Ideas were discussed as to how the LAF could help. Secondly the Colne Valley Park CIC gave their perspectives on their new way of working and the Slough LAF became a member of CVP Community Interest Company. The Slough LAF formally objected to a Gating Order and were consulted on a variety of sustainable Transport Schemes in the borough.

### 4 - Profile and Direction

Has anything changed over the last year? A alteration in focus towards walking and cycling off road routes

What changes / barriers can you see ahead? Difficulties in making things happen

What are your priorities for the year ahead (list up to 3)?

1 - Concentrate on developing and implementing a LAF Action Plan for the Slough Arm of the Grand Union Canal and CVP

2 - Continue highlighting the LAF's role and profile to the Council and other organisations

3 - Increase activity in the Slough LAF area and with neighbouring LAFs having more of the subject items in their domain, to deliver enhancements to, and greater public awareness/recreational and travel-to-work usage of, the Western Arm - Grand Union Canal and the Colne Valley Park plus accessibility to and recreational usage of The Jubilee River flood relief channel

What support or training do you need to deliver your priorities?

### 5 - Section 94 Bodies

Give up to 3 examples of advice given by your LAF to section 94 bodies:

1 - Joint LAF letter to large multi-national company to ask them to comply with their S106 agreement obligations regarding a vital cycle path/sustrans route.

2 - The LAF commented on a variety of LSTF funded transport schemes put forward by the Council's Transport section.

## Local Access Forum (LAF) Annual Review Form: April 2013 to March 2014

3 - The LAF formally objected to one of the locations on a Gating Order where two locations were cited.

### 6 - Open Access Work

How many Restriction Cases have you been consulted on? 0

How many cases have you responded to? 0

Detail any informal involvement with Open Access Restriction cases: n/a

**7 - Number of consultations, meetings and initiatives your LAF has been involved with over the year. Please add numbers into the boxes below and only count specific consultations once even if advice has been given on them a number of times. If a consultation covers more than one subject area, please count them separately as appropriate.**

Public meetings (e.g. LAF meetings)	3	Working groups	
Training days	0	Definitive map modification orders	
Highway orders		Green Infrastructure strategies	
Gating orders	3	Local transport plans and traffic management schemes	9
Cycle projects		Disabled access	
Dog exclusion/on leads/fouling orders		Housing development schemes	
Planning applications	2	PROW network and projects	
ROWIP planning and objectives		Local development frameworks and planning strategies	
Local Nature Partnerships		Recording of paths and promoting use	1
Expiring permissive agreements under Higher Level Stewardship schemes - assessing the value and future of and liaison with landowners to improve access		Flood defence works - Environment Agency consultations and planning applications regarding	
Slipways and landing stages - public access to		Improvement of access through the Paths for Communities (P4C) scheme	

## Local Access Forum (LAF) Annual Review Form: April 2013 to March 2014

Disposal and development of land owned by the Council		Parish Council or local improvement grant schemes	
Shoreline management plans		Rail freight interchange strategic development	
Network rail and rail crossing closures		Access and nature conservation	
Horse routes and equestrian provision		Multi user routes	1
National Parks		Coastal access	
Motorised vehicle access		Access to MOD land	
New town & village green registration government consultation		Natural England consultations	
Defra consultations		Commons grazing proposals	
Highways Agency consultations		Department for Transport consultations	
Other (please specify):			

**8 - Final comments from Appointing Authority:** The LAF has continued to develop it's focus and own agenda of important issues over the last year.

**9 - Final comments from LAF Chair:** As Chair, I have been fortunate enough to have with me members who are wonderfully enthusiastic, highly committed and of independent thought. The latter can present a welcome challenge and members are not only very forthcoming in their views but willing to engage in sub-groups and participate in other bodies. The Slough LAF membership is an outstanding group of people and the only regrets are that, as a small but highly urbanised forum, we have struggled to attract wider special-interest membership such as ramblers, horse riders, disabled people and those from ethnic groups. We are also in need of female members

In our early days, in my first term as Chair of the Slough LAF, as a highly urbanised area we had to interpret regulations and guidelines in ways that were perhaps outside of original considerations of the legislators but necessary for survival of the Slough forum and others like it. It has been pleasing to see guidelines changing to reflect the work and visions of urban LAFs but there remains a lot to be done in Slough and with many urban LAFs, to raise public and business-sector profile, enhance the perceived relevance of the forum so as to increase membership, and to widen diversity. These have to be our priorities for Slough in the future, plus delivering benefit for the community, alongside retaining the valuable membership that we have