

NINETEENTH MEETING OF THE CHAIRS OF THE LOCAL ACCESS FORUMS IN WALES

MEETING NOTE

Date: 26 April 2017

Location: Canolfan Hafren, Llanidloes Road, Newtown, Powys SY16 4HU

Timing: 10.30am – 3.00pm

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| Present: | <i>See separate attendance list</i> |
| Apologies: | Edwin Guilliford (Eastern Valley's LAF), Bob Derbyshire (Cardiff LAF), Rhondda Cynon Taf LAF, Dewi ap Rhobert (Anglesey LAF) |
| 1. | <p>Introduction and outline of the day</p> <p>John Morgan welcomed everyone to the meeting, in particular those representatives for whom this was their first meeting.</p> <p>New representatives that were attending were:</p> <p>Tim Faire – Conwy East and Denbighshire LAF (Chair) Gwen Butler - Conwy East and Denbighshire LAF (Deputy Chair) Chris Tomley – Powys LAF (Chair)</p> <p>Apologies were received from a number of LAFs (see above) some LAF Chairs had not responded.</p> |
| 2. | <p>Minutes from the Last Meeting</p> <p>Minutes had been circulated and approved as correct by email.</p> <p>Matters arising from the last meeting to be carried forward to this meeting:</p> <p>Action 18.1: John Morgan and Carys Drew will look into WFGA and Environment Act to consider the implications and opportunities for LAFs [such as in relation to PSBs, Area Statements and the NNRMP] and include an item for a future national LAFs meeting.</p> <p>This had been followed up. Carys explained that this was an area of work that was still developing and evolving, she had sought information from colleagues who were working closely with the staff involved in supporting PSBs. NRW is a statutory member of each PSB. It was suggested and agreed that an item be included to discuss this more fully at the next meeting to include a briefing paper.</p> <p>Action 19.1: Carys Drew to include item on Wellbeing of Future Generations Act and the work of PSBs on the next agenda and provide accompanying briefing paper.</p> <p>John Morgan summarised the other matters covered at the last meeting which had included discussion in relation to fencing on common land. In</p> |

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| | <p>relation to the 2026 cut-off date and whether this did or didn't apply in Wales, Richard Beale (Swansea LAF) had received an authoritative statement which he offered to share.</p> <p>Action 19.2 Richard Beale to share (via Secretary) the statement on CROW Act received from the Minister</p> <p>Other actions had been completed or would be reported on elsewhere on the agenda.</p> |
| 3. | <p>Related Welsh Government issues: Rob Taylor, Landscape and Outdoor Recreation Branch</p> <p>Rob Taylor discussed the Written Statement from Lesley Griffiths, Cabinet Secretary for Environment and Rural Affairs on Improving Opportunities to Access the Outdoors for Recreation available here (and previously circulated by the Secretary on 15/02/2017).</p> <p>He provided an overview of the previous work to gather views and on access in Wales, 5800 responses had been received in relation to the Green paper. Responses have helped inform Welsh Government policy on access and the Cabinet Secretary's views on how to move forward.</p> <p>Rob highlighted that there are three areas which the Cabinet Secretary intends to consult on proposals for making improvements:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Achieving consistency in the opportunities available for participation in different activities and how activities are restricted and regulated;</i> • <i>Simplifying and harmonising procedures for designating and recording public access;</i> • <i>Improving existing advisory forums and how access rights and responsibilities are communicated to all interests.</i> <p>The proposals will be included in a White Paper consultation, Welsh Government (WG) do not yet have a timeline for this, it was clear that it would be included in work considering the wider environment and in particular link to green infrastructure.</p> <p>It was noted that in relation to advisory forums such as LAFs, it is unlikely that WG would seek to change primary legislation and the feedback received from LAFs in response to the previous consultations indicated that many improvements could be made by looking at regulations and guidance.</p> <p>Rob also advised that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Work which WG had commissioned into the cost of implementing current rights of way legislation had been completed and the findings would contribute to the proposals in the white paper. |

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| | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The Rights of Way Improvement Plan Funding Programme was coming to an end in its current form. In future it would become part of a wider WG Green Infrastructure Fund to which bids could be made. <p>Discussion Points:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • LAFs are not currently statutory consultees on WG highway schemes, but these schemes can have significant impact on access and therefore something on which LAFs can advise • Concern that LAFs can give advice but that this advice can be largely ignored. Whilst it was noted that organisations in receipt of LAF advice would have to give good reason not to take it up, it was felt that the morale of LAFs would be improved if the need to take their advice could be strengthened • The role of LAFs in the ROWIP process is clearly set out in the WG ROWIP Guidance • There was concern that the ROWIP Funding Programme (RFP) would be coming to an end at the time that authorities would be carrying out their review, however WG emphasised that RFP had been intended as a boost to support implementation of the original ROWIP • Concern that authorities were spending significant sums on consultants, but it was noted that there are circumstances in which this was necessary and a number of authorities had used consultants in the first round of ROWIPs • It was suggested that Green Infrastructure was an area that authorities and LAFs should explore and identify how ROWIPs contribute, there was concern that this shouldn't only focus on urban areas • With changes in legislation and widening areas of interest there is an implication for the role of LAFs and this needs to be reflected in any guidance |
| 4. | <p>Glastir 2017 : LAF Approval Arrangements</p> <p>The Chair and Secretary had been advised that unfortunately due to prior commitments, no one was available to attend from WG to represent Glastir.</p> <p>Jane Tibbott had circulated an updated briefing paper for LAFs, setting out the role LAFs had been given in approving access under Glastir Advanced. Jane had offered to meet John Morgan as National Representative, together with the Secretary to follow up on any issues raised by the Chairs meeting, it was agreed that the Deputy Chair would also attend the</p> |

meeting.

Carys noted that this was an update of the previous briefings which set out the opportunity for annual exercise for LAF to suggest permissive routes, in order to narrow it down to an achievable task, LAFs could prioritise looking at making permissive links to the priority routes set out in the briefing.

Rob Taylor suggested that it would be helpful if a representative from the WG Landscape and Outdoor Recreation Branch also attend to discuss issues of shared interest.

Discussion Points:

- Concern that the task being expected of LAFs is not practical (mainly in relation to the scale of the task and LAFs not knowing which areas are in Glastir), the fact that LAF members are volunteers and there is potential for a lot of work for little gain.
- Publicising routes and communication is a big issue. Concern that there are no maps available showing or publicising the location of permissive access available under Glastir and that there is a lack of communication back to LAFs about whether any schemes are going forward
- A number of LAFs had put effort into proposing permissive access routes, but there had been no communication from WG in response to confirm whether or not any of these proposals had been taken up
- The fact that access is optional under the scheme, need to make LAFs aware that they could invest significant time but not see benefit as there is no requirement to take access forward.
- Clarity is needed about the status of Tir Gofal paths where signage is still on site and questions about the value for money in relation to the longevity of paths
- Good that Glastir Advanced is open to a wider group of land use as well as farming – such as woodland
- The need to influence any future schemes after 2020 with regard to cross compliance in relation to rights of way
- Suggestion whether it would be more cost effective in future for farmers to receive funding in order to maintain rights of way

Action 19.3: Carys to arrange meeting for LAF Chairs with Jane Tibbott and include representative from Landscape and Outdoor Recreation Branch

Action 19.4: All Chairs to submit any points they want John Morgan to

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| | raise with Jane Tibbott by email |
| 5. | <p>Welsh Outdoor Recreation Survey and its Implications</p> <p>Carys Drew gave a presentation about the Welsh Outdoor Recreation Survey: Key Facts for Policy and Practice Summary Report. The report is available online here</p> <p>The report findings are clearly presented and provide useful evidence and insights to help inform the advice of LAFs about. It includes information about who participates in outdoor recreation, what people do, where people go, motivations and barriers to participation, future demand, physical activity and health benefits, Expenditure and Economic Benefits, Caring for the Environment. The key challenges that need to be addressed are summarised at the end of the report.</p> <p>Further information is available on the NRW website here</p> <p>After reading the full report, any further queries can be addressed to Carys Drew in the first instance before sending to Susan Williams.</p> <p>Discussion</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Disability is identified as one of the reported barriers to participation • Noting the findings that dog ownership is a factor in participation with 39% of visits being made by people with a dog. The importance of responsible behaviour of dog walkers and controlling dogs on farmland to ensure they did not worry livestock was stressed. |
| 6. | <p>General NRW Briefing:</p> <p>Carys provided an overview of a number of items of NRW work of interest to LAFs (see separate written briefing)</p> <p>Discussion</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In relation to the Year of Legends, query about whether there had been consultation with National Park Authorities about additional publicity for routes in their areas which already experience high use • Whether contact details for WCP officers and the areas they cover can be circulated |
| 7. | <p>Ensuring the adequacy of the LAF's relationship with a County Council or National Park: Draft paper for discussion and agreement</p> <p>John Morgan presented the paper (circulated 10/4/17). It summarises the issues raised through previous work looking at LAF working practices.</p> <p>One of the suggestions of the paper is to introduce a Memorandum of</p> |

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| | <p>Agreement (MOA) (template agreement included in appendix 1 of the paper) between to ensure close working between LAFs and their appointing authority.</p> <p>Discussion:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Some LAFs are happy with current working arrangements and concerned that introduction of a more formal MOA could upset these • Support for an approach that helps increase the profile of the LAF with the authority and provides those LAFs experiencing problems with a starting point to seek improvement • This is a suggested approach, it would be a matter for each LAF to consider whether they want to pursue this type of formal agreements and noted that it could help address some of the concerns frequently raised by LAFs • Suggestion that this could be added to any guidance issued by WG or NRW in relation to LAFs • Suggestion that the NRW guidance be developed as a living document rather than waiting for outcome of WG proposed consultations • The need to develop a degree of autonomy from appointing authorities • Regulations state that LAF member should get their expenses paid, however some stated that they were not <p>Action 19.5: All to consider the paper and email any comments through to Carys Drew on the following email: LAF@cyfoethnaturiolcymru.gov.uk</p> <p>Action 19.6: Anyone wanting a copy of the guidance to LAFs previously issued by CCW to contact Carys Drew on the following email: LAF@cyfoethnaturiolcymru.gov.uk</p> |
| 8. | <p>Best practice Issues:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Making best use of the statutory Annual Report - Training <p>John Morgan introduced this item as an opportunity to have a focussed discussion on matters of best practice that had been raised.</p> <p>Discussion</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • It was noted that the annual report is an important opportunity to publicise the work of the LAF, and a requirement for the appointing authority to produce, however, not all LAFs produce an annual report |

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| | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The role of the report could be expanded, for example to get funding, advertising for new members, it could include member views and articles and help to generate interest in the work of the LAF and future membership • Suggestion that the requirement to report could be amended to be at the end of the term of the LAF rather than annually to share the work of the forum • The annual report should be circulated widely • It is helpful to have a pack of information and training and presentations from rights of way staff on appointment • It would be helpful to share and collate useful information and best practice as a resource for LAFs |
| 9. | <p>Future meeting arrangements</p> <p>John Morgan outlined the agreement that had been reached with NRW in relation to supporting the LAF Chairs meetings.</p> <p>In order to make best use of NRW resources, it had been agreed that Carys would provide secretariat support for 3 Chairs meetings in order to help progress the areas of work which the Chairs meeting had identified. Should the Chairs meeting find the need for subcommittee meetings, NRW would try to provide a meeting place at one of its offices. The Conference would not be held this year.</p> <p>Discussion</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consideration needed to be given to involving LAF secretaries in progressing work and the valuable contribution they have to make – possibility to consider regional meetings with secretaries <p>Action 19.7: John Morgan to consult with secretaries on their views with regard to meeting</p> |
| 10. | <p>AOB</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identified in Gwynedd in relation to Bont Newydd Bypass that LAFs are not statutory consultee on large highways construction project – although such projects can have significant impact on access • John Morgan is seeking to attend individual LAF meetings – chairs asked to contact him to advise on their next meeting dates |
| 11. | <p>Date of Next meeting</p> <p>Agreed to hold meeting in the Autumn and to seek the same meeting room in Newtown</p> |