



### **Committee and Date**

Shropshire's Great Outdoors  
Strategy Board

4 June 2020

## **SHROPSHIRE'S GREAT OUTDOORS STRATEGY BOARD**

### **Minutes of the meeting held on 6 February 2020**

**In the Shrewsbury Room, Shirehall, Abbey Foregate, Shrewsbury, Shropshire, SY2 6ND**

**2.00 - 4.20 pm**

**Responsible Officer:** Tim Ward

Email: [tim.ward@shropshire.gov.uk](mailto:tim.ward@shropshire.gov.uk) Tel: 01743 257713

### **Present**

Alex Carson-Taylor (Chair), Peter Carr, Lezley Picton, Nigel Pocock, Ronald Repath, Jack Tavernor and Andrew Wood

## **22 Welcome. Introductions and Apologies for Absence**

- 22.1 The Chairman welcomed Sophie Dwerryhouse, National Access Adviser, CLA and Lauren Eaton, Greenlane Association (GLASS) communications officer, who were attending the meeting as observers
- 22.2 Apologies for absence were received from Sarah Faulkner, Cecilia Motley, Stewart Pickering and Mark Weston

## **23 Declarations of Interest**

- 23.1 There were no declarations made

## **24 Public Question Time**

- 24.1 3 Public questions had been received
- 24.2 Question 1 from Stuart Morgan

Question to Shropshire County Councils Shropshire's Great Outdoor's Strategy Board

Has the Great Outdoors Shropshire's Great Outdoor's Strategy Board considered the case for safe public access across the North West relief road and if so was the proximity of a right of way to a service bridge for the private use of the Berwick Estate considered? Especially as this anomalous right of way so obviously points to a lostway.

The advantages to the Borough, economic and social, could be huge. Less obvious are the advantages to the Estate itself. This possibly, because of the historical and current opposition to access privately expressed by the landowner lobby groups through various publications.

The trails that this access point could lead into the County town relate well to geography, history and geology of this county and relate well to the ambitions of many beyond that of its boundaries. I would have hoped that any person with an interest in the Great Outdoors would have spotted at least some of the features, of how the access network of Shropshire can grow towards the needs of the 21st century.

I wrote a letter to our MP about this, I received a brush off that indicated that Daniel Kawczynski had referred to the County Council. This suggested scant consideration to the possibility that the public should share in the countryside beyond its town boundaries, when there is such an obvious anomaly on the Ordnance Survey maps. Surely this must have been looked at during the planning stage of this road. It is alarming if a past mistake by Local Government is not tabled for correction, as the needs for open green space grows.

Is the Great Outdoors Liaison Group doing its job in the best interests of all the people of Shropshire or safe guarding the interests of a privileged minority, as a former officer of the council probably did? Something I warned of, repeatedly, when I was a member, at the time it was merely called a Local Access Forum, a title bequeathed by the Act of Parliament that brought it into being.

However, there is perhaps another more relevant question the GOSB should consider and that is why the owners of the Berwick Estate have not petitioned to have the right of way over this service bridge and asked for other lostways to be scrutinized adjoining their boundary. As there are several natural long-distance routes that could enter the Borough from this direction. Routes that could become nationally popular, with the rising trend for long distance walking. With an annual earning per mile of £8000 in 1990, the Pennine Way established a positive factor for public access as a contributor to rural economies. Such facts that were noticeably missing from the CLA's 2012 policy on Access.

### **Answer**

The SGOSB can confirm that Officers who are responsible for protecting and asserting the public rights of way network have and continue to be involved in discussions with the Highway consultants leading on this project. All potential affected public rights of way have been identified, together with the provision of desire lines to improve connectivity within the network affected.

#### **24.3 Question 2 from Trevor Allison, Walking Environment Officer for the Shropshire Area of the Ramblers**

Now that 2 major Planning Applications for the 'Ironbridge' Power Station site have been lodged, is the Board confident that the positive approach so far displayed by Harworth, the Developers, and expressed in the documents, will provide, when the Development is completed, a sensible and worthwhile network of Public Rights of Way, which will connect to other existing routes in all directions. The basic

proposals are depicted in the diagram ADC1776-DR-008 which is to be found in the Residential Travel Plan of 19/05560 after page 25. As long as these routes are actually established as properly connected P. R. O. W's. (Footpaths, Bridleways or even Restricted Byways) then considerable public benefit will be provided.

### **Answer**

Officers concur with the views expressed in this question and can confirm that an initial meeting with the agents acting on behalf of Harworth's was very positive and the issues raised highlighting the existing network and increased connectivity were put forward. Since that time officers have responded to the current planning application and have reiterated the need for legally recorded outlets at the correct status and the wishes previously put forward by this group and other user groups.

#### **24.4 Question 3 to SGOSB (formerly LAF) From Karen Pearce, Bicton Heath resident and user of local PROW**

The Oxon Link Road (OLR) subject of a previous planning application on the west of Shrewsbury will now be merged into the planning application for the proposed NWR.

Forgive me if I am wrong, but this group appears to have had no involvement in protecting the recreational and access interests of existing local people and the thousands of new residents of the SWUE who will be affected by the proposed new road.

The OLR application was a poor application and was subsequently withdrawn. It attracted hundreds of objections many relating to access issues including severance of local lanes and PROW and lack of safe passage across the proposed road. The Urban Extension has little provision of usable open space and proposes that residents access it by crossing the proposed road. The OLR did not provide footbridges despite their need accepted for phase 1 of the SWUE. The current planning application for Phase 1 does not provide the necessary bridge either.

**Would it be possible for this group to look into this and ensure that current and future residents can access what open space will remain safely?**

**Is this group aware that much of the land for the proposed OLR leg of the NWR and the SWUE is owned by Shropshire Council?** The Council are also the promoters of the proposed road and will also determine the planning application. The LAF is now incorporated into SGOSB which has a different remit and membership to the original LAF. **Can this group assure the residents of Bicton/Bicton Heath that their interests will be properly protected by the group when the Council clearly has a vested interest in developments?** **Would the previous LAF have been more independent and served us better?**

**Is this group willing to show a more active interest in the huge amount of development planned for the Bicton/ Bicton Heath area and seek to protect the many PROW/Bridleways enjoyed by so many of us?** Existing and new residents face a huge loss of access to the countryside, PROW and open spaces. This appears have largely been ignored by the Council in their apparent desire to

develop every available open space in their quest for continual economic development.

**Would the group be able to explore the possibilities of retaining existing PROW (which sometimes follow very old hedgerows) as green corridors within the developments to allow continued enjoyment of routes that have existed for centuries and to protect wildlife?** It seems these valuable and historic features always find they are in the way of houses when it is the houses that are in the way! **Is there any way that this group could use its role as LAF to encourage the planners/architects to be a bit more creative and incorporate PROW into well designed places to live?** SC have signed up to a climate emergency and should be valuing PROW for many reasons.

Members of this group may not be aware that on top of loss of PROW that access and movement around the area will be severely hampered by severance of many of the local lanes (Calcott, Shepherds, Little Oxon, and Clayton Way. There will be an impact on pedestrian and cycle use on Holyhead Road (National Cycleway) where a huge island is proposed. **Given that the proposed road will likely go well over budget please could this group ensure that funding is obtained, and ring fenced for footbridges to counteract proposed severances and that existing and new residents are allowed to be able to continue to use all the Rights of Way to which they are entitled?**

#### **Answer**

Officers have raised their own concerns regarding the retention of the public rights of way in this vicinity as well as the provision of easily accessible public open space. It is felt that the inclusion of this proposal with the NWRR is an opportunity to re-emphasise the importance of a well-considered network throughout the scheme.

Officers have addressed with the developer the issue of lack of central public open space, lack of green corridors through the site and the crossing of the NWRR by public footpath 7 and have suggested that the planning application at Churncote be redesigned accordingly.

Should the group wish to contribute to the planning application at Churncote then this is the appropriate time to submit comments to be addressed.

## **25 Minutes of the Last Meeting**

25.1 The minutes of the meeting held on 17 October 2019 had been circulated

### **25.2 Resolved:**

That the minutes of the meeting of the Shropshire Great Outdoors Strategy Board held on 17 October 2019 be approved as a true record and signed by the Chairman

## **26 Cultural Strategy**

- 26.1 The Culture and Heritage Manager reminded Members that an initial consultation on the Cultural Strategy had been carried out and emerging themes and priorities had been identified which would guide the production of the final draft report.
- 26.2 The Culture and Heritage Manager gave a short presentation which outlined the emerging themes and priorities for the Strategy. Members then split into groups to consider the themes and priorities.
- 26.3 The Culture and Heritage Manager advised the meeting that their feedback would be considered during the development of the final plan which would be published for consultation in April. It was agreed that the draft strategy would be circulated to members when it was available.

## **27 North West Relief Road (NWRR)**

- 27.1 The Interim Outdoor Partnership Manager advised that due to late redesign requirements on certain elements of the road, the launch of the NWRR pre planning consultation had been delayed and that the presentation would need to be deferred to the next meeting.

## **28 Definitive Map Update**

- 28.1 The ROW Mapping & Enforcement Manager advised the meeting that the Rights of Way Definitive Map and Statement had been updated and passed around an example of the new map.
- 28.2 Members congratulated Officers on the production of the new map.
- 28.3 The Culture and Heritage Manager paid tribute to the immense amount of work the Definitive Map and Enforcement Support Officer had undertaken in updating the definitive map statement.
- 28.4 In response to a question the ROW Mapping & Enforcement Manager confirmed that the map was available on line, and that the online version would be updated as necessary.
- 28.5 In response to a question the ROW Mapping & Enforcement Manager confirmed that the old maps would be preserved and archived.
- 28.6 The Chair thanked the ROW Mapping & Enforcement Manager and her team for their work in updating the maps

## **29 Agriculture Bill**

- 29.1 The Chair advised the meeting that the Agriculture Bill had received its second reading and would now pass to the Committee stage.

- 29.2 The Chair stated that the main change that would interest members was the introduction of Environmental Land Management Schemes (ELMS) which would replace the Basic Payment Scheme (BPS) and introduce the principle of payment for public goods and that provision of public access could form a large proportion of this.
- 29.3 Several Members expressed the view that they would rather see permanent additions to the definitive map as permissive routes only lasted as long as the funding was available and then tended to be withdrawn.
- 29.4 The Culture and Heritage Manager advised that the EFRA Committee had launched a call for evidence and advised that the Council were collating a response. She asked whether members felt that the Board should make a response.
- 29.5 The Chair advised that the bill excluded extending the RDP and that this would be picked up under the Shared Prosperity Fund.
- 29.6 The Chair advised members that the Environment Bill would be published shortly although full details were not known.
- 29.7 The Culture and Heritage Manager advised the meeting that as part of its declaration of Climate Emergency the Council had set up a Climate Change team led by Adrian Cooper

### **30 General Updates**

- 30.1 Mr Carr informed the meeting that the Chief Executive Officer of the Ramblers Association had resigned, and work was underway to appoint a new CEO. He also informed Members that he had stood down as Chair of the Shropshire Area Committee and that Will Tandy had been elected as Chair. Mr Carr informed the meeting that he had concerns regarding the planning application at Mile End Oswestry and that he would be submitting a response to the planning application. He commented that there seemed to be a number of planning applications that looked at road developments in isolation and suggested that this might be a subject the Board looked at at a future meeting.
- 30.2 The Culture and Heritage Manager advised the meeting that Sue Finnigan had been appointed as Head of Culture, Leisure and Tourism. She informed Members that she would continue to lead on Outdoor Partnerships and the AONB.
- 30.3 Ms Eaton informed the meeting that the work to prevent unlawful access at Quatt had been completed. She reminded Members that her organisation had funding available for works and volunteers available to help where required.

### **31 Other items**

- 31.1 Members noted the minutes of the Shropshire Riding and Carriage Driving Forum held on 14 October 2019.

**32 Date of Next meeting**

32.1 Members were reminded that the next meeting of the Shropshire's Great Outdoors Strategy Board will be held on Thursday 4 June 2020 at 2.00pm

Signed ..... (Chairman)

Date: .....