

Local Access Forum Annual Review Form

April 2014 to March 2015

Name of LAF	Brighton & Hove LAF
Name of LAF Chair	See Section 6
Name of LAF Secretary	See Section 6

Total number of LAF members	
Number of members representing users of public rights of way or access land	
Number of members representing owners and occupiers of access land or land over which PROW subsist	
Number of members representing other interests	

1. LAF achievements? (Please give examples to illustrate how your LAF has improved public access to land for the purpose of open air recreation and the enjoyment of the area)

Although the LAF has been temporarily suspended this year, rights of way work has been continueing, and there is a lot to report on when the LAF reconvenes:

Patcham Court Farm Open Access area was created – opening up 282 hectares of countryside and installing 28 gates for access. We are currently in the process of officially dedicating both the Patcham Court Farm and Stanmer Open Access areas.

A new cycle way was put in along the Ditchling Road – providing a sustainable transport link from the City to the Downs. It is a 2km stretch of new cycle path funded by a combination of Linking Communities funding from the Department of Transport, Local Sustainable Transport Fund and the Local Transport Plan capital programme.

The original Brighton & Hove LAF were consulted with on the Open Access plans for Patcham, the new cycle way along Ditchling Road and the future plans for Stanmer Park as an improved recreational area.

As part of the Lewes Road Improvement Project, 30 new waymarkers have been installed to help people navigate around the Public Rights of Way networks in Hollingbury, Wild Park, Bevendean and Stanmer.

At the end of this financial year, work started on the Drove Road behind Woodingdean. This is a Byway Open to All Traffic, the surface of which has severe rutting and drainage issues. A new surface is currently being laid.

As part of routine rights of way maintenance, vegetation has been cleared along 79km of paths, helping to fulfil our obligation to keep our rights of way network open and accessible.

The Council are currently updating the Definitive Map of Public Rights of Way for Brighton & Hove – adding over 500 urban footpaths (Twittens) that were not included in the original 1995 version. The digitised mapping was completed in 2014/15, and the legal event order process is currently in progress. The original LAF was kept apprised of progress on this project and provided advice.

The Council are embarking on an asset & condition survey of our rights of way network, which will be digitally mapped and used to help prioritise future maintenance plans.

2. What are the main challenges affecting your LAF's ability to deliver improvements to public access in the coming year?

Re-establishment of an effective LAF group, supported by the Council, with an elected Chair from the group and a good cross section of membership.

Local Access Forum Annual Review Form

April 2014 to March 2015

3. What are your top three priorities for the year ahead?

1. Re-instate a LAF - selecting a Councillor from the new administration to chair the group in the first instance, to be replaced as soon as possible from the new LAF membership
2. Updated Brighton & Hove Definitive Map with the addition of 500 new path (urban link paths - Twittens) and working towards incorporating Missing Links
3. To work with the new LAF to agree priorities going forward

4. Is there any particular support or training that you need to deliver your priorities?

Support from South Downs National Park, East Sussex County Council and West Sussex County Council LAFs in helping to re-establish the Brighton & Hove LAF. Particular support in recruiting members to the group.

LAF activity in 2014/15

Number of full LAF meetings held	1	Number of sub-group meetings held	1
Number of working groups led by others	0	Number of training days provided by the Appointing Authority	0

Partners the LAF worked with during 2014/15 (click on a box or type 'x')

Local Nature Partnerships	<input type="checkbox"/>	Local Enterprise Partnerships	<input type="checkbox"/>
Health and Wellbeing Boards	<input type="checkbox"/>	LEADER funding Local Action Groups	<input type="checkbox"/>

Please add numbers to the following differentiating between formal consultations and general advice given by the LAF on particular subjects. If a consultation covered more than one subject area, please count separately.

	Consultations	Advice
Green Infrastructure strategies		
Public Space Protection Orders (including gating orders)		
Transport (LTP, traffic management, rail, DfT, Highways Agency)		
Water / Coast (slipways, flood defence, EA, shoreline)		
Public open space (protection orders, commons, village greens)		
Dog exclusion/on leads/fouling orders		
Planning applications		
Housing development schemes		
Local development frameworks and planning strategies		
PROW creation, diversion or closure - number of each		
Right of Way Improvement Plan review		
Route improvements (to PROW and other multi-user/cycling/horse-riding/walking routes)		1
Promotion of access, open air recreation and the enjoyment of the area	2	
Definitive map and recording PROW		1
Parish Council or other grant schemes		
Disabled access / access for people with mobility issues?		
Vehicular access and issues relating to motorised use of PROW		
Nature conservation (including SSSIs)		

Local Access Forum Annual Review Form

April 2014 to March 2015

Land use and planning matters (e.g. informal advice on land development)		
Greenspace including Country Parks and Local Nature Reserves		
Open Access land restrictions		
Coastal Access/National Trails		
NNR dedication		
Agri-environment scheme issues (HLS and new Countryside Stewardship) e.g. expiring permissive access agreements, effects of land management options on public access etc.		
Forestry and woodland		

Any other LAF activity (please specify)

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5. Summarise any feedback received from section 94(4) bodies¹

N/A

6. Please provide any comments from your Appointing Authority

Brighton & Hove LAF folded in July 2014, with the Chair of the group resigning.

Response sent from Penny Thompson (CEO of Brighton & Hove City Council) to the South Downs National Park LAF and the South East LAF Co-ordinator:

"Improving our residents access to the Countryside around the City has been one of the administrations priorities and an area that I am proud of our achievements in.

As with all public bodies we are facing significant funding pressures and it becomes more difficult to resource everything that we would like to, however, I do not think it was appropriate to let support of the LAF slip to the extent that it did.

I have discussed this issue with the Executive Director of Environment, Development and Housing who as a result has re prioritised work to ensure resources are available. As I understand from my staff there were problems with both officer support and finding a chair, the two may well be interlinked, I will be asking a Councillor to chair the initial meetings handing over to a chair elected from within the group as soon as possible.

To avoid the possibility of the Councillor changing before the group is properly established this will not happen until after the May election."

¹ The Countryside and Rights of Way Act, 2000, Section 94(4) specifies that it is the function of a local access forum, as respects to the area for which it is established, to advise the appointing authority; the local highway authority; other bodies exercising functions under CROW Act Part 1 (Natural England, Forestry Commission and English Heritage) and such other bodies as may be prescribed. These other bodies are set out in the LAF Regulations 2007, paragraph 21, and include: any conservation board established by the Secretary of State, any parish or town council in the area covered by the LAF, and Sport England.

Local Access Forum Annual Review Form

April 2014 to March 2015

Since the election of the new administration, Councillor Gill Mitchell has been selected as Chair of Environment & Housing and Deputy Leader. She will Chair the new LAF until this role can be elected from the membership.

Responsibility for the secretariat role of the LAF has transferred from Highways to Cityparks - the Department responsible for the majority of rights of way work within the Council.

Organisation of the first meeting is now underway with recruitment of members, setting up a meeting date and venue.

7. Comments from LAF Chair

The N/A

8. Any important information to bring to the attention of Natural England

The re-establishment of Brighton & Hove LAF is a priority target for the Authority and will be progressed, as soon as possible, working with the new administration to push it forward.

9. Any other comments