

Solihull MBC LAF Meeting Report 28 April 2022

Maintenance Work

- Strimming of 131 sections of paths ~ 42,000 linear metres (from a total of 450 routes) under annual programme - completed twice over the summer months, first cut undertaken in May/June will be undertaken by a new contractor Idverde.
- Ad-hoc maintenance of the PRowS continues on a reactive basis.

Improvement Works Carried Out (includes but not limited to)

- Repairs to boardwalks, bridge structures and ditch crossings.
- New kissing gates.
- Fingerpost replacements.

Obstruction and Encroachment Problems

- Letters are sent to land owners as appropriate, sometimes/preferably resolved informally over the telephone and email where an established relationship exists.

Land Owner Concerns

- Off-lead dogs and continued problems with faeces not being picked up and disposed of.

Service Requests

- ~ 100 service requests in the last 6 months.

Diversion Orders

- Formal diversion Order SL20A Arden School – objections received to formal consultation matter now referred to Planning Inspectorate.
- Request for diversion SL81 Hockely Heath. Not taken to formal stage.
- Request for diversion M121 Hampton Manor. Additional consultation with stakeholders undertaken, a revised proposal now developed that seems agreeable to take forward.
- Request for diversion M166 Oldwich Lan East. Additional consultation with stakeholders undertaken, a revised proposal now developed that seems agreeable to take forward.
- Request for diversion M169 Heronfield Cottages. Concerns raised through informal consultation a revised proposal is under development.

DMMOs

- Ongoing. 15 current requests – one is currently under further investigation (Oak Lane Barston) and we have instructed a specialist to advertise the Order.

Land Owner/Highway Statements and Declarations

- A number of updated declarations have been received, and new statements processed (under section 31(6) of the Highways Act 1980).

Notices

- No formal notices received since the last LAF meeting.

Contribution of Volunteers

- We continue to work with and are thankful for the contributions of volunteers. There are two main groups that work on the network - A Coventry Way and Solihull Bramblers

Other

- **HS2** Main works are having significant impact . SMBC continues to hold a working group to engage user groups on matters associated with HS2 and rights of way, demonstrating the Council's commitment to working collaboratively with HS2, its contractors and stakeholders. It should be noted that HS2 as scheme promoters also carry out considerable engagement and consultation exercises with the local community and have a dedicated website which has recently been upgraded to make it easier for members of the public to access information on their scheme. SMBC as a consultee in many instances works to ensure that HS2 deliver their works, with as minimal impact to the network as possible. However, it must be borne in mind that the size of the scheme does impact significantly on the network. An example of SMBC's input is paths M215 and M216 remaining open with a controlled crossing points rather than the previously planned closures. The group looked at ways to mitigate the impact of a Coventry Way's annual challenge and are currently working towards an acceptable solution for Waste Lane with respect to pedestrian accessibility. One of the actions from the stakeholder group is that improved plans and public notices are required.
- **M42** As a nationally significant scheme, the scheme is being progressed by Highways England through a mechanism known as a Development Consent Order. This provides them with wide ranging powers to close roads and public rights of way where necessary to progress their scheme. This is outside of the normal process which is overseen and administered by the local authority. Notwithstanding this, we continue to engage and work collaboratively with Highways England and their contractors to mitigate the impact of the scheme and escalate concerns from users as appropriate.
- **General** The Council continues to undertake its statutory functions in managing the network of some 250km of rights of way in the borough seriously. We have a small team that support the service alongside other workloads and priorities. Schemes such as HS2 and the Highways England junction 6 works provide plenty of challenge but also opportunity for betterment, and we will continue to positively engage and influence these schemes to aid and benefit rights of way in Solihull where possible.

Photographs of Recent Improvement Works

Volunteers removing a fallen tree



Boardwalk repairs – SMBC Contractor

