

# Local Access Forums and the Planning Process

Dr Roger SK Buisson

Vice-Chairman

Cambridgeshire LAF

# Objective

To share experience with other LAF members of:

- The extent to which local planning authorities provide appropriate protection for public rights of way and access land as part of their strategic plan making and when making individual development planning decisions
- The role that LAFs can play in advising local planning authorities

# Outcome

LAF members will:

- Have exchanged examples of best practice
- Leave the conference with some ideas as to how they can take action to seek an improvement in the performance of the local planning authorities within their LAF area

# The planning system

‘Plan led’:

- The local planning authority plan:  
Now the Local Plan  
[Back to the future, replaces LDF – Core Strategy, Site Specific, SPDs]
- In most areas the planning authority is not the highways authority (your appointing authority). Exceptions are ‘county planning issues’ and where there is a unitary authority.  
Issues of split responsibilities

# The planning system

Decisions taken outside the local planning process:

- National policies (NPPF\*) override in the absence of an up to date Local Plan
- Nationally Significant Infrastructure  
[moves toward bringing in nationally insignificant developments]

# \* National Planning Policy Framework

## Paragraph 75.

- Planning policies should protect and enhance public rights of way and access. Local authorities should seek opportunities to provide better facilities for users, for example by adding links to existing rights of way networks including National Trails.

This is better than many local planning policies

# LAF experience

- Cambridgeshire LAF
- East of England Regional meetings
- Your experience
  - Loss of PRoWs as a result of planning decisions
  - Protective policies in Local Plans
  - Proactive policies e.g. green infrastructure
  - Actions by appointing authority
  - Support from appointing authority
  - Support from NE

# Potential LAF actions

- Input at strategic level of policy making  
Local Plan [pre-]consultation
- Input at individual decision (planning application)  
Commenting, objecting, sustaining objection
- Supporting local groups and objectors
- Support from public bodies and NGOs