



BUCKINGHAMSHIRE LOCAL ACCESS FORUM

Report

AGENDA ITEM 1

Date: 1st November 2023

Title: Definitive Map Activities and Priorities

Author: Helen Francis, Senior Definitive Map Officer & Claire Hudson, Definitive Map & Highway Searches Team Leader.

Contact Officer: Harry Thomas [01296 585234]

The activities undertaken by the Definitive Map and Highway Searches Team can typically be split into three areas:

- 1] Definitive Map
- 2] Planning
- 3] Highway Searches

The Definitive Map Officers within the team pick up all the Definitive Map activities which vary from applications for Definitive Map Modification Orders (DMMOs), Public Path Orders (PPOs), Village Greens, as well as other types of application and enquiries.

Looking more specifically at DMMOs, there are three types of applications:

- 1] those containing documentary evidence only;
- 2] those containing user evidence only; and
- 3] those containing a combination of documentary and user evidence.

Applications impacted by planning applications are brought towards the top of the list.

The council's priorities when determining DMMOs are detailed in a statement of priorities attached to this report, which is also sent out to applicants at the time of their application. This is based on whether the application fits in categories 1, 2 or 3. Generally, user evidence comes before documentary evidence, but both sit behind applications impacted by development.

DMMOs cannot be investigated immediately on receipt due to available staff resources, so a backlog develops. This is typical across councils in England and Wales. The current

Buckinghamshire backlog is between 2 - 10 years, depending on the circumstances of the application.

The basis for the 'Statement of Priorities' [Appendix 1] is to give applicants information regarding the reasons why their application is in a queue.

LAF members have recently raised concerns the DMMO list, both on the website and presented at Local Access Forum meetings, doesn't give applicants or LAF members an approximate timescale when their claim is likely to be addressed.

The DM Team will outline the existing workload of the team and the statement of priorities and how this can be balanced against members' wishes to see a priority order in which an expected timetable can be included.

The Team are also looking at updating the 'Statement of Priorities' and would be interested in hearing any recommendations from members.