



E7/pf/238

8 February 2007

Mrs Maureen Comber
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By Email

Councillor Ken Thornber CBE
Leader of Hampshire County Council

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Dear Maureen

I am writing in response to the e-mail exchanges recently regarding rights of way and in particular with respect to matters considered by the County Council's Regulatory Committee. I hope I can address all the outstanding questions that you have.

I am reluctant to enter into a detailed consideration of the specific evidence that was presented to the Regulatory Committee regarding the Definitive Map Modification Order application. There is a clear process to follow if you feel that the Council has made the incorrect decision and it is right that you should follow this process. The matter is now in the appropriate hands and I am sure that the Council will be instructed to make the Order if the Government Office considers that the County Council ought to have done this given the evidence available.

I understand that this matter has given rise to your concern about the whole process and how items are presented to Regulatory Committee. Officers in the Recreation and Heritage Department are well trained specialists with great experience in the investigation of applications seeking to modify the Definitive Map. They are ably advised by legal professionals from the Council's Chief Executive's Department. Members of the Committee are presented with detailed reports which encompass the relevant evidence. I totally refute the suggestion that any officers would deliberately mislead members of the Regulatory Committee in these matters. Colleagues in both departments recognise their role in ensuring that matters are presented fairly and solely in accordance with the evidence that has been discovered.

Members of the Regulatory Committee make decisions with regard to Definitive Map Modification Orders in accordance with the evidence about the existence or otherwise of public rights. It is not the role of the Committee to consider whether routes being considered would add to or detract from the wider access network. Therefore, Rights of Way Improvement Plans are not relevant to these decisions. It is important however, for all elected members to be familiar with, and recognise the importance of these Plans for their day-to-day work. Clearly this is something that can be improved upon.

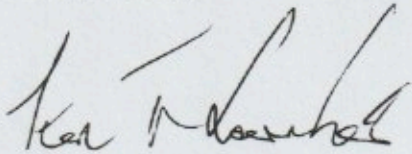
The Area Team will look at the problem you have with the catches on Bridleway 4.

/continued.....

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I hope this letter covers all the issues regarding rights of way and the Regulatory Committee which have been the subject of your recent emails.

Yours sincerely

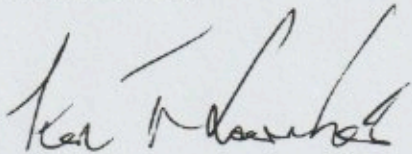
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Ken Thornber
Leader

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