

NORTH YORKSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL
NORTH YORKSHIRE LOCAL ACCESS FORUM

17th February 2005

Open Access Update

1.0 Purpose of Report

1.1 To update members on the progress of the Access Management Plan.

2.0 Background

2.1 The County Council has been awarded a grant to produce an Access Management Plan. The Plan is designed to assess the potential changes Open Access will bring about and put measures in place to manage that change for the benefit of land managers and visitors alike. From the findings of the Management Plan, a second grant bid has been submitted and awarded worth £33,562.50 (with a County Council contribution of £11,187.50) to pay for information boards, cover costs of the Open Access Volunteers, leaflet and web information.

3.0 Infrastructure Works

3.1 The main findings from the management plan identified a need to provide visitors with information about their new responsibilities that come with the new right.

3.2 In order to achieve this we have identified existing parking areas near access land where we will provide interpretation boards. The interpretation boards will have information about the location of access land and will remind visitors about their new responsibilities. The boards are currently been designed by Ron McCombe Associates who have produced a number of interpretation boards for Lancashire County Council and Yorkshire Water.

3.3 A volunteer service was also identified to assist with the management of open access. The recruitment for the service has been successful to the point where the service is currently over subscribed. Training is being delivered though BTCV. The first two sessions have already been completed and feedback suggests volunteers are happy and looking forward to 'getting out there'.

2.4 We have funding to produce a leaflet/newsletter to do with open access. It is intended to produce a newsletter in time for commencement. The newsletter will highlight the new interpretation boards, the Open Access Volunteers and other related issues. We invite contributions from users and landowners.

4.0 Access Management Plan Document

4.1 As part of the planning grant we are required to submit a written document to the Countryside Agency explaining our methodology and findings. This has been achieved to the standards set out in the grant offer. It is thought that the document could be published and sent out to partner organisations and members of the public

who enquire about our approach to open access. The plan details our approach to open access and lists what we intend to do and when.

4.2 Appendix 1 is the final draft of the Access Management Plan. If it can be agreed at the meeting it would be useful if the document could be endorsed by the LAF including possibly a foreword introducing the plan.

5.0 Timetables

5.1 The conclusive maps for area four have been published, although at the time of writing we have yet to receive our copies. If we receive the maps in time for the meeting they will be available to view.

5.2 DEFRA has announced that open access in areas 4 and 5 (covering most of North Yorkshire) will commence on Saturday 28th May. Details are not yet available about any publicity event in the regions, although it is likely that there will be an event in the Lake District.

6.0 Recommendation

6.1 It is recommended that

- (a) this report be received for information;
- (b) the LAF endorse the Access Management Plan; and
- (c) the Chairman be authorised to agree a foreword to introduce the plan.