

## North Yorkshire Local Access Forum

3<sup>rd</sup> June 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 largest section of Open Access in North Yorkshire will become reality on Saturday 28<sup>th</sup> May 2005. The County Council have produced an Access Management Plan explaining how we have prepared for Open Access and intend to manage it in the future. The grant scheme has funded work in preparation for the launch and will continue for another two years.

#### 3.0 Open Access Launch

3.1 The main launch event is at Ribbleshead in the Yorkshire Dales National Park. There will be a further launch at Scar House at the head of Nidderdale. This event is hosted by the Ramblers Association other organisations attending are Nidderdale AONB, Moorland Association and Yorkshire Water. Some of the Open Access Volunteers will be helping with the event. The County Council will be represented by the chairman of the LAF and a councillor will be present.

#### 4.0 Infrastructure, Information and Volunteers

4.1 The Management Plan identified the need for clear information to explain the new responsibilities that have been introduced with Open Access. In response to this we identified popular areas where information boards would be useful, set up an Open Access Volunteer Service and provided information leaflets.

4.2 Interpretation Boards have been produced to be sited at popular location where we predict people will park to enter Access Land. The boards will provide vital information on where and when people can use their new right and explain the rules people must adhere to when using Access Land.

4.3 Forty volunteers have been trained and equipped to carry out duties throughout the AONB. Their main roles will be to assist people to enjoy their new right responsibly and provide the Countryside Service with valuable feedback.

4.4 A newsletter has been produced which includes articles by a Open Access Volunteer, English Nature explain the ecology of a Moor and a landowner gives his frank perspective on the effect Open Access could have on his land. The Countryside Service's Open Access leaflet will be updated in time for the numerous shows the service plans to attend over the summer.

#### 5.0 Post Launch

5.1 As already mentioned the grant scheme is carrying on for this year and next. An other bid will shortly be going in for more information boards in different parts of the County. Boards are going up in Forest of Bowland, Thixendale and Skipwith Common.

5.2 There is a Rapid Response Service within the grant scheme. This scheme allows local authorities to apply for funds to combat a specific issue that has arisen, which was not identified in the grant scheme. Grant money can be awarded within a matter of days to ensure an issue can be dealt with immediately. This service is most welcome and we intend to make use of it if the need arises.

## 6.0 Recommendation

6.1 It is recommended that this report is received for information.