

NORTH YORKSHIRE
LOCAL ACCESS FORUM

17 August 2006

Public Rights of Way Budget

1.0 PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

1.1 The purpose of the report is to provide details of current budget provision and expenditure on PROW in North Yorkshire outside the National Parks.

2.0 BACKGROUND

2.1 At a previous meeting of the Local Access Forum, members requested a report on the current level of funding available for public rights of way in North Yorkshire outside the National Parks. Details of the budget provision for the current year are set out in Appendix 1, together with the comparable figures for budget and out-turn in 2005/2006.

3.0 EXPENDITURE IN 2005/2006

3.1 Expenditure by the Area Rights of Way Officers on maintenance of the network in 2005/2006 amounted to £300.1k against a budget allocation of £241.3k. The increased spend was met from elsewhere within the PROW budget, e.g. from the CROW Act and LPSA budgets, as described below. In addition, a small sum was allocated to the Howardian Hills AONB to deal with some outstanding work following completion of the long running improvement programme. A further £89.9k was committed to infrastructure works connected to the open access programme, which attracted grant aid from the Countryside Agency. £104.5k of the final year's LPSA (Local Public Service Agreement) allocation was committed – the reduced LPSA spend on 'improvements' was counter-balanced by an increased spend on 'maintenance', as noted above. Similarly monies were vired from the CROW Act to support an increased spend on maintenance, to help meet the LPSA target.

4.0 BUDGET ALLOCATION IN 2006/2007

4.1 The base budget available for maintenance of the network in 2006/2007 amounts to £321.1k. This compares to £241.3k in 2005/2006, an increase of 33.1%. This 'above inflation' increase is due mainly to a 'one-off' allocation to offset loss of the LPSA funding which has been available to the service over the past three years, together with a small budgeted increase in income (for the Wolds Way in the Eastern Area). In line with normal practice, a core budget of £30-70k has been allocated to each area team, with the balance held centrally to be allocated later in the year depending on demand.

- 4.2 With the launch of the new open access rights in May 2005, most work on infrastructure improvements has now been completed. A small core budget of £14.4k remains and this will be used to attract external income, eg from the Countryside Agency, for any remaining follow up works that are necessary.
- 4.3 The CROW Act budget has decreased from £92.8k to £16.3k. This budget was originally established to fund a variety of commitments arising from the Countryside and Rights of Way Act such as the Rights of Way Improvement Plan and open access, some of which are now covered by other budget heads. The budget has been reduced in 2006/2007 to support the cost of the Countryside Volunteer Service (previously funded from LPSA monies) and as a contribution from the Countryside Service towards Directorate expenditure reductions.
- 4.4 Now that the Countryside Service has successfully achieved its LPSA target, the core funding available from the Government (£336k over 3 years) is no longer available. Although some compensatory funding has been made available in 2006/2007 only, as described above, the Service is aiming to maintain its high level of performance at existing levels within available resources.

5.0 RECOMMENDATIONS

It is recommended that the report be received for information

Contact Officer:
John Edwards
Head of Countryside Services
01609 532452

Public Rights of Way	2005/2006	2005/2006	2006/2007
'Project' Expenditure ¹	Out-turn ²	Original Budget	Original Budget
	£k	£k	£k
Northern Area Maintenance	62.3	30.0	33.9
Eastern Area Maintenance	101.0	30.0	45.8
Western Area Maintenance	42.0	50.0	67.8
Southern Area Maintenance	48.1	30.0	33.9
Central Maintenance ³	46.7	101.3	139.7
Total Area Maintenance	300.1	241.3	321.1
Howardian Hills PROW	7.7		
Open Access	89.9	88.1	14.4
Total Other Maintenance	97.6	88.1	14.4
CROW Act	56.4	92.8	16.3
LPSA	104.5	142.7	0.0
Volunteer Service	21.5		22.8
Total Miscellaneous	182.4	235.5	39.1
TOTAL ALL PROJECTS	580.1	564.9	374.6

¹ Excluding staffing and related expenditure and income

² Includes income from partner bodies eg Countryside Agency

³ Maintenance budget initially held centrally and then divided up between areas depending upon demand