

NORTH YORKSHIRE  
LOCAL ACCESS FORUM

17 August 2006

Achievements and Performance on Public Rights of Way  
2005/2006

1.0 Purpose Of Report

1.1 To provide details of Countryside Service achievements and performance relating to public rights of way

2.0 Introduction

2.1 At a previous meeting it was suggested that a copy of the Countryside Service Annual Report should be made available to the Local Access Forum to provide some basic information on work undertaken on public rights of way during the previous year. Although most of the detail of the Annual Report has been completed, the exact format has yet to be agreed. As an interim measure, extracts from the draft relating to public rights of way are enclosed in the Appendix.

3.0 Achievements and Performance

3.1 The Appendix contains a summary of the most significant achievements of the service during 2005/2006. It also lists up to date information on the main performance indicators used to monitor the work of the service.

3.2 The service is currently reviewing a range of possible future performance management measures for the work of the Public Rights of Way Section. A separate report on the agenda sets out proposals for prioritising reported problems on the network and an associated set of targets that could be used to measure performance. Other work is ongoing to establish procedures for providing more detailed quantitative data on service outputs. When available, these measures will enable progress to be measured more precisely and resources to be directed to where they are most needed.

3.3 The appendix gives details of performance against BVPI 178, the only national indicator relating to public rights of way. The results of the May 2006 survey are now available which, when combined with the forthcoming November survey, will provide the BVPI out-turn for 2006/2007. The up to date position, including data for the two National Parks and the area outside, is set out below.

BVPI 178	Length of PROW		Length easy to use km		easy to use %	
	2005	2006	2005	2006*	2005	2006*
<b>NYCC</b>	<b>6,013</b>	<b>6,013</b>	<b>4,625</b>	<b>4,269*</b>	<b>76.91</b>	<b>71.00*</b>
NYMNP	2,178	2,178	1,318	1,366*	60.50	62.72*
YDNP	1,860	1,860	1,562	1,538*	83.98	82.69*
	10,051	10,051	7,505	7,173*	74.67	71.37*

\* Data for May survey only

NYCC (Outside National Parks only)	easy to use %	easy to use %
	2005	2006
May	72.36	71.00
November	81.39	
Combined	<b>76.91</b>	

#### 4.0 Comments

4.1 I hope members will agree that the data contained in the appendix and the above tables demonstrates an impressive list of outputs and a steady trend towards improved performance. Although it is not possible to predict the likely BVPI out-turn for 2006, due to the random sampling approach adopted, data from the May survey suggest the service could well be on target to achieve a similar level of performance to last year. Should this be the case, it would be a credit to the staff involved, who are working hard to maintain performance without the benefit of the LPSA funding available over the last 3 years.

#### 5.0 Recommendation

5.1 To receive the report for information

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**COUNTRYSIDE SERVICE  
KEY ACHIEVEMENTS RELATING TO ACCESS  
2005/2006**

**PROVIDING A SAFE AND RELIABLE NETWORK OF PUBLIC RIGHTS OF WAY**

In 2004, the County Council entered into a **Local Public Service Agreement (LPSA)** with the Government. This provided an additional £120,000 per annum for three years to spend on the rights of way network, with the objective of improving the 'ease of use' of the rights of way network outside the National Parks to 75% by 2005/2006. This target was achieved in November 2005 and earned the County Council an additional £1m in performance reward grant:

**Countryside Service Performance**

**Target:**

*Ensure that at least 75% of public rights of way (outside the North York Moors and Yorkshire Dales National Parks) are easy to use*

	<b>LPSA Target</b>	<b>Countryside Service Performance</b>
<b>2002/2003</b>		44%
<b>2003/2004</b>	55%	48%
<b>2004/2005</b>	65%	55%
<b>2005/2006</b>	75%	77%

The extent to which the rights of way network is 'easy to use' is assessed twice a year in May and November by undertaking sample **BVPI surveys** of the network using standard criteria. Results for North Yorkshire are compiled through combining separate surveys of the network in the Yorkshire Dales and North York Moors National Park with surveys of the rest of the County area. The aggregate figure is used to assess the County Council's performance compared with other authorities elsewhere in the country.

### Countryside Service Performance

*Percentage of footpaths and public rights of way that are easy to use by the public  
(for the whole of North Yorkshire including the North York Moors and Yorkshire Dales National Parks)*

#### BVPI 178

	National Average 'Ease of Use'	Performance in North Yorkshire
2002/2003	65%	50%
2003/2004	62%	51%
2004/2005	66%	61%
2005/2006	n/a	75%

The County Council receives regular **reports from the public** on the condition of the public rights of way network. These are assessed and prioritised and works are then undertaken to address any problems reported. Since 2004/2005, the rate at which these and other problems are resolved has been regularly monitored:

### Countryside Service Performance

#### Target:

*Resolve 800 problems on the public rights of way network each quarter  
(3200 p.a)*

	Target	Performance
2004/2005	2,400	2,643
2005/2006	3,200	3,566

The Countryside Service is continuously looking at ways in which its public rights of way service to customers can be enhanced. To improve efficiency, and to help to meet its challenging targets, a number of **new initiatives** were introduced during 2005/2006:

#### In 2005/2006 to help the Public Rights of Way Section achieve performance targets:

- 4 new Rangers were appointed, one in each Area office
- Each of the Rangers was provided with a utility vehicle
- £150,000 additional funding was put into the service for maintenance and improvement
- A Modern Apprentice Team was formed in the Southern Area to help resolve problems
- 2 Employment Training Service Teams were used to resolve problems in the Northern and Eastern Areas
- 45 new Countryside Volunteers were recruited, many of whom helped with condition surveys and path improvements

The rights of way network contains a large number of **bridges** and culverts which are the responsibility of the County Council to maintain. Many smaller structures are replaced or repaired by the Countryside Service but larger bridges require specialist expertise and can be expensive. A rolling programme has been established in partnership with the Directorate Highways team to tackle some of the larger projects:

**In 2005/2006, Highways assisted in repairing or replacing a number of large bridges on the rights of way network at a total cost of £113,600:**

**Northern Area**

- Great Busby – old bridge removed and replaced
- Middleton-on-Leven – new bridge installed and 2 existing bridges replaced

**Western Area**

- Skew Bridge, Clapham - new bridge installed
- Addingham – Existing bridge re-decked and repaired

**Southern Area**

- Colber La, Harrogate – new bridge installed
- Linton-on-Ouse – new bridge erected adjacent to private structure

The County Council has a duty to maintain the **Definitive Map and Statement** for Public Rights of Way. The Countryside Service is progressively undertaking a complete review of the Definitive Map to ensure that it incorporates any 'Legal Events' made in previous years (e.g. for Diversion, Creation and Closure Orders):

**In 2005/2006 the Public Rights of Way Section published new Definitive Maps for:**

- Hambleton
- Richmondshire
- Scarborough urban area

Over the years, a large number of applications have been received from members of the public for changes to the Definitive Map e.g. on the basis of a claim for a new route or a claimed change in status from footpath to bridleway. New applications continue to be received. All previous applications have been prioritised and then, together with new applications, are processed as **Definitive Map Modification Orders** (DMMOs). These are investigated and then either resolved internally or sent to the Council's Legal Services team for an Order to be made. Prior to 2004, only small numbers of DMMOs were processed each year. Since then, following the introduction of new procedures, it has been possible to significantly increase performance and the number of DMMOs processed in 2005/2006 was nearly twice the number processed in the proceeding year.

## Countryside Service Performance

### Target:

**Resolve 40 DMMO applications each year (either resolve internally or send to Legal Services for Order/Agreement)**

	Target	Performance
2004/2005	70	15
2005/2006	40	29

Through processing DMMOs during 2005/2006, 9.4 km of new public rights of way were added to the Definitive Map

The Definitive Map and Statement is used regularly to provide **information to the public**; for consultations on planning applications and other developments; for legal statements on non-existence of access rights (Section 31 depositions) and for land charge searches:

### In 2005/2006 the Definitive Map was used to supply information for:

- 2,054 Land Charge Searches
- 20 Section 31 Depositions

## MANAGING AREAS OF OPEN ACCESS

The Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000 introduced a new public right of **access to open country** (unenclosed mountain, moor, heath, down and Common Land). The County Council has responsibility for over 36,900 ha of 'open access' land outside the two National Parks. Over the vast majority of this area, the new public access rights were introduced on 28 May 2005. The Countryside Service has been actively involved in helping to manage the new rights 'on the ground' both to ensure the public has sufficient information on where they can and cannot go and to minimise any problems for landowners:

### In 2005/2006 the Countryside Service:

- Launched the new public right of access to open country at Scar House Reservoir
- Published an Access Management Plan for North Yorkshire
- Trained and equipped 40 volunteers to warden open access areas in Nidderdale
- Completed 335 volunteer open access patrols to monitor usage
- Erected 29 information boards at key access points to open country
- Published and distributed 2 information leaflets explaining the new rights
- Reported to 4 meetings of the Local Access Forum on management and access restriction issues
- Attracted £36,000 in external funding support from the Countryside Agency for open access implementation

## ENCOURAGING HEALTHY SAFE OUTDOOR ACTIVITY

The Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000 placed a duty on the County Council to convene a **Local Access Forum (LAF)** for its area. The responsibilities of the Forum include advising the County Council on the development of access strategies, improving the rights of way network and implementation of the right of access to open country. Although the LAF is an independent body, Countryside Service staff play a key role in supporting the work of the Forum:

### **In 2005/2006, the Countryside Service supported the work of the North Yorkshire Local Access Forum by:**

- Convening 4 business meetings at Northallerton, Middlesmoor and Pateley Bridge
- Convening 2 additional joint meetings with neighbouring Open Access Forums
- Preparing an Annual Report on the business of the Forum for 2004/2005
- Advertising for and recruiting 6 new Forum members in May 2005
- Providing a £2,500 contribution towards the work of the Forum

### **During 2005/2006 the North Yorkshire Local Access Forum received reports from the Countryside Service on**

- Development of the Rights of Way Improvement Plan
- Management of open access
- Information on public rights of way and public path orders
- Consultations from DEFRA and the Countryside Agency
- Improvements to the work of the Forum

The Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000 also placed a duty on the County Council to publish a **Rights of Way Improvement Plan** by November 2007. Work is being progressed through a Steering Group of partners and with guidance from the three Local Access Forums:

### **In 2005/2006, progress was made towards preparing a Rights of Way Improvement Plan for North Yorkshire by:**

- Preparing a policy statement for inclusion in the Local Transport Plan
- Undertaking an assessment of network condition and opportunities for improvement
- Convening a workshop of partners to evaluate the network assessment
- Holding 1 meeting of steering group partners
- Reporting to 4 meetings of the North Yorkshire Local Access Forum
- Convening a seminar of neighbouring Local Access Forums to advise on access related issues
- Completing condition surveys of the network outside National Parks for 58% of Parish Councils

## PROMOTING OPPORTUNITIES FOR COUNTRYSIDE VOLUNTEERS

A new **Countryside Volunteer Service** was established in November 2004 to help support the work of the Countryside Service. Following recruitment, volunteers are provided with appropriate training and protective equipment and are then invited to 'sign up' to the service in exchange for various commitments from the County Council:

### Countryside Service Performance

#### Target:

#### Total number of Countryside Volunteers

	Target	Performance
2004/2005	50	91
2005/2006	100	136

Priority during the first few years of the Countryside Volunteer Service is being given to improving the public rights of way network and managing open access. In the longer term, there is scope for expanding the service to support a wider range of heritage and countryside management tasks:

### In 2005/2006 Countryside Volunteers supported the service in a wide variety of ways:

#### Rights of Way Surveys

- 762 volunteer days devoted to condition surveys of the rights of way network

#### Managing Open Access

- 519 volunteer days devoted to open access patrols

#### Improving rights of way

- 374 volunteer days devoted to practical rights of way improvement projects

#### Historic heritage

- 31 volunteer days devoted to restoration of historic buildings at risk
- 10 volunteer days helping with the Historic Environment Record

#### Guided Walks

- 24 volunteer days devoted to guided walks

## HELPING THE UNEMPLOYED BACK INTO WORK

To help meet its challenging public rights of way targets during 2005/2006, the Countryside Service made use of the services of a number of **direct works teams** to tackle some of the larger improvement projects. These included a Modern Apprentice Team employed by the City of York Council and managed by the Southern Area public rights of way team. It also included two North Yorkshire Works Teams employed under the Employment Training Scheme and contracted to assist with work for the Eastern Area public rights of way team:



**In 2005/2006 the Countryside Service provided practical training and work experience for several teams working on the public rights of way network, including:**

- A Modern Apprentice team of 4 completed 97 team days in Selby, Hambleton, Harrogate and Ryedale
- An Employment Training Scheme team of 6 completed 152 team days in Scarborough
- An Employment Training Scheme team of 6 completed 36 team days in Hambleton

## **PROMOTING THE SERVICE TO A WIDE AUDIENCE**

The Countryside Service is seeking to promote its work to a wider audience and to achieve a higher profile with its customers and the general public. In 2005/2006, a number of **promotional initiatives** have been taken to achieve this objective:

**In 2005/2006 the Countryside Service:**

- Established a Publicity Group to co-ordinate the promotion of the Service
- Promoted the work of the service at the Ryedale, Nidderdale and Great Yorkshire Shows
- Purchased a mobile display unit to expand promotion of the service at agricultural shows around the County
- Commissioned design guidance to provide an identifiable Countryside Service publicity brand
- Released 9 press releases to promote the work of the service
- Developed criteria to guide the production of a new series of local walks leaflets