

North Yorkshire
Local Access Forum

22 November 2007

Open Access – Links to Isolated Areas

1.0 Purpose of the report

- 1.1 The purpose of the report is to update members on the area of work around identifying and addressing problems relating to the lack of access to areas of Open Access Land

2.0 Introduction

- 2.1 In May 2006 the Access Officer reported on a proposed system for prioritising isolated areas for action based on the following criteria:

- Potential improvement to the rights of way network
- Amenity of the area of land
- Environmental sensitivity of the land
- Accessibility by public transport
- Local factors
- Public demand

- 2.2 Following the departure of the Access Officer and subsequent loss of the specialist role, slow progress has been made on carrying out the site assessments required to score and prioritise areas for action

3.0 Progress

- 3.1 A full site survey on those inaccessible sites in the Yorkshire Wolds has been carried out by volunteers from the Ramblers Association. This survey also encompassed already accessible areas and recorded known access points and signage allowing a full picture to be built up.

- 3.2 Work has yet to commence on the remainder of Access Land in the County, which is mainly in the Nidderdale AONB. Once this work is complete a comprehensive prioritisation exercise can be carried out and an action plan prepared.

4.0 Proposed Action

- 4.1 Following the restructure within the Public Rights of way section, responsibility for progressing this work lies with the PROW Officer with special responsibility for Open Access.

- 4.2 Unfortunately this officer is currently on long term sick leave with little prospect of returning to work in the immediate future, leaving this area of work temporarily without resource.

- 4.3 In order to make some progress the PROW Team Leader and volunteer Co-ordinator have recruited a team of volunteers to undertake surveying of the outstanding areas, which will allow the collation of a full dataset on which to prioritise.
- 4.4 Options are currently under investigation for carrying forward those areas which are a priority. This may involve the use of volunteer resource to carry forward the work programme, supported by the PROW Team Leader where technical and legal expertise are required.

5.0 Conclusion

- 5.1 Whilst a method for prioritising isolated areas for action has been developed, there is a need to complete the collation of data in order to carry out the prioritisation exercise.
- 5.2 The data collection exercise will be completed by a team of volunteers, allowing the prioritisation process to take place.
- 5.3 Whilst there is currently insufficient staff resource to carry any action plan forward, there may be an opportunity for interested volunteers to become involved, supported where appropriate by Staff.

6.0 Recommendations

- 6.1 It is recommended that members receive this report for information.

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