

NORTH YORKSHIRE
NORTH YORKSHIRE LOCAL ACCESS FORUM

24TH NOVEMBER 2011

RESTRUCTURING THE NORTH YORKSHIRE ACCESS CONSULTATIVE
GROUPS

1.0 PURPOSE OF REPORT

1.1 This paper proposes to expand the membership of the Local Access Forum, and to recruit additional members up to the maximum allowed by Defra's guidance for LAFs.

2.0 BACKGROUND

2.1 Proposals to rationalise the access consultative arrangements have been presented to the Local Access Forum and to the North Yorkshire Rights of Way Liaison Group.

2.2 At the LAF meeting on 8th September 2011, members agreed in principle to proposals that would see the Local Access Forum continuing to deliver strategic/North Yorkshire-wide advice, whilst the central Rights of Way Liaison Group would cease to function. Under those proposals, the 3 existing local Rights of Way liaison groups would carry on with their function in considering operational delivery on-the-ground and ad hoc meetings that bring together user groups with the council would also continue.

2.3 Following the small handful of comments received, the decision has been taken to cease the operation of the Rights of Way Liaison Group as proposed, on the basis that there is significant overlap and duplication between the business and membership of central and local liaison group business. In addition much of the original purpose of the central liaison group is being now being performed by the Local Access Forum. Continuing the current arrangements is not sustainable.

3.0 LOCAL ACCESS FORUM MEMBERSHIP

3.1 As a result of the discontinuation of the Rights of Way Liaison Group it is now proposed to take the opportunity to expand the Local Access Forum to the maximum allowed by Defra's guidance. This would provide the opportunity for some of the members of the Liaison Group to contribute to the Local Access Forum's discussions.

- 3.2 The North Yorkshire LAF currently has a total membership of 18. This proposal would see the membership rise to 22, which is the maximum allowed in Defra's guidance.
- 3.3 There are currently 5 vacancies. If the increase in size of the LAF is approved there would therefore be 9 vacancies to fill on the forum.
- 3.4 There remains a need to sustain a balance between user groups, landowning/occupying interests, and other representatives. Taking into account the current balance of LAF members, of the 9 vacancies, 3 would be open to user group representatives, 3 to owner/occupier interests and 3 for other representatives.
- 3.5 Informal soundings have already been made with the members of the Rights of Way Liaison Group in terms of potential members that might be put forward for the LAF. A formal recruitment exercise would need to take place for the vacancies that exist on the LAF, but the outcome of these informal soundings provides a useful start point.

4.0 LOCAL ACCESS FORUM BUSINESS

- 4.1 The vast majority of matters that the Rights of Way Liaison group has considered have also been the subject of discussion within the LAF. There is not an immediate need to radically transform the business of the LAF but members are invited to comment on this.

5.0 RECOMMENDATION

- 8.1 Members are asked to;
- Endorse the expansion of the Local Access Forum membership to a maximum of 22 people and that the normal recruitment process take place to fill the 9 vacancies that would therefore exist.
 - Consider and comment upon the business of the LAF to ensure it provides the most efficient mechanism for providing county-wide advice and consultation relating to access issues in the light of the expansion of the forum membership.

CONTACT OFFICER

Richard Walker

Head of Countryside Service

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richard.walker@northyorks.gov.uk