

NORTH YORKSHIRE  
LOCAL ACCESS FORUM

WEDNESDAY 29<sup>th</sup> FEBRUARY 2012

SPONSORSHIP OF PUBLIC RIGHTS OF WAY

## 1.0 PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

- 1.1 This report outlines the opportunities available for sponsorship of the public rights of way network.

## 2.0 KEY AREAS FOR CONSIDERATION

- 2.1 The following areas have been considered in terms of suitability for attracting some form of sponsorship:

- Signage
- Structures
- Surfacing
- Promotional literature

## 3.0 SIGNAGE

- 3.1 As Highway Authority the County Council is responsible for the provision of signage at the roadside and general waymarking on the network where it is necessary.
- 3.2 In managing this undertaking we currently use timber fingerposts and plastic waymark discs. There is potential to include named sponsors within both types of sign.
- 3.3 Whilst many private enterprises are exercising caution with advertising budgets in the current economic climate, there is potential in seeking a reduction in cost in return for permitting the display of the manufacturers' details on the signage.
- 3.4 There is also potential for the non-manufacturer sponsorship of these items.

## 4.0 STRUCTURES

- 4.1 The majority of gaps, gates and stiles on the network are the property of landowners and it would therefore not be in the remit of the Highway Authority to enter into sponsorship arrangements

specifically on these structures without the involvement of individual landowners.

4.2 Bridges are however within the ownership of the Highway Authority and therefore sponsorship agreements would be a possibility.

4.3 An area for consideration in respect of gates and stiles is bequests. Bucks County Council have run a 'donate a gate' scheme for a number of years whereby donors nominate a gate location, material and plaque and cover the costs. The County Council then commit to matching the donation – over the last three years Bucks estimate that over £25000 worth of income has been generated and over 300 gates replaced with stiles. The scheme is managed by the Chilterns society.

## 5.0 SURFACING

5.1 As the Highway Authority have control of the surface of a right of way it is possible that sponsorship of surfacing treatments is an option.

## 6.0 PROMOTIONAL LITERATURE

6.1 We currently publish many walks leaflets and guides ranging from one off short walks to long distance trails. Details are available in both electronic (via the website) and hard copy (via County Hall and Tourist Information Centres) formats.

6.2 Within these guides there is potential to publicise details of businesses, particularly local providers who may have a service to offer users as part of a sponsorship arrangement.

## 7.0 GENERAL CONSIDERATIONS

7.1 There is currently no identified demand from business to utilise sponsorship budgets on opportunities the rights of way network can offer. Research would need to be undertaken to better understand the potential market.

7.2 Where it is in our gift to enter into arrangements on elements of the network a legally compliant mechanism would need to be adopted. further research into legislative requirements is required.

7.3 Any scheme would need to raise sufficient funds to cover the costs of researching and identifying it before any additional benefit is seen.

## 8.0 CONCLUSIONS

- 8.1 Significant resource input is required to establish demand and market conditions for a general sponsorship scheme and to determine the legal framework within which it would need to operate.
- 8.2 Significant resource would be required to initiate and administer any scheme.
- 8.3 Currently the area of sponsorship of the network does not offer sufficient realistic benefits to justify the re-allocation of officer resource as a dedicated project.
- 8.4 The option of seeking a reduction in materials supply costs in return for the display of the suppliers details on the product is a potential 'quick win' which will be taken forward.
- 8.5 Bequests are sometimes made to us as Highway Authority and there is potential to harness and promote this opportunity in the same way that Bucks have with their 'donate a gate' scheme. Further consideration will be given to a scheme of this nature for North Yorkshire.

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