

NORTH YORKSHIRE  
LOCAL ACCESS FORUM

THURSDAY 19<sup>th</sup> MAY 2011

RECORD OF ACTIONS

1.0 PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

1.1 This report contains a record of those actions completed following the November meeting of the Forum.

2.0 ACTIONS COMPLETED

2.1 Response sent by the Chair to DEFRA regarding the possible inclusion of LAFs on the proposed Forestry Panel (Appendix 1, 2 & 3)

3.0 RECOMMENDATION

3.1 It is recommended that members receive this report for information

Contact:  
John Taylor  
Chairman

## APPENDIX 1

From: John Taylor [<mailto:john@cjtaylor.net>]  
Sent: 16 March 2011 12:16  
To: '[Ruth.Sanders@defra.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:Ruth.Sanders@defra.gsi.gov.uk)'  
Subject: LAF input to PFE etc

Dear Ruth

I am chairman of the North Yorkshire LAF and want to comment on your recent message regarding LAF input to the proposed Forestry Panel.

I am aware that some difficulties seem to exist between DEFRA, Natural England and the England Access Forum (EAF) that has resulted in a lack of communication in both directions. I'm therefore not sure if your message is a way of by-passing this political stalemate or if you are perhaps unaware of this current completely unacceptable situation that has significantly reduced the ability of LAFs to present any sort of voice to government?

It is certainly encouraging to the frustrated LAFs that DEFRA does want to see LAFs included somehow within the Panel.

Your thoughts on the different ways of achieving this are interesting but I would suggest that LAFs should be represented directly.

LAFs are of course statutory bodies set up for exactly this type of activity so should perhaps be the first organisation to be called on when this type of situation arises.

However one of the problems within the LAF structure is the simple fact that the LAFs are operating in vastly different geographical areas and are advising on very different situations. This becomes apparent in our Regional meetings where we have strictly urban LAFs, National Park LAFs and rural LAFs such as North Yorkshire. In North Yorkshire we have no large cities but do have forestry of various types. Obviously it is interesting to learn of the different LAF activities within our Region but in reality the problems we face and the objectives we are trying to achieve are really different. I think this does make it quite difficult to formulate a national LAF view.

I personally think that this difficulty may have stopped EAF, as a non statutory body, to be recognised as being able to represent such widely different problems and views?

Obviously this Panel has to result eventually in some sort of policy that is generally acceptable. This does mean that the Panel should include the moderate but pragmatic view of rights of way and access that recognises the longer term situation.

I am conscious that I could waffle on for ever on this subject and am not sure of any timescale you are working towards.

However to be practical I am concerned about the Forestry situation and would certainly be willing to get more involved in whatever way would be of help. I do not have any allegiance to any pressure groups and do believe that in all access and rights of ways issues a negotiated solution is often possible.

A consensus on the forestry problem is possible and because of the political fallout is now essential.

Best Regards

John Taylor

## APPENDIX 2

From: John Taylor [<mailto:john@cjtaylor.net>]  
Sent: 19 March 2011 18:01  
To: '[Ruth.Sanders@defra.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:Ruth.Sanders@defra.gsi.gov.uk)'  
Subject: Forestry Commission Panel

Ruth

Further to my response last week to your message to the LAFs, it was a bit disappointing to find out both that the make up of the panel had effectively already been decided and who has been included has now been published.

I hope you will understand that the high level of frustration already existing within the LAFs can only increase.

Of course it is accepted that there will be differences of opinion surrounding the make-up of the panel but as one example the inclusion of the Ramblers Association instead of the LAFs is difficult to understand.

The Ramblers Association is well and enthusiastically represented in many LAFs. However their objective is certainly not to encourage access for the widest range of ROW users but to promote their own members interests, often in conflict with both other user groups and land owners. As you will appreciate the LAFs provide a far wider user and land owner representation with the objective of promoting ROWs at the most inclusive level practical. Many users of forestry land are missing from this panel that are found within the LAFs. The general public who actually opposed the original government proposals are not represented within this panel at all.

Ok the panel will come up with the 'right' answer but it may not receive public acceptance?

It does though really force the issue of the future of the LAFs. They are statutory bodies and logic dictates that their 'democratic' make-up would ensure inclusion somehow within the panel rather than the non representative groups appointed.

However I think DEFRA (and NE) need to be positive about the situation and realise that the current LAF organisation cannot really continue. It may well be that the time has come to do away with the LAFs altogether. We are all volunteers giving up valuable spare time or earning potential and it is now becoming increasingly difficult to maintain general membership once the current position of LAFs is understood.

A decision needs to be made as to whether LAFs continue to exist or not.

Best Regards

John Taylor, Chairman, North Yorkshire LAF

## APPENDIX 3

From: John Taylor [<mailto:john@cjtaylor.net>]  
Sent: 08 April 2011 11:32  
To: 'Ruth.Sanders@defra.gsi.gov.uk'  
Subject: LAFs and Forestry Panel

Ruth

Following my recent responses to your earlier messages I wonder if any progress has been made regarding a LAF input to the Panel.

As I have hopefully indicated the main thrust of public opinion causing the re-think was really all about access which is effectively ignored in the Panel makeup!

Obviously with the Ministers recent communication to LAF Chairman and his proposal to communicate to us via NE the situation is as confused as ever?

Obviously comments from DEFRA on the results of your investigation and indeed the involvement of LAFs will be very welcome.

Best Regards

John Taylor

Chairman, North Yorkshire Local Access Forum