

**North Yorkshire Local Access Forum****6 July 2016****Local Access Forum Principles and Advice****Report of the Secretary****1.0 Purpose of the Report**

- 1.1 To seek the Forum's confirmation of position statements relating to Local Access Forum Principles and advice to District Councils.

**2.0 Background**

- 2.1 In the past, the Local Access Forum has developed position statements in relation to LAF principles, and advice to District Councils. This is in line with good practice set out in the Defra Guidance on Local Access Forums in England, particularly in relation to responding to section 94(4) bodies when advice is required between meetings.
- 2.2 The LAF principles were last formally agreed by the Local Access Forum on 5 June 2013. The advice to District Councils was last formally minuted as being considered by the Forum on 20 October 2011.
- 2.3 The Chair has requested that the Forum be asked formally to agree the attached documents for future use.

**3.0 Recommendation**

- 3.1 That members agree the attached position statements relating to North Yorkshire Local Access Forum Principles and Advice to District Councils as Section 94 (4) bodies.

BARRY KHAN  
Assistant Chief Executive (Legal and Democratic Services)  
County Hall  
NORTHALLERTON

Report author: Kate Arscott, Secretary to North Yorkshire Local Access Forum

**Background Documents:** None

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# NORTH YORKSHIRE LOCAL ACCESS FORUM

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Local Access Forums perform a statutory function and all section 94(4) bodies are required under section 94(5) of the CROW Act 2000 to 'have regard in carrying out their functions to any relevant advice given to them' by a Forum. Reflecting the directives given to forums, the North Yorkshire LAF has drawn up a set of principles which now underpin their work and advice.

- Any new access should be at the highest rights practicable
- All rights of way should be maintained to the standard required and, where needed, upgraded physically and legally to a higher standard
- The Forum will work to see rights of way developed to redress the fragmentation of the network, connect communities and improve links to places of demand
- The Forum will work to develop more access opportunities to include the widest possible range of users, especially families, children, minority groups and the less able
- The Forum seeks the establishment of an annual budget to fund the fulfilling of the Rights of Way Improvement Plan (RoWIP)
- Whilst the creation of all access is welcome, the Forum stresses that permissive (temporary) access does not equate with the public benefit of definitive (permanent) access
- The Forum wishes to raise awareness of how different users can enjoy responsible sharing of routes where appropriate, whilst supporting challenges to illegal use
- The Forum recognises the establishment and challenges of new initiatives such as coastal access, access to water, access to woodland and the dedication of land for public access

The above may be summarised simply as:

**The Forum seeks to maximise every opportunity for improved access, providing safer non-motorised journeys for the widest range of users practicable.**

The Forum welcomes consultation from all section 94(4) bodies or others who feel they might benefit from discussion with them. For further information please contact the chair through the Secretary to the Forum, Kate Arscott: [kate.arscott@northyorks.gov.uk](mailto:kate.arscott@northyorks.gov.uk) 01609 532834

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## Advice to District Councils as Sec.94 (4) bodies

Whilst each District will have different priorities within its Local Plan, the North Yorkshire Local Access Forum, in accordance with its statutory remit under sec. 94(5) of the CROW Act 2000, recommends the following points, which it hopes will be reflected by every District Council:

- The Forum advises that Good Practice in planning matters will incorporate connections for non-motorised users to local services and the rights of way network whenever possible. Such routes should be multi-user, if practicable, to encourage sustainable travel.
- That new sites provide informal as well as formal green space.
- That Local Plans reflect the objectives of NYCC's Rights of Way Improvement Plan and the Local Transport Plan.
- That Councils identify popular rights of way so they can put measures in places to enhance them and ensure their sustainability.
- That Councils seek opportunities to remedy missing links in a fragmented network to encourage healthy and sustainable travel.
- Councils should take advantage of Community Infrastructure Levy, Sec.106 arrangements, minerals tax and windfarm contribution to invest in initiatives and improvements for access.
- That Councils recognise the value of strong partnership with NYCC's rights of way department to promote the benefits accruing from a useful network of public paths.

These can be loosely summarised in the advice 'that all planning applications, should be considered from the Access point of view, to ensure opportunities for access are included'. Once missed, it is unlikely they can be added at a future date.

The Forum welcomes engagement. Contact can either be made through your named LAF member or through the LAF secretary, Kate Arscott at North Yorkshire County Council: [kate.arscott@northyorks.gov.uk](mailto:kate.arscott@northyorks.gov.uk) 01609 532834