

## North Yorkshire Local Access Forum

Minutes of the meeting held in The Brierley Room, County Hall, Northallerton on 6 July 2016, commencing at 10 am

### **Present**

David Barraclough, Michael Bartholomew, George Bateman, Doug Cartwright, Rachel Connolly, County Councillor John Fort BEM, David Gibson, County Councillor Robert Heseltine, County Councillor David Jeffels, Barrie Mouny, Sue Raper, Paul Sherwood and Richard Smith

Officers: Ian Kelly, Sheila Laking, Allan McVeigh, Neil Leighton (Business and Environmental Services) and Kate Arscott (Legal and Democratic Services, Secretary to the Local Access Forum)

### **121 Apologies for absence**

Apologies for absence were received from Tom Halstead.

The Secretary informed members of the resignation of John Ainsworth.

### **122 Minutes of the meeting held on 4 February 2016**

**Resolved** – That the minutes of the meeting held on 4 February 2016 be agreed as a correct record and be signed by the Chair.

### **123 Matters Arising**

With reference to the Schools and Education Project, County Councillor David Jeffels reported that he had met with the Assistant Director - Waste and Countryside Services to discuss the project. He reiterated his commitment to assist with progressing the project now that his period of Chairmanship of the County Council had finished and he would have more time available.

It was agreed that the Chair, Councillor Jeffels and the Secretary would meet with the appropriate officer from Children and Young People's Services to progress the issue.

Sue Raper reported that she had discussed work with schools with the Howardian Hills Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) team. They had confirmed that, notwithstanding funding cuts, they continued to carry out a lot of work with schools.

### **124 Public Questions or Statements**

There were no public questions or statements.

### **125 Increasing the Use of Volunteers and Strategic Partners to Assist with the Delivery of the Countryside Access Service**

The Forum considered a report of the Assistant Director – Waste and Countryside Services setting out how the County Council is using volunteers and strategic partners to assist with the delivery of the Countryside Access Service. The report included a review of the recommendations made by a sub group of the Local Access Forum in February 2015, together with a summary of future plans to expand the role of volunteers and strategic delivery partners.

Ian Kelly, Countryside Access Manager, and Sheila Laking, Volunteer Co-ordinator, attended the meeting to present the report and respond to Members' questions. They stressed their commitment to maximising the use of volunteers where possible, but that the context had changed as outlined in the report.

The Forum acknowledged that the authority faced increased constraints in using volunteers compared to the situation in the past, with regard to health and safety matters and liaison with landowners. Officers reassured members that they sought to take a pragmatic approach and not to be overly restrictive.

They were also limited by the reduced level of resources available to manage volunteers in the field on tasks where this was required. Given the limited resources, going forward it was important to channel volunteer efforts into priority areas of work. It was recognised that this could be difficult for some potential volunteers to understand, if they were wanting to help in an area that was not judged as a priority.

The role of recognised groups was discussed. Officers confirmed that it was helpful where such groups have their own insurance and risk assessments etc. However, liability for the work undertaken would still ultimately rest with the Council.

A meeting was taking place later in the day with the Lower Wharfedale Ramblers group to discuss a pilot scheme, which had the potential to be rolled out if successful. Richard Smith confirmed that he was hoping that a model could be developed for North Yorkshire, building on an existing partnership the group already had in place.

It was noted that a group Doug Cartwright was involved with would be interested in this option for the future and may also have some funding available. Other groups may also wish to come forward with self-funded proposals, once the initial pilot has been set up and assessed.

Members were also reminded that some Parish Councils still employed local caretakers or similar roles, and that there may be opportunities to build on this resource.

Overall, the Forum welcomed the report and the willingness on all sides to take a flexible approach to the use of volunteers and resources to maximise impact on the rights of way network. It was agreed to request a progress report in six months' time.

**Resolved** – That the Forum receives a further progress report in six months' time.

## **126 Position Statement – Unsurfaced Unclassified Roads (UUR) in North Yorkshire**

The Forum considered a statement summarising the current position with regard to the management of Unsurfaced Unclassified Roads (UURs) in North Yorkshire, including details of the current operational management process; longer term management options; and an internal pilot project regarding management arrangements for UURs being trialled in the Scarborough Borough area.

Allan McVeigh, Network Strategy Manager, and Neil Leighton, Team Leader Network Management, attend the meeting to present the document and respond to members' questions. They invited comments from the Forum on the document. They also stressed that requests regarding individual routes are considered on a case by case basis.

Members of the Forum broadly welcomed the document as a useful outline of the current position, acknowledging the challenges that officers faced in the light of increasing recreational use and restricted resources.

Members raised a range of issues in discussion with officers, including:

- Methods of measuring levels of use both before and after in order to assess the effectiveness of voluntary restraints
- Ways of differentiating directional use in measuring the impact of one way voluntary restraints
- Work with user groups to support voluntary restraint, and dismay at those who choose to disregard such initiatives
- The relative merits and costs of temporary and permanent Traffic Regulation Orders
- Confirmation that the Police are consulted on proposals for Traffic Regulation Orders
- Difficulties that can be caused for walkers and cyclists where crushed stone was used for repairs
- Exemptions for local and emergency access
- Work undertaken, for example with timber extraction companies, to limit the damage caused by vehicles and to encourage restoration
- A commitment to review the current pilot project before deciding whether to roll it out

**Resolved** – That the position statement be noted.

#### **127 Position Statement – List of Streets, Local Street Gazetteer and Definitive Map**

The Forum considered a statement summarising the position with regard to the different requirements on the Local Authority to keep a List of Streets, Local Street Gazetteer and Definitive Map and Statement. The statement also included information on the Local Land and Property Gazetteer, Street Works Register and Ordnance Survey.

Allan McVeigh, Network Strategy Manager, and Neil Leighton, Team Leader Network Management, attended the meeting to present the document and respond to members' questions.

Members discussed the various uses of the different resources, including their relevance to the recording of public rights of way by 2026 covered under the next agenda item. They asked about possible access to the Local Street Gazetteer for those Forum members who may be interested.

**Resolved** – That the position statement be noted and that the Secretary clarifies the route for LAF members to access the Local Street Gazetteer.

#### **128 Recording of Public Rights of Way within the Definitive Map and Statement by 2026**

The Forum considered a report of the Assistant Director – Waste and Countryside Services. The report provided a summary of the County Council's position in respect to recording of public rights of way within the Definitive Map and Statement by 2026, as requested by the LAF. It also provided an update on the national position and the delayed publication of regulations to implement the 2026 'cut-off date'. The report confirmed that no specific local authority strategy would be devised until there is greater clarity on the Regulations, although some steps had been taken in preparation of anticipated changes.

Ian Kelly, Countryside Access Manager, and Penny Noake, Principal Definitive Map Officer, attended the meeting to present the report and respond to Members' questions.

Members thanked officers for the update and shared some of their own concerns about the huge amount of work still to be carried out by both local authorities and other interested parties in preparing and responding to applications for including public rights of way in the Definitive Map and Statement by the 'cut-off date'.

**Resolved** – That the report be noted.

## 129 **Secretary's Update Report**

The Secretary presented an update since the last meeting of the Forum, covering the following issues:

- Consultation responses
- Feedback from last meeting on Countryside Access Service Review
- Notification of Open Access restrictions
- National conference and regional meeting
- LAF newsletter and Huddle
- Local Development Plans
- Working Group report
- England Coast Path

The Forum noted the position with regard to the preparation of Local Development Plans by District Councils. A correction was noted with regard to the position in Richmondshire, that the Core Strategy has been adopted as opposed to the Local Development Plan.

The Forum noted that a number of consultations were scheduled to take place between this meeting and the next meeting of the LAF in October. Arrangements were agreed for preparing a response from the LAF to these consultations.

The working group report referred to in paragraph 2.10 of the report was circulated at the meeting. The Forum agreed to the proposal in paragraph 2.5 of the report with regard to collating planning notification and consultation processes for each of the various planning authorities within the LAF area.

**Resolved** – (a) That the report be noted.

(b) That the relevant District Council liaison representative be authorised to work with the Chair and Secretary of the Forum to prepare a draft response on behalf of the LAF to the Local Development Plan consultations anticipated to take place over the summer of 2016 as set out in paragraph 2.8 of the report. This would then be circulated for consultation by the Secretary and a formal LAF response submitted by the Secretary to meet the deadlines for each consultation, assuming that this is before the LAF meeting on 12 October 2016.

(c) That the Secretary collates information on the planning notification and consultation processes for each of the various planning authorities within the LAF area for circulation to LAF members.

## 130 **Local Access Forum Annual Review**

The Forum considered a report of the Secretary presenting the draft annual review form which was required to be submitted to Natural England by 31 July 2016.

It was noted that the membership of the forum should read 18 members including 2 vacancies. Members confirmed the category of Local Access Forum membership they considered they fell into for inclusion in the review.

It was suggested that the influence of the sub group work on the report on volunteering considered earlier in the agenda should be added to the list of achievements.

It was also suggested that it be noted that the Forum was awaiting further information from the government with regard to the 2026 deadline in order to develop its own strategy.

**Resolved** – That the Secretary amend the draft to reflect the comments made at the meeting, and submit the annual review to Natural England to meet the deadline of 31 July 2016.

### 131 Local Access Forum Principles and Advice

The Forum considered a report of the Secretary seeking formal confirmation of updated position statements relating to Local Access Forum Principles and advice to District Councils.

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

### 132 District Council Updates

The Forum considered a report of the Secretary providing an update on liaison with District Councils. The report included information on liaison with Hambleton, Richmondshire and Selby District Councils. Richard Smith confirmed his intention to make contact with Harrogate Borough Council. The Chair emphasised the value of face to face contact in developing good relationships.

**Resolved** – That the updates on liaison with District Councils be noted.

### 133 Forward Plan

The Forum considered a report of the Secretary inviting members to identify items of business for future meetings.

Members agreed to the Chair's suggestion that an item on cycling should be included on the agenda for the next meeting.

Members also requested a further update on progress with the Countryside Access Service Review at the next meeting, with particular reference to the areas identified in the final bullet point of paragraph 2.2 of the Secretary's Update Report.

Members confirmed their support for the strategic use of working groups to be commissioned to progress priority issues between formal meetings.

Members were invited to inform the Chair and Secretary of any further proposed issues for future meetings.

**Resolved** – That the issues identified during the meeting and recorded in the minutes be incorporated into the Forum's Forward Plan.

**134 Date of Next Meeting**

The next meeting of the Local Access Forum will be held on Wednesday 12 October 2016 at 10 am.

The meeting concluded at 12.10pm.

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