

North Yorkshire County Council

North Yorkshire Local Access Forum

Minutes of the remote meeting held on Wednesday, 28th September 2022 commencing at 10.00 am.

Paul Sherwood in the Chair, plus County Councillors Will Scarlett, Nick Abbey, Dick Brew, Rachel Connolly, Roma Haigh, Graham Lampkin, David Lepper, Kath Topping, Julia Winterburn, Cllr Robert Heseltine and Cllr David Jeffels.

Officers present: Ian Kelly and Arrietty Heath.

Apologies: Kath Topping

Copies of all documents considered are in the Minute Book

11 Introductions & Apologies for Absence

The Chair welcomed the attendance of three new members of the Forum, and confirmed apologies had been received from Kath Topping.

12 Minutes of the Meeting held on 1 June 2022

Resolved - That the Minutes of the meeting held on 1 June 2022 be agreed as a correct record and signed by the Chair, subject to a number of typo corrections identified by the Chair at the meeting as follows:

Minute 6 - paragraph 1 should have read '.....the Tontine and Black Swan Junctions'.

Minute 7 – 7th bullet point should have read De-regulation and not Re-regulation.

Minute 8 – paragraph 2 should have read '....Local Government Reorganisation (LGR)'

13 Public Questions & Statements

There were no public questions or statements.

14 Secretary's Update Report

Considered –

The report of the Secretary, which updated on developments since the last meeting. Attention was drawn to the update on the Local Transport Plan provided by Louise Neale, Transport Planning Team Leader.

The Chair confirmed the next meeting of the Regional Forum would be held on 8 March 2023.

Resolved – That the update be noted.

15 Local Government Review - Verbal Update

Karl Battersby, Corporate Director for Business & Environmental Services provided a detailed verbal update on the ongoing work in regard to Local Government Reorganisation (LGR). He confirmed that progress on delivery was good with no red flags, and went on to highlight:

- The recent appointment of a Chief Executive Officer and the imminent publication of his new Council structure, together with the ongoing formal process to appoint his management board and Assistant Directors;
- The ongoing preparations for day one and the challenge of being safe and legal as from vesting day, with 6,500 items on the list;
- The 17 different officer work streams in place alongside 7 member working groups;
- That as of day 1, the existing planning departments across the county would still be in place;
- New branding would be agreed and introduced in stages;
- Post day 1, work would be required to identify service efficiencies and improvements, with the aim of achieving consistency across the county;
- The ongoing staff roadshows on TUPE and the work to evaluate job roles and terms and conditions of employment across all the District / Borough Councils;
- The significant staffing difficulties in some service areas, e.g. Planning, and the ongoing work to evaluate jobs in those service areas most effected, to enable recruitment to commence;
- The importance of retaining the good staff in District / Borough Councils;
- Consideration of the future of the Highways teams and the areas they covered;
- Consideration of the future work of the Area Constituency Committees ensuring they maximise localism opportunities;
- The review of all Local Authority real estate across the county ensuring it was the right size and fit for purpose;
- The development of an economic strategy for the whole county, and other key policies e.g. an Affordable Housing Policy;
- The intention to have a Main Planning Committee that could meet in the locality of a major planning application;
- A devolution deal would bring £18m a year and see the election of a combined Mayor and PFCC role;

Members noted the expectation that there would be improved coordination between the Planning, Highways and Countryside Access Service team, once those services were all under the control of one Authority. The also noted the opportunities it would bring for significant savings and improved localism.

County Councillor David Jeffels drew attention to the ongoing 'Let's Talk' initiative to communicate the LGR aims and priorities and the ongoing work to deliver them. He also suggested that it would be helpful if a mobile unit could travel around villages rather than expecting villagers to attend a 'Let's Talk' session at a distant Council building.

Finally, Karl Battersby confirmed the timeframe for completion of the necessary changes to services and service delivery post vesting day would depend on the issues to be addressed. For example, he suggested an indicative time for introducing a new comprehensive waste collection regime would be 3 years. He also noted that central Government decisions on key national issues would also affect the timescale for changes.

The Chair thanked Karl Battersby and Forum members noted the update.

16 Countryside Access Service - Waymarking Overview

Arrietty Heath, Volunteer Co-ordinator introduced her written update on how the Countryside Access Service currently responded to requests for waymarking from landowners, Parish Councils and the public. She also sought the Forum's advice on how the process might be modified to streamline the process, in the hope of identifying a clear set of principles to ensure consistency across the network, as well as ensuring the best use of the limited resources available, both financial and staffing.

Arrietty Heath showed examples of the types of waymarkers used, and confirmed there was no legal standard of waymarkers. She also confirmed the Authority had no statutory obligation to waymark, but it was required to consider whether it would be appropriate.

Forum members discussed the pros and cons of waymarking and whether the introduction of a hierarchy of types of routes should be introduced in order to prioritise the requests for waymarking.

David Lepper drew attention to a particular route where the waymarking was incomplete. Arrietty Heath confirmed that volunteers were used to walk routes to identify where the use of waymarkers could be appropriately used, and that to aid them in their work they had access to the definitive map.

Forum members agreed to set up a Task Group to consider whether a more stringent approach to responding to waymarking requests would be the best way forward and noted the suggested caveats and questions to be considered, as listed in the update report. It was agreed the Task Group should also carry out some benchmarking with other areas nationally.

The Chair thanked Arrietty for her report and it was

Resolved – That:

- i. The update on waymarking be noted;
- ii. A Task Group be set up, made up of Nick Abbey, David Lepper, Dick Brew and Cllr David Jeffels to carry out a review of the best approach to responding to waymarking requests;
- ii. The Task Group provide a draft report for the Forum's consideration at its next meeting in January 2023;

17 District Council & LAF Project - Verbal Updates

Considered –

The report of the Secretary giving LAF members the opportunity to update the Forum on District Council liaison and other LAF representative project activity since the last meeting.

The Chair confirmed he had received no further information on the progression of the A66 works.

Roma Haigh confirmed that the Yorkshire Wolds Way would be celebrating its anniversary on 2 October 2022.

Will Scarlett confirmed he had attended two online meetings of the Rural Taskforce and would circulate two presentations and a feedback paper in due course.

It was noted that Rachel Connolly had circulated a written update ahead of the meeting that

had not been included in the update report. In regard to the A1 she confirmed some grass cutting has been undertaken along the local access roads to provide safer margins for NMUs, but not as much as had been agreed through Public Inquiry. Also, that other defects have yet to be addressed.

In regard to the A66, she confirmed a consultancy firm had been employed in 2020 to carry out research into NMu crossings on the A66 west of the dualing scheme, and a report had recently been published that confirmed there was a need for crossings that NMUs felt safe to use, and it recognised the lack of them. She noted that National Highways had confirmed it did not intend to make major changes but would cut back foliage and check on the surfaces of the crossings and spend the money on places where there was a greater demand for walking and cycling. Overall she expressed her view that the highly selective report was disappointing for the volunteers who took part in the surveys and workshop and offered to write to National Highways to respond to their findings.

In regard to Richmond District Council, Rachel Connolly confirmed she had responded to several planning, without receiving any feedback. She expressed her view that this was unsatisfactory, but noted that officers were not permitted to speak to the public and it is impossible to assess if the Forum's advice had made a difference.

In regard to Hambleton District Council she noted the Forum had been consulted on a few planning applications since the last meeting and that she had received a suggestion for a Memorandum of Understanding between the Authority and the Forum, to prevent the recurrence of a recent issue concerning a major development with a right of way through it that the Forum had not been made aware of.

Forum members discussed the benefits of having a Memorandum of Understanding in place and whether the introduction of such a document with one of the District Councils was appropriate and necessary at this time in light of LGR. Members acknowledged that Planning Authorities had no statutory obligation to liaise with Local Access Forums on planning applications, rather it was the Forums right to offer its advice. They were pleased to note Hambleton District Council's willingness to work with the Forum to introduce a Memorandum of Understanding, and recognised that if developed it could be beneficial to the future working relationship between the Forum, and the Planning Department and the Countryside Access Service of the new Authority. It was therefore agreed that:

- The work on the draft Memorandum of Understanding should continue with the support of Rachel Connolly and Will Scarlet. Mike Leah, Assistant Director for Travel, Environmental and Countryside also offered to support the process.
- The final draft of the Memorandum be signed off by the full Forum before being issued to Hambleton District Council.

Resolved - That the update information provided at the meeting be noted.

18 Work Programme

Considered –

Members considered the Forward Plan provided at Appendix 1 to the report, and invited members to identify any additional items of business to be added.

It was agreed that the following items of future business be added to the work Programme

25 January 2023 Waymarking Working Group Report
ELMs Scheme Update
Overview of Highways Design Guide

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24 May 2023

Network Rail Update
Update on LTP5

Resolved - That the Work Programme document be updated as above.

The meeting concluded at 12.05 pm.