

North Yorkshire County Council

North Yorkshire Local Access Forum

Minutes of the public meeting held on Wednesday, 24th January 2024 commencing at 10.00 am.

Will Scarlett in the Chair, plus Rachel Connolly, Patricia Coulson, Jeremy Dunford, Naomi Guthrie, Roma Haigh, David Lepper, Samantha Perks, Councillor Robert Heseltine and Councillor David Jeffels.

In attendance: Councillor George Jabbour.

Officers present: Ian Kelly, Andy Brown and Melanie Carr.

Apologies: Belinda Ryan.

Copies of all documents considered are in the Minute Book

40 Election of a Chair

Will Scarlett, Vice Chair proposed the election of a new Chair and Vice-Chair (Agenda item 3) be deferred until the next meeting of the Forum so that the newer Members would have more time to participate in the work of the Forum before deciding whether they would be interested in taking up one of the posts.

As acting Chair, he confirmed he had discussed his proposed approach with all members prior to the meeting. He also took the opportunity to thank the previous Chair – Paul Sherwood, for his time on the Forum and for his contributions as both a long standing member and more recently as Chair.

Resolved – That the election of a new Chair and Vice-Chair be deferred to the Forum's next meeting on 22 May 2024.

41 Introductions & Apologies for Absence

Members of the Local Access Forum introduced themselves, and the acting Chair confirmed apologies had been received from Lin Ryan.

42 Election of a Vice-Chair

In line with the discussion undertaken for agenda item 1, it was

Resolved – That the election of a new Chair and Vice-Chair be deferred to the Forum's next meeting on 22 May 2024.

43 Minutes of the Meeting held on 27 September 2024

Members identified the following amendments required to the draft Minutes of the meeting held on 27 September 2023:

- The meeting had been held in public and not remotely as stated in the draft Minutes

- The attendance of Councillor George Jabbour as substitute for Councillor David Jeffels

Resolved - That subject to the above amendments, the draft Minutes of the meeting held on 27 September 2023 be agreed as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

44 Public Questions & Statements

There were no public questions or statements.

45 Secretary's Update Report

Considered –

The report of the Secretary, which updated on developments since the last meeting.

Members noted the written updates provided on Sustrans, the Coast to Coast route and the Environmental Land Management Scheme (ELMs).

In regard to ELMs it was noted the purpose of the Scheme was to pay subsidies to landowners / farmers etc for permissive access. Members welcomed the proposed attendance of a representative of Natural England at their next meeting in May 2024, as the last public update on ELMs had been before Christmas 2023.

In regard to the Coast to Coast National Trail route, Andy Brown – Senior PROW Officer, confirmed the creation of a complimentary coast to Coast riders' route was progressing. He noted the plan was to maximise the benefits to riders by not religiously following the Trail's core route. He confirmed there had been more challenges than expected to the proposed diversions, but the work was still on schedule for the agreed timeframe.

Rachel Connelly queried whether a map of the trail route and the complimentary riders' route (for cyclists and horse riders) existed, and it was confirmed both would need to be 100% agreed before being publicised. The possibility of a Coast to Coast User Forum was also welcomed.

Members noted an ELMs update was scheduled for their next meeting in May 2024. They agreed they would also like a Sustrans update adding to the Forward Plan for that meeting, and that it would be helpful to have an update on the Coast to Coast route as a standing item on their Forward Plan for all future meetings.

Resolved – That:

- i. The update be noted.
- ii. The Forum's Forward Plan be updated to reflect the discussions above

46 Liaison & LAF Project Updates

Considered –

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

David Lepper drew attention to a written update he had previously circulated to Forum members on Designated Areas, which confirmed England was to get a new national park as part of a government set of 'nature pledges' to give greater access and protection to the

countryside. It was noted this would not fall within North Yorkshire.

He also confirmed £15m in additional funding was to be shared between the existing 10 national parks and 34 national landscapes, formerly known as Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty (of which there were 3 in North Yorkshire).

Forum Members considered the allocations for representation shown in the table at paragraph 2.1 of the report.

In regard to the A19 Ian Kelly confirmed there was a Project Board meeting scheduled, and it was agreed that an update on the A19 should be added as a standing item to the forum's Forward Plan for all future meetings.

Forum Members went on to agree the table should be updated to reflect the following:

- Dick Brew to be removed;
- NYC Countryside Access Service User Group to be removed as it was no longer meeting;
- A66 to be added to Rachel Connelly allocations;
- Naomi Guthrie to be allocated the Selby District area

Resolved – That:

- i. The additional information provided at the meeting be noted;
- ii The table at paragraph 2.1 be updated;

47 Forward Plan

Considered –

Members considered the Forward Plan provided at Appendix 1

Ian Kelly, Head of Countryside Access Service drew attention to an online public survey related to the updating of the Council's Health & Wellbeing Strategy. He suggested the Forum may wish to submit a response and noted the closing date was 31 March 2024. He agreed to circulate a link.

He also drew attention to a Strategic Leisure Review underway and suggested the Forum may wish to feed in its views on access. He offered to investigate the attendance of an appropriate NYC officer to a future Forum meeting.

In regard to the scheduled update on the Local Transport Plan for the Forum's September 2024 meeting, Ian Kelly confirmed a liaison session for Forum members had been offered by NYC's LTP team. Forum members agreed it would be helpful and Ian Kelly agreed to arrange a session outside of the Forum's formal meeting dates.

In addition, Ian Kelly noted the Forum had yet to respond to the Let's Talk North Yorkshire' residents survey in support of the updating of the Council's Local Transport Plan, previously raised at the last Forum meeting. It was agreed that following the meeting the Acting Chair would identify a number of members to form a sub-group to respond on behalf of the Forum. Members agreed the Forum's response should highlight the need for use of more sustainable transport.

Councillor David Jeffels raised concern about off-roading, an issue brought to his attention by a representative of Green lanes Environmental Action Movement (GLEAM) following the

tragedy at Glaisdale. He noted the damage caused by non-essential vehicle usage on unsurfaced unclassified roads (UURs) and the need to safeguard other users and protect the environment. He suggested this was something the Forum should be concerned with and proposed it be considered for further review.

David Lepper acknowledged the conflict between recreational use and conservation, and the need to strike a balance for all users. Ian Kelly noted the Forum's many discussions undertaken over recent years on the UUR network, confirming they were classed as Category 6 Highways – available for use by all, and that the National Parks and CAS had a good handle on their usage. He noted the Authority had a legal statutory duty to maintain those routes and confirmed his team worked closely with both National Parks to identify those routes requiring maintenance work (with an annual budget allocated for that purpose), and that a review of that work was undertaken annually. Where there were ongoing issues, he confirmed that a Traffic Regulation Order was the last resort.

Attention was also drawn to the Forum's existing Position Statement on UURs which was still relevant, and it was agreed it would be helpful if the Secretary re-circulated all the Forum's Position Statements to ensure all members were aware of their content. Having noted the information provided, Forum members requested an update on UUR maintenance for their May 2024 meeting.

The Acting Chair proposed a possible update from the Slow Ways Volunteer Walking Group and agreed to investigate. He also drew attention to an informal meeting held in November 2023 attended by himself, the previous Chair, Ian Kelly and Daniel Harry - Head of Democratic Services, and confirmed his intention to circulate the notes from that meeting to all Forum members. He noted there had been discussions around the Forum's web presence, the Forum's terms of reference, and the future of the CAS User Group. This led to discussions around those three issues.

Ian Kelly confirmed the NYC Countryside Access Service User Group would no longer be continuing in its previous format, and it had yet to be decided whether and how the information shared at those meetings previously, would be disseminated in the future. He offered to provide an update on CAS for the next meeting and suggested an annual update for future years.

In regard to the other two issues, it was agreed that two further sub-groups be formed – one to consider the Forum's Profile and one to consider the Terms of Reference. Again the Acting Chair agreed to identify a number of members to participate in those sub-groups.

Forum members also queried the outcome of their recommendations arising from their previously completed review on Planning matters. It was agreed the Secretary should seek feedback from Planning.

As a result of all the discussions at the meeting, the following amendments were agreed to the Forward Plan:

22 May 2024

Add:

- Election of Chair & Vice Chair
- Update on restructure of Planning Teams following LGR
- Update on UUR maintenance works
- Annual Report on CAS
- Sustrans Update

Defer Network Rail Update to September 2024 meeting

25 September 2024

Remove:

- Coast to Coast National Trail Update (to be replaced by standing item)
- Local Transport Plan Update (replaced by liaison session to be arranged by Ian Kelly)

Add Network Rail Update

All meetings

Add standing items on A19 and the Coast to Coast Route for

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

The meeting concluded at 12.03 pm.