

North York Moors Local Access Forum

11 September 2012

Future Working of the Local Access Forum

<p>1. Purpose of the Report</p> <p>1.1 To outline changes to the way in which the Local Access Forum will operate following the review of National Park Authority Committee Structures</p>

2. **Background**

2.1 As part of the process of reviewing how the National Park Authority works, members called for significant changes in the working of the Authority's Committees and Advisory Groups. The primary aim of the changes is to make the Authority's decision making processes more open and inclusive and enable greater contact between Authority members and outside interests. It is also intended to result in a smaller number of formal meetings so as to reduce the administrative burden in line with the reduction in overall resources at the authority's disposal.

2.2 A broad framework for how this might be achieved has been agreed by the Authority's members and it is accepted that this will evolve over the coming year. These proposals have been informed by discussions at earlier meetings of the Local Access Forum. This report now sets out the proposals and how they will affect future working of the Local Access Forum.

3. **Proposed new structure**

3.1 The Authority's old committees relating to first and second purpose work, Access and Information Committee and Conservation Committee, have been abolished. In their place, two new Forums have been established:

- Awareness, Recreation and Business Forum
- Conservation and Land Management Forum

The role of these forums will be to bring Authority members and selected external representatives together to discuss key issues, develop new ideas, communicate with the outside world and scrutinise the Authority's work. The topics for discussion and external representatives will be agreed by the Authority members of the Forum.

3.2 The remit of the Awareness, Recreation and Business Forum will include all second purpose matters (education, interpretation and communication, awareness, access, etc) together with the broad spectrum of business matters not encompassed within conservation and land management. It will therefore have a remit which is far wider than the statutory remit of the Local Access Forum.

- 3.2 These Forums will consist of six National Park Authority members (who have already been selected) and up to twelve people with an interest/expertise in the subjects being discussed. A number of these external representatives will be “semi – permanent” members and will be invited to attend for a number of meetings others will be invited for all or part of one meeting on the basis of their particular expertise in a subject being discussed. By the date of the meeting, it is anticipated that the external representatives will have been agreed, a verbal update will be provided to the meeting.
- 3.3 It is initially proposed that the Forums will meet twice each year. The first meetings of the Forums are to be held in October 2012. At this meeting further details of the future operation will be agreed but it is likely that this will evolve over the first year or more of operation.
- 3.4 It is agreed also that the number of Local Access Forum meetings will be reduced to two per year but that there will be some significant overlap in membership between the two Forums. This is being mirrored on the Conservation and Land Management side where the new forum and the Primary Land Users Group will also each meet twice annually.

4. **Future working of the Local Access Forum**

- 4.1 The Local Access Forum (LAF) performs a valuable role in considering and advising upon the specialist subject of access and the aim of this review is to enable this to continue. However, in view of the greater opportunity for outside interests to work directly with National Park Authority members via the new Forum and in view of the big reductions in the Authority’s resources, it is considered possible and necessary to reduce the number of LAF meetings.
- 4.2 As discussed at previous meetings of the LAF, it has now been agreed by National Park Authority members that the number of LAF meetings will be reduced to two per year. This is the statutory requirement.
- 4.3 It is anticipated though that practice of forming small task and finish groups of LAF members to consider particular topics between meetings will continue along with email and telephone correspondence between members.
- 4.4 This combined with the opportunity for a number of LAF members and other outside interests to be part of the new Forum and have direct contact with Authority members will ensure that there a continued flow of advice to the Authority from the broad range of interests regarding access and that the LAF is able to continue to perform its statutory role.

<h4>5. Recommendation</h4>
5.1 That the report be noted
5.2 That Forum members comment regarding the matters set out in the report.

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