

English Access Forum 15th May 2008 John Dower House Cheltenham

Briefing for Yorkshire & Humberside LAF's

Attendance

All eight National Regions had two representatives, only one apology. Natural England provided support for the meeting and had five representatives. The meeting was chaired by Duncan Graham (Cumbria LAF chair).

Content

Please see draft constitution, agenda and minutes of the meeting (when available). Additional briefing papers are available – Discovering Lost Ways, National Trail Review and Coastal Access.

The meeting agreed on the name and constitution with minor changes. The majority of representatives were chairs of LAF's, one other and myself were not chairs.

There was some discussion regarding how individual regions selected representatives and how to ensure all views were effectively represented. Some Regions have a structure in place for routine meetings for chairs of LAF's and were able to use this meeting to choose representatives. Alternative processes were used in the other Regions.

The English Access Forum is the structure to enable exchange of information and views between LAF's and Natural England. In order to facilitate the exchange of information a process needs to be established to provide contact between the region's LAF's and the English Access Forum representatives. The process should be on the basis of representation and not by mandate in order to reflect the role of the English Access Forum.

Discovering Lost Ways - there is to be an open review of progress to involve all stakeholders based on the data collected so far.

National Trail Review - the review is to consider the future for long distance trails and identify new options for management and funding.

Coastal Access – the project 'scheme' was outlined and it was confirmed this would become the 14th National Trail.

Further issues considered included a National Newsletter (no conclusion), financial constraints (both for Local Authorities and Natural England) and the electronic sharing of information. There was a divergence of views on Natural England's policy of only providing information in electronic format. This is in order to save on printing costs and also provide information with embedded links to other information. Some Forum Members were able to receive and distribute information via their computer, others felt this was not appropriate and were excluded by this policy. In order that all LAF members are properly informed there may be a role for the individual local authority support of the LAF.

Due to time constraints the latter part of the agenda was not considered, no date was set for the next meeting (possibly Sept/Oct) and Duncan Graham was confirmed as chair.

Richard Holmes
Wakefield LAF