

NORTH LINCOLNSHIRE LOCAL ACCESS FORUM

TERMS OF REFERENCE

1. Regulations

The statutory role of a Local Access Forum is to advise decision making organisations (including local authorities) about making improvements to public access for outdoor recreation and sustainable travel.

Local Access Forums were established under section 94 of the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000 and operate in accordance with the provisions of the Act and the Local Access Forum (England) Regulations 2007. There are approximately 80 Local Access Forums in England.

2. Functions

2.1 Local Access Forums are advisory bodies with their main function to provide independent advice. The recipient of such advice; being the Council or other body, should 'have regard' to that which is given, however, the recipient is not bound by that advice.

2.2 The function of the forum is to provide guidance and contribute towards improving opportunities for the public to enjoy North Lincolnshire's countryside. This will involve:

- i. commenting on the draft maps of open country and registered common land for North Lincolnshire.
- ii. advising on the improvement of public access to land in North Lincolnshire for the purpose of open-air recreation.
- iii. contributing in an advisory capacity to the development of a Public-Right-of-Way Improvement Plan for the area.
- iv. advising on the promotion of the appropriate use of opportunities for all types of users to enjoy the countryside; and
- v. advising on the management and maintenance of access, whilst balancing this against the needs of biodiversity, wildlife management, the interests of landowners and managers and countryside management projects within North Lincolnshire.

3. Roles and Responsibilities

3.1 The Local Access Forum shall contribute constructively as an advisory role by.

- i. sharing (and developing) experience, knowledge, skills, and opinions.
- ii. valuing the contribution of other forum members, respecting minority views, engaging in constructive debate, and seeking consensus where possible.

- iii. adopting an inclusive approach to improvement of access, which reflects local circumstances and the needs of all sections of society.
- iv. taking account of the needs of integrated land management, and of environmental, social, economic, and educational interests.
- v. engaging with the interests which they represent (and others) to explain and
- vi. promote the work of the forum.
- vii. operating within the requirements of the law (e.g., section 94 of the CROW Act and the Regulations) and locally set conditions of appointment or Standing Orders; and
- viii. having regard to Guidance issued by the Secretary of State.

4. Membership

4.1 The membership of the forum will;

- i. comprise 14 members of the public, representing among them user, landownership, and other interests: and
- ii. 3 North Lincolnshire Council elected members.
- iii. Members of the forum will not be substituted if they are unable to attend a meeting.
- iv. be balanced to avoid dominance by any single user / interest group or coalition of interests.
- v. avoid any geographic bias.
- vi. will show respect to all members of the group.
- vii. vacancies shall be advertised on North Lincolnshire Council website.

4.2 Officers of North Lincolnshire Council may be invited to attend meetings of the forum in order to present reports, provide information and offer advice as appropriate.

5. Term of Office

5.1 Members of the forum will remain in office for three years. Re-election is possible thereafter and there is no limit on the number of consecutive terms that a member may serve.

5.2 Members of the forum will be agreed by the Local Authority as required under the Local Access Forum (England) Regulations 2007.

6 Election of Chairman and Vice-Chairman

6.1 A quorate meeting of the forum will elect the chairman and vice-chairman. The election of the chairman and the vice-chairman will take place annually basis.

7 Quorum

7.1 The Forum shall be quorate if at least 6 members of the total membership is present (this excludes observers and the membership count excludes vacancies) which equates to 14 members if no vacancies.

8 Frequency of Meetings

8.1 The forum shall hold no fewer than two meetings every year. The forum may agree to meet more frequently, and the chairman may call an extraordinary meeting at his or her discretion. Meetings will be called at a time and place to be determined by the forum.

9 Declaration of Interests

9.1 The relevant Statutory Instrument (Regulation 6(8) of SI 2007 268) requires a Forum member who is directly or indirectly interested in any matter brought up for consideration by the Forum, to disclose the nature of that interest to the meeting.

Members of the forum must declare an interest where relevant to any matters to be discussed at a meeting of the forum.

10 Voting

10.1 Each Member shall have only one vote. Voting shall be by show of hands. Chair will have a second or casting vote.

11 Public Observers

11.1 Members of the public are welcome at meetings of the Forum, and will normally be able to ask questions, make statements or representations, present petitions or bring a deputation on matters relating to the business of the Forum. Time available for public participation will be at the Chair's discretion.

11.2 Details of the arrangements for participating in a meeting can be obtained from the Secretariat.

12 Expenses

12.1 The Local Authority shall reimburse the reasonable expenses of a member of the Forum when members submit appropriate claims, in connection with attendance at meetings.

13 Notice of Meetings

- 13.1 Meetings of the Forum shall be convened by the Local Authority, who will also arrange secretariat responsibilities including the clerking of meetings.
- 13.2 Items for consideration by the Forum shall be submitted to the clerk no later than 10 working days prior to the meeting. The agenda and papers shall be sent by email to members no later than 5 working days prior to the meeting.