

LOCAL ACCESS FORUM: 1st DECEMBER 2009

LOCAL ACCESS FORUM MEMBERS' SURVEY OUTCOME: DECISION ITEM

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

To consult the Forum about potential improvement and development of the Local Access Forum as a result of the Members' Survey conducted between June and October 2009.

2. SUPPORTING INFORMATION

2.1 The Council recently conducted research into how the Forum could be improved and developed to make it a more effective advisory body. The main part of this research was to ascertain how well the members of the LAF feel the Forum is operating, and what suggestions members may have to improve the Forum.

2.2 The results of the survey were circulated to all members, and have been included as Appendix A to this report.

2.3 A meeting was held following the survey with the Chair and Secretary of the Forum and the LAF Appointments Panel. The following actions were agreed:

Issue Identified: need to encourage wider participation.

- Include a standard agenda item for a 'round table' update from each member limited to 2 or 3 minutes, to prevent agenda items running off topic.
- Improve membership balance by inviting more landowners, write to NFU/CLA/Rural Forum.
- Introduce themes to meetings, concentrating on one type of issue, for example Cycling, Horse Riding, Landowner needs, Health issues etc, and encourage members with particular interest areas to provide material for the LAF meetings. Work with members early before LAF meetings.

Issue identified: agenda items frequently run off topic.

- Stricter adherence to time limits - secretary to assist chair in meetings.
- Advance notice of content of discussions/agenda item, including what is being requested from the Forum (allows full public disclosure) - All materials to be provided in advance of the meeting. Agenda items and content to be received a minimum 5 days in advance of the meeting.

Issue identified: Forum members do not see benefit/effect of LAF; Some feel animosity between LAF and RBWM.

- Work to broaden Forum's scope to include other RBWM initiatives.
- Introduce standard agenda item: Feedback from LAF on advice given and responses received.
- Ensure all members have a copy of the LAF handbook.
- Improve liaison between neighbouring LAFs: better system for sharing minutes and agendas, encourage Forum members to visit other LAFs.
- Include standard disclaimer on all LAF advice, stating its status under statute.
- Send copy of comments to Forum members with actions decided at meeting.

Issue identified: The LAF should hold more site visits.

- Ask LAF members where they wish to visit and why; draw up list of planned site visits.

2.4 The views of the Forum are requested on the following:

- **Does the Forum recommend any further changes that could be made to improve the effectiveness and operation of the Forum?**
- **What themes should the LAF meetings hold and why?**
- **What future site visits should be scheduled for the Forum and why?**
