

# Norfolk Local Access Forum

<b>Report title:</b>	<b>Economic Benefit of Norfolk Trails</b>
<b>Date of meeting:</b>	<b>24 October 2018</b>
<b>Responsible Officer:</b>	<b>Steve Miller – Assistant Director, Culture and Heritage</b>
<b>Strategic impact</b> The Norfolk Trails network managed by Norfolk County Council provide the public with an opportunity to experience the natural beauty, tranquillity, cultural heritage and wildlife of the county. With over 1,200 miles of trail managed to National Trail standards Norfolk Trails provide access for a range of activities including walking, running, horse riding and cycling) representing a great way to explore the great outdoors in Norfolk. The Norfolk Trails network brings health, environmental and economic benefit to Norfolk.	

## Executive summary

This report highlights the footfall data recorded for Norfolk Trails and how this information is being used to create an economic model to quantify the financial impact of the Norfolk Trails to the county's economy.

### **Recommendation:**

**That the NLAf notes work ongoing to create a model to quantify the economic benefit of the managed Norfolk Trails network.**

## **1. Proposal**

- 1.1** At the previous Local Access Forum meeting the National Trail Annual Report was discussed and members asked for information on the economics of the whole of the Trails network (not just the National Trail).

This report and the accompanying power point presentation seeks to highlight the process and methodology for capturing user numbers and how those numbers are used to create an economic analysis.

Whilst this is the current approach being used by the Trails team, members are asked to note that ongoing work with the UEA is underway to create a valuation toolkit. The data collected by the Trails team to date has been shared with the UEA to provide a solid evidence base for the toolkit.

This toolkit will be suitable for use on new and current routes and infrastructure. Once complete it is proposed that a future report is brought to the Local Access Forum for further information.

## **2. Evidence**

- 2.1.** Data counter information has been collected and collated over a period of years (Appendix 1) and this data has been used to support BSc studies at the UEA by previous year in industry students (Appendix 2).

Methodologies of approach have been tested as have existing models such as the ORVal approach which has been created by Exeter University.

Natural England uses a MENE (Monitoring Engagement with Natural Environment) approach to quantifying the economic impact of countryside

access offers an economic value for countryside users and the Norfolk Trails team have used this as a starting point to put an economic value on the Norfolk Trails network (Appendix 3).

In order to produce the National Trail annual report and economic data for 2017/2018 the trails team installed additional portable data counters to reflect the usage of the Norfolk Coast Path and to capture the true use of the route. In addition, self-survey sites were installed which allowed National Trail users to complete the surveys which were then uploads for analysis. This data was then brought together with face to face surveys in order to create a composite approach to the data gathered.

This combined with the data counter report was used to create a final report looking at the Norfolk Coast Path which has provided a number of different data sources which can be used over time to help focus future development of the National Trail.

### **3. Financial Implications**

- 3.1. The Natural England MENE report values countryside access to green space at £6 per visit and visits to the coast at £18. This reflects the fact that people travel further to get to the coast, tend to stay for longer and as a result spend significantly more on the coast than a trip to local green space. When we reported this to our Trails partnership in 2016 a number of business felt that this was a significant under-representation of the value of coastal access in Norfolk. A previous Year in Industry student studied this figure, carried out her own research and came up with a figure of £23.99. After carrying out the surveys and after using the information provided from the data counters the report has highlighted the value of coastal access in Norfolk at £23.41 per visit. This multiplied by the number of users recorded last year puts an annual value on the Norfolk Coast Path of £12,171,662.

The rest of the Trails network has used the MENE figure of £6 to value the remaining trails. This provides a figure of £5,119,334. The trails team have moved portable counters to the Weavers Way during 2018/2019 and these will be moved to the Peddars Way and the Coastal Treasures area during 2019/2020 in order to create a fuller picture of usage and reflect the value of countryside access across the county.

This means the annual value of the Norfolk Trails network is over £17 million annually.

In addition to the economic benefits of the Norfolk Trails network Norfolk County Council have used the Health Economic Assessment Tool to evaluate the health benefits of the network to Norfolk and this adds an additional £147 million of health benefit value into the network.

### **4. Issues, risks and innovation**

- 4.1. As previously highlighted in the report Norfolk County Council are taking a new and innovative approach to valuing countryside access by developing new modelling with the UEA and this will supplement and enhance the existing data set that is currently being used.

A number of data counters have been damaged and moved without consent so maintaining a full and credible data set is an ongoing challenge to the Trails team and working practices have changed in order to mitigate these risks

## **Officer Contact**

If you have any questions about matters contained in this paper or want to see copies of any assessments, e.g. equality impact assessment, please get in touch with:

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