

Environment, Development and Transport committee

Report title:	Endorsement of new members on the Norfolk Local Access Forum
Date of meeting:	8 March 2019
Responsible Chief Officer:	Tom McCabe – Executive Director, Community and Environmental Services
Strategic impact The Norfolk Local Access Forum (NLAF) (www.norfolk.gov.uk/nlaf) is an independent statutory advisory body that gives advice to Section 94(4) (Countryside and Rights of Way Act) bodies including Norfolk County Council (NCC) about making improvements to public access to land for open-air recreation and the enjoyment of the area.	

Executive summary

Norfolk County Council Environment Team has just completed an external recruitment to appoint members to the Norfolk Local Access Forum (NLAF) for a 3-year term. Endorsement of the list of 18 recommended appointees is requested from the EDT committee. The EDT committee is also requested to identify 3 NCC Councillors who would be best placed to join the Forum, bringing the total membership to 21. In addition, one recommended appointee remains to be confirmed at a later date, which would bring the total membership to 22.

Recommendations:

- 1. That the EDT committee endorses the 18 recommended appointees to the Norfolk Local Access Forum**
- 2. That the EDT committee agrees which 3 NCC councillors (from within the EDT committee) would be best placed to attend meetings of the NLAF and identifies what interest areas they will represent. Regular attendance at NLAF meetings by Councillors is requested to bring total Forum membership to 21.**

1. Proposal

- 1.1. That the EDT committee endorses the recommendations made regarding appointments to the Norfolk Local Access Forum and identifies 3 Councillor appointees.

2. Evidence

- 2.1. As independent advisory bodies but operating on a statutory basis, local access forums are in a unique position to formulate fresh, creative and even challenging ideas on ways to improved public access and open-air recreation for the benefit of all. Forums give advice which is independent, constructive, relevant, inclusive, incisive and informed (see Guidance on Local Access Forums in England, 2007).

See **Appendix 1** for the constitution of the NLAF.

The NLAFF comprises up to 22 volunteer representatives who are all appointed by Norfolk County Council. Under the legislation, up to 3 members can be Norfolk County Councillors (or district councillors).

The Norfolk Local Access Forum enjoys the same level of support from Norfolk County Council as a committee (although it is not a formal NCC committee). Forum members are given technical and administrative support by Norfolk County Council officers to enable them to undertake their advisory role as effectively as possible. The Forum works closely with the following Norfolk County Council departments: Highways; Legal Orders and Registers Team; Norfolk Trails; Democratic Services. Agendas and minutes are published here: https://norfolkcc.cmis.uk.com/norfolkcc/Committees/tabid/62/ctl/ViewCMIS_CommitteeDetails/mid/381/id/42/Default.aspx

- 2.2. Norfolk County Council is the appointing body to the Norfolk Local Access Forum and organises the recruitment and appointment of members. The Forum has up to 22 members drawn from:
- (a) Users of local rights of way or open access land (e.g. walkers, horse riders, cyclists and carriage drivers);
 - (b) Owners and occupiers of access land or land over which local rights of way subsist; or
 - (c) Any other interests especially relevant to Norfolk (such as tourism; nature or landscape conservation; coastal issues; education; heritage; local transport; enterprise and economy; health; disabled people; young people; older people; ethnic and low income groups).

A reasonable balance across interest groups is required to enable the Forum to function effectively.

The term of office lasts for a period of 3 years after which members are asked to reapply.

- 2.3. Norfolk County Council advertises all Forum vacancies, with the exception of those who are members of a district or county council.

A recruitment exercise conducted between December 2018 and January 2019 was run to fill 4 volunteer vacancies and to invite current members whose terms of office end in March 2019 to seek reappointment (19 volunteer member places). Promotion of the recruitment was via social media, direct emails, existing NLAFF members, newsletters and via other relevant contacts and bodies. There were 33 applications which were assessed by a selection panel (comprising the Chair and Vice Chair of the NLAFF and 3 NCC officers) on 5th February 2019.

The panel assessed suitability of candidates on the basis of their experience, skills and access interest areas and have drawn up a list of recommended appointees for the Environment, Development and Transport Committee to endorse (Appendix 2). In addition, one recommended appointee remains to be confirmed at a later date.

- 2.4. There are 3 NCC Councillor places on the Forum but hitherto attendance at NLAf meetings by the two Councillors officially appointed to the NLAf has not been regular owing to other commitments.

The EDT committee is requested to identify 3 Councillors who will commit to attending NLAf meetings on a regular basis. The following names have been suggested as formal appointees to the NLAf:

Cllr Andrew Jamieson (NCC Walking and Cycling champion) who has attended meetings in an 'ex officio' capacity;

Cllr John Fisher

Cllr Andy Grant.

EDT committee is requested to agree these names (or suggest others) and establish which interest area they would be happy to represent (Appendix 3) and confirm their regular attendance at NLAf meetings.

3. Financial Implications

- 3.1. None as a result of this report.

4. Issues, risks and innovation

- 4.1. None as a result of this report.

5. Background

- 5.1. Please see 'evidence'.

Officer Contact

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

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