

HAMPSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

Decision Report

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| Decision Maker: | Executive Member for Culture, Recreation and Countryside |
| Date: | 4 December 2014 |
| Title: | Membership of the Hampshire Countryside Access Forum |
| Reference: | 6262 |
| Report From: | Director of Culture, Communities and Business Services |

Contact name: Sarah Manchester

Tel: 01962 667921

Email: sarah.manchester@hants.gov.uk

1. Executive Summary

- 1.1. The purpose of this paper is to appoint members to the Local Access Forum for Hampshire (excluding the New Forest and South Downs), Portsmouth and Southampton for the period December 2014 to December 2017.
- 1.2. The County Council is required to establish a Local Access Forum in accordance with the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000, to advise on and promote improvements in access to the countryside. The national regulations require the Forum to be re-established every three years. This report proposes the membership for the next three year term of the Hampshire Countryside Access Forum, as the Local Access Forum for Hampshire (excluding the New Forest and South Downs), Portsmouth and Southampton.
- 1.3. In carrying out the recruitment and making recommendations for the membership, officers followed the process adopted by the council in 2002 and the subsequent national regulations and guidance.

2. Contextual information

- 2.1. The Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000 (the Act) requires highway authorities to appoint a Local Access Forum. The duty of the Forum under the Act is to advise the County Council, and any other body which has functions relating to access over land in the area, on the improvement of public access to land for the purposes of open-air recreation and the enjoyment of the area. In preparing this advice, the Local Access Forum must have regard to the needs of land management and the desirability of conserving the natural beauty of the area, including the flora, fauna and geological and physiographical features of the area. The recipients of advice

from the Local Access Forum are required to have regard to this advice in carrying out their functions.

- 2.2. Locally, the duty to establish a Forum affects Hampshire County Council, Portsmouth City Council and Southampton City Council. Following wide consultation among stakeholders, support from Councillors in all three authorities and a decision by the Executive member in 2002, a single jointly appointed Local Access Forum was established to cover all three authorities, known as the 'Hampshire Countryside Access Forum'.
- 2.3. The Hampshire Countryside Access Forum remit covers the whole of Hampshire (including Portsmouth and Southampton) except for the parts of the County within either the New Forest National Park, New Forest District Council area or South Downs National Park as the respective National Park Authorities appoint the local access forums in those areas.

3. Finance

- 3.1. In accordance with national regulations (Local Access Forums (England) Regulations 2007), Forum members attending full meetings, sub-group meetings, site visits or training for the Forum are entitled to claim travel and subsistence expenses, and any expenses in arranging for the care of their children or dependants. This has played no bearing on recommendations for membership.

4. Recruitment

- 4.1. Hampshire Countryside Access Forum was established in 2002 and re-recruited in 2005, 2008 and 2011, as required by national regulations.
- 4.2. Prior to the current appointment process, the Forum comprised 18 members including two local authority representatives: Alderman Ray Ellis, representing Hampshire County Council, and Councillor Phil Smith representing Portsmouth City Council. Attendance at the meetings is normally in excess of 65%.
- 4.3. In recruiting to the Forum for its fifth term of three years, officers followed the process previously adopted by the County Council, which conforms to the national regulations and the County Council's Constitution, and has the full support of current members. Applications were invited through articles in the local press, social media and direct contact with relevant groups and individuals. A small group of officers, comprising representatives of all three appointing authorities, examined the applications and made the recommendations for membership shown in Appendix 1 to this report.
- 4.4. The Act and regulations together require that:
 - Members must be representative of users of local rights of way and Access Land; owners and occupiers of land on which public access rights subsist; or other interests which are especially relevant to the area, for example nature conservation, youth or health and wellbeing

- Membership should be reasonably balanced between the interests of land owners/managers and those of the access users; the Forum is a non-political body. The requirement for balance is important to ensure that fair, workable and consistent advice is given on what can be sensitive issues
- The Forum should comprise of between 10 and 22 members, including representatives of the appointing authorities. Appointing authorities may appoint representatives directly to the Forum; such appointments are not subject to the approval sought in this report

5. Proposed membership

5.1. The names of the proposed Forum members are set out below.

Proposed members with predominantly land-management interests

1. Robin Edwards (*existing member*) – Land management/ownership
2. Nigel Wolstenholme (*existing member*) – Land management and Rural business
3. Mark Ludlow (*existing member*) – Public land management
4. Alan Taylor (*existing member*) – Land management practices
5. Mr L Marshall (*new member*) – Farming
6. Lyell Fairlie (*new member*) – Farming

Proposed members with predominantly user interests

7. Sue Coles (*existing member*) – Cycling
8. Suzanne Churcher (*new member*) – Cycling
9. Sue Montila (*existing member*) – Horse riding
10. Gail Johnson (*new member*) – Carriage driving
11. Alan Marlow (*existing member*) – Walking
12. Melanie Fortescue (*existing member*) – Motor vehicle use

Proposed members with other interests of relevance to the Forum

13. Aileen Wood (*new member*) – Young people
14. Isaac Walker (*new member*) – Young people
15. Paul Brockman (*new member*) – Countryside education
16. Valerie Rawlings (*new member*) – People with disabilities
17. Graham Flatt (*existing member*) – Community planning
18. Rachel Moroney (*new member*) – Volunteering
19. Paul Knipe (*existing member*) – Nature conservation

For information: representation of the appointing authorities

20. Councillor Mark Kemp-Gee (*new member*) – Hampshire County Council

21. Councillor Jacqui Rayment (*new member*) – Southampton City Council

22. Honorary Alderman Ray Ellis (*existing member*) – Hampshire County Council (Rural Affairs)

5.2 Re-appointment of existing members for further terms is permitted, and indeed was found to provide valuable continuity and consistency in the national research undertaken on local access forums. Therefore, officers are keen to retain a number of the active Forum members who applied for re-appointment.

5.3 Individuals have been chosen for their ability to represent their own interests, knowledge of wider countryside issues, ability to build consensus and work within a team, ability to communicate effectively (and with social media) and the ability to disseminate information to their relevant interest groups. A pragmatic approach and knowledge of more than one area of interest are particularly important; experience both in Hampshire and nationally has shown that this breadth of understanding assists in finding a reasonable consensus. The category that each proposed member is assigned to is therefore only a guide, as most have an understanding which reaches across the categories.

6. Recommendation

6.1. That the Executive Member for Culture, Communities and Business Services approves the proposed membership of Hampshire Countryside Access Forum as described in the report (Paragraph 5.1).

CORPORATE OR LEGAL INFORMATION:**Links to the Corporate Strategy**

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| Hampshire safer and more secure for all: | no |
| Maximising well-being: | yes |
| Enhancing our quality of place: | no |

Other Significant Links

| Links to previous Member decisions: | | |
|---|------------------|-------------------|
| <u>Title</u> | <u>Reference</u> | <u>Date</u> |
| Proposed Appointments to Hampshire Countryside Access Forum | R&H Exec Member | 4 November 2011 |
| Membership of Hampshire Countryside Access Forum | R&H Exec Member | 11 September 2008 |
| Proposed Appointments to Hampshire Countryside Access Forum | R&H Exec Member | 15 September 2005 |
| Membership of Hampshire Countryside Access Forum and Countryside Access Plans | R&H Exec Member | 23 September 2002 |
| Direct links to specific legislation or Government Directives | | |
| <u>Title</u> | | <u>Date</u> |
| Countryside and Rights of Way Act | | 2000 |
| Local Access Forums (England) Regulations | | 2007 |
| Guidance on Local Access Forums in England | | 2007 |

Section 100 D - Local Government Act 1972 - background documents

The following documents discuss facts or matters on which this report, or an important part of it, is based and have been relied upon to a material extent in the preparation of this report. (NB: the list excludes published works and any documents which disclose exempt or confidential information as defined in the Act.)

DocumentLocation

None

IMPACT ASSESSMENTS:

1. Equalities Impact Assessment:

- 1.1 Membership opportunities with the Forum were advertised widely and applications were accepted from all. Forum meetings will be open for all members of the public to attend as observers.
- 1.2 As part of the appointment process applicants were referred to the Disability Discrimination Act 1995 and 2005 and the Equality Act 2010.

2. Impact on Crime and Disorder:

- 2.1. No impact

3. Climate Change:

- 3.1. Not applicable