

# WAKEFIELD DISTRICT LOCAL ACCESS FORUM

## TERMS OF REFERENCE

### Title

- 1 The forum shall be known as the Wakefield District Local Access Forum and cover the administrative area of the City of Wakefield Metropolitan District Council.

### Role and Responsibilities

- 2 The forum will function under the terms laid out in the Local Access Forums (England) Regulations 2002 and guidance to Local Access Forums from the Secretary of State for Environment, Food, and Rural Affairs.
- 3 The primary purpose of the Wakefield District Local Access Forum is to advise on the improvement of public access to land within the District for open-air recreation and enjoyment. The forum is a statutory advisory body having no executive functions. The forum will give advice on:-
  - The implementation, management and review of the statutory right of access to open country and registered common land
  - Improvement of the rights of way network
  - The development of recreation and access strategies
- 4 In carrying out its functions, the forum shall have regard to:-
  - a) The needs of land management
  - b) The desirability of conserving the natural beauty of the area, including the flora, fauna and geological and physiographical features of the area
  - c) Guidance given from time to time by the Secretary of State
  - d) Liaison with neighbouring authorities

- 5 The forum will prepare an annual report of its work.

### Membership

- 6 WMDC as appointing authority will appoint Members according to the established selection criteria.

The membership will be balanced and representative of:-

- a) Users of the right of access introduced by Part 1 of the Countryside & Rights of Way Act 2000, and users of local rights of way
  - b) Owners and occupiers of access land or land crossed by local rights of way
  - c) Other interests relevant to the area and outlined in Appendix A
- 7 Membership will be a minimum of 12 and maximum of 15 members, including two local authority elected members.
  - 8 Members of the forum do not necessarily have to live in the District.
  - 9 Members will be appointed for a period of three years. However, the initial appointments will be made for periods of one, two and three years to provide continuity save that:

- a member replacing another member who has retired, been replaced or otherwise vacated membership will be a member for the duration of the term left for the person replaced;
- a Council representative shall be a member of the forum until the nomination is revoked by the Wakefield MDC;
- a Council representative may appoint a substitute to attend any meeting on his/her behalf.

Members can be reappointed at the end of their term.

- 10 Members wishing to resign should give written notice to the Secretary of the forum.
- 11 Members of the forum must disclose any personal interest, whether direct or indirect, in any matter to be discussed by the forum and disclose the nature of the interest to the meeting.
- 12 Wakefield MDC may terminate forum membership if a member has failed to attend a forum meeting for one year without consent, or has failed to disclose a personal interest.
- 13 The Chair and Vice-chair will be drawn from the different interests as listed in paragraph 6 above. Local authority elected members are not eligible for the positions of Chair and Vice-Chair.
- 14 The election of Chair and Vice-chair will take place at the first formal meeting where the term of office will be determined by the forum. (This will be constrained by the period for which the person has been appointed to the forum)
- 15 The Vice-chair will Chair the meeting if the Chair cannot attend or has to leave the meeting.
- 16 The Chair may suspend the meeting if in their opinion the meeting does not accord with the scope of the forum and regulations.
- 17 The quorum for the meeting will be one third of members currently appointed.

### **Administration**

- 18 Meetings will be held at least twice a year and more frequently as determined necessary by the Chair and Secretary.
- 19 The Secretary will be an officer of the Council who will be responsible for the administration of the local access forum, the secretary will be responsible for:-
  - organising and advertising meetings;
  - preparing and circulating the agenda, and commissioning and distributing papers in advance of meetings;
  - preparing an outline work programme for the forum;
  - assisting the chair in conducting the meetings so as to comply with statutory requirements and guidance;
  - writing the draft minutes of meetings;
  - publicising the proceedings of meetings and related papers;
  - producing draft annual reports on the business covered by the forum;
  - liaising between the forum and the appointing authority;
  - liaising between the forum and neighbouring forums; and
  - communicating the forum's advice to the appointing authority and other bodies to which the forum may give advice, and reporting back to the forum any response from, or action taken by the recipient.

- 20** Meetings will be advertised in advance and held in public. Except with the permission of the Chair they shall not be recorded or broadcast.
- 21** Meeting agendas will be agreed between the Chair and the Secretary. They will be distributed one week before any proposed meeting (except in case of emergency) and all papers for inclusion on an agenda will be submitted to the Secretary two weeks before any proposed meeting (except in case of emergency). Copies of the agenda and any reports will be made available to the public a minimum of five days prior to the meeting.
- 22** The Chair may invite observers to the meeting when appropriate. The Council and the Countryside Agency will have a right to send observers to any meetings.
- 23** Observers will be able to contribute at the meeting at the discretion of the Chair.
- 24** Meetings are to be open to the public, however individuals or groups may be excluded in the event of disorderly conduct or other misbehaviour. The public will be able to contribute at the meeting at the discretion of the Chair.
- 25** Wakefield MDC will have the right to review the chairing and membership of the forum if necessary, to ensure that the requirements of paragraph 6 are being met.
- 26** The forum may decide to set up such committees, sub-committees and working parties as it considers necessary and they will be subject to the same rules (altered as necessary for the circumstances) as the forum.