

Lancashire Local Access Forum

Minutes of the Meeting held on Tuesday, 16th January, 2018 at 10.00 am in Committee Room 'C' (The Duke of Lancaster Room) - County Hall, Preston

Present:

Chair

Cllr J R Toon, Independent

Committee Members

County Councillor Cosima Towneley
Arthur Baldwin
Ms Sue Harrison
Michael Helm
Ralph Henderson
David Kelly
Steve Kirby

Officers

David Goode, Lancashire County Council
Paul Withington, Blackburn with Darwen (Capita)

1. Apologies for Absence

Apologies were received from Peter Edge and Mike Prescott.

2. Minutes of the Meeting held on 17 October 2017

The minutes of the meeting held on 17 October 2017 were agreed as a correct record.

3. Matters Arising

The Forum was informed that there was still a lack of funding available to the Countryside Service for everything it wanted to do and used to do. An update report from Tim Blythe, Countryside Service Manager, was requested for the April meeting of the LLAF.

The Coastal Access Working Group had met with Natural England on 12 December 2017. The meeting had been very comprehensive and useful. Natural England had been very thorough and was close to target on the coastal path.

Richard Toon informed the Forum that he had attended a Public Health Specialist meeting on 9th January 2018. It had been a good and informative meeting.

Regarding Lost Ways research, Forum members enquired if there had been any progress in the request for user evidence forms to be slimmed down.

4. Lancashire's Visitor Economy Strategy

The Chair welcomed Justina Ma, Business Manager at Marketing Lancashire, to the meeting. Justina presented the Forum with Marketing Lancashire's Visitor Economy Strategy 2016 – 2020.

The Forum was informed that there was a total of 67.28 million tourism visits to Lancashire in 2016 and visitor numbers had grown by about 5 million over the last 5 years. It was vital to develop and promote Lancashire as a tourist destination. A total of £4.13 billion was generated within the local economy through visitor and tourism business expenditure. Lancashire's visitors supported more than 59,000 full time equivalent jobs.

The vision for Lancashire as a visitor destination by 2020 was:

- To be recognised as one of the top 5 English counties for a refreshing and relaxing short break and an active family holiday.
- To be known nationally as a culinary 'must visit destination because of the authenticity and quality of its food and drink, from field to table, locally sourced from the counties stunning valleys, plains, woodlands and coasts.
- To be a preferred location for corporate events and association conferences because of the choice and value for money of its venues and the breadth and depth of the business tourism infrastructure.
- For the county's cultural offer, and key annual events, to be one of the main reasons that visitors chose to visit Lancashire.
- To be recognised for its stunning 137 mile coastline that effortlessly combined seaside heritage and contemporary leisure experiences and was centred on England's favourite resort, Blackpool.
- A destination that offered outstanding customer service on a par with the best worldwide and was an example of best practice in offering accessible holidays.

The objectives for Lancashire's visitor economy by 2020 were:

- To attract an additional 6.3m visitors.
- To achieve a ratio of 80:20 between day and staying visits: 1.3m additional staying visitor and 5m additional day visitors.
- To deliver an additional visitor spend of £650m.
- To support an additional 5000 jobs.

Marketing Lancashire focused on 7 priority areas in trying to achieve and deliver its vision. The areas were:

- Priority 1 – to raise the profile of the county nationally so that it attracted more visitors, particularly staying visitors.
- Priority 2 – to create and maintain a robust evidence base for decision making. A county wide visitor survey had taken place in 2016 and there were 2,920 completed surveys. A summary was available on the Marketing Lancashire website.

- Priority 3 – to develop the product and supporting infrastructure to increase the county's competitiveness and support year round business.
- Priority 4 – to improve business support for visitor economy SMEs to help them improve their profitability.
- Priority 5 – to increase the value of the existing visiting friends and relations market.
- Priority 6 – to grow the value of business tourism including conferencing
- Priority 7 – to improve the visitor experience, particularly the visitor welcome and customer service.

The Forum thanked Justina for an excellent presentation.

The Forum enquired if Marketing Lancashire had any links with public transport and was informed that Marketing Lancashire was working closely with Virgin Trains in the campaign to promote and boost tourism in Lancashire. Virgin Trains were offering discounted fares to Preston and Lancaster to try and get more people to visit Lancashire.

It was noted that mountain biking was expanding at a great rate and Lancashire was falling behind in the promotion of it compared to the rest of the country. Promotion of canals and bridleways was important too.

5. Update on Coastal Access in Lancashire

The Coastal Access Working Group had met with Natural England on 12 December 2017. The meeting had been very comprehensive and useful. Natural England had been very thorough and was close to target on the coastal path.

Natural England had been invited to the April meeting of the Lancashire Local Access Forum to give an update on its progress.

6. Any Other Business

The Chair brought to the Forum's attention the figures on the statistics of the defects on the network from the Public Rights of Way Access Forum agenda. The Forum was alarmed at how fast the network was degrading. The Forum agreed that the Chair, Richard Toon, should write to Lancashire County Council regarding the LLAF's concerns about the state of the network.

It was pointed out that the defects of the network was do with a lack of funding and where the priorities of maintenance lay. It was important to spend money on looking after what it had and not what was needed.

Regarding claims against LCC, there were no actual figures on claims. It was pointed out that LCC was much more aware and robust at resisting claims.

7. Date of Next Meeting

It was noted that the next meeting of the Forum would be held on Tuesday 10 April 2018 at 10:00am in the Duke of Lancaster Room (former Committee Room 'C') at County Hall, Preston.

L Sales
Director of Corporate Services

County Hall
Preston