

**APPOINTMENTS TO LOCAL ACCESS FORUM**

*To:* **Economy and Environment Committee**

*Meeting Date:* **1<sup>st</sup> September 2016**

*From:* **Democratic Services Officer**

*Electoral division(s):* **All**

*Forward Plan ref:* **Not applicable**      *Key decision:* **No**

*Purpose:* **Due to two vacancies on the Local Access Forum, there is a need for new appointments, as currently there is no member representation at Local Access Forum meetings.**

*Recommendation:* **It is recommended that the Committee:**

- (i) approve the appointment of Councillor Dent to one of the two vacancies on the Local Access Forum.**
- (ii) to consider if any Members of the Committee would wish to take up the second available place, and if no volunteers are forthcoming, to undertake a further consultation seeking volunteers from other Members of the Council.**

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## **1. BACKGROUND**

- 1.1 The Economy and Environment Committee undertook its annual review of its appointments to Internal Advisory Groups and Panels and to Partnership Liaison and Advisory Groups at its May Committee meeting. Democratic Services have recently been advised that there are now two vacancies on the Local Access Forum (LAF) (previous appointments were Councillors Topping and Councillor Loynes who due to other commitments are now, or have been, unable to attend Forum meetings) and therefore two replacement Members have been requested who will be able to devote time to attend and make a positive contribution to the future work of the Forum.
- 1.2 The Countryside and Rights of Way Act (CROW) 2000 places a duty on Cambridgeshire County Council to establish a Local Access Forum for the purposes of monitoring and advising County Council's on their management of the local rights of way networks. The Forum meets on average four times a year. The regulations require the County Council to have a presence on this Forum. Cambridgeshire members have opted for a membership of 22. This can, and does include 2 County Councillors.
- 1.3 The LAF is a statutory advisory body to the County Council and Natural England on the 'improvement of public access land... for open air recreational purposes'. The County Council is charged with taking the views of the Forum into account when exercising their statutory duties in this area. The Forum is specifically charged with commenting on strategic planning proposals and the County Council's Rights of Way Improvement Plans.

## **2. CURRENT POSITION**

- 2.1 At the suggestion of Economy and Environment Spokes, Democratic Services wrote to all Member of the Council on 12<sup>th</sup> August seeking volunteers. At the time of writing this report (22<sup>nd</sup> August) Councillor Dent is the only Member who has responded, indicating that as local access is a hot topic in the villages within his electoral division, he would wish to be considered to one of the two vacancies. An oral update will be provided at the Committee meeting on whether any other responses have been received. If none are, it is recommended that Councillor Dent is appointed and if no member of the Committee wishes to volunteer for the other vacancy, a further invitation is sent to other Members of the Council. The appointment of at least one Councillor will ensure some degree of representation.

## **3. ALIGNMENT WITH CORPORATE PRIORITIES**

### **3.1 Developing the local economy for the benefit of all**

There are no significant implications for this priority.

### **3.2 Helping people live healthy and independent lives**

There are no significant implications for this priority.

### 3.3 Supporting and protecting vulnerable people

There are no significant implications for this priority.

## 4. SIGNIFICANT IMPLICATIONS

4.1 There are no significant implications within these categories:

- Resource Implications
- Equality and Diversity Implications
- Localism and Local Member Involvement
- Public Health Implications

### **Statutory Risk and Legal Implications and Engagement and Consultation Implications**

- 4.2 The Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000 regulations require the County Council to have a presence on this Forum. The membership includes 2 County Councillors and it is important for Democratic representation that the two places are filled.
- 4.3 The LAF is a statutory advisory body to the County Council and Natural England on the 'improvement of public access land for open air recreational purposes'. The County Council is required to take the views of the Forum into account when exercising their statutory duties in this area, with the Forum specifically charged with commenting on strategic planning proposals and the County Council's Rights of Way Improvement Plans.

Source Documents	Location
Appointments to Outside Bodies: Economy and Environment Committee Appointments to Internal Advisory Groups and Panels and to Partnership Liaison and Advisory Groups	Room 117, Shire Hall, Cambridge
Countryside and Rights of Way Act (2000)	<a href="http://jncc.defra.gov.uk/page-1378">http://jncc.defra.gov.uk/page-1378</a>