

8 December 2005

LOCAL ACCESS FORUM RESPONSE TO MR TUKE

Thank you for submitting public questions for the Devon Local Access Forum meeting on 25 November. As you know the atrocious weather meant the meeting did not, unfortunately, take place as planned.

I am writing in response to your request for written answers.

1. Availability of Committee reports.

Committee papers for the Public Rights of Way Committee and all Devon County Council committees are available on the website one week prior to the meeting.

The website link is:

http://www.devon.gov.uk/index/your_council/decision_making/cma/index_prw.htm

This should give you an opportunity to consider the report on the Thorndon Cross to Halwill Junction bridleway proposal before the meeting, which will be held on Wednesday, 11 January at 2.15 p.m.

2. Impartiality.

Individual members of each Local Access Forum do, of course, have a particular interest in certain areas of the forum's work and tend to adopt positions depending on whether they represent the interests of access users or landowners. However, the formation of the forum is structured in such a way that there is a balance between landowners/managers and those with access interests. Removal of any member would create imbalance and possibly bias. In providing advice forum members are all involved in presenting their own viewpoint which is then debated. The aim is to achieve common ground and find a position where all forum members are comfortable. To gain consensus means some opinions at either end of the spectrum must be taken out of the equation.

The Devon Local Access Forum would emphasise that it is an advisory body and not one that takes executive decisions.