FUNDING COUNTRYSIDE ACCESS

DISCUSSION DOCUMENT

INTRODUCTION

With budgets becoming tighter, funding of some projects will suffer, as it is more important that funding is focussed on what is seen as essential projects. This means that other areas of work which the LAF and its sub groups would like to see materialise may not happen. This may also have an impact on the ROWIPs' of the two County Councils. This discussion document investigates what could be done to aid fund projects which are outside the statutory duties of the Lincolnshire and Rutland County Council.

HOW NORFOLK LAF IS TACKLING THE ISSUE

Following contacting Fiona Taylor (Natural England) in relation to Community Interest Organisations, Fiona mentioned Norfolk LAF is in the process of setting up a CIO (Community Interest Organisation) and registering with the Charity Commission. Once agreed this means the LAF CIO can then apply to organisations for funding where statutory bodies cannot. Don Saunders (the Norfolk LAF chair) and Kirsty Webber – Walton (Norfolk County Council provided the following information:

"Members of the Norfolk County Council Projects team are providing administrative support and managing the application on behalf of the group. The CIO has its own bank account and Treasurer. The Chair of the CIO is the Chair of the LAF.

The charitable objectives of the CIO are around advancement of health for the population through improving countryside access so that people have opportunities to be active outside in their local environment and to benefit their health from doing so; also conservation and restoration of the environment for environmental and public benefit in areas of public access.

This includes agreeing project ideas and identifying external funding streams that will enable projects to happen. The LAF may offer links to people and organisations that could be a useful part of projects and officers will build partnerships in order to take projects forward and involve LAF members as appropriate."

EXAMPLE OF CIO OPPORTUNITIES

Attracting funding for:

1. ROWIP projects which the LAF deem as important which cannot be funded and are outside the Lincolnshire and Rutland County Council statutory duties.
2. Digitally scanning both County Council historic records to aid research into Lost Ways.
3. Permissive routes in accordance with the "Future of Public Access in Stewardship Schemes" discussion document.
4. Buying land to dedicate as PRoW
5. Working with other organisations to attract funding for major improvements to the PRoW Network

WHAT WE COULD DO

We could set up a CIO for the LAF or see if other LAFs in our Region would be interested in creating a Regional CIO, where each LAF would have a member on the CIO to enable them to take their LAF's project or joint projects forward.

QUESTION

Should we investigate further the costs, challenges and opportunities of setting up a CIO and provide further information to the next Forum meeting?

NOTE

This same paper is being requested to be included for discussion for the July Leicestershire LAF meeting.