



One voice for sport and recreation

Access Working Group

17 June 2010

Attendance

William Crookshank
Kevin East
Adrian Morris
Paul Lawrence
Tom Neale
Colin Palmer
Susanna Perkins
Robert Pettigrew
Tamsin Phipps
Will Renshaw
Cedric Selby

Martin Key
Andrew Hanson

Apologies

Mark Lloyd
Tony Williams
Kim Atkinson
Pauline Harrison
Peter Revill
Roger Squires
Cath Flitcroft

1. Welcome and introductions

2. Access statement

- The group considered the draft access statement and suggested alterations which are outlined below.
- Include the date and issue number
- Include a sentence on increasing access opportunities to encourage learning outside of the classroom
- Re-word the bullet points under 'rights and responsibilities' to reflect the strategic approach of this document

- Include a reference to the importance of local authorities as the principle access manager in maintaining, improving and broadening public access provision. There was some debate about whether the statement should focus on local authorities at a time when their resources will be limited. An alternative suggestion is to use the coalition Government's 'big society' idea which may have more political capital than the traditional focus local authority budgets

3. Terms of reference

The group considered the draft terms of reference and agreed with the principles of the document, most pertinently, the need for key proposed actions of the Group to be referred to the Divisions.

Other points included:

- Check if the term 'observer' is commonly used for non-members who attend CCPR member led meetings – **It is**
- Observers can not vote on key proposed actions. The majority of observers attending the group will be from government agencies/departments or major landowners and so are also the principle targets of the Groups campaigning and lobbying work. While support from these organisations is crucial for CCPR's success they should not control the direction of our work.
- Comments made during the meeting are considered to be 'public' unless asked not to be

4. Rights of way discussion paper

Discussion Point 1: Do the broad recommendations of Group set the foundations for a rights of way system that will be fit for purpose in the first half of the 20th century? How does CCPR contribute to promoting the cultural change that the Groups see as vital?

No. Members felt that the recommendations made were useful but only within the narrow remit of the group, namely, *'how to capture or preserve useful and historical rights, and then close the definitive map and statement to such rights'*.

- Members supported the recommendations in the short term to 'oil the mechanism' of recording useful and historical rights.
- Members believe that the current mechanism of administering rights of way is under-resourced
- Members believe that the current system is not fit for purpose as it can not deliver public benefit in 21st century Britain
- **Action:** Write to DEFRA outlining this position

Discussion Point 2: Are ROWIPs of any real value given that there is no duty on local highway authorities to implement their recommendations and the continuing challenge to fulfil the statutory obligation to keep rights of way open and easy to use?

- More funding is required for them to work.
- To members knowledge actions are not being monitored
- Greater buy in is required from Local Access Forums
- They work in Wales because Government and local authorities are more closely connected and funding was found to support and implement recommendations – half of all local authorities have implementation officers

- **Action:** Write to DEFRA outlining this position

Discussion Point 3: How can quality access to the countryside be achieved through Agri-Environment schemes given that they are voluntary and time limited.

- The Group agreed that access to water is required
- What access there was lacked consistency in terms of geography and permanency of routes
- Access could be better targeted to areas of need
- Members agree that the role of user groups in targeting landowners for improved access is not working

Richard Cooke from Natural England ran a workshop for CCPR and answered many of the Group's questions

- Access only schemes are possible: user groups can approach a landowner to apply for scheme but they would first need Entry Level Stewardship and a FEP? (a search for existing environmental agreements). Land locked access land is perfect for an access agreement. All landowners are eligible for access and payments can be made for existing access so long as it is part of an improved access 'package'
- There is growing support within Natural England for payments to be made to landowners for deemed dedication of rights of way. The EU scheme does not allow for it at the moment but access payments are state funded
- Targeting access is tricky because you need landowner agreement. Officers do use ROWIPs to identify need as the work has already been done
- Payments are not made for PROW but they can be made for permissive upgrades of PROW
- Members asked for mapping to be improved to show the continuation of the route (<http://cwr.naturalengland.org.uk/>). A particularly good idea was to turn access schemes into an application 'layer' for GPS mapping. This gets around difficulty including it on OS maps
- There is currently no effective way of measuring levels of use apart from anecdotal and looking at path erosion. Richard did not have the figure for the percentage of schemes with access provision
- Spatial analysis of access schemes is possible as access is now included in the Holdings Assessment Toolkit and access is given the same weighting as other priorities

Discussion Point 4: Can the principle of paying landowners for permissive access be broadened to include other rights of access as a means of encouraging a cultural change and thus broadening/improving access provision?

Not covered

Discussion Point 5: Will the rights of way network sufficiently link up with new coastal access provision? How can linear access support and enhance area access?

Not covered

Discussion Point 6: Does the rights of way network sufficiently link up with existing and future open access land? How can linear access support and enhance area access?

Not covered

Discussion Point 7: Will the funding challenges create greater inconsistencies in the approach taken by local highway authorities to rights of way work? What could this mean to user groups and how could CCPR address these challenges?

Not covered

5. Risk in recreation

- Members felt that this was an area of work the Group should focus on
- CCPR submitted a paper to Lord Young's review of health and safety legislation and the compensation culture and is available on our [website](#). The results of the review are expected to be announced later this year.

6. National recreational access forum

- Natural England has no appetite for a national recreation access forum in its original form as they believe it is not a good method for focussing on particular subjects - NE's policy is to arrange ad-hoc groups to focus on individual issues e.g. the ROW stakeholder group and CROW re-mapping
- There is a precedent for this in Wales where it works reasonably well – but England is very different as there are many more interested groups
- Martin attended the July meeting of the National Access Forum for Wales to research this area work – anecdotal evidence suggests that CCW officers believe the Forum has lost its way post CROW
- **Action:** MK to write a proposal for a national recreational access forum and seek support from key stakeholders before approaching DEFRA and Natural England

7. Best of both worlds

- CCPR has taken over the contract of the website from Natural England who now only support the project with staff time (1 day per week)

8. Coastal access implementation

- Ramblers and BMC are working on volunteer training programme to be ready for the implementation
- The first stage (Weymouth to Lulworth) is due to be consulted on in September – the signs are that this stage will go ahead but whether funding will be available for the rest of the scheme is unknown

9. CROW re-mapping

- Reports suggest that NE is taking legal advice on the necessary actions to fulfil the requirements of the legislation
- Estimate of 3-4 months for the start of the process
- **Action:** AM to circulate Ramblers policy position on re-mapping

10. Ordnance survey

- The most useful recreational data sets (1:50,000 and 1:25,000) have not been released

11. Facilities inquiry

- Facilities Inquiry report and recommendations has been launched. Members asked for research due difficulties experienced in accessing facilities. Members are encouraged to use the document for their own campaigns. The board is considering how CCPR will take forward recommendations

12. Access and Agri-Environment Workshop

- 7 July (see item discussion point 3 for details)

13. Date of next meeting

- January 2011

Martin Key
July 2010