

## **NATIONAL ACCESS FORUM: WORK PROGRAMME**

### **Purpose**

To stimulate discussion about the Work Programme for the Forum in 2017 and 2018.

### **Action**

***Members are invited to discuss this paper with a view to developing an agreed Work Programme for 2017 and 2018.***

### **Background**

1. Paragraph C13 of the NAF Operating Principles states that “a work programme will be agreed by the Forum each year. This programme will set out the main areas of work, the main outputs expected and what working groups are likely to be required”.

2. In practice, some of the work of the Forum is inevitably reactive to new and emerging problems; however, a Work Programme that recognises the need to accommodate this should provide a framework for proactive implementation.

3. In its report of May 2014, the Land Reform Review Group stated that the main tasks of the Forum should include continued promotion of the Code, its improved implementation on the ground and the publication of good practice guidance. In addition, the Group identified a number of issues that had been raised in this context, namely:

- dogs (e.g. dogs not under control, commercial dog walking and dog fouling);
- blocked accesses/locked gates;
- tensions between canoeists and anglers;
- damage by mountain bikes and horses;
- concerns about unauthorised camping;
- problems that can arise from commercial and intensive access use.

The Land Reform Review Group also highlighted the need for adequate resources to support the promotional and educational work required to improve the implementation of the Code and the importance of recognising the wider public benefits of public access for health and well-being when allocating budgets. Furthermore, as recommended by the Group, Ministers have agreed to update their guidance to access authorities under section 27 of the 2003 Act.

4. In broader terms, other issues discussed by the Forum over the past three years include, and which are still “live”, include:

- OS mapping of core paths;
- the possibility of using a dispute resolution procedure for difficult cases before they go to Court;
- supporting and encouraging the work of access authorities and their staff.

5. The principal tools available to the Forum for addressing these issues are:
- Its convening power – at its own meetings; through sub-groups; at meetings with LAFs; and by engaging with others;
  - Advice to SNH, SG officials and Ministers;
  - Publication of good practice guidance notes.

### **Draft Work Programme for 2017 and 2018**

6. The following draft Work Programme for 2017 and 2018 is put forward as a basis for discussion by Members of the Forum.

March 2017 (NAF/LAF):	Dog-related issues (primary topic) Core path mapping Locked gates/rural security Update on case law
May 2017:	Revised Ministerial Guidelines to access authorities (s.27) Possible non-judicial approaches to dispute resolution Update on National Walking & Cycling Network
Autumn 2017:	Camping issues Promoting the economic and social benefits of outdoor access
2018:	Review of Forum membership Consideration of support for public access post-SRDP Stock-take on links with LAFs

### **Members are invited to discuss these proposals – e.g. by suggesting additional topics and indicating priorities**

7. As noted above, the Forum also needs to be able to react to emerging new priorities and so there will need to be flexibility in following this Work Programme. It is suggested that in any event the Work Programme is reviewed annually.

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10 January 2017