

Committee: ACCESS

Date: 19 April 2007

Report: HEAD OF DEPARTMENT REPORT

ACTIVITIES

- Attendance of Transforming Outdoor Yorkshire working group meeting;
- Attendance at Active Craven and Active Richmondshire meetings
- Attendance at Yorkshire Dales Green Lanes Advisory Group meeting
- Attendance at Natural England Open Access Restrictions Officers meeting
- Hosted visit from Cumbria County Council Countryside Officers
- Attendance at National Trust Annual Liaison Meeting
- Attendance at Rambler Association Liaison Meeting

ISSUES FOR MEMBERS TO NOTE

The Local Access Forums (England) Regulations 2007 (SI 2007 No. 268)

1. The Regulations came into effect on 19 March 2007 and revoke earlier Regulations made in 2002. In summary, Parts 1 and 2 largely re-enact the earlier provisions concerning the establishment, administration and conduct of forums. Part 3 introduces new powers for appointing authorities to adapt the organisational structure and geographical coverage of forums. Part 4 places a new duty on appointing authorities to supply Natural England with information on forums.
2. Part 4 also prescribes additional bodies (Sport England, parish councils and AONB Conservation Boards) to whom forums may give advice. It also prescribes an additional matter on which forums may advise - in addition to recreational access, forums will now be able to advise on 'functional' and 'utility' access. The Regulations can be viewed at <http://www.opsi.gov.uk/si/si2007/20070268.htm>. Hard copies of the Regulations can be made available to Members on request.

Guidance for Local Access Forum members and local authorities

3. The Secretary of State has also issued revised Guidance on local access forums. This replaces guidance issued in 2002 and is intended to guide the work of forum members.

The revised Guidance disseminates good practice and highlights how forums can most effectively “make a difference”.

4. The Guidance is primarily intended for forum members but is relevant to appointing authorities, forums secretaries, section 94(4) bodies and anyone wanting to find out about the role and work of forums. Copies of the guidance can be viewed at <http://www.defra.gov.uk/wildlife-countryside/cl/laf-guidance.pdf> . Hard copies of the guidance can be made available for Members on request.
5. Members commented on the consultation paper at the 3 November 2005 Access Committee. Most of the issues raised in the Authority’s response have been picked up in the revised guidance. Members may also like to note that the LAF’s remit and standard procedures are also in accordance with it.

Transforming Outdoor Yorkshire

6. Further to the January 2007 Access Committee paper, the last meeting of the North Yorkshire cultural officers ‘transforming outdoor Yorkshire’ group agreed that the idea of developing rocksports in the Yorkshire Dales, through development a ‘via ferrata’ and ‘gill scrambling’, should be dropped. The group agreed to take forward the idea of a ‘year of adventure’. This is looking at ways of promoting ‘iconic’ outdoor activity experiences in North Yorkshire. In the two National Parks ideas will be put forward based on the understanding and enjoyment of the special qualities of the National Parks for example in the Yorkshire Dales this could be walking the Dales Way, horse riding the Settle Loop or watching peregrines at Malham Cove. The detail has still to be worked out and we are currently leading, with Yorkshire Culture, in working up a project brief. The concept is fundamentally about inspiring people to enjoy what the area has to offer, in keeping with why National Parks were originally set up, to explain how they can access these opportunities, and to do so in a way that safeguards the natural beauty of the area.

Jon Avison
Head of Park Management
April 2007

Background documents: none