

Dear Officers,

Please find attached the recently published government White Paper on the Natural Environment titled: The Natural Choice: securing the value of nature. Reference directly to access is on p52 'Connecting by improving access to the countryside' and in Annex 1, p.73, items 72 and 73.

<http://www.defra.gov.uk/environment/natural/whitepaper/>

One role for Local Access Forums will be through being involved with Local Nature Partnerships. It may be that a bid is currently being made to Defra by your authority to form an LNP (perhaps contact your Ecology or Green Infrastructure Officer), but LAFs should be involved to represent access. At such an early stage this may be simply a letter of support, but a member of the LAF may eventually become a member of the LNP. The message to your LAF is:

- DEFRA and Natural England will be keen for your LAF to be engaged with the LNP representing your area and, in doing so, play a key role in informing discussions and influencing decisions that affect resident's access to and enjoyment of the natural environment. LAFs are explicitly listed on the DEFRA website as potential LNP members.
- There will be workshops from September 2011 onwards to inform the establishment of an LNP for Buckinghamshire. The LAF is encouraged to take part in these discussions.
- There are numerous reasons why engagement is relevant to a LAF. LNPs will play a key role in influencing decisions about the natural environment and people's access and enjoyment of it. The LNP provides an opportunity to integrate access into the activities of projects and other organisations that might otherwise overlook access opportunities. LNP meetings are an opportunity to work collaboratively with organisations such as the National Trust, RSPB, BBOWT, AONBs and Natural England.
- The LNP will influence strategic documents, input to initiatives such as biodiversity offset pilots and Nature Improvement Areas, and provide integrated advice to local authorities on the natural environment.
- The mechanism for LAF engagement with an LNP is open to discussion in the workshops, but it seems likely that both LAFs and LNPs can meet their respective aims. It may be that the business of identifying and realising improved access opportunities can be delivered through working with the LNP.
- DEFRA and local representatives are leading on LNPs. Natural England are simply raising awareness of the opportunity to contribute to LNPs and encourage joint applications to avoid overlaps/competing LNP applications in a geographical area. Please email DEFRA with questions [LNPs@defra.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:LNPs@defra.gsi.gov.uk).

The timetable please see the following background paper...

Regards,

Jonathan.

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[www.buckscc.gov.uk/rights\\_of\\_way](http://www.buckscc.gov.uk/rights_of_way)

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