

NATIONAL ACCESS FORUM: WORK PROGRAMME

Purpose

To stimulate discussion about the Work Programme for the Forum in 2021 and beyond.

Actions

Members are invited to:

1. Review and discuss this paper with a view to developing an agreed Work Programme for 2021, and potentially as a foundation for a rolling Work Programme to be reviewed and updated at each meeting

2. Consider whether a matrix/spreadsheet of the NAF Work plan should be created and maintained to keep members up to date with progress in key work areas.

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. There are various on-going issues, as well as post Covid recovery and post Brexit replacement for IPA. These include:

- continued promotion of the Code, its improved implementation on the ground and the publication of good practice guidance.
- raising awareness of the wider public benefits of public access for health and well-being when allocating budgets.
- seeking to ensure that there are adequate resources to support the promotional and educational work required to improve the implementation of the Code - this includes supporting and encouraging the work of access authorities and their staff.
- addressing specific issues. Examples include; responsible access with dogs (dogs & livestock/ground nesting birds, reducing dog fouling); blocked access/locked gates; informal camping, fires, litter, path mapping, E-bikes etc,

4. Following a recommendation by the Land Reform Review Group, Ministers have agreed to update their guidance to access authorities under section 27 of the 2003 Act.

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 NatureScot, SG officials and Ministers;
- Publication of good practice guidance notes.

Draft Work Programme for 2021 and beyond

6. The following draft Work Programme for 2021 and beyond is put forward as a basis for discussion by Members of the Forum.

- June 2021:**
- Review March NAF/LAF meeting
 - Access & Roads Legislation interface –Transport Scotland to attend
 - Outdoor Access with E-bikes – update on the research
 - Visitor Management Strategy
 - LAF issue: Role of LAFs in planning & forestry consultations
- September 2021:**
- Outdoor Access with E-bikes – update on the research
 - Visitor Management Strategy
 - SOAC promotion/messages to younger people
 - Membership review
 - LAF issue – standing item
- October 2021:**
- NAF/LAF meeting (in person)
 - topics to be identified during the year based on post Covid recovery
- Other Issues:**
- Post Brexit Rural Policy – IPA
 - Open water swimming
 - Shared use around active travel
 - Reservoirs and signage compliance

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 it continues to review this Work Programme annually and the matrix of actions at each meeting.

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