

Public Consultation on proposed Land Reform Bill

Purpose

1. To provide an update on the consideration of access matters within the current public consultation on a Land Reform Bill.

Action

2. Members are invited to note this update and discuss as required

Background

3. The Scottish Government has welcomed the overall message and direction of the Land Reform Review Group's report, *The Land of Scotland and the Common Good*, as published in May 2014. As part of their on-going commitment to land reform and as part of the response to that report, the Scottish Government are taking forward various commitments, including bringing forward a Land Reform Bill within this Parliamentary term.

4. A public consultation was launched in December 2014, seeking views on a range of measures intended to further land reform in Scotland. The document includes a 'Land Rights and Responsibilities Policy Statement' to help guide the development of public policy on the nature and character of land rights in Scotland, and a range of proposals for a Land Reform Bill. An annex B contains a table detailing all the recommendations made in the LRRG Report, and the action that is being taken forward by the Scottish Government for each.

5. One of the stated intentions featured in the consultation is to: "address specific aspects of land ownership and rights", including "...on public access, to make clarifications to the core paths planning process as set out in Part 1 of the Land Reform (Scotland) Act 2003. Specific consultation questions about Part One of the Act are included as proposal 11 in the consultation. This comprises three consultation questions (numbers 38, 39 and 40) relating to clarifying the core paths planning and review process under sections 18 and 20 of the Act.

6. The consultation runs until 10 February 2015. Links to the consultation were circulated in early December around the National Access Forum members and contacts, to assist and encourage member organisations in submitting their views to the consultation. At present we are not proposing to submit a response from the National Access Forum as a whole, but this is available for discussion.