

LEEDS LOCAL ACCESS FORUM

Meeting to be held in Leeds Civic Hall on
Thursday, 14th May, 2009 at 6.30 pm

MEMBERSHIP

Mike Willison (Chair) - User of local rights of way
Phillip Maude - User of local rights of way
Jerry Pearlman - User of local rights of way
Steven Wood - User of Local Rights of Way
Vacancy - User of Local Rights of Way
Vacancy - Owners and Occupiers
Vacancy - Owners and Occupiers
Vacancy - Owners and Occupiers
Councillor J Dunn - LCC
Councillor C Fox - LCC

A G E N D A

1 **Apologies for Absence**

To receive apologies for absence (if any).

2 **Chair's Opening Remarks**

To receive the Chair's opening remarks.

3 **Declarations of Interest**

In accordance with Regulation 6(8) of the Local Access Forums (England) Regulations 2007 Members of the Forum are required to declare any direct or indirect interests. A direct or indirect interest might reasonably be regarded as one which might affect a Member's well being, financial position, or business (direct) or that of a relative or friend (indirect) to a greater extent than that of other council tax payers, ratepayers or other inhabitants of the area.

4 **Minutes of the Last Meeting**

1 - 4

To consider the minutes of the last meeting held on 17th February 2009.

5 **Matters arising from the minutes**

To consider any matters arising from the minutes.

6 **England Access Forum**

5 - 24

To receive the minutes of the last meeting of the England Access Forum and to also receive a copy of the presentation on equality and diversity.

7 **Regional Access Forum**

Members will be provided with an update of the last meeting of the Regional Access Forum.

8 **Site Visit - St. Aidan's**

To make arrangements and confirm a date for the proposed site visit to St. Aidan's.

9 **Rights of Way Improvement Plan**

To consider a verbal update on the current status of the Rights of Way Improvement Plan

10 **Leeds Local Access Forum Website**

Members are requested to consider what information they would like to see on the Leeds Local Access Forum Website. Examples of other Local Access Forum websites will be provided at the meeting.

11 **Forward Work Programme**

Members are requested to identify topics for future meetings of the Leeds Local Access Forum.

12 **Date and Time of next meeting**

To confirm the date and time of the next meeting of the Leeds Local Access Forum.

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Leeds Local Access Forum

Tuesday, 17th February, 2009

PRESENT: Dr. M. Willison in the Chair

Mr. P. Maude, Mrs. D. Metcalf and Mr. S. Wood

IN ATTENDANCE: Brent Brady – Alleygating Co-ordinator
Roger Brookes – Public Rights of Way Development Officer
Paul Bowers – Legal Services
Bob Buckenham – Assistant Countryside and Access Manager
Claire Tregembo – Senior Definitive Map Officer

41 Apologies for Absence

Apologies were received from Councillor J. Dunn and Councillor C. Fox.

42 Declarations of Interest

None were declared.

43 Chair's Opening Remarks

The Chair welcomed the members of the public who were in attendance and also welcomed Claire Tregembo, Senior Definitive Map Officer, to her first meeting since recently joining the Council.

44 Minutes of the Last Meeting

Subject to the correction of some typographical errors the minutes of the last meeting of the Leeds Local Access Forum were held on 11th November 2009 were approved as a correct record.

RESOLVED: That the Minutes be approved.

45 Matters Arising from the minutes of the last meeting

In relation to minute 37 the Chair advised the Forum that the next meeting of the Regional Access Forum (RAF) will be held in Hull on 25th March 2009. The Leeds Local Access Forum had been requested to send two members to the RAF and Members were requested to contact the Forum Secretary if they wished to attend.

46 Gating Orders

The Forum considered a report in relation to the proposal for a Gating Order for Back Cross Green Lane, Leeds. The Alleygating Co-ordinator provided Members with a brief background to the application. Back Cross Green Lane was a short carriageway and back street. The intention was to gate both ends of the lane and provide keys to the residents who remained on the two streets which backed onto the lane. The area had a reputation for crime and anti-social behaviour and many residents had left the area.

The following issues were addressed in questions:

- Members raised their concern that gating this particular street may have a knock on effect for other streets in the area and displace the crime and disorder. The Alleygating Officer informed Members that Cross Green Crescent had also been referred for a Gating Order however as the budget stood there was only sufficient funding to install gates at back Cross Green Lane. Officers had agreed to consult and obtain planning permission for both street incase the finances became available.
- Officers had not received any complaints from the emergency services in relation to accessing gated areas. All services were provided with ample sets of master keys.
- The area had historically been a crime hotspot for years and there had been an incident for arson on the street. Officers and other agencies had explored alternative options in the past including moving residents, increasing patrols of neighbourhood policing teams and police and community support officers. Many of those involved in crime in the area in the past had moved and problems had temporarily improved however new residents had moved in and problems had arisen again.
- Some parts of the area had been demolished including Cross Green Avenue which still appeared on the map and the Officer was unsure whether further demolition would take place in the area. However a new link road that had recently been built may lead to the regeneration of the are in the long term.
- The police were aware that the Gating Order would only work if patrols and their support continued.
- There had been costs associated with the replacement of locks on gates throughout the authority and particularly Richmond Hill.
- There was no hard evidence to suggest that the Gating Orders displaced crime and disorder however the Officer was not aware of any investigations in to this area.
- The area had seen an increase in the number of private landlords purchasing properties in the area and this had led to the establishment of a Residents Association.
- As with all Gating Orders the order will be reviewed in one year. Members of the Forum will be informed of the reviews which take place.

Members of the Forum thanked the Officer for the report and issued no objections to the application.

RESOLVED: That no objection be issued to the application.

47 Rights of Way Improvement Plan

The Public Rights of Way Development Officer provided Members of the Forum an update on the developments in the approval of the Rights of Way Improvement Plan. Members were advised that since the last meeting the Plan had moved on significantly. Minute 37 of the minutes of the last meeting had mentioned a letter from DEFRA to the local authority however at the time neither the Chair or Officers were aware what the content of the letter was. The letter was subsequently forwarded to Joanne Clough and advised the Council that the ROWIP had to be published by the 31st March 2009 or the authority could find themselves liable to Judicial Review. In order to meet this deadline the ROWIP was submitted to the Council's Executive Board for approval on Friday 13th February 2009. Members were contacted prior to the Executive Board meeting to ask for their comments.

The ROWIP was approved at the meeting and all corrections would be included in the revised report. The next step was to edit the glossy version and the officer would be working with the designer to work on the final document. The final document would be available as a paper copy, on CD and electronically via the LCC Website.

The Chair advised the Forum that he had raised concerns that the ROWIP had referred to the publishing date for the online version of the Definitive Map was 2015 which he felt that it could be published earlier. The Senior Definitive Map Officer informed the Forum that work was underway which explored the various options for the digitised version of the Definitive Map. There were two options currently being investigated. One was to use and amend the current GIS system which the Council currently used. This could be published fairly quickly with a disclaimer stating that the map was a representation of the Definitive Map. The alternative solution was to specifically designed for their needs which would take longer to develop and potentially be more costly. A business plan would have to be put together and submitted to IT services in order for the project to progress and be costed. There were advantages and disadvantages to each option however officers were initially in favour of using the existing system however more work was required to ensure that the end result met the authority's legal obligations and provided meaningful and useful information for members of the public. Officers had been concerned that publishing the Definitive Map online before it could be checked properly could create problems if the paths were not located correctly on the map however it was anticipated that many of the concerns and problems which could be experienced would be addressed prior to application.

RESOLVED: That the update be noted.

48 Practice Guidance Note 1- Consultation on Changes to Public Rights of Way and Definitive Maps

The Assistant Countryside Access Officer provided members with a copy of the updated DEFRA Guidance on Consultation on Changes to Public Rights of Way Improvement Plan for their information. The Chair informed Members that in comparison to the previous edition there were a few changes. The Chair added that the inclusion of the variety of voluntary bodies to be consulted should be applauded. Members noted the Local Access Forums were included within this section however

in Leeds only major or sensitive schemes were brought to the Forum. Officer informed Members that the number of requested for Diversion Orders etc. had decreased in the last 12 months due to the effect of the current economic problems. Officers added that there was a list of standard consultees who were consulted for all applications under the Town and Country Planning Act and other pieces of legislation and that there was no problem with adding the LAF to the list.

RESOLVED: That the update be noted and the Leeds Local Access Forum be added to the list of standard consultees.

49 Forum Matters

The Secretary informed the Forum that following the last meeting there had been four applications for membership of the Forum from people with interests in disability access, walking and trail riding. Interviews were to take place over the next month and it was anticipated that there would be new Members to the Forum at the next meeting. However the Forum was lacking in representatives from owners or occupiers of land in Leeds and other interest areas. Officer and Members suggested contacting the managers at Bramham Park, Yorkshire Water, the RSPB, Wildlife Trust and Biodiversity Access Group. The Secretary agreed to continue to recruit new Members.

RESOLVED: That the update be noted.

50 Date and Time of the Next meeting

The date and time of the next meeting will be Thursday 14th May 2009.

Agenda Item 6

ENGLAND ACCESS FORUM, THIRD MEETING, 11 MARCH 2009, SHEFFIELD

EAF representatives

Alan Marlow, South East
Matthew Balfour, South East
Paul Heal, South West
Bob Harvey, South West
Andrew McCloy, East Midlands
Andrew Shirley, East Midlands
Liddy Lawrence, East of England

Natural England representatives

Andrew Wood
Duncan Mackay
Peter Ashcroft
Belinda Davies

Duncan Graham, North West
Edgar Ernstbrunner, North West
Edgar Powell, West Midlands
Hazel Armstrong, Yorkshire & Humber
Richard Holmes, Yorkshire & Humber
Steve Scoffin, North East
Pam Brooks, North East

Apologies from

Bob Smith, East of England

Sir Martin Doughty (1949 – 2009)

The meeting appreciated the many achievements that Martin Doughty had made during his life for people and the natural environment, and extended their sympathy to his family.

Regional Organisation

The progress made in appointing LAF regional co-ordinators was welcomed.

Chair's update

- The Chair reported that there was abundant evidence of effective and imaginative work by LAFs across the country.
- He had received reports of impressive activities in various regions, with for example 50 LAF members at a training day in the SE, an ambitious programme on diversity and coastal access in Yorks and Humber and inaugural meetings in the NW.
- Topics submitted by regions were reaching the national agenda – e.g. gating orders and preserving access over new roads.
- There was early and effective involvement in NE policy consultations.
- Some regions were producing excellent newsletters which celebrated success and good practice.

Gating Orders

The paper on gating orders was discussed and the following points were made:

- The data collected might not reflect the situation in urban areas where LAFs may be not so well connected with the LAF regional networks.
- If gating orders lead to major restrictions in access this would conflict with Natural England's urban agenda.
- Are there sufficient checks and balances in the GO processes?
- There are different definitions of anti-social behaviour in the two components of the legislation.
- There are differences of substance between the legislation and the guidance.
- The impacts on people with disabilities needs to be recognised.
- The impacts on children and their home range was not fully recognised.
- This is a complex area which would benefit from a systematic review.

Action:

- 1. A summary of the legal basis for Gating Orders and its operation be disseminated to LAFs.**
- 2. LAFs to be encouraged to lobby their parent highway authority to have a clear and published policy for Gating Orders.**
- 3. Natural England would seek talks with the Department of Transport about evaluating the effectiveness of the legislation.**
- 4. Natural England would explore ways of reminding Highway Authorities about their responsibilities.**

Local Area Agreements

An excellent paper was welcomed for its clarity and for the specific advice as to how LAFs can get involved. The following points were made:

- Many LAFs are not yet aware of the significance of LAAs in funding access.
- LAFs need to do more to engage in this new process, where there are significant, if not new funds to be played for.
- LAFs need to make the case that health is about accessing the natural environment as well as simply going to the gym.

Action

- 1. LAFs are encouraged to share within their regions and with EAF good examples of engaging with LAAs.**
- 2. The paper be disseminated to LAFs with a recommendation for action.**

Rights of Way and Trunk Road Improvements.

A verbal report was made on recent discussions which NE had conducted with the Highways Agency following the concerns raised by Suffolk LAF and the following points were made:

- Improvements to how rights of way and non-motorised road users are treated in the design of trunk road improvements were welcomed, including the involvement of LAFs, and the specific recognition of the Highways Agency as a 'highway authority'

- The ratings of risks and safety criteria should be apply to proposed improvements.
- Many of the same issues also apply to other busy roads where the good practice being adopted for trunk road improvements could be recommended by LAFs

Action

- 1. Natural England will reflect these concerns in its transport and roads policy and will ask the Highways Agency for more evidence of how its 'listening approach' leads to improvements.**
- 2. Natural England will consider how its local teams can have clearer advice on how to deal with local highway improvements.**
- 3. The recent response from the HA be shared with the Suffolk LAF, and the main points be passed to other LAFs.**

Diversity and Equality

The forum appreciated an excellent and forthright presentation on diversity and equality where much remains to be done. The following points were made:

- Greater clarity on LAF responsibilities would be appreciated.
- Engaging with diversity groups is challenging.
- There is a need to widen understanding of diversity beyond wheel-chair users.
- Getting people to overcome their fears requires dedication and perseverance
- Small improvements can make a real difference.
- Rights of Way Improvement Plans are a useful way of making progress.
- Use of the local media, eg local radio, by LAFs can widen interest in access and raise awareness

Action

- 1. The presentation will be disseminated to LAFs.**
- 2. The EAF working group will explore with NE in more detail how LAFs can respond to diversity issues, and will report the outcomes to LAFs.**
- 3. EAF members are asked to send examples of good practice in their regions to the Secretary.**

LAFs strategic influence on Highway Authorities.

The paper was discussed and the following points were made:

- The value of LAFs having statutory consultee status.
- How LAFs would benefit from knowing what progress other LAFs made and how this was being achieved.
- Ways in which LAFs can communicate with members and senior officers when facing difficulties in being heard effectively.
- In what ways LAFs facing problems could be advised and supported by their regions and EA
- The continuing need for better communications.
- How the LAF Handbook can be made more accessible and updated where necessary.
- How annual reports which often contain examples of good practice can be shared more easily

Action

- 1. Natural England will consider what support it can provide its local teams so they can engage at the right level with highway authorities.**
- 2. Natural England will look at how it can promulgate the LAF Handbook more effectively and how communication can be improved by, for example, a website or newsletter.**

Integrating Access across Natural England's business.

The paper was welcomed as a very significant step forward in emphasising the value and importance of access. The following points were made:

- Natural England are aware that higher rights (ie beyond walking) need to be addressed by government but there are no current specific proposals.
- To be aware that woodlands will come within the scope of agri-environment agreements.
- The new Uplands HLS will have an access component.

Access and related Policy

An update included the following points:

- The policy had been amended in the light of advice received including that from EAF
- The Access policy will be sent to the Chair of NE for sign off before the end of March and a policy position statement disseminated shortly after confirmation by the April NE Policy Steering Group.
- Two further policies will be developed during 2009, in which LAFs and EAF will be engaged one on broadening understanding and the other on volunteering/active citizenship.

Review of Trails and Routes

The review is now complete, with around 30% of LAFs involved in consultation events or providing written responses. The recommendations will be presented to the July Board meeting of NE.

ROWIP Awards

The chair welcomed this initiative which recognises the importance of ROWIPs and the achievement of both highway authorities and LAFs and described EAF's involvement as judges in selecting Award winners. The celebration culminates in an Awards Ceremony to be held in Leicester in March when the guest of honour will be Nicholas Crane.

Stakeholder Working Group

Andrew Wood reminded EAF of the make up and remit of this group, whose core purpose is around unrecorded rights of way, as distinct from wider rights of way or access improvement issues. However its terms of reference also allows the group to look at related issues, so it can form its recommendations in a proper access context.

Action

- 1. Natural England will consult with the EAF chair should any wider access issues arise.**

Issues submitted by regions and requiring further work

1. fencing of woodland planting on open access land
2. access for horse-riders in the Forestry Commission Estate
3. Local Transport Plans
4. the impact on rights of way from major road improvements
5. LAF communications
6. Diversity

Action

1. these items are remitted to the EAF working group.

Peter Ashcroft

Members thanked the Secretary, Peter Ashcroft, for his efforts on their behalf in the establishment and management of the work of EAF and expressed best wishes to him in his new post.

Date of Next Meeting

This will be arranged in the next few months when dates for consultation on forthcoming policies etc become clearer.

PA/DG

14 March 09

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Diversity and Equality presentation for EAF
11 March 2009

Belinda Davis – Policy Team, People & Access

Diversity affects us all



Taking a representative sample of 100 adults from the population at large...

- -- are likely to have a disability of some kind
- -- will be gay
- -- will be women
- -- will be over 65
- -- will be lone parents and
- -- will be from an ethnic minority

Equality – what it covers

At present there are 116 separate pieces of equality legislation in force

- 35 Acts
- 52 statutory instruments
- 13 codes of practice
- 16 European Commission directives and recommendations
- Plus 2,500 pages of guidance

Discrimination law covers:

- Sex Discrimination
- Sexual Orientation
- Race
- Age
- Religion and Belief
- Disability
- Part time workers



Definitions

The Equality and Human Rights Commission:

- “To help create a society where our origins do not determine our destiny.”
- “Giving every individual the chance to achieve their potential, free from prejudice and discrimination.”
- “A Britain that is at ease with itself”

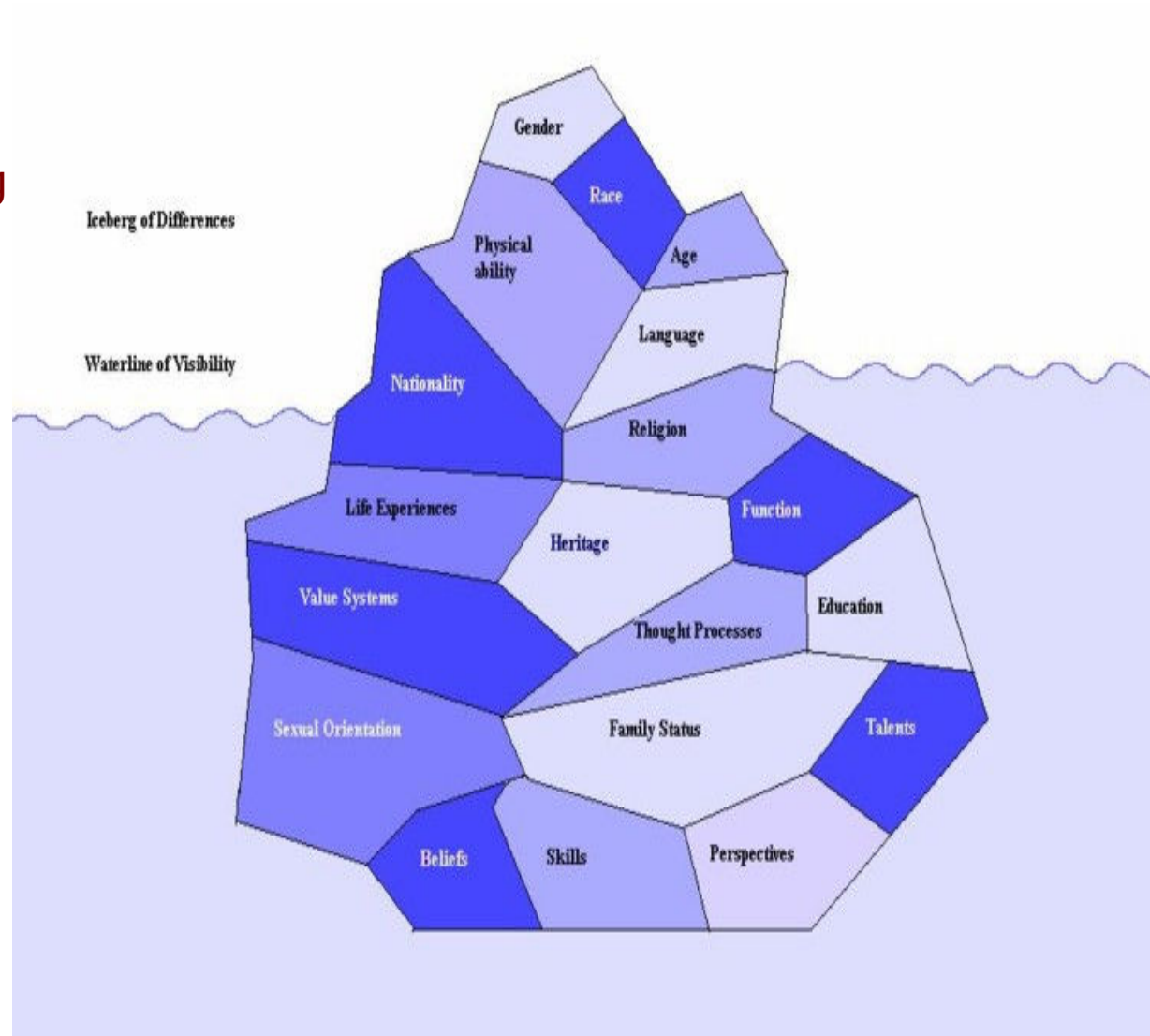


Why it matters

- Legislative obligations
- Changing demographics
- Employee engagement
- Recruitment and retention
- Stakeholder value

So what does Diversity mean?

- Equality
- Appreciating Diversity
- Social Inclusion





What it means for LAFs

Creating an inclusive environment where:

- Difference is valued and appreciated
- People can be themselves
- 'Don't assume – ask' is the embedded approach, avoiding prejudice, stereotyping and bias
- Diversity is more than a policy
- Creating equality of opportunity and a 'welcoming countryside'

Promoting Equality - Removing Barriers



- Physical
- Cultural
- Attitudinal
- Confidence
- Information
- Financial

Equality in Natural England

- Diversity Champions for 6 equality strands
- Diversity Ambassadors in each region across the organisation
- Equality Schemes and Action Plans
- Equality Impact Assessments
- Improving our data - employees, volunteers and visitors
- Monitoring engagement with natural environment (MENE survey)
- Access Audits on National Nature Reserves
- Consultations





Further Information

- Capturing Richness (Countryside Agency 2003)
- Diversity Review (Countryside Agency)
- By All Reasonable Means (Countryside Agency)
- A Sense of Freedom (Natural England 2007)

- Outdoors For All
- Mosaic
- Access to Nature

Diversity Review findings



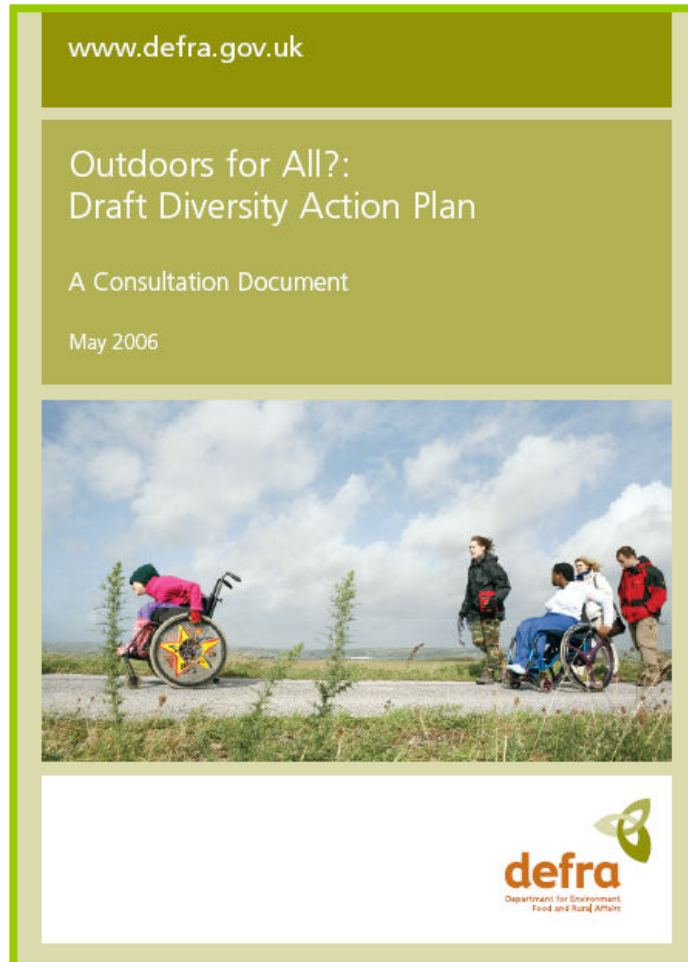
- ✓ Lack of information/knowledge of what is out there
- ✓ Difficulty with transport
- ✓ Fear of discrimination
- ✓ Lack of confidence in some providers dealing with diverse customers



Action Research Projects

- Four action research projects
- Final evaluation - Spring 2009

Outdoors for All?



- Public Consultation
- Work with Stakeholders
- “Outdoors for All?” launched by Jonathan Shaw MP March 2008



How can Local Access Forums make a difference?

- Embrace Diversity and Advocate Social Inclusion
- Assess your Representation on Local Access Forums
- Address barriers – physical
 - cultural
 - attitudinal
 - information
- More specifically:
 - Coastal Access
 - Championing Equality of Opportunity and Accessibility in your local area
- LAFs meet diversity groups on site to explore opportunities?



Discussion points

- We would like to here your thoughts on some of the issues raised in this presentation.
- Are you aware what is happening in your local areas already?
- Is there a need to consider some sort of diversity and equality training for LAFs?
- Have you got any examples of best practice you can share?
- How can we best promote success?