

**ACTION PLAN TO SUPPORT AND DEVELOP THE WORK OF ENGLAND'S
LOCAL ACCESS FORUMs** 25.10.05 DRAFT

The purpose of this Action Plan is to outline how the Countryside Agency, Defra, and the Local Government Association, intend to respond to, and where appropriate implement, the recommendations contained in the 2005 research report by the CCRU (Countryside & Community Research Unit), University of Gloucestershire.

The aim is to better support and develop the work of LAFs (local access forums) in England. The Action Plan is divided into seven broad themes, each of which includes specific actions. Details of action point contents may be found in Section 8 of CCRU's report. Please note that the Action Plan is not immutable – it should be regarded as a working document.

<u>Theme</u>	<u>Action by</u>	<u>By when</u>
1. Amending the regulatory framework to allow greater flexibility		
<u>Action:</u>		
(a) Invite views on proposed amendments to <i>Local Access Forums (England) Regulations 2002</i>	Defra	Sep 2005
(b) Responses considered, and LAF Regs amended	Defra	March 2006
2. Consider revising guidance to LAF members and secretaries, to clarify the role and remit of LAFs		
<u>Action:</u>		
(a) Invite views on whether, and if so, how the SofS guidance to LAFs might be amended, and invite examples of good practice which could be included in the guidance (or disseminated in other ways)	Defra	Sep 2005
(b) Discuss (selected) CCRU recs with CA regions, Defra, main interest groups (via ROWRC?), LGA (via Access Advisory Group). and CSS (via Countryside Working Group).	CA(LAR)	Nov 2005
(c) Collate responses, and make recommendations to Defra.	CA(LAR)	Nov 2005
(d) Consider consultation responses and issue revised guidance as appropriate (which may take the	Defra/CA	March 2006

form of guidance from SofS or guidance from CA.

3. Revising the guidance to AAs (appointing authorities) on how they should engage with their LAFs and raise their profiles locally

Action:

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|---|--------------|------------|
| (a) Invite views on whether to amend guidance issued to AA's and other LAs | Defra | Sep 2005 |
| (b) Discuss views on (selected) CCRU recs with CA regions, Defra, main interest groups (via ROWRC?), LGA (via Access Advisory Group). and CSS (via Countryside Working Group). | CA(LAR) | Dec 2005 |
| (c) Collate responses, and discuss with LGA and Defra. | CA(LAR) | Dec 2005 |
| (d) Issue improved guidance to AA officers & departmental heads concerning their role in 'sponsorship and engagement with their LAF. | Defra/CA/LGA | March 2006 |

4. Raising the profile of LAFs nationally

Action:

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|---|-----------------|----------|
| (a) Update and improve the LAF section of the Defra web site | Defra | Sep 2005 |
| (b) Add a 'dedicated' LAF section to CA web site | CA(LAR) | Nov 2005 |
| (c) Encourage AAs to raise awareness within their organisations, including among their elected members | Defra/CA/LGA | Ongoing |
| (d) Seek opportunities to increase awareness amongst members of the public, via agricultural shows, and radio (eg <i>The Archers</i>) and TV (eg <i>Countryfile</i>) programmes. | CA(LAR) | Ongoing |
| (e) Encourage AAs and LAFs to contribute articles to magazines of special interest groups. | CA(LAR) Regions | Ongoing |
| (f) Encourage AAs to issue press releases of good news about LAFs, as appropriate. | CA(LAR) Regions | Ongoing |
| (g) Raise awareness, and ensure the function of LAFs is understood across Government (in England), and is reflected in policy developments, and new legislation as appropriate | Defra | Ongoing |

5. Developing additional resources for use by LAFs

Action:

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|---|--------------|------------|
| (a) Invite views on production of a generic LAF Member Information Pack from CA regions, Defra, main interest groups (via ROWRC?), LGA (via Access Advisory Group). and CSS (via Countryside Working Group). | CA(LAR) | Oct 2005 |
| (b) Discuss views with Defra, and initiate action as appropriate. | CA(LAR) | Dec 2005 |
| (c) Consider including advice or guidance on resourcing issues in revised guidance to LAFs and AAs (see 2 & 3 above). | CA/LGA/Defra | March 2006 |

6. Improving communication with LAFs

Action:

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|-----|---|----------------|----------|
| (a) | Continue to encourage/invite LAF chairs to attend NCAF meetings. | NCAF Secretary | Ongoing |
| (b) | Consider other measures to strengthen linkages between LAFs and NCAF. | CA(LAR) | Ongoing |
| (c) | Consider whether a national event should be arranged for LAFs | CA(LAR) | Nov 2005 |

7. Developing regional liaison arrangements for LAFs

Action:

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|-----|---|-----------------|---------|
| (a) | Encourage LAFs to improve their inter-communication by supporting fledgling LAF regional network | CA(LAR) regions | Ongoing |
| (b) | Encourage improved lines of communication between LAFs and LAR regional offices, by supporting fledgling LAF regional network | CA(LAR) regions | Ongoing |
| (c) | Organise and/or support regional seminars, conferences, road shows, etc. | CA(LAR) regions | Ongoing |

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Oct 2005