

## Paper 1

### REGIONAL ORGANISATION

Following agreement at the last EAF meeting to the form of regional support offered by Natural England the table below shows the progress we are making in appointing LAF Regional Co-ordinators.

<b>Region</b>	<b>Regional Co-ordinators</b>	<b>Comment</b>
South East	Cath Hart	In post
South West	Hilary Winter	In post
East of England	Nicky Rowbottom	Just recruited, will start in April
East Midlands	Neil Lewis (volunteer)	In post
West Midlands		Shropshire CC have agreed to provide & host the post to be filled by April
North West	Kate Doughty (Acting co-ordinator)	Kate, who works for Natural England, is filling-in until an appointment is made
Yorks Humberside	Kate Jackson/ Margaret Kirtly	In post
North East	Beryl Bird	Just recruited, will start in April

## **Paper 2**

### **GATING ORDERS**

**Purpose:** This paper reports back on an investigation carried out by the Working Group into Gating Orders, including recommendations to EAF.

#### **What are Gating Orders?**

A gating order is a legal mechanism which allows locked gates to be erected across public rights of way to prevent crime and anti-social behaviour. The public are not able to use the route once an order has been made and the gates are in place.

Gating Orders were introduced as part of The Clean Neighbourhoods and Environment Act 2005.

Most orders take place within metropolitan authorities in the north of England. The Ramblers Association estimate that 1500 orders have been made in the last 3 years. They are running a campaign with the object that a public inquiry should be held if there is an objection to a proposed gating order.

#### **What are the issues?**

Gating Orders can make rights of way less convenient and useful.

Consultation: As there isn't the rigorous local consultation and independent appeals process normally associated with path closures, the gating order process has been criticised as being undemocratic.

Alternative solutions: Some councils are allegedly using alley-gating as a 'first resort' rather than last resort, so that the alternative potential solutions (eg clean-ups, lighting) are not considered.

Cost: Apart from the approx £5,000 cost of gating just one path, the gates/barriers will be subject to ongoing maintenance costs, and if the path is closed 'part-time', then someone has to be paid to open/close the gates. Liverpool City Council has spent about £500K over just one year, but costs tend not to be born by rights of way budgets.

#### **The Investigation**

The working group was asked to investigate Gating Orders.

We looked at their legal basis, summarised in Annex 1 and, through our regional networks, compiled case studies and views about how the gating orders were being applied. These raw findings are summarised in Annex 2.

## **Conclusions**

- Because Gating Orders are a relatively new concept their long term significance is not clear. Are there a fixed number of problems that will be addressed and then new orders will become infrequently used? Or will they turn into a major impediment to use of rights of way in some urban areas?
- Our regional survey suggests that requests for gating orders are not pursued lightly by local authorities - they are expensive and controversial.
- Lack of evidence of anti social behaviour often means that requests for Gating Orders are not followed through.
- The process seems to work reasonably well, given the complexity and emotiveness of the issue.
- There are no obvious or practical changes to the current system that EAF should call for.

## **Recommendations**

- EAF to approve the circulation of Annex 1 to all LAFs.
- To keep a watching brief on any other particular cases.

David Gear/Peter Ashcroft  
20 February 2009

## **Annex 1 Gating Orders: the Legal Basis & its Operation**

### **The Law**

The Clean Neighbourhoods and Environment Act 2005 amended section 129 of the Highways Act 1980 to empower local authorities to restrict access by means of gates across public rights of way on crime reduction grounds, and to deal with problems of anti-social behaviour. (The power excludes special, trunk, classified, principal, and strategic roads.)

The empowering statutory instrument where the details are described is *SI 2006 No 537 Environmental Protection, England, The Highways Act 1980 (Gating Orders) (England) Regulations 2006*.

### **Scope**

The legal basis is that a gating order restricts, to the extent it specifies, the public right of way over the highway to which it relates, and may:

- restrict the public right of way at all times, or at certain times, or periods;
- exclude persons of a certain description in the order from the effect of the restriction; and
- authorise the installation, operation and maintenance of a barrier or barriers for the purpose of enforcing the restriction.

### **How it Operates**

Those local authorities considering implementing gating orders are advised that:

- in general, rights of way do not cause or facilitate crime;
- the provisions are framed in a way that limits their use to alleyways which can be shown to expressly facilitate persistent crime and anti-social behaviour;
- the powers are intended to be used as a deterrent while the crime or anti-social behaviour is persistent; and
- following the reduction of the crime or anti-social behaviour, the highway restrictions can be varied or revoked.

In this context, “anti-social behaviour” is defined as meaning behaviour by a person which causes or is likely to cause harassment, alarm, or distress to one or more other persons not of the same household as him/her-self.

## **Issues That Local Authorities are Obligated to Consider**

This is usually invoked by residents living next to the route applying to their local authority. Before making a gating order, an authority must be satisfied that:

- There is sufficient evidence that premises adjoining or adjacent to the highway are affected by crime or anti-social behaviour;
- the existence of the highway is facilitating the persistent commission of criminal or anti-social behaviour; and
- it is expedient to make the order for the purpose of reducing crime or anti-social behaviour, having taken into account all the circumstances, including:
  - the likely effect of making the order on the occupiers of premises adjoining or adjacent to the highway;
  - the likely effect of making the order on other persons in the locality; and
  - in a case where the highway constitutes a through route, the availability of a reasonably convenient alternative route.

The local authority is required to advertise a proposed gating order on or close to the path in question, on its web site, and in a local newspaper.

## **Paper 2 – Annex 2**

### **GATING ORDERS**

#### **EVIDENCE & RAW DATA FROM OUR REGIONAL SURVEY @ 2 February 2009**

##### **The Ramblers Association**

The Ramblers Association are running a campaign on gating orders. According to their website around 1,500 alley closures have been made since 2006 when the gating order regulations came into force. Liverpool city Council have spend £0.5m a year on orders in the last 3 years.

##### **West Midlands**

– “not an issue” says NE access specialist,

##### **East of England**

Feedback from a range of partners as below:

1 We have only had one request at King’s Lynn and I gather it was only a minor closure at weekends. Not seen to be a problem. Allan.

2 Our experience of the application of Orders is curtailed by the failure of Norfolk County Council to complete the register of Rights of Way on the Definitive Map for Norwich and Great Yarmouth. But I do know that St.Leonard's Terrace, Thorpe Hamlet, Norwich has been blocked. I do not know the circumstances which caused it closure. Should NorfolkCC, as the Highway Authority, have notified Norfolk Access Forum?

Ray Walpole Countryside Officer Norfolk Ramblers Association and member of Norfolk Access Forum.

3 As expected , the issue of Gating Orders( GO) is a touchy subject. On the one hand the local politician faced with complaints of disorder etc sees this Gating business as the panacea to all ills and just wants it done. The local user groups and interest parties see every attempt as an assault on their freedom and we as the Highways Authority ( HA)are in the middle I have been approached by a few hopeful local councillors to get routes closed and I have said " Where is your evidence?" and usually there isn't any or its very thin . I also contact the local policing team and crime reduction partnership and there is usually little evidence and we agree to undertake other measure such as tidying up, increasing patrols etc and the problem evaporates for a while or they start collecting the evidence.

In numbers terms we have had about 4 enquiries of substance with several other on an informal information across the county and strangely one case today that has been rumbling on in a matter of school security where a ROW

runs through a residential school where as an alternative to a school based extinguishment a proposal for a GO has floated to the top and may provide a solution.

One of the principle difficulties is, especially where the Local Authority (LA) is not the HA. Where there is a unitary body such as York city it is they who make the gating order decision as a response to a local problem and it is they who resource its supervision with all the costs that entails. Therefore if it is not a strong case they do not have a buck to pass to somebody else because there isn't anyone. They either deal with it by gating and all the added costs etc or they don't and they have to adopt another strategy. Where the LA is not the HA, the LA can be very willing to pass the poisoned chalice on to the HA saying to their customers "It not our fault/ problem its down to the HA" and we as HA say "Woah hold on a minute why are we solving your disorder problem when:

**A** You don't appear to have a strong case for a GO and or you have not taken other appropriate steps to mitigate the problem" and

**B** This is going to cost us a lot of money and responsibility without end and we are going to get all the flack" and

**C** We really don't think this will solve the problem or its chances of success are poor

So in summary the GO should be seen as a local solution to a local problem and perhaps the law should be changed to allow the LA when they are not the HA to invoke the GO themselves with the HA acting as neutral or critical friend/observer. I acknowledge that we are obliged to work as a partner when it comes to crime reduction and where there is patent evidence of a problem and a GO has a high chance of success then we do our bit but our position is that we will not do this lightly.

The other notion I usually float across the consciousness of the aspirant councillor is the application of critical thought to the criminal access process. It goes along the lines of ..

**A.** Shutting a public right of way will not deter Billy Burglar. He wont be saying to himself " Oooh err ,I had better not climb this fence and go down there to do my burglary, I may be committing another offence and get into trouble" If they are quite happy to climb into somebodies garden and force the patio doors with the metal garden gnome then they are unlikely to break into a sweat about defying a GO( I agree it may discourage vagrant or transient misbehaviour ) and :

**B** On the basis that we shut routes that are used in the commission of crime we should close the M25 M1 and all other roads because criminals use them to travel to commit crime. Why don't we do that?..... because it will inconvenience the rest of the public !!! So wont closing this route also inconvenience..... etc. It make them think about the proportionality of the response they are considering.

So , in summary whilst GO's may be considered as solutions , it is important that the threshold for acceptance is set high and the case properly tested.

Bob FENTON

Team Leader  
Countryside Access Team  
Rights of Way Service  
Herts County Council

4 This authority has implemented a number of closures using the Gating Order legislation on urban paths within the borough. As we do not have a Definitive Map for our urban paths, when consulted, The Ramblers or any other local walking groups have not objected. Therefore, we have not yet encountered any problems when using the Gating Order legislation and would rather view our cases as success stories against combating crime and anti-social behaviour.

*Nicola Hardy*  
*Rights of Way Mapping Officer , North East Lincs BC*

5 Up to this point in time Thurrock Borough Council (TBC) has only enforced one Gating Order. The order was placed on a public footpath in an urban area as a deterrent against occurrences of crime and vandalism.

This is the sequence of events for TBC's first attempt to secure an order, which took place over a period from July 2007 to November 2007.

- TBC erected gates at either end of the footpath before seeking a Gating Order. Thurrock Local Access Forum (TLAF) reminded TBC that they had acted unlawfully contrary to Section 137 of the Highways Act 1980 and advised them, that to avoid any person from issuing them with an enforcement notice under Section 130A(1) of the Highways Act 1980 for the removal of the obstruction, they should dismantle the gates immediately.
- TBC informed TLAF that because of continuous anti social behaviour that the police had been unable to stop the closure was deemed as urgent. The letter also stated that TBC would be seeking an Extinguishment Order under Section 118 and that TLAF's representations would be considered.
- I issued the TBC with enforcement notices under Section 130A(1) of the Highways Act 1980 for the removal of the obstructions.
- TBC informed TLAF that they were going to the Magistrates Court to seek an Extinguishment of Public Rights under Section 118. Highways Act 1980 on the footpath and that the gates would remain locked until the magistrates decision.
- The Public Notice for the Extinguishment was published in the local newspaper and the London Gazette. TLAF objected to the notice because of technical inaccuracies.

- I informed TBC that, as the gates were still in place I intended to apply to the Magistrates Court, under Section 130C(1) of the Highways Act 1980, to secure the removal of the obstructions.
- I received a telephone call from TBC Legal Services to invite me to discuss the matter.
- Legal Services informed me that they were dropping the extinguishment and dismantling the gates.

Although locally this event was fairly high profile and quite emotive, not once was the Local Access Forum approached by members of the public, user groups or the local press for help, advice or comments.

Thurrock Borough Council has since gone through the correct legal requirements and has placed a Gating Order on the footpath. *'Thurrock Borough Council Gating of Part of Public Footpath 129 between College Avenue and Bradleigh Avenue Order 2008'* prohibits pedestrian access at all times until it is reviewed after twelve months.

Regards  
George Whitehead  
Chairman - Thurrock Local Access Forum.

6 My own experience with a London Borough is very unsatisfactory as I am passed back and forwards between Havering Council and the Met. Police (Romford) - who want £625 from me to provide the statistics of the 'events' which were used to justify their closing the PRoWs. The area is much larger than seems appropriate! Michael Cullen. LAF member

7 I'm not entirely sure what the state of play is on the the Stowmarket case Suffolk CC was progressing but we did have some concerns, for instance, about the gating order Ipswich BC were progressing at Kelly-Pickwick Road, largely because we felt the link was a useful one and IBC had not appeared to provide any evidence about ASB in relation to the route and seemed to fly in the face of LTP objectives. In addition, IBC did not appear to have a policy on gating orders and we were consulted very late on. Suffolk CC Steve

## **South West**

1 The only comeback I have which cites any problem is from JLAF (Bristol/Bath area). A paper prepared by JLAF has already been sent. In the remainder of the SW it does not appear to be an issue. Hilary Winter Regional Coordinator

2 I currently sit on the Plymouth LAF and would like to pass on my comments in relation to the 'Anti-Gating Campaign'

Although I can fully understand certain groups or individuals would be passionate about ensuring that any PRow are not temporally closed or was given restricted access. My own personal opinion is that until such times that those campaigners have lived, worked or even spoken with residents that live in the areas affected by anti-social behaviour and in turn, 'Gating orders'. They are not able to fully understand the reasoning behind such decisions.

When a community has become seriously affected by anti-social behaviour, such as drug taking, dog fouling, burglary or physical or verbal attacks. It becomes the duty of combined agencies including the Police and Local Council to ensure that action is taken to protect those individuals and families from experiencing such threats. Parents would do anything to ensure that their child remains safe in their area. If used needles and attacks were a regular occurrence in a particular area or street, even if it was a PRow. Then it is essential that the influencing factor is removed to stop those events from happening. In many cases, this involves the closing of streets or back lanes that act as a breeding ground in some communities for these issues.

I do agree that these agencies need to look at tackling these anti-social issues another way. However, I would expect that at least 90% of the areas affected by gating orders are within deprived areas or communities that suffer from multiple deprivation. All these areas or communities would already have a National strategy for development and improvement in areas including anti-social behaviour. There are never any short term solutions to these issues, but often a three, five and ten year plan is drawn up to tackle the root causes of the issues facing individual communities.

As outlined in the Human Rights Act, Everyone has the right to a safe environment. We have to understand that shutting certain PRow are vital for the safety of certain communities. If all this means that people would have to walk an extra few meters to the next street or main road, to enable people to be and actually feel safer, then that is certainly a good thing.

I have personally lived and worked in areas affected by anti-social behaviour and gating orders and that is why I feel strongly that its not as clear that these PRow are purely shut with no good reason, as suggested within this campaign.

Kind Regards  
Bethan Roberts Plymouth LAF Member

## **East Midlands**

1 Nottinghamshire Local Access Forum have been involved in two Gating Orders. The first one the LAF supported albeit they did comment on the use of a 24 hour closure despite the majority of incidents occurring in the evening / night.

The second Gating Order, the LAF objected along with the RA and Open Spaces Society. However, the County Council are still going ahead with the order. I can provide further details if required.

Neil Lewis  
Countryside Access Development Officer  
Countryside Access Team  
Communities  
Nottinghamshire County Council

2 Well, good question, I think this can only be answered if you look outside the rights of way a remit a little and place it equally in a crime, disorder and ASB context, obviously to those residents suffering from crime etc on a right of way or resulting from its use, then the right of way is not a priority and they would prefer to walk a little further if it meant not having to live in fear - we are currently dealing with a request for a GO for a path that links to the tram and the 'reasonably convenient alternative route' is approx 1700 metres, which I have turned down because I don't think this is reasonable and we can't satisfy this stat criteria and it goes against the council's policy on getting more people to walk, cycle and use the tram

basically in Nottingham rights of way are very important for local journeys but if no one is using them because of the fear of crime then we need to factor this in - our LAF is very interested in the designing out crime and the principals of Secured by Design which may reduce the need for many GO's in the future if new developments/developers/planners take this on board - hope this makes sense.

Regards

John Lee  
Public Rights of Way  
Traffic Management  
Environment and Regeneration  
Nottingham City

### **North East**

As I have just come from local authority to work for Natural England I thought that I would add some input from a Highway Authority prospective (in fact 5 urban authorities).

Each of the authorities received requests on numerous occasions requesting the closure / gating of paths (definitive and non definitive) due to anti social behaviour. In the cases that I am aware of the highway authorities deferred requests referring the complainant(s) to the police and / or other partnership community groups to look into the issue.

Some complaints were investigated (due to political pressure) – resulting in these complaints not being supported by police or community safety statistics and hence not pursued.

One authority within Tyne and Wear commissioned a consultant to look at 3 alleged hotspots (again following political pressure) – to date the results of two are awaited publicly but one has been dismissed due to lack of evidence (speaking to the ROW officer it appears that the other 2 are likely not to be progressed due to lack of evidence – but political pressure may dictate).

Within Tyne and Wear to date only one scheme was instigated for a 12 month period – this was after 5 years of working to resolve the issues with crime reduction partnerships.

Hope this helps.

Kevin Vigers  
Access Adviser  
Communities Team, Natural England

It does not appear to have been a big issue here; the only comment I have received (anonymously) is that one authority only consulted their LAF after the decision on a Gating Order had already been made!

In Durham the LAF have had a presentation on the County Council's policy on 'alleygates', but so far I think only one application has progressed to the consultation stage.

Mke Odgen LAF regional co-ordinator

### **South East**

I know of only one case where a LAF in the south east was consulted about gating orders, and we asked them to report on this for the LAF officers' group in 2007; this is attached. We know of one other case where the LAF wasn't consulted, and suspect there might be more but have no proof. Cath Hart  
LAF regional co-ordinator

## Paper 3

### FUNDING FOR ACCESS VIA LOCAL AREA AGREEMENTS

**Purpose:** this paper explains the link between access and local area agreements and proposes actions for LAFs.

#### What are Local Area Agreements?

- A new method for pooling resources between local public sector organisations and Central Government to deliver agreed outcomes;
- 3 year agreements, based on locally written Sustainable Community Strategies;
- Organised around a set of 198 national indicators; some of which are obligatory and some optional; local indicators can also be included if agreed;
- Involving complex organisation, negotiations and agreements;
- The lead local organisation is normally either a unitary authority or County Council;
- Delivery of actions is through Local Strategic Partnerships where relevant local organisations agree to collaborate
- Designed to integrate different funding streams rather than release extra funding although there are small performance rewards if local organisations reach specific stretching targets.

“the core basis for finance between Central and Local Government ... leading to a progressive review and rationalisation of all funding streams and grant resources” *James Blake, Head of Local Agreements & Partnerships, CLG, Sept 2008*

#### Where are the links with Access?

Local Areas Agreements are mainly about improvements and results rather than the provision of services or facilities. There are 4 main themes;

- Children and young people
- Economic development and enterprise
- Healthier communities and Older People
- Safer and Stronger communities

It is possible to link access with all of these.

In addition, several National Indicators refer directly or indirectly to access or the need to be more active;

- NI 8 “Adult participation in sport and active recreation”
- NI 55 “Children in Reception Year: overweight and obesity levels”
- NI 56 “Children in Year 6: overweight and obesity levels”
- NI 57 “Children and young people’s participation in PE and sport”

- NI 110 “Young people’s participation in positive activities”
- NI 175: “Access to services and facilities by public transport, walking and cycling”
- NI 186 “per capita reduction in carbon dioxide emissions”
- NI 198 “Mode of travel to school”

A straw poll across Natural England shows that, for example, NI 8 “Adult participation in sport and active recreation” has been successfully adopted by five of the nine relevant local authorities in the East Midlands, namely Leicester City, Rutland, Derbyshire, Lincolnshire and Northamptonshire.

### **What do we know about LAAs so far?**

- some LAAs do contain references to access, even though their main priorities are elsewhere;
- because it’s a new process, in its early days, there is scope for greater engagement;
- its never too late to get involved.

### **How can LAFs get involved?**

- Ask your highway authority some probing questions about its level of engagement in Local Area Agreements:
  - “how are we integrating access into LAAs?”
  - “what LAA activities are relevant to access?”
  - “how can access help to deliver some of the LAA priorities?”
- Investigate the opportunities for LAF members to become active in the decision making and delivery process – there are often small sub-groups responsible for specific topics.

### **Next Steps for EAF**

- Seek good examples of LAF successes in engaging with LAAs.
- Encourage regional and local discussions to identify opportunities and learn from others successes.
- Distribute this advice to LAF chairs.

For more details about Local Area Agreements see

[www.localpriorities.communities.gov.uk](http://www.localpriorities.communities.gov.uk)

Peter Ashcroft  
9 February 2009

## **Paper 4**

### **STRENGTHENING THE STRATEGIC EFFECTIVENESS OF LOCAL ACCESS FORUMS**

#### **A discussion paper**

#### **Background**

LAFs need to exert strategic influence if they are to make a real difference to the quality of access and people's use and appreciation of the outdoors - in their patch.

#### **What do LAFs bring to the party?**

They represent, uniquely an informed lay contribution to the process of developing implementing and monitoring policy. By the very nature of their constitution they bring a balanced and non-partisan approach which complements and contrasts with that the inevitably partisan views of worthy single-interest groups.

Just as importantly they bring to the professionals the authentic feelings of the public and communities they represent. All too often, if that is missing, policy can enter into a bewildering and impenetrable jungle of jargon and acronyms, resulting in a widening and damaging gulf between authorities and ordinary folks.

There are many organisations, national and local to influence, all with their differing needs, priorities and pressures. But by common consent the most crucial relationship is with the 'parent' access authority (or authorities) and other local councils. Where that relationship is strong, where communication is good, and where LAF members know their voice is being heard and their views exerting influence, then results are more likely to be achieved. And in turn that provides more satisfaction, greater commitment and sense of doing something really useful. No one wants to be there just for the tea and biscuits!

When things are less satisfactory, at its simplest this can be because

- The parent access authority affords access a lower priority than it should and /or finds it difficult to cope with external advice
- The LAF for whatever reason is not functioning satisfactorily

When the setting up of the regional structure was being mooted, there were quite a few requests for a mechanism to help where problems exist, and in the short time that things have been up and running there have been an increasing number of requests for help. Problems for LAFs have ranged from simply not being listened to trying to cope with up to five different 'parents'.

Depending on the severity of the problem requests can be for

- Technical advice
- Advice based on experience in other LAFs
- Training
- More direct intervention

## **What support is available?**

### Regionally

For the first time and subject to the limitations of resources, it would seem feasible for NE regional staff with LAF responsibilities together with LAF Chairs to offer support ranging from advice to sitting-in with both parties to explore remedies to perceived problems. This could be a responsibility for the regional EAF representatives.

There is now a modest budget for LAF training which the regions can use to fit their top priorities.

### England Access Forum

EAF's main contribution would be through the regions, as would Natural England's.

Exceptionally there could be a call on EAF itself to act. There would have to be agreed protocols and consensus within the region before help and support could be offered.

### Nationally

Natural England (and DEFRA) could help most effectively by giving the message to access authorities that their applications for funding and submissions of ROWIPs and LTPs would be judged, *inter alia*, against the evidence of effective partnership with their LAFs, in terms of influence, response and communication.

The ROWIP Awards Scheme is an effective means of raising the profile of both ROWIPs and LAFs and could form the basis of a system for a new emphasis on the importance of and the rewards for productive working together.

## **Conclusion**

The Natural England review of ROWIPs has revealed impressive examples of quality, partnership and innovation. Inevitably there are disparities in quality.

What is put forward here for discussion could help to bring about greater consistency and enhanced influence.

Duncan Graham/26 February 2009

## Paper 5

# INTEGRATING ACCESS ACROSS NATURAL ENGLAND'S BUSINESS

## Introduction

Our *Strategic Direction 2008 – 2013* describes the four outcomes we want to achieve for the natural environment over the next five years. These are:

1. A healthy natural environment.
2. People are inspired to value and conserve the natural environment.
3. Sustainable use of the natural environment.
4. Secure the natural environment for the future.

The second outcome, about people, is the outcome where our access work might be expected to solely reside.

However in preparing our current Corporate Plan for the period 2009-12 (which brigades all our resources around our priorities) we have integrated benefits to people and access across our entire business.

## Examples of Integration

The list below contains extracts from the Corporate Plan which gives some examples of what integration means in practice.

### Landscapes

- All our work on landscapes and geodiversity aims to inspire increased public engagement. (CP target 1.1.1)
- We will identify and prioritise landscapes where their natural beauty and opportunities for extensive outdoor recreation are suited to statutory designation (09/10 milestone)

### Marine

- We will engage with 2.5 million members of the public through events and related media activities to raise awareness of regional characteristic undersea landscapes leading to new public support for marine conservation and marine conservation zones (CP target 1.2.1 and 09/10 milestone)

### Children

- By 2012, we will give one million children and their families a high quality learning experience which enriches their understanding and appreciation of the natural environment (CP target 2.1.1)

### Health Walks

- Increase the participation in health walks by 50% (subject to Department of Health funding being confirmed (09/10 milestone))

#### Grant scheme – Access to Nature

- Award £11 million from Access to Nature (lottery grant scheme) to support the delivery of 50 projects in urban, rural and coastal communities across England to enable wider use and greater understanding and appreciation of the natural environment and its contribution to people's quality of life, including health and wellbeing (CP target 2.1.2 and 09/10 milestone)

#### Volunteering & Engagement

- Increase the number and diversity of people activity engaged in conserving and enhancing the natural environment by 10% by 2011 (CP target 2.2.1)
- Deliver a programme of outreach events on National Nature Reserves (09/10 milestone)

#### Access Infrastructure

- By 2011 each region will develop a strategic understanding of its access infrastructure and champion strategies for quality access to quality environments (CP target 2.3.1)

#### Coastal Access

- Established a tested statutory framework to enable delivery of improved coastal access to begin in 2010 (09/10 milestone)

#### Open Access

- Maintain at least 99% of open access land open for sustainable use by walkers without dogs through statutory and other management activities (09/10 milestone)

#### National Nature Reserves

- By 2011 develop a series of 'champion' National Nature Reserves (NNRs) which demonstrate the sustainable use and management of high quality natural destinations, and ensure that the NNRs estate is fully integrated into the access network.

#### Land Use

- We will provide a consistent and strong voice, advocating the natural environment as essential to the quality of life and prosperity of communities. We will exercise our role in this publicly so as to encourage people to exercise their own influence on environmental change and demand higher environmental standards for themselves (Objective 3.1)
- We will work to ensure that the planning system and major land-use planning funding streams deliver measurable environmental benefits (CP target 3.1.2)

- -this follows our recent success in securing a requirement that all 20 Growth Points must produce Green Infrastructure Strategies and a standard for Eco-towns that 40% of land is devoted to Green Infrastructure (ie green spaces, routes for walking or cycling, nature reserves, trees and vegetation)

#### Land Management

- We will support activities to improve understanding and connections between land managers and the public in the delivery of goods and services from the natural environment(Objective 3.2)
- We will work to help deliver reasonable public access via the Inheritance Tax Conditional Exemption Scheme (part of CP target 3.2.3)

#### Agri-environment schemes

- We will explore how our policies for access to the natural environment, and better understanding of it, can be delivered through agri-environment schemes (part of CP target 3.2.1) as part of £367m to be spent annually on agri-environment schemes which secure environmental and social benefits (09/10 milestone)

#### Vision for the future

- An integrated programme to engage the public and key stakeholders around our emerging vision and land use strategy (CP target 4.1.1 and 09/10 milestone)
- Inform and enable better responses to the changing needs of the natural environment through climate change (CP target 4.2.2), which will include promotion of low carbon access.
- We will play a key role in explaining and advocating the value to society of a healthy natural environment (CP target 4.2.2)

Peter Ashcroft/Terry Robinson

03 March 2009