

DEFRA –RIGHTS OF WAY IMPROVEMENT PLANS OF THE FUTURE

- Defra team update.
- The Review of ROWIPs.
- Areas of work for the LAF review of ROWIPS to consider.

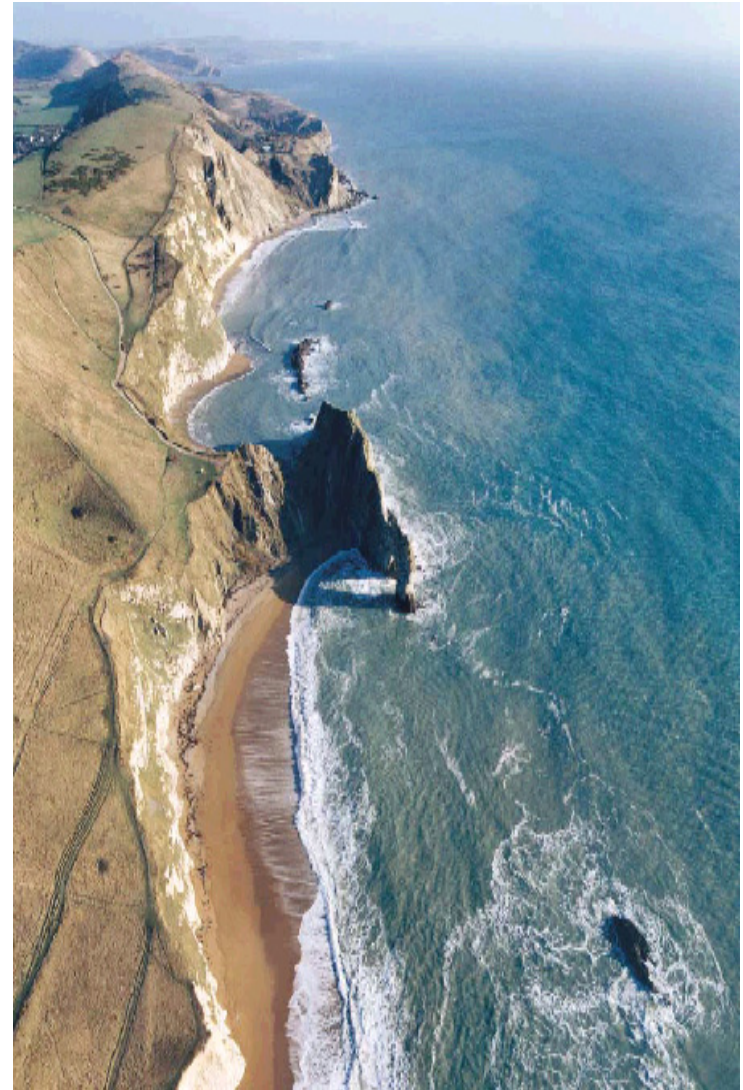


Commons and Access Implementation Team

Head of Team – Margaret Read

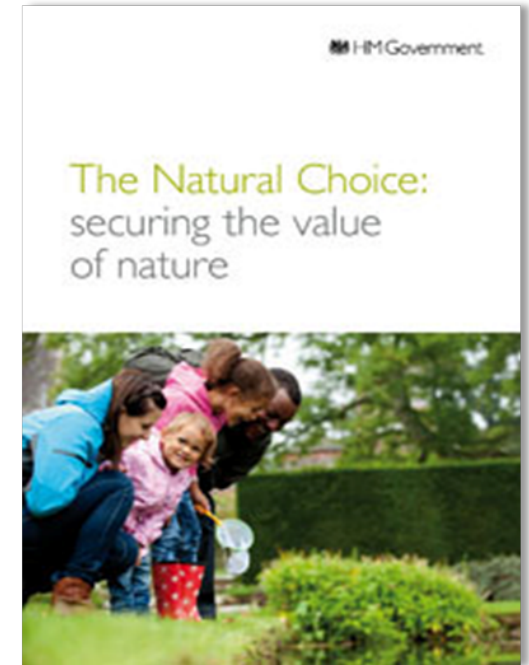
Responsible for -

- Implementation of the Commons Act 2006.
- Review of town and village greens registration system.
- Policy advice on common land generally (e.g. commons in environmental stewardship).
- Policy on public rights of way.
- Management of public rights of way and commons casework undertaken by Planning Inspectorate.
- Open Access Land under part 1 of the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000.
- Coastal access.



Defra Vision

The Natural Environment White Paper outlines the Government's vision for the natural environment over the next 50 years.



“4.33 Clear, well-maintained paths and bridleways are important to give people access to the natural environment and can be enjoyed by cyclists, walkers and horse riders. There is considerable scope to improve and extend this network, for example through Local Access Forums and Rights of Way Improvement Plans. We will make it easier for local communities and civil society groups to get involved in developing and maintaining networks of paths and accessible green space. ”

Rights of Way Improvement Plans

- ROWIPS are still relevant, not old hat!



- NEWP has highlighted ROWIPS and links them with LAFs.
- Local Highway Authorities have a duty to review their RoWIPs – many might already be doing that now.
- Defra/NE ROWIP questionnaire.
- Authorities have a duty to consult any LAF in their area in carrying out their review.

Government Forestry and Woodlands Policy Statement - Access and Recreation

“We want as many people as possible to be able to access green space, including woodlands, for exercise, leisure and recreational purposes and, in particular, we are keen to see greater multi-use access to woodland in and around our towns and cities. We will work with others to explore opportunities for increasing access. We believe that this is best done at the local level, for example through the further development of Rights of Way Improvement Plans.”

- Provide guidance to assist Local Authorities in reviewing Rights of Way Improvement Plans, with a particular emphasis on woodland access improvements.
- Fund a pilot project to assess and improve the condition, quality, and connectivity of Public Rights of Way for woodland access by foot, cycle and horse.

National Nature Reserves

- In 2012 Richard Benyon approved Natural England plans to dedicate its freehold NNR estate under section 16 of CROW.
- Defra is encouraging Natural England to pursue dedicated higher rights for horse riders and cyclists where possible.
- LAFs will be part of the process through their statutory role in the section 16 dedications process, but role is wider.
- Local knowledge will be vital to maximise the benefits for each local site.





Canal & River Trust
keeping people, nature & history connected

Canal and River Trust

Policy statement. “Our trustees believe we can unlock our waterways’ potential by:

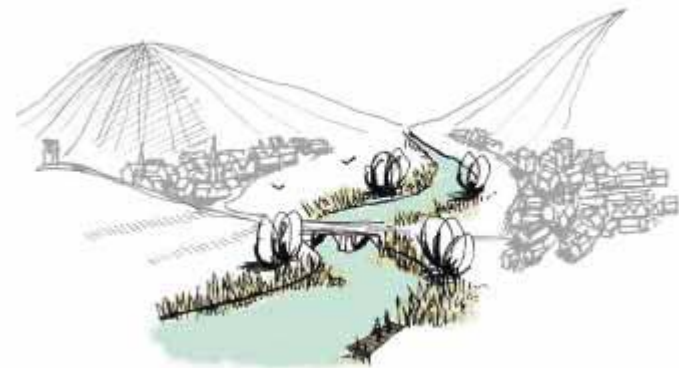
- Ensuring our canals and rivers are open, accessible and safe.
- Inspiring more people to enjoy the canals and rivers and support our work. “



Defra Green Infrastructure Partnership

The Green Infrastructure Partnership fulfils a commitment made in the Natural Environment White Paper. The Partnership brings together expertise from over 270 partner organisations from civil society, professional bodies, local authorities, developers, planners and social housing enterprises, and academics, among others to identify and develop solutions to help local decision makers adopt a Green Infrastructure approach in their day-to-day planning, development and delivery.

Richard Benyon – “It’s about ecological connectivity. It’s about bringing countryside into the city – trees where we need them, green transport corridors, connecting rural and urban areas. “



National Trails

Richard Benyon - “I believe that there is still more which could be done to realise the potential of these assets to our economy.”

- Consider the possibility of making links to existing National Trails from the existing public rights of way network.
- Look at where National Trails could become multi-use trails and be used by horse riders and cyclists.
- Consider short circular routes on National Trails linked to local communities



And finally.....

Local Nature Partnerships (LNPs)

- LNPs are partnerships of stakeholders who will work at a strategic scale to improve the range of benefits and services we get from a healthy natural environment.
- Important for LAFs to make LNPs understand public access and its many benefits and to include access as part of their plans.

Annual Reports

- It is important that Local Access Forums submit annual reports on time so Defra can gather national information on Forums and provide accurate briefing for the Minister.

