

Peak District Local Access Forum

Date: 1st April 2010

Item: 4

Title: Summary of Review of Directions to Restrict Access

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Purpose of the Report

The purpose of this report is to provide a summary of the progress that has been made in reviewing the long-term directions to restrict access under the CRoW Act.

An update is also provided on Natural England's new system for managing and displaying restrictions on open access land.

Background

A report was presented to the March 2009 meeting of the Local Access Forum to advise on the process for reviewing long-term directions for the exclusion of public to open access land within the Peak District National Park.

A Local Access Forum Sub-Group has been established to comment on the consultations for existing directions and proposed variations. An update report is provided to each meeting of the LAF.

Natural England (NE) and the National Park Authorities (NPAs) have statutory duties under CRoW for managing the provisions for exclusions and restrictions to open access land. NE undertake certain responsibilities on behalf of the NPAs.

In August 2009, NE established a simplified system to process the fewer than anticipated restrictions on open access land applied for by land managers. This is known as OASYS and is administered by the Open Access Contact Centre at NE.

The PDNPA is reviewing the contract it has with NE. NPAs now have additional responsibilities for managing casework coupled with a reduced accessibility to the system. This is being discussed with NE along with an appropriate contribution based on level of use.

At the same time the PDNPA is reviewing the provision of information relating to access land on its website. The Access Officer's post has been extended by one day a week to enable this.

Progress with restrictions

The Local Access Forum sub-group met on 3 occasions in 2009 and on 11 February 2010 to discuss the following sites:

1) Hollins Hill – The review has now been concluded. Dogs are excluded during the months of May to October due to cattle with calves and the topography of the site. Signage to display details of the concession path and the period of restriction is being

discussed with the landowner. The direction has effect until 2016 and is subject to review by 5 March 2015.

2) Deer Hill – A consultation on the proposal to revise the fall of shot zones has now been undertaken and the direction will be varied accordingly. This increases the availability for climbing. Discussions are still taking place to explore further opportunities for access. A guided walk is proposed for 23 April 2010.

3) Crowden – The first consultation has been undertaken. The land is used for clay pigeon shooting and an exclusion was granted following appeal. A further consultation will be required.

A copy of the Sub-group's formal consultation response is attached (Appendix 1).

Website provision

Information on open access land and restrictions is now displayed in a different format on Natural England's website. The mapping allows searches to be undertaken for current restrictions on open access land by opening as individual files. The website includes consultations and provides advice and guidance. In addition, information is given on fire severity.

The PDNPA's website provides an overview on access rights, predominantly for visitors. It provides links to NE's national website. It lists the restrictions under s 22 of CRow relating to 28 day discretions which vary from year to year. No detailed mapping is available.

The intention is to develop the information on the PDNPA's website to include web pages on consultations, managing access, dedications, restrictions, dogs and fires. Detailed mapping to include open access land, access points and concession paths is also being considered.

A further report will be provided to the LAF later this year.

Recommendation

- 1. That the report be noted.**

Appendix 1

Peak District Local Access Forum

Meeting of the LAF Sub-group to Review Statutory Directions to Restrict Access

Date: 11th February 2010

Attendees:

Andrew McCloy, Henry Folkard, Terry Howard, Sue Weatherley, James Kellie, Mike Rhodes, Sue Smith

Hollins Hill, Hollinsclough

The Local Access Forum is satisfied that the restriction on dogs is reasonable on the basis of safety and improved access opportunities for the public as a whole afforded by the concession path. In addition, it recommended that signage be displayed on site advising of the restriction.

Deer Hill, Meltham

The Local Access Forum supported the proposed changes to the direction regarding the amended fall of shot safety zones. However, it encouraged the Authority to explore further opportunities for access with all parties and to continue to keep the Local Access Forum informed.

Top Field, Crowden

In view of the Inspectors decision following the public inquiry and providing there has not been a change in circumstances, the Local Access Forum recommended leaving the direction unchanged. However, it encouraged the Authority to examine and assess all other access points in the vicinity.