

National Access Forum / Local Access Forum joint meeting

Edinburgh City Chambers, Tuesday 2 October 2012

Item	Summary
1. Present	Representatives of the National Access Forum (NAF) and Local Access Forums throughout Scotland. Chaired by Richard Cooke, Convenor of the NAF
2. Background to and purpose of meeting	To explore a current range of issues through presentations and workshops.
3. Key issues arising (* action points in bold)	<p>Introduction and welcome from Cllr Lesley Hinds who sits on Edinburgh LOAF and also is Chair of the Council's Transport, Infrastructure and Environment Committee. An interesting fact from Edinburgh is that they direct 5% of spend on infrastructure projects to cycling development. They also have a very good Active Travel Plan which wins plaudits out with the Council.</p> <p>Access in urban Scotland delivered by Sue Hilder of Glasgow City Council. This was a fascinating if somewhat scary presentation into a wide range of urban issues, including gang culture, temporary night closures, shared use pavements, managing access on "stalled" sites and difficulties in retro-fitting solutions. Rights of Way remain more important than in less urban areas and she highlighted the need for close working across departmental boundaries and the interplay between a number of different pieces of legislation and guidance.</p> <p>NAF work over last year was presented by Mark Wrightham who is Secretary of the NAF. This covered the following broad headings:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Access management and health and safety legislation; • Charging for facilities and services; • Commercial access; • Scottish Rural Development Programme; • Level crossings (still awaiting advice from Scottish Law Commission); • Other issues such as wildfire, Visitor Management Planning in Loch Lomond and Trossachs National Park, managing access with dogs at sensitive sites and providing guidance to new land owners and access rights. <p>SNH campaign to promote responsible behaviour was given by Marion Mulholland. Whilst she presented a useful overview of materials available and what had been done in relation to campaigns, articles etc, the most telling statistic was a fall in awareness of the Code from 67% in March 2008 to 32% in March 2012. The only upside</p>

of this was that more active users have a higher % recollection. A contract is currently out to review the effectiveness of the campaign.

Managing woodland access and forest operations in Scotland.

Joint presentation by Kevin Lafferty and James Ogilvie of FCS. New guidance is being planned by FCS to help address long term Health and Safety problems in woodlands – 5 fatalities per annum – and is aimed at Forest and Access Managers. The presentation highlighted some of the current problems which mainly arise through ignorance from both operators and users and the guidance proposes a number of approaches that will help address the problems. The intention is to seek comments now and seek feedback at the NAF meeting in November. Thereafter they plan to publish in Spring 2013 and run a series of workshops with key stakeholders in the summer of 2013.

Medal Routes are an initiative being led by Ramblers Scotland which is targeting those that take no exercise to start through having a series of promoted routes in and around communities that vary in length and are labelled bronze, silver and gold to reflect the effort required. This project is unashamedly capitalising on the Olympics and Commonwealth games is trying to help deliver a real legacy by making the 61% that currently fall below the minimum physical activity level more active.

Paul Wheelhouse, Minister for Environment and Climate Change joined the meeting and gave the keynote presentation. He emphasised the linkages that walking and recreation generally can have across the spectrum of topics that Government deal with including, health, transport, environment, social inclusion and justice. If everyone in Scotland achieved the minimum activity levels of 30 minutes of exercise 5 times a week, there would be a 30% reduction in preventative deaths in Scotland. He encouraged all to think about opportunities during 2013 which is the Year of Natural Scotland. He also provided a brief overview of the terms and remit of the Land Reform Group which has now been appointed as has its supporting advisory group. (Here is a link to the remit and composition of the group.)

<http://www.scotland.gov.uk/About/Review/land-reform/ReviewGroup>

4 parallel workshop sessions took place in the afternoon. These covered:

- Access issues in urban Scotland;
- Promoting responsible behaviour – nationally and locally;
- Making the most of local access forums; and
- Open session – sharing issues and experiences

The purpose of the last one was to allow delegates to flag up topics which would then be discussed. Two topics were discussed and these were:

CAIRNGORMS LOCAL OUTDOOR ACCESS FORUM

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Lack of public knowledge where RPAC funded paths are on the ground. Suggestions were to raise through consultation on next funding round and also to feed in concerns to the Land Reform Group.• Charging for parking and vehicle access on Forestry Commission Scotland ground. £50 charges for vehicles to gain access is being applied at certain locations and charging for events is also causing concern. FCS drew attention to the need to maximise revenue against a reduced net allocation from Scottish Gov't. The difference between charging that was designed to "recoup costs" from charging that had a profit motive was highlighted but no conclusions were reached. <p>Short feedback was given on each session before the meeting closed.</p>
4. General reflections	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• A useful format but perhaps more time built in for question and answers after each talk would have made for a more collaborative meeting.
5. Date and location of next meeting	October 2013?