



BUCKINGHAMSHIRE LOCAL ACCESS FORUM

TERMS OF REFERENCE

1. **Title**

1.1 The Buckinghamshire Local Access Forum.

2. **Reference Area**

2.1 The County of Buckinghamshire excluding Milton Keynes Unitary Authority Area.

3. **Status**

3.1 The LAF will be a Statutory Advisory Forum. It will provide advice and guidance to the Countryside Agency and the County Council on how to make the countryside more accessible and enjoyable for open-air recreation in ways that have regard to social, economic and environmental interests. The LAF will encourage and assist access provision, giving advice on issues of particular local relevance.

4. **Membership of the LAF**

4.1 The LAF will consist of no fewer than 10 and no more than 22 members.

4.2 Membership will be balanced to avoid dominance by any single interest group and include cross sectional interests.

4.3 Members will act in the best interests of the residents of and visitors to Buckinghamshire and not through individual interest agendas.

4.4 A Chairman and Vice-Chairman for the LAF will be elected by the LAF from amongst those persons appointed to be members. Their terms of office will also be decided by the LAF, with a limit determined by the length of time that they were appointed to serve as members.

4.5 LAF members will commit necessary time and will be willing to work to produce outputs.

4.6 LAF members will represent a broad range of experience and interests in recreational use of the countryside, land management and other relevant interests (eg tourism, local transport, health, disabled).

4.7 Members will be expected to confirm their support to the positive purpose of LAFs, commit to working within the Terms of Reference and through

constructive working with other members and devote necessary time to attend meetings, training, etc.

- 4.8 Members will take back information/recommendations/advice from the LAF to the members of their own group or organisation or area of interest.
- 4.9 Members will bring forward information/recommendations/ advice to the LAF from the members of their own group or organisation or area of interest as appropriate.
- 4.10 Members will work up ideas or actions outside of the confines of the meeting of the Forum, reporting back as necessary.
- 4.11 Members will respond quickly and efficiently to requests for information from the Secretariat.
- 4.12 Membership of the LAF will be regularly reviewed by the County Council, with formal reviews every 3 years. Each appointment of a member shall be for a period of one to three years, with the option of renewal on expiry in each case.
- 4.13 Members of the LAF may have their appointments terminated if they fail to attend any of the Forum's meetings for a year without first having obtained the Council's consent or if they have contravened the provisions in the Local Access Forums (England) Regulations 2002, relating to the disclosure of personal interests.
- 4.14 Members of the LAF who are directly or indirectly interested in any matter brought up for consideration at a meeting of the Forum shall disclose the nature of their interest to the meeting.
- 4.15 Members will be expected to give 3 months notice in writing should he/she wish to leave the LAF.

5. Role and Responsibilities of the Forum

5.1 To give advice on the development and implementation of a recreation and access strategy which:

- 5.1.1 Sets rights of way and open access in a broad context, integrating provision for access, all forms of open-air recreation, transport, tourism, health and public information.
- 5.1.2 Ensures provision is made for all users, and reflects the needs of local people.
- 5.1.3 Addresses the co-ordinated use of resources to deliver integrated recreation and access provision and management.
- 5.1.4 Develops a constructive and inclusive approach to the improvement of recreational access to the countryside.
- 5.1.5 Generates and develops its own ideas.

5.1.6 Respects local circumstances and different interests taking account of national guidance.

5.1.7 Engages in constructive debate and seeks consensus wherever possible.

5.1.8 Where consensus is not possible, makes clear the nature of the differing views and suggests how they might be resolved.

5.2 It will work to improve the public rights of way network as required by the Countryside and Rights of Way Act by:

5.2.1 Assisting with the review of Buckinghamshire's public rights of way network, including commenting on the extent to which the network meets the present and likely future needs of the public.

5.2.2 Assisting with the production of the Rights of Way Improvement Plan.

5.2.3 Evaluating the results of any public consultation on the draft plan and any particularly significant issues arising from it.

5.2.4 Commenting on action plans that follow from the review and assist with their implementation.

5.3 It will assist the implementation, management and review of the statutory right of Open Access to the countryside by acting as a consultee for the Countryside Agency's mapping project in Buckinghamshire by:

5.3.1 Providing advice to the Council and the Countryside Agency.

5.3.2 Commenting on the identification of Open Access land.

5.4 It will assist the Countryside Agency in respect of local restrictions of access to the countryside by:

5.4.1 Identifying any local issues that need to be taken into account in deciding how best to implement any advice received from English Nature and English Heritage, and in considering applications made on land management grounds.

5.4.2 Advising on the consistency and general approach that the Countryside Agency is taking.

5.4.3 Helping to identify best practice for the management of access restrictions in Buckinghamshire.

6. The LAF will aim to:

6.1 Develop a constructive and inclusive approach to the improvement of recreational access to the Buckinghamshire countryside.

6.2 Adopt inclusive and consistent approaches with neighbouring Access Forums.

- 6.3 Disseminate its advice to Members of the County Council and other bodies as appropriate.
- 6.4 Seek specialist technical advice when needed and appropriate.
- 6.5 Work as a cohesive team engaging in constructive debate, seeking consensus on all reports.
- 6.6 Where consensus is not possible, issues may be decided by vote.

7 Administration

- 7.1 The LAF will meet 4 times a year or as necessary. The frequency of the meetings can be reviewed by the LAF.
- 7.2 Agendas will be agreed between the Chairman and the Secretariat.
- 7.3 The LAF will be open to the public and advertised in advance.
- 7.4 Agendas, papers and minutes of meetings will be available to the public.
- 7.5 Questions from the public or outside organisations must be sent to the County Council in advance of the LAF.
- 7.6 The Chair will invite observers to the LAF when appropriate.
- 7.7 Observers will be able to contribute to the proceedings at the discretion of the Chairman.
- 7.8 Minutes of the Forum meetings will be considered by the County Council's Cabinet/Policy Advisory Group/Scrutiny Committee/Local Area Committee as appropriate.
- 7.9 The LAF will prepare an annual report on its activities. This will be published by the County Council.