



Dedicating our freehold NNRs

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Dedication the Background



- In November 2011 the Natural England board said;
 - that all parts of our eligible NNRs and similar holdings should be dedicated for permanent public access unless there are compelling reasons on particular sites not to do so.
- The programme of dedication will cover **all** of our freehold NNRs
 - even if already mapped as CRoW
 - only in exceptional circumstances will we not dedicate.
- Consistent with the Forestry Commission's dedication of its freehold estate



Dedication – the legislation



- The Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000 (CRoW)
- Section 16 allows for owners* of land to dedicate it for public access in perpetuity.



- Consistent with our role as an 'integrated agency' under our general statutory purpose and with our wider objectives
- Additional public enjoyment
- Support the message people and wildlife are able to co exist on many sites.
- Promote public engagement
- Example to other landowners

Access on NNRs - The current situation



Current levels of access on all NNRs

- Some 40% of the total NNR area already has open access rights under the CRoW Act (mapped or dedicated).
- Three quarters of NNRs have rights of way over them, amounting to some 770 km.
- A significant number of NNR also have permissive paths or self guided trails.

There are;

- eligible NNRs across 32 counties
- consisting of 82 freehold (whole or part) reserves



Dedication; what will change?



- Dedication will often be the formalisation of existing access and access management.
- The existing network of paths and information will remain as the biggest influence over where people go on the NNR.
- Dedication does not mean making every part of the NNR physically easy to reach or use.



Dedication; how will the process work?



- There are five basic elements to the dedication process
 - 1. Legal check and review
 - 2. Initial site meeting
 - 3. Assessment meeting
 - 4. Proposal to the Chief Executive (in batches)
 - 5. Dedication
- 1 happens during 2 and 3 and is undertaken by land agent
- 2 and 3 can be done together on less complex sites
- It all comes together at 5

Stage 1 – Initial site meeting



- Familiarisation visit to the NNR
 - Open Access lead advisor
 - Project manager
 - SRM and RM
- The agenda includes;
 - Understanding the special features of the NNR
 - Understanding current access on the NNR
 - Opportunities and constraints
 - Higher rights
 - Neighbours
 - Byelaws
 - The Nature Conservation Assessment process

Stage 2 – Assessment meeting



- Each NNR will undergo an 'initial assessment' that respects the primacy of the nature conservation value of the site.
- The assessment will look at implications for the whole site and neighbouring land.
- Higher Rights
- Access management approaches.
- Restrictions if needed.
- If no satisfactory solution can be found then we will not dedicate
 - this will be an exceptional circumstance and will need to be justified to the Chief Executive.



- Each path and track assessed for its potential to withstand HR.
- Senior Reserve Manager scores it for management issues
- Responsible officer scores it for Nature Conservation issues.
- Scores 1 3



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			÷	Path ID SFB000	SRM			Responsible Officer			Higher Rights Y/N		Comments by Case Officer		
+4+1+3+1+2+1					Score bike 1,2,3	Score horse 1,2,3	Notes on reasons for scores, or on any perceived nature conservation issues	Score bike 1,2,3	Score horse 1,2,3	Notes on what is required or why it is impossible to conclude no likely significant effect	Bike	Hors e	(including any seasonal nature of rights)		
-7-1-6-1-5-				002	3	3	The path is very narrow and the surface is extremely soft. Path soon develops ruts.	3	3	The path is narrow and inundated by tides so is very fragile. Any engineered surface work would not pass LSE	N	N	The physical constraint of the path rules out HR direction on this section		
14-1-13-1-12-1-11-1-10-1-9-1-8-				003,004 005, 009	1	3	Hard surfaced reduced mobility facility. Concern that monitoring and staff resource will be required to monitor use to prevent damage to dunes. Could be a nice stop off point as part of a promoted road route.	1	1	No concerns as hard surface is already provided. No adverse effect from cycles.	Y	N	Multi use of the path in such a small area means horses cannot be accommodated.		
-19-1 3-1-17-1-16-1-15-				006,010 ,007	3		These paths are short sections from a car park to the main expanse of beach. Once on the beach the sand is very soft with little or no	3	1	No concern from RO on horses using the short access from the car park to reach the open beach. The objective of the horse riders is to access the expanse of beach. As there is nowhere for cyclists to go (they are unable to physically cycle on the beach due to the soft	N	Ŷ	Dedication of existing area used via permit system.	_	



Questions and feedback on the project?