

REGIONAL AND NATIONAL UPDATE:

1. PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

To provide updates to members about the current national and regional context for access and information about provisional details for the next LAF member event and training day.

2. SLAF Response to the Richard Benyon Letter Consultation

A response was sent by Slough LAF via email on 25th August 2011.

On behalf of Slough Local Access Forum, in response to the Minister, Richard Benyon's letter dated 5th April 2011. The general consensus, after discussions at the last meeting of the Slough Forum on 12th May 2011 was that members were in agreement with the proposals set out. In particular, it was felt that a virtual forum would be beneficial to communication between LAF members and for delivering advice/opinions to Defra.

3. Natural England

3.1 A new Business Model has been circulated for Natural England whereby there is a specific department titled Access and Engagement (People & Access). Local Access Forums are being offered liaison through the People & Partnerships stream with Lead Advisors as follows:

- Kevin Haugh - Kent, Medway and Sussex;
- Kirsten Chamley - Surrey;
- Jenny Hanwell - Buckinghamshire, Oxfordshire; and
- Martin Gilchrist - Hampshire and Berkshire.

3.2 Andrew Hawkins from Oxfordshire LAF has kindly agreed to help NE in their planning for a southern event and training day for LAF members. The provisional date will be FEB/MAR time (see email update below), with venue to be confirmed, please decide if you may be free to attend.

3.3 E- mail update received from Alice Kimpton to Regional coordinators – 7/9/11

I have had quite a few enquiries about the training and Huddle so I thought it would be worth just clarifying a few points:

Training/Conference

Following a meeting with Defra 2 weeks ago we have decided to put back the Training (we are now calling it a conference) to Feb/Mar time. We will get dates and venues out to you soon as we want LAFs to be able to access cheaper travel and make plans around the event,

Most likely venues are Reading and Newcastle.

There is no funding this year for regional training events we have kept all the funds centrally to run this two venue national event

Huddle

Hopefully most people are now registered on Huddle and able to access the functions and have a play with it. We have developed a flyer to promote Huddle and will forward that soon.

There was no consultation about Huddle apart from its mention in the letter from Richard Benyon asking LAFs if they thought having this online collaborative workspace was a good idea – the response has been overwhelmingly positive. Natural England and Defra felt that Huddle provides a way of sharing best practice amongst LAFs. There will be no charge to the LAFs or their appointing authorities for the use of this technology.

The plan for the roll out of Huddle is to demonstrate Huddle to the Chairs and Secretaries during Regional Meetings and then get a volunteer from each LAF who is interested in huddle and train them. They would then be the Huddle Champion for that group. We have yet to decide exactly what that may mean. We would like to have all LAFs represented on Huddle by the end of February 2012 for a Launch event soon after that.

There is a small group of people working on the look and content of Huddle and for support or technical advice you should look to Jenny Parsons and Rob Leek as well as Graham Ellery (from SKI).