



# **Environmental Stewardship Targeting for Access & Recreation**



## Environmental Stewardship, background:



- Introduced in 2005, an agri-environment scheme open to all land managers which aims to secure widespread environmental benefits.
- ES represents the main delivery vehicle for the agri-environment and non-productive investment measures within the RDPE 2007–13 with a budget of approx. £2.9 billion over the 7 year life of the programme.
- 5 primary objectives: biodiversity, landscape character, resource protection (soils, air & water), ***promotion of public access*** and conservation of the historic environment

## Environmental Stewardship, Targeting:



- ***Entry Level Stewardship*** (ELS) is not targeted, though applicants receive guidance on the options best suited to their area
- ***Higher Level Stewardship*** (HLS) targeting statements have been developed for each Joint Character Area (JCA) setting out the priority issues for that particular area, for e.g. priority habitats, features etc

Defra and Natural England have made the decision to move from a list-based to a map-based approach to targeting. This approach should provide a more robust, consistent and transparent means of identifying and selecting the agreements that offer the best environmental value for money.

## Environmental Stewardship, Targeting:



- Target Maps will be produced to provide a simple, visual summary of overall priority
- Underpinned by a database showing which features contribute to the priority given to each area and accompanied by delivery criteria and guidance

### **Timetable:**

Mapping (October 07 – January 08)

Refining (February – April 08)

Testing (April - June 08)

Implementing (July – September 08)



## HLS Targeting, Access:

In applying a spatial targeting approach to access it has to be recognised that:

- HLS is one tool through which access can be established
- It is *optional, permissive* and *time limited* ...  
and accordingly while it can add significant value to existing mechanisms it can neither replace them nor be regarded as the panacea to deficiencies in their use
- By definition it is mapping ***potential*** rather than the ***actual***

The overarching priority for access within HLS is that the scheme enhances peoples' recreational experience –

***close to where they live.. close to where they visit***



## HLS Targeting, Access:

### The objectives for HLS access *remain* (abridged):

- To provide facilities on farms that promote greater understanding of the countryside ...
- To create new access routes to currently inaccessible features of interest
- To improve countryside access for walkers and others by bridging gaps e.g. ROW network, CROW island sites, and to link to promoted trails and the coast
- To create new areas of open permissive access

In the light of this priority areas are likely to be **coast, open country** (in the forma of Open Access land and National Trail corridors) and **around settlements**



## HLS Targeting, Access:

At a national and regional level one proposal is to buffer these priority areas and overlay existing access provision to produce a graduated area of search beneath which the use of local data and knowledge will need to be applied

- Within priority areas we should proactively seek access opportunities:
- Outside priority areas we should not actively seek access agreements but rather should react to applications

the exceptions to this being:

- Successful expiring access agreements and...
- Educational Access which could well form an example of a scattered /thematic priority



## HLS Targeting, Access:

- The primary source of evidence at a local level should be ***Rights of Way Improvement Plans*** and in particular their associated ***statements of action***
- Accordingly making the link between these plans and the research that underpins them will be key...

***But how.. ?***