

**East of England Regional LAF Chair and Vice Chair meeting
Thursday 21st June 2018**

Update from Natural England

- Are there any statistical measures of users of the countryside?
- Access post-Brexit
- Future of farming
- Resources invested in Country Parks and their management

Are there any statistical measures of users of the countryside?

MENE or the [Monitor of the Engagement with the Natural Environment](#). It captures:

- type of destination
- duration
- mode of transport
- distance travelled
- expenditure
- main activities
- motivations
- barriers to visiting

Annual reports are published:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/monitor-of-engagement-with-the-natural-environment-2015-to-2016>

Data is back online (years 1-7). The 16/17 and 17/18 data and reports should be available by September. We are hoping to use the data to inform us about a number of measures from the Defra 25-year plan.

In addition to this are more local measures to monitor the use of for example, National Trails (e.g. using people counters and analysing findings). Norfolk have managed to secure funds by using the evidence they gather in this way.

For ECP work, we have a number of mobile counters which are placed as needed around the country.

This is the Online tabulation viewer for you to interrogate as you choose:

<http://naturalengland.tns-global.com/>

Access post-Brexit

Defra is working on the analysis of the responses to the consultation "Health and Harmony". Michael Gove has said many times that he wants post Brexit schemes to improve public access to the environment.

Although there isn't any more detail to share yet, if LAFs have any comments or suggestions to make about post Brexit schemes, please post them on the LAF Huddle. It is particularly helpful as it enables our Principal Specialist, Pippa Langford, to read your views and ideas.

Future of Farming

The [consultation](#) on the future of food, farming and the environment post Brexit closed on 8 May and Defra have not yet published a formal response. There were [44000 responses](#) to the consultation which demonstrates the level of interest in the subject.

The Defra proposal at the moment is for phasing out the current system of direct payments and replacing it with a system whereby land managers are paid for public goods (public money for public goods).

While the consultation is assumed to be with farmers, Defra are keen to talk to everybody who manages land. This is a key difference as post EU exit eligibility for these funds may change allowing a wider range of organisation and individuals that manage land to access it.

Have any EE LAFs submit a response to the consultation? Many LAFs will have, as access that improves engagement with the natural environment is regarded as a public good, as is health and wellbeing. You may want to think about exploring new opportunities for accessing these and other funds.

Timing is very important: the new scheme will not be launched before 2022 at the earliest so we have at least another three years of the existing schemes.

Resources invested in Country Parks and their management

Natural England hosts and manages the [Accreditation Scheme for Country Parks](#) as the national typology standard for all a country park should provide.

Beyond that, Natural England has no involvement in the management of these spaces or decisions around their provision. The power to call a country park rests with local authorities and decisions on management and resourcing rests with site owners and managers.

Huddle

To get onto this forum where you can share ideas and concerns, contact Andrew.Mackintosh@naturalengland.org.uk

Current funding for newly-opened stretches of England Coast Path

<http://publications.naturalengland.org.uk/publication/6238141>