

## Selecting a Convenor

### Purpose

1. Following discussions at the Access Forum meeting on 26 May 2004 and a further opportunity for all members of the Forum to comment by 16 July 2004, this paper sets out the proposed role of the Convenor and the process for selecting the Convenor. The proposals will now be implemented by the Forum Secretariat in time for the next meeting on 15 September.

### Background

2. At the meeting of the Access Forum on 26 May, a paper setting out some initial proposals for selecting a Convenor was discussed. The paper set out four basic options:
  - a) SNH to appoint a Convenor from its Main or Areas Boards;
  - b) the Forum to select a Convenor from the representatives on it;
  - c) undertake a full recruitment exercise and appoint a Convenor under Nolan principles; and
  - d) seek nominations from member and corresponding bodies and have the Forum select the Convenor from these nominations.
3. The Forum discussed these options in some detail. The consultation on the future of the Forum showed that many respondents felt that option a was not sufficiently open and did not involve the wider membership. There is also a view that a Convenor selected through a more open process would have greater standing outside the Forum and, once selected, could be called on to give a Forum view on key access issues.
4. Option b would be relatively straightforward to implement and is very similar to the process used to select the Convenor of the new Cairngorms National Park Authority. However, the Forum did not support this option as it would draw the Convenor from a relatively limited field of candidates and it might be considered as being too closed.
5. Option c is a very thorough process for selecting the Convenor. It is open, accountable and would ensure that the Convenor is drawn from a wide pool of potential candidates. This option had some support from Forum members (particularly if the Convenor was to be a remunerated post), but was considered to be too complex, expensive and time-consuming given the nature of the Forum, which is not a formally constituted public body.
6. Option d builds on the best features of some of the other approaches. All member and corresponding member bodies of the Forum would be invited to put forward nominations and the Forum would select the Convenor from these nominations. This should be a relatively quick process but,

importantly, would involve all appropriate bodies. On balance, the general view of the Forum was that this was the preferred option.

7. Following discussion at the meeting of the Forum on 26 May and a further opportunity to comment on the options and proposals by 16 July, it has been concluded by the interim Convenor and the Secretariat that the preferred option is (d).
8. Secretariat will now implement the process with the aim being to conclude it at the next Forum meeting on 15 September 2004. In the meantime, John Markland, who is currently Chairman of SNH, will act as the interim Convenor of the Forum.

### **The role of the Convenor**

9. The role of the Convenor will be to:
  - provide leadership to the national Access Forum and its work;
  - work closely with the Secretariat to agree agendas, advise on papers and comment on draft minutes;
  - chair meetings and ensure that representatives are able to have a full say on the issues being raised and discussed;
  - encourage member bodies and their representatives to reach collective views on issues and how best to address them; and
  - represent the national Access Forum externally.
10. In carrying out this role, the Convenor must be impartial and allow all interests to have a full and equal say. A “job description” for the Convenor is attached at Annex 1.

### **Selecting a Convenor**

11. Based on option d, the process for selecting the Convenor is set out below.
  - Secretariat to set out proposals for selecting the Convenor for final comment by 16 July.
  - Secretariat, in consultation with the interim Convenor, to finalise the process and a job description and send this to all members of the Forum by 23 July.
  - Secretariat to invite all member and corresponding bodies to put forward nominations to the Secretariat by 20 August.
  - This invitation will also be placed on the SNH website. All nominations must be made through a full or corresponding member body of the Forum.
  - Each nomination should be supported by a brief summary of the person’s background and a brief statement about the skills and

experience that they would bring to the role of Convenor and confirmation of their willingness to be considered (a nomination form will be available for this).

- If there are several nominations, a small sub-group, representative of the balanced membership of the Forum, will meet in the week commencing 23 August to consider the nominations submitted and undertake an initial sift. This sub-group could also meet and interview a small number of preferred nominees, and make recommendations to the full Forum on 15 September.
  - On 15 September, the Forum will consider the recommendations of the sub-group and select the Convenor through a one member/one vote secret ballot.
  - Only full members of the Forum will be able to vote. Corresponding members and non-voting members of the Forum (the Scottish Executive and SNH) will not be able to vote.
  - Any nominee who already sits on the Forum would have to withdraw from the discussions and not have a vote.
  - If there is a split vote, the interim Convenor would have the casting vote.
12. In the event that there are no nominations, or no nominations that have the cross-interest support of the Forum, SNH will appoint the Convenor, on a time-limited basis, from its Boards membership.

**Richard Davison**  
**Secretary, national Access Forum**

## **Convenor, National Access Forum**

A new national Access Forum has recently been established to advise Scottish Natural Heritage and other bodies on a wide range of access issues at the national level, including the effectiveness of the new Scottish Outdoor Access Code. Nominations are now being invited for the role of Convenor of the Forum.

The members of the national Access Forum include bodies representing recreation, land management and related issues, as well as several public bodies. The current membership of the Forum is attached. Secretariat support is provided by Scottish Natural Heritage.

### **The job**

The role of the Convenor is to:

- provide leadership to the national Access Forum and its work;
- work closely with the Secretariat to agree agendas, advise on papers and comment on draft minutes;
- chair meetings and ensure that representatives are able to have a full and equal say on the issues being raised and discussed;
- encourage member bodies and their representatives to reach collective views on issues and how best to address them; and
- represent the national Access Forum externally, including contact with the media as required.

The Forum will meet between 3 and 4 times a year and conduct most of its work through a number of working groups. The time commitment required for the role will be a minimum of one day per month.

### **The person**

It is essential that the Convenor can command the respect of all the main interests on the Forum through a combination of their experience, and their interest in and understanding of recreation and land management. The ideal Convenor would have:

- experience of chairing multi-interest forums or groups;
- a proven track record of encouraging consensus amongst differing interests;
- excellent communication and advocacy skills;
- a good understanding of the access provisions in the Land Reform (Scotland) Act 2003 and of the Scottish Outdoor Access Code, and a strong commitment to making these work on the ground;
- a good understanding of the needs and interests of those taking part in outdoor recreation and of land managers;
- a good understanding of the work of public bodies and how best to engage with them and influence their work.

## **Membership of the National Access Forum**

Recreation Bodies:	British Horse Society Cyclists' Touring Club Scotland Mountaineering Council of Scotland Ramblers' Association Scottish Canoe Association Scottish Sports Association
Land management bodies:	Association of Deer Management Groups British Association for Shooting & Conservation Forestry & Timber Association Historic Houses Association NFU Scotland Scottish Rural Property & Business Association
Other bodies:	Activity Scotland Farming & Wildlife Advisory Group Scotland Royal Society for the Protection of Birds Scottish Advisory Panel for Outdoor Education Scotways
Public bodies:	Convention of Scottish Local Authorities Forestry Commission Scotland National Park Authorities Scottish Natural Heritage Scottish Water Sportscotland

There are also a large number of corresponding members and a list of these is attached.