DARTMOOR NATIONAL PARK AUTHORITY

DARTMOOR ACCESS FORUM

Terms of Reference

1 **Title**

1.1 The Forum shall be known as the Dartmoor Access Forum.

2 **Role and Responsibilities**

2.1 The purpose of the Dartmoor Access Forum shall be to provide advice to the Dartmoor National Park Authority (NPA), the Countryside Agency, Devon County Council and the Forestry Commission, as appropriate, on how to make the countryside more accessible and enjoyable for open air recreation, in ways which address environmental, social and economic interests.

2.2 The Dartmoor Access Forum shall:

- respond to consultations from the Countryside Agency on draft maps of open country and registered common land on Dartmoor, and thereafter on directions relating to restrictions and exclusions of access;

- promote a constructive and inclusive approach to the improvement of recreational access to the countryside (and specifically contribute to the development of any Rights of Way Improvement Plan for Dartmoor);

- advise upon the management and maintenance of access, balancing the provision of access against the needs of conservation of the natural beauty, wildlife and cultural heritage, and the needs of residents, landowners and land managers;
- identify and respect local circumstances and different interests while operating within national guidance;

- advise on developing additional opportunities for everyone to enjoy the rights of way and access network.

2.3 Arrangements shall be made for effective liaison between the Dartmoor Access Forum and any Forums established elsewhere in Devon, Plymouth, Torbay and adjoining areas.

3 **Membership**

3.1 Forum Members shall represent one or more fields of interest rather than any particular organization of which they might also be a member.

3.2 The membership of the Forum shall be selected to achieve a reasonable balance between the numbers of members representing each of the following interests:

a) users of the new right of access introduced by Part I of the *Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000* (principally walkers), and users of local rights of way (for example walkers, horse riders and cyclists), and **b)** owners and occupiers of access land or land crossed by local rights of way **c)** additionally, the membership of the Forum shall seek to represent any other interests especially relevant to the Dartmoor area, and these are considered to be: wildlife conservation, cultural heritage conservation, tourism, sport and recreation, health, outdoor education, the military, local businesses and the residents of nearby urban areas.

3.3 Members shall be appointed by the NPA according to the Member Selection Criteria which are designed to ensure that Members are able to make an informed and constructive contribution to improving local access provision.

3.4 Members shall be appointed initially for periods of one, two or three years but, at the end of this first appointment period, they shall be eligible for reappointment for a further period or periods of between one and three years.

3.5 Before appointment, Members shall confirm:

- their commitment to working within the Terms of Reference and achieving the purpose of the Forum through constructive working with other members; and
- their ability to devote the necessary time to attend Forum meetings, to attend training sessions, and to network with a wide range of interests outside meetings.

3.6 The Forum shall comprise 18 members, including two appointed by the Dartmoor National Park Authority.

3.7 The first Chair and Deputy Chair shall be appointed by the Forum at its first meeting and shall hold office for one year. They shall normally represent different interests. Subject to their continuing membership of the Forum, they shall be eligible for re-election annually thereafter. A Member appointed by the NPA shall not be eligible for appointment as Chair or Deputy Chair.

3.8 Members shall disclose the nature of any direct or indirect interest in any matter brought up for consideration at a meeting of the Forum.

4 Administration

4.1 The NPA shall provide a Secretary responsible for the administration of the Forum who shall be neither a member of the NPA nor a Member of the Forum.

4.2 Meetings of the Forum shall be held at least twice a year and more frequently when necessary.

4.3 Meeting agendas shall be agreed between the Chair and the Secretary.

4.4 Meetings shall be advertised in advance and held in public.

4.5 Agendas, papers and minutes of the meeting shall be available to the public.

4.6 The Chair shall, when appropriate, invite observers to the meeting who shall be able to contribute at the meeting at the discretion of the Chair.

4.7 The public shall be able to ask questions on the business of the meeting at the discretion of the Chair, or as otherwise agreed by the Forum.

5 Allowances

5.1 Members may claim travelling allowances for attendance at Forum meetings and authorised training events, and where appropriate, a carer's allowance, at the rates adopted in the NPA Members' Allowance Scheme.