

## Northumberland Joint Local Access Forum

### Climate Change Position Statement

The JLAF has considered the effects of climate change on access issues. There are many factors involved that potentially impact access to the countryside, including the following:

**Sea level rise.** It is likely that a rise of 50cm will mean some areas will be lost. A possible knock-on effect is the degradation of habitat and breeding areas for hundreds of thousands of seabirds and that in turn may create problems if other areas are colonised and conflict with access, which already occurs

**Visitor Increase.** Global increases in fuel and travel costs may have an impact on foreign holidays, and a curtailment of flights due to environmental policies in response to emission pledges could create a large increase in visitors to Northumberland. The JLAF is aware that this will place pressure on many places and is keen to promote infrastructure creation on access routes to cater for this.

**Forestation, Wilding and Rewilding.** These are all, effectively, part of the Government response to Climate Change. There is a potential for conflict in this area and the JLAF will monitor each case as it arises on its own merits, as it is impossible to create a generic policy for every situation.

**Legislation.** The latest Act of Parliament affecting access is the Environment Act 2021, but there are around 200 other pieces of legislation in existence that may have some bearing on access issues. This is a rapidly changing area as new government policies are being prepared constantly and further changes in environmental law are expected as climate change gathers pace. The JLAF will monitor new legislation as it appears and format any advice or consultations in line with this.

The JLAF will consider the effects of climate change in relation to the above factors and any others that may arise when carrying out its statutory duties. It recognises that an increasing population and shrinking space will impose pressure from all directions and will endeavour to strike a balance between conflicting issues when this arises. It further recognises that climate change is a dynamic process and the constant changes involved make it impossible to prepare a long-term policy.

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