

Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs

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To Motor Vehicle Stakeholders

Our ref: MPV - OOF

Sent by e-mail.

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Dear All

The use of 4x4s and motorbikes on public rights of way is a controversial and difficult issue. We believe problems must be addressed so that we can safeguard the network for the greater enjoyment of all users. It is evident that, in certain hotspots, there are three major problems:

- Conflict between motor vehicles and other users;
- Damaged route surfaces especially where drainage is poor; and
- The illegal use of routes including where traffic regulation orders are in place.

Detailed guidance is already provided on managing these problems by Defra in its publications 'Making the Best of Byways' and 'Regulating the use of Motor Vehicles on public rights of way and off road'.

During the passage of the Deregulation Act through Parliament in early 2015, the Coalition Government committed to Defra and Natural England together establishing a Motor Vehicle Working Group made up of stakeholder experts to look at the issues of motor vehicular use of unsealed routes and make recommendations in a report. However, Defra believes that locally brokered solutions, bespoke to the local area are far more effective in the long-term.

We are keen that shareholders share their considerable knowledge and expertise with each other and with local highway authorities so that they can learn from each other and build on existing best practice. We therefore propose to set up a one-off forum for all motor vehicle stakeholders to share their experiences and discuss ways of working together in the future. Perhaps stakeholders would consider setting up a more permanent forum themselves depending on the success of the one-off forum.

Please let me know if you would like to participate in such a one-off forum and any ideas you might have for the format and attendees for the day's discussion. If there is sufficient interest we will work with Natural England to set it up.

Yours sincerely

Jonathan Tweney

Jonathan Tweney
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