

Key Proposals for Government Action on the Outdoors

Together, we represent over four million people and 550 organisations with an interest in outdoor recreation and the conservation of our countryside. We have agreed a set of core actions that we believe should guide future policy and legislative proposals.

Cross-government support for a long-term strategy on outdoor recreation

Introduce a fully resourced cross-government strategy with ministerial support to promote outdoor recreation.

Government departments, agencies and outdoor organisations should work together to implement a strategic programme which recognises the benefits for health and wellbeing of outdoor recreation and aims to lift 1 million people out of physical inactivity.

Maximise the economic contribution of outdoor recreation

Maximise the economic contribution of outdoor recreation to the rural economy through targeted investment.

Government should recognise the economic importance of outdoor recreation tourism, particularly in the rural economy, and ensure it is prioritised by existing funding mechanisms such as Local Enterprise Partnerships.

Improve access to coast and countryside

Facilitate and promote public access to outdoor spaces including the coast, woodland and open countryside.

Government should commit to a timetable for constructing the England Coast Path and associated margin of land and meet the recommendations of the Independent Panel on Forestry regarding access. Highway authorities must be properly equipped to carry out their statutory duties on the existing access network, and in connection with mapping unrecorded routes.

Strengthen planning guidance and protect the outdoors

Strengthen the protection of areas valued for their natural beauty and recreational opportunities.

Government should protect the spaces that people value from inappropriate developments and damaging land management changes by strengthening planning legislation aimed at preventing visually intrusive development in National Parks, Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty and other areas valued for their natural beauty and recreational opportunities.

Increase opportunities for young people to get outside

Increase opportunities for young people to engage in outdoor learning in both school and non-school settings.

Government should recognise the educational value of outdoor learning, adventurous activity and engagement with nature through a strategy that supports schools to incorporate and deliver a programme of frequent and progressive outdoor activity experiences.

Better public transport in rural areas

Invest in accessible and affordable public transport for residents and visitors to our countryside.

Government should ensure that rural public transport has adequate funding to allow everyone, visitors and residents alike, to be able to access the countryside and use vital public services, and should support accessible walking and cycling routes to and from transport hubs.

