

MARINE AND COASTAL ACCESS BILL

On 4 December 2008 the Marine and Coastal Access (MCA) Bill was introduced into Parliament. Part 9 of the Bill contains provisions for improving access to the English coast. The Bill is currently being debated in the House of Lords at Committee stage and Part 9 of the Bill is expected to be considered shortly.

The new right of access to the coast proposed in the MCA Bill will be provided through amendments to the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000, to include coastal land within the description of land to which the public has a right of access for the purposes of open air recreation. The Government has recently published a paper setting out its proposals for amending that Act for coastal land. This is a revised version of the paper that was published in April 2009 when the draft Bill was published for pre-legislative scrutiny.

A public consultation on the intended amendments will be held following Royal Assent to the MCA Bill. The s3A order making the amendments will then be subject to agreement in both Houses of Parliament.

You can read the paper on Defra's coastal access webpage at <http://www.defra.gov.uk/wildlife-countryside/access/access-coast.htm>

In addition, four further papers have been published providing information on:

- how Natural England and local authorities will work together to deliver coastal access;
- how implementation of the coastal route will be flexible to meet future development needs;
- how the process of consultation and representations on the route will work; and
- Why the process of representations is appropriate to coastal land compared to CROW-style appeals.

These papers can be found on the same webpage.

If you have any queries please write to coastalaccess@defra.gsi.gov.uk