



## Feedback Form: Grassroots Engagement An Invitation to Shape the Nature of England

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Please use this form to tell us about the Big Ideas that your discussion produced. You can also tell us any other information you think relevant. You can email this form back to us at: [naturalenvironment@defra.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:naturalenvironment@defra.gsi.gov.uk)

### What natural environments or locations did you discuss?

The focus of the discussion was based around environments that had been or will be developed, especially larger minerals applications and brown field sites. Leicestershire is a major minerals exporter and has a number of active quarries. It is currently subject to a major application for a new extraction site. Some previous applications have resulted in restored land rich in all types of wildlife whilst others have little in the way of restoration planning`

### What were the Big Ideas that your discussion produced?

Making good what man has or is doing to the Natural Environment.

Recognising that a number of types of development result in damage to the environment but also offer opportunities to create wildlife havens. Where effective planning has taken a longer term approach these can also offer ideal sites to allow public access to enjoy, touch, smell and interact with nature. In quarry settings this can include a range of activities

Nature and people should be given an opportunity to work together to offset the damage caused and heal the wounds of development. This should be an ongoing process when sites such as quarries have long term permissions. Although this is a matter considered by Local Minerals planning authorities, Natural England could also play a role in bringing together parties.

The National Forest has provided a good example of how both past, present and future brown field sites can move forward working with local authorities, communities and organisations.

### What is the role of local people or other organisations in delivering those big ideas?

The long term restoration of sites or the provision of access needs to be with the express agreement and enthusiasm of local communities. People need to have a say.

This includes, especially in the current financial climate how sites will be managed in future. Community involvement must provide solutions that people want to engage with and help be involved including endowments and practical long term funding solutions. This includes work with other parties such as the Wildlife Trust or local support groups.

### What other information would you like to share with us?

At the meeting was a general unease and concern that the current discussion around the Shape of English Nature seemed to have overlooked the role of public access. Without access people can't come into contact with Nature, enjoy it, and then see value in the wider work being undertaken. It was also recognised that areas such as rights of way were on the doorstep of most households and provided the key link between the public and the wider environment. Part of that process includes providing all types of access including rural paths and verges that encourages and allows more people to access the wider environment including the less able.