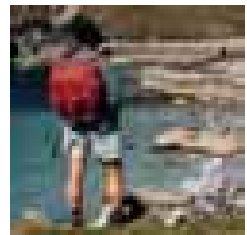
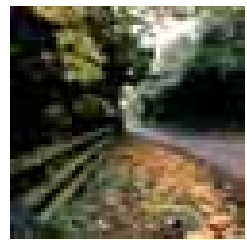


Until recently, access to the UK's countryside was a result of accidents of history, concerted campaigning by access users and voluntary agreement by landowners and public authorities.

Access to countryside



Capability statement

Access to countryside

Entec

Entec is one of the UK's largest environmental and engineering consultancies. Our technical and business skills are dedicated to delivering strategic, technical and engineering solutions which bring commercial benefit to customers at home and overseas. This know-how is based on over 60 years' consulting experience in the public and private sectors.



Certificate No. EMS 69090

Certificate No. FS13881

Entec operates a Quality Management System in accordance with the latest requirements of the international standard BS EN ISO 9001 and an Environmental Management System compliant with BS EN ISO 14001. Both are audited by BSI Management Systems.



Public access - understanding the demand, the benefits and implications



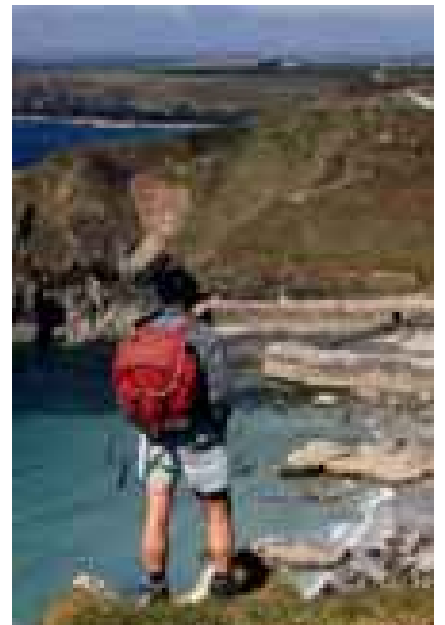
With increased leisure time, growing affluence and an improved transport network, use of the countryside for walking and other forms of recreation has grown substantially, with many keen to secure rights to previously unavailable areas.

After widespread consultation and evaluation, the Countryside and Rights of Way Act (CROW) was passed in 2000 applying to land in England and Wales. Change in Scotland is being pursued separately.

Increasing opportunities for public access also offers potential to achieve other agendas. Travel to work and public health improvements can all be enhanced by provision of opportunities for those wishing to travel on foot or by cycle around the areas where they live and work.

Establishing access in any given area is however complex with many interactions and implications to be reconciled sensitively. The demands of aspiring users may have detrimental effects on the legitimate interests of landowners and potentially on other interests such as nature conservation. The public purse and resources available to develop opportunities is also limited requiring careful targeting of effort.

Entec has a diverse range of technical specialists able to assist with understanding the issues and with the development of robust and achievable solutions.



Access to countryside

Entec has contributed significantly to the development of the access debate through our work for government to undertake an economic appraisal of the proposals for access to the open countryside.

As the legislation has progressed, so Entec has continued to work with government agencies to develop the details of implementation. We have also been involved in the development of understanding about how the available provision can be enhanced to best meet the evolving needs of the public for on foot, cycling, horse-riding and off-road motorsport opportunities.

This detailed knowledge ensures we can respond appropriately to whatever issue is raised.

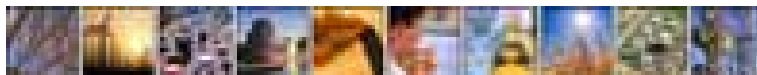
Knowledge of the legislation and policy context



Diverse technical skills

Whatever the circumstances, Entec has a diverse base of technical skills that can be drawn together to meet each project's unique needs. Our skills include:

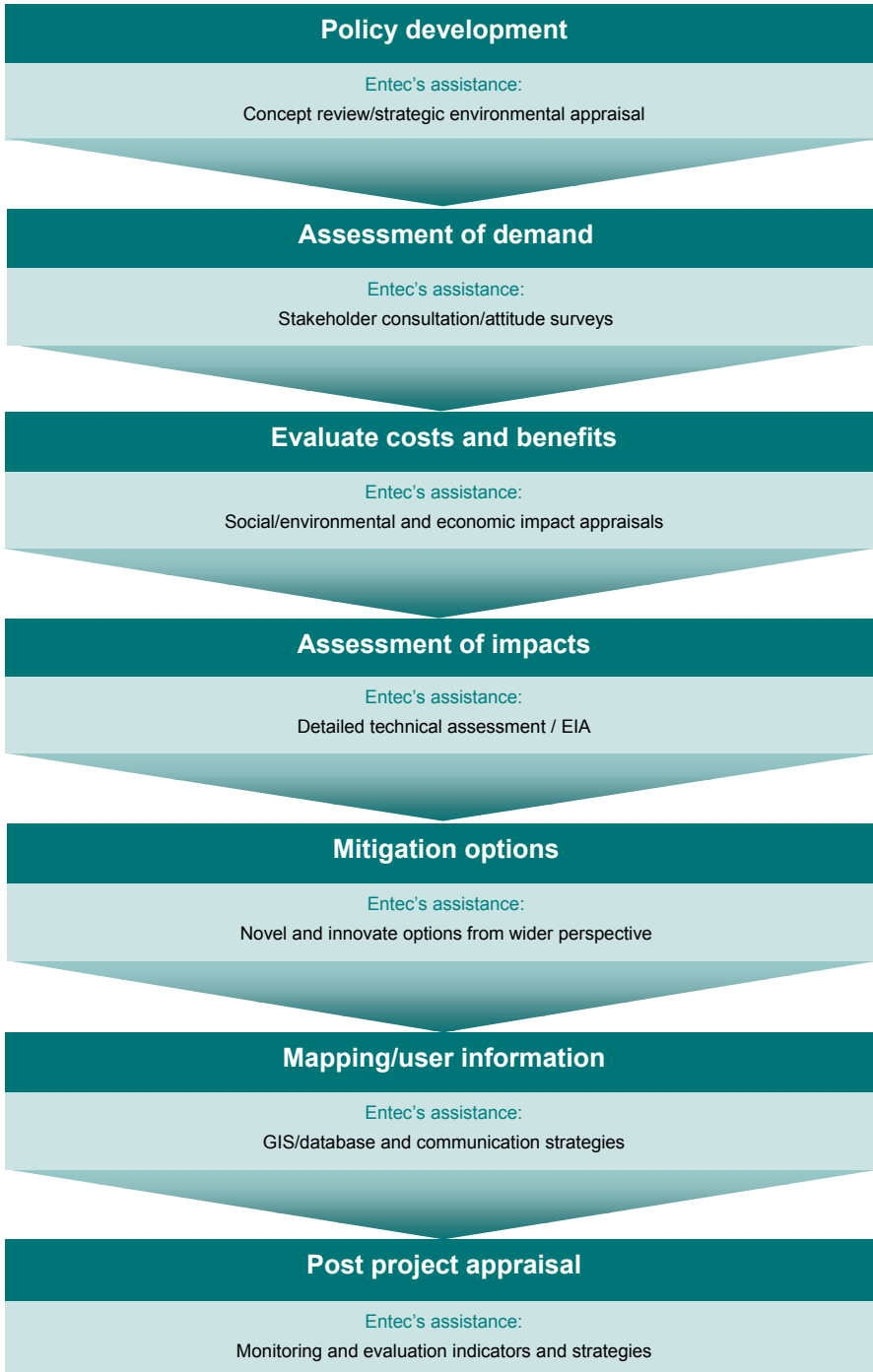
- Agriculture and land management implications;
- Ecology and nature conservation;
- Mapping;
- Stakeholder consultation;
- Strategy and policy development;
- Landscape and countryside planning;
- Environmental impact assessment;
- Monitoring and evaluation.



Access to countryside

How we can help

The following chart outlines Entec's ability to influence a project at each critical stage of the access implementation process.



Case studies

The following pages demonstrate Entec's capabilities in the area of access to the countryside, using case study examples. ►



Predicting Levels and Patterns of Recreational Use of Open Country The Countryside Agency

The Countryside Agency is the lead government agency responsible for implementing the “Wider Welcome” which includes extending a right of access to open country in England. The Agency were concerned to develop methods of:

- predicting the level of recreational trips to new open access land made available under the countryside and Rights of Way Act at a national level; and
- predicting the likely patterns of use of specific sites.

These were essential to assessing the potential environmental impacts of recreational trips on open country.

Recreational behaviour is influenced by a wide range of factors including weather, socio-economic status, the attractiveness of the countryside, personal circumstances, tourism and accessibility. The challenge for Entec was to develop acceptable and robust models using existing data sources that were limited in scope and quality; resolving inconsistencies between the data sources added to the difficulties.

Entec has completed the initial development of the methods using a GIS base and drawing on information from the Census, English Nature, DEFRA and other sources. The national level predictions involve using distance decay methods to predict recreational trips by one kilometre squares. The site specific method synthesises a predicted number of visitors based on the national model and distributes users on the basis of a series of assumptions about visitor behaviour, for example people are attracted to viewpoints but avoid difficult ground conditions such as marshland.

The methods are currently being refined and tested in consultation with advisory groups of countryside managers working principally for national park authorities and local authorities. They will be used by Countryside Agency staff and others to assist with management of access land made available under the Countryside and Rights of Way Act, 2000.

Entec has produced cost-effective models that are readily understood and provide robust projections despite the paucity of data and past research in this field.



*Implementing a wider welcome to
the English countryside*



Assessment of Access Proposals DETR (now DTLR)

*Cost of compliance
assessment of
proposals for
access to the open
countryside*



The Government had issued a consultation paper in which it set out a range of proposals for ensuring access was made available to open country in England and Wales. Entec was commissioned to investigate the costs and benefits associated with the different options including the way they impacted on different sectors of society.

The effects of the proposals were quantified as far as possible within the timetable, either in monetary or other numerical terms, giving priority to those areas where impacts were likely to be greatest. Effects on land managers, landowners and nature conservation interests were amongst the detrimental effects considered possible from the proposals, with the main benefits being increased enjoyment of those wishing to undertake recreational activities in the newly available areas.

Advice was also provided on how the detrimental effects may be mitigated through the use of limited closures as well as other practical means. Limited findings from the public consultation process were incorporated in addition to input from a range of direct contacts with interested parties.

Entec's report provided a detailed summary of the cost and benefits of the individual options being considered and made recommendations on how benefits could be maximised whilst costs were minimised. The recommended option was subsequently incorporated into the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000.



Alternative Approaches to Assessing the Aesthetic Quality of the Environment Environment Agency

The Environment Agency (EA) wanted to understand how members of the public appraise the urban and rural areas in which they walk or travel during their working and leisure time. With considerable expenditure being made by the EA and others on improving the environment, or reducing detrimental impacts, there was a need to understand how the public formed their perceptions of environmental quality. This could then be captured in an approach that would sit alongside other assessments being made of, for example, bathing beaches.

An extensive literature review was undertaken to identify techniques that had been used to assess environmental quality. Building from this, and the findings of a series of focus groups, two interview surveys were undertaken with a sample of the public in three pilot areas. The first of these investigated the most effective interview approach (in-street, in-home etc) and tested alternative means for capturing assessments of quality. The second survey then applied the selected techniques to allow refinement of the questionnaire used and illustration of the analysis possible with real survey information.

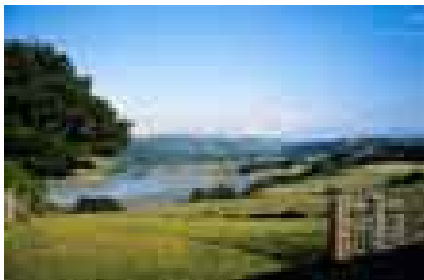
It was clear from the work that weighting / scoring approaches would not be successful in capturing the aggregated effects of smells, sights, sounds and other perceived qualities, partly because of the complex interaction due to the positive and negative associations that could exist. There were also many diverse situations in which quality needed to be assessed from

the pristine natural countryside of the national parks through to declining residential areas. The recommended approach prompted respondents to consider the area where they lived and its surroundings against their ideal characteristics for the area. It recognised that housing areas would generally remain as housing areas but that litter, poor designs etc could detract from the best appearance.

One important finding of the focus groups was the importance of local pride in the environmental quality of the area. Where this was present there was positive feedback to maintain and enhance the area, where it was absent then decline could be expected to accelerate.

The recommended strategy for data collection and interpretation was incorporated within the Environment Agency's R&D programme in the following year.

Capturing the public's perceptions of their surrounding environments



Rights of Way Use and Demand Study Countryside Agency



*Developing a method
to identify the
adequacy of local
rights of way*

The Countryside Agency is the statutory body working to:

- conserve and enhance the countryside;
- promote social and economic opportunity for the people who live there; and
- help everyone, wherever they live, to enjoy the countryside.

In responding to the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000, the Agency commissioned Entec to research the current use and demand associated with public rights of way, and to develop a simple and cost-effective methodology which highway authorities can use to assess the adequacy of their networks.

Entec's approach included a survey of 1600 households throughout England to identify:

- the type of activities undertaken, including walking, running, cycling, horse-riding and off-road motor sports;
- perceived deficiencies in opportunities to participate in the activities; and
- the extent to which levels of use would increase if additional opportunities were made available.

Focus groups and case study investigations were used to develop and test alternative methods for assessing the adequacy of the network available to current and potential users.

The aim was to develop cost-effective guidance on how, if at all, the available network should be enhanced to ensure that it meets local needs and encourages enjoyment of the countryside for a variety of purposes.

The recommended approach included mechanisms through which specific local needs and influences could be incorporated. It will be tested by the Countryside Agency, in partnership with local authorities, in pilot areas during 2002/03. This will further develop appropriate techniques within the context of the statutory guidance on preparing Rights of Way Improvement Plans, which is expected to be issued in autumn 2002.



