



North Western IFCA
Technical, Science and Byelaws Sub-Committee
18 October 2011
Strathmore Hotel, Marine Road East, Morecambe 10.30 a.m.

Agenda Item: 6

WEB FORUM FOR MEMBERS OF THE TSB SUB-COMMITTEE

Purpose of Report

1. To inform members of a newly available web forum to enable wider discussion and debate of matters relevant to the TSB sub-committee.
2. Provide members with details of how to access the forum.

Recommendation

1. That the report be received.

Background

1. At the first TSB sub-committee meeting in February, it was suggested that it might be useful for Members to have their own web-based discussion forum to further debate and the exchange of ideas on issues outwith the quarterly face to face meetings.
2. Officers suggested using the Local Government Communities of Practice for public service (CoP) which is already used successfully by the IFCA Technical Advisory Group. This service is free and, while not as sophisticated as some discussion websites, Officers consider that it provides the functionality and security to meet Members' needs. As a result it was resolved that a "community" be set up
3. This has now been done and the procedures for accessing it are shown at Annex 1.
4. All communities are required to have "facilitators" who administer membership as well as moderate the content and discussion threads. Currently, these are Officers Bob Houghton, Cath Dobson, Mandy Knott and Andy Brownrigg. While Officers are happy to continue with this arrangement, Members might wish to consider taking on some or all of the facilitation role themselves.
5. The success of any discussion forum depends on its members' commitment to using it and the quality of content. Facilitators can only do so much to assist with these aspects and some threads have been created as a starting point. However, it is up to the users to provide the impetus, materials and direction of the forum if it is to grow and prove useful.

Senior Scientific & Environmental Officer
19th September 2011