

Wrexham Rights of Way Improvement Plan 2007



Foreword

Wrexham County Borough Council is committed to working towards improving its rights of way network and providing equal opportunities for all. We have spent over two year's, listening to a whole variety of different views from organisations and individuals about our rights of way in Wrexham and what we should do to make them easier to use and more relevant to both local communities and visitors. We trust we have captured these priorities in the Statement of Action.

We know from the public consultation that people want a better maintained and easily accessible network of public rights of way. The amount of money required to completely open the rights of way network in Wrexham, is approximately £700,000 and then a further quarter of a million pounds per year would be required to keep this newly opened network open and well maintained.

If this is put into the context of a steadily declining Council budget for all its services, it can be seen that Wrexham County Borough Council will not be able to achieve this ideal goal of a fully opened network, without significant resources from elsewhere. Therefore, this Rights of Way improvement Plan must be seen not just as a plan of action of what we hope to achieve over the next ten years, but as a bidding document, to external funders to support us in our efforts to improve the quality of Wrexham's rights of way. We will judge the success of this approach in the years to come.



Councillor Aled Roberts
Leader, Wrexham County Borough Council

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If you would like this strategy in a more accessible format, such as Braille, then you are welcome to request this.

Executive Summary

If more resources are not put into the maintenance and management of the rights of way network, then Wrexham's paths are unlikely to improve significantly. The priorities as indicated in the consultation remain basic issues, getting the paths open, signposted and easy to use. Despite the best efforts of the rights of way team, Wrexham's paths are generally not particularly easy to use (the 5 % annual random sample of the network-paths that are easy to use, shows little improvement in the range of 32-42% over the last few years) and Wrexham's performance nationally remains in the lower section of Local Authorities in Wales.

There is also a need to commit resources to improving the management of the Definitive Map. The service, which is a statutory duty, needs to significantly improve for users over the next 5 years.

Putting more information on the web, such as the Definitive Map, updates on the progress of rights of way work and information about walks etc., is very important for the local community using the path network. This is achievable within the plan timetable.

The need to consider how the network can be made more accessible to a wider range of people with disabilities is challenging. It may involve working with small groups to get their opinion on what they need and



then considering how it can be made to happen on the ground, without causing problems for farmers and landowners.

Considering how to improve the connectivity of the rights of way system is not easy. Areas of work, such as improvements in the unclassified road network, changes to the status of some footpaths to bridleways and working with our planners to take advantage of planning gain is put forward in the plan.

Encouraging people to get out and use the rights of way is a very important part of the plan. Rights of way need to be seen as part of the general transport network, used to get to and from school or work, as well as places for leisure, tourism and accessing the countryside. The promotion and encouragement of people from all backgrounds, to use the rights of way network and become involved in its care, as volunteers, will be an increasingly important part of the work of rights of way staff.

A vision for Wrexham's Rights of Way Network

The long term vision for Wrexham's rights of way network is a network of paths, easy to use and useful, connecting the countryside with the towns and villages. The network is well used by people of all ages, abilities and backgrounds, walking or riding for leisure or for work and as an educational tool. People are able to easily download a variety of information from the Council website, whether it's for a walk, cycle ride or horseriding route in their area or for specific information about their rights and responsibilities. The Definitive Map is up to date and published on the web. Any problems with obstructions are reported back through a network of volunteers, in each community or direct to the Council using an online complaints form. The paths are well maintained and signed and the pride of each community.



1.0 Introduction

1.1 In recent years, the rise in concern over our community's health and the impact of the ever increasing road use by cars and lorries, has led to a rethink and a growing awareness of what part the rights of way network stretching across our communities can play, in getting people fitter, healthier, possibly to work, to our local shops or schools, without using the car.

1.2 The Welsh Assembly Government has laid down targets for improving the health and fitness of the population of Wales (Welsh Assembly Government Strategy for Sport and Physical Activity - Climbing Higher 2005). The target is to get people exercising 5 times a week for at least 30 minutes. A target of 95% of people in Wales will have a footpath or cycle path within a ten minute walk. No one should live more than a six minute walk from their nearest green space. These are ambitious targets, however the Rights of Way Improvement Plan can help in supporting this work. The rights of way network, if open and easy to use, provides the cheapest and best way of connecting people with their local countryside and accessing many of our towns and villages .

1.3 Rights of way are not only important for the local community, but they have an important role in encouraging tourists to visit our countryside and towns and villages. A well signed, well maintained network has huge potential for encouraging responsible use of the countryside and bringing in money for the rural economy.

1.4 For the first time we have set down a strategic 10 year plan to improve our rights of way network in Wrexham. We need this, as our network is in need of improvement and we need to consider much more when we carry out any improvements, how they affect the needs of the many different users. We are committed to making the network as accessible as possible to all groups, within the statutory framework that we have to work to. We welcome feedback and this will play an important part in helping us to improve and develop our rights of way.

1.5 We need to think how we can involve the local communities, Community Councils and other partners, in being involved in the care and management of the network, because if we don't, the network is very unlikely to improve. People out walking the paths, cycling or riding their horses, keeping an eye on their condition, are the best way of keeping the paths open and easy to use.

2.0 Background to this work

2.1 The story to date

The Assessment Phase of the Rights of Way Improvement Plan, Getting Rights of Way Right in Wrexham, Assessment Phase Consultation, was carried out during 2005 and 2006. A brief summary of the main findings are included in this plan, but the two documents should be read in conjunction to give an awareness of the scope of the work undertaken to produce the Rights of Way Improvement Plan.

2.2 Public Rights of Way Network

The public rights of way network in Wrexham County Borough consists of 783 km of footpath, 60 km of bridleway and 7 km of byways open to all traffic.

2.3 Other Publicly Accessible Green Space and Countryside

Wrexham is very fortunate to have a good Country Park and Urban Park network of 11 Parks, serving the majority of the population of Wrexham. There are large areas of Access Land (Registered Commons and Open Country) on Ruabon Mountain and the Berwyns . Nant y Ffrith has an access agreement for walkers to use the valley. The National Trust and Woodland Trust also own publicly accessible land, such as Erddig, Chirk Castle, Nant Mill Woods, Plas Power Woods and Coed Collfryn. There is also a network of unsealed unclassified roads, which are used for recreation, particularly in the Ceiriog Valley.

2.4 The Management of the Public Rights of Way

The network of public rights of way in Wrexham County Borough is managed by the Council's Rights of Way team. The Rights of Way team is part of the Parks, Countryside and Rights of Way section of the Environment

Department, of Wrexham County Borough Council. The Parks Countryside and Rights of Way section manages the Country Parks, Urban Parks, Rights of Way, Play Areas, Allotments and Tree Service.

There are 8 members of staff in the rights of way section. There are two team leaders, one team leader manages the Maintenance and Enforcement team and the other manages the Definitive Map team. The Maintenance and Enforcement team leader manages the two part time and one full time Access Rangers who deal with issues out in the network, liaising with members of the public, contractors and landowners. The Local Access Forum secretary also reports to this team leader. The Definitive Map team leader manages the two officers that deal with the Definitive Map and Public Path Diversion Orders, and a Public Rights of Way Assistant, who deals with general enquiries, searches and other administrative work. The team members each have their own areas of responsibility and make their own specific contribution towards the management of the network. The team is managed by the Parks, Countryside and Rights of Way Manager.

2.5 What is a ROWIP ?

The Rights Of Way Improvement Plan (ROWIP) is a strategic document which will help the Authority to manage the rights of way network for the residents of Wrexham County Borough and visitors to the area. This Plan lays out how Wrexham County Borough Council will deliver improvements to the rights of way network and how we will improve the management of the Rights of Way Service. The plan is a strategic document and lays out a ten year programme for the Wrexham County Borough Rights of Way network. There is a statutory duty to publish the plan (Wrexham County Borough Council, as a Highway Authority, is required (under Section 60 of The Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000) to develop and publish a Rights of Way Improvement Plan).

2.6 What's in a ROWIP ?

The legislative guidance makes it clear that the Rights Of Way Improvement Plan (ROWIP) should assess:

- "...the extent to which local rights of way meet the present and likely future needs of the public."

- “...the opportunities provided by local rights of way (and in particular by footpaths, cycle tracks, bridleways and restricted byways) for exercise and other forms of open air recreation, the enjoyment of their area and the accessibility of rights of way to blind or partially sighted persons and others with mobility problems.”

The Rights Of Way Improvement Plan (ROWIP) should also include a statement of the actions that the Council propose to take for the management and improvement of the network of rights of way.

2.7 Why bother writing a Rights of Way Improvement Plan ?

The first reason is we need to, as we have a statutory responsibility to write and publish a plan. It is also a sensible approach to the management of a service to possess a long term vision and plan for its development and improvement. The published plan should help everyone to see where we need to improve the service, what our goals are and how they can help us in achieving this. It will also help in applying for grant aid or other money to support the work that needs to be done.

2.8 How will WCBC be held accountable for the Rights of Way Improvement Plan ?

A report on the progress in meeting targets for the Rights Of Way Improvement Plan will be submitted to the Wrexham Local Access Forum each year. This progress report will be published on the Wrexham Local Access Forum section of the Wrexham County Borough website.

2.9 How will WCBC ensure the targets are achieved in the Rights of Way Improvement Plan ?

It is intended that an Annual Action Plan will be produced to coincide with WCBC budgeting system. This will outline annual projects and commitments for the network over the coming year and will ensure the targets laid out in the Rights Of Way Improvement Plan are realistic and achievable within the current financial resources of that year and matched to any relevant grant aid applications.

3.0 Partnership Working



This is a much used and abused phrase, but without seeking to build on past relationships with voluntary organisations and charities such as the Ramblers' Association and Groundwork Wrexham and Flintshire, working with interest groups such as horseriders, working with Community Councils and local people with an enthusiasm for their paths, the rights of way network would not improve. The plan seeks to work more closely with Community Councils and to encourage a much greater involvement in improving rights of way by local people. Local access groups and the Wrexham Local Access Forum have an important part to play through encouraging different sections of the community to work together, such as landowners and the users, to improve

the network and to advise the Council on how it considers improvements are needed in countryside access. New partnerships are needed, possibly through link ups with Business, getting them to volunteer and help improve areas. Schools could be more actively involved in caring and improving their rights of way.

4.0 Policy Context

It is not the intention to spend a large amount of time going over the many policies that the Rights of Way Improvement Plan fits into and supports. A brief review of key strategic documents that underpin the Rights of Way Improvement Plan is included below.

4.1 Climbing Higher (Welsh Assembly Strategy For Sport And Physical Activity)

Climbing Higher is a key document with stretching targets for the health of people living in Wales. The strategy focuses on improving the health of the nation through improving physical access to green space and sporting facilities and encouraging children and adults to take more exercise. The targets below are relevant to the Rights of Way Improvement Plan -

- Target 1- Adults participating in 5x30 minutes of moderate physical exercise per week, with a target of one percentage point per annum increase in overall adult physical activity levels.
- Target 10 - The percentage of the people of Wales using the natural environment for outdoor activities will increase from 36% to 60%.
- Target 11 – 95% of people in Wales will have a footpath or cycle path within a ten minute walk.
- Target 12 – No one should live more than a six minute walk (300m) from their nearest green space.

4.2 Environment Strategy For Wales (Welsh Assembly Strategy For The Environment)

The Environment Strategy for Wales sets out important principles and outcomes expected from us all; in particular –

- Individuals understand and are enabled to take responsibility for their environmental impact; changes are apparent in behaviour. Indicators for this outcome include percentage of people taking actions to improve the environment and trends in the number of people taking part in environmental volunteering.
- There will be sustainable, widespread and equitable access to the countryside and coast, which recognises the need for a balance between tranquil areas and areas supporting larger numbers of people and a range of activities. Damaging access will be discouraged. An important Indicator for this outcome is the percentage of the total length of footpaths and other rights of way which are easy to use by the public.
- The number of people choosing to walk or cycle as a means of transport is increasing. Indicators for this outcome are the percentage of people whose main mode of travel to work is (a) walking or (b) cycling and the percentage of pupils whose main mode of travel to school is walking.

4.3 The Wales Transport Strategy and Taith Regional Transport Plan

The Transport (Wales) Act 2006 gave the Welsh Assembly Government new powers to plan and improve the transport system in Wales. The Act required the Assembly Government to prepare and publish a Wales Transport Strategy (WTS) setting out how it proposed to deliver its transport duty. The Wales Transport Strategy focuses on three key themes which can be used individually or in combination to meet the desired outcomes of the strategy:

- To achieve a more effective and efficient transport system
- To achieve greater use of more sustainable and healthy forms of travel
- To minimise the need for travel

Individual Authorities in Wales are no longer required to develop Local Transport Plans, but to develop Regional Transport Plans in partnership with other local Authorities. There are four regional transport consortia operating

in Wales. Wrexham along with Flintshire, Denbighshire, Conwy, Gwynedd and Anglesey form the North Wales consortia called Taith.

In relation to the Rights of Way Improvement Plan, the Transport Strategy for Wales emphasises the role walking and cycling will have in our daily lives and the need to consider them when decision making. The Rights of Way improvement Plan supports the aims of the Regional Transport Strategy and will contribute to some of the actions flowing out of the Taith Regional Transport Plan

4.4 Health, Social Care and Wellbeing Strategy for Wrexham

The strategy's vision is to create a healthier community by promoting and supporting healthier lifestyles and to develop first class services that support those people who have health or care needs. The strategy sets out a clear indication of how Wrexham County Borough Council and Wrexham Local Health Board working with their partners, aim to improve the health, social care and well-being of the population of Wrexham over the next three years. Within the strategy, there is an awareness that walking and cycling are two of the most important kinds of physical activity. The strategy identifies a need to create a publicity and promotion strategy for sustainable (and healthy) transport. Further work could be undertaken to improve a greater number of paths brought up to suitable standards for wheelchair use or use by the visually impaired and the need to encourage cycling and walking and reduce car dependency.

4.5 Wrexham Community Strategy

The Welsh Assembly Government has given WCBC a statutory duty to work with partners in the delivery of the Community Strategy. This strategy, known as "Wrexham Refreshed, Wrexham Community Vision 2004 – 2020", aims to promote the economic, social and environmental well-being of people in Wrexham County Borough and contribute to sustainable development over the next fifteen years. Key objectives that relate to the Rights of Way Improvement Plan include –

- To provide an efficient and integrated transport system that promotes walking and public transport.
- To encourage people to respect and enjoy their local environment and its biodiversity.
- To increase the availability of safe leisure and cultural activities and more opportunities for play and creativity.
- To build social and physical environments that create the necessary conditions to protect, promote and support health and well being.

4.6 Wrexham Unitary Plan and the Local Development Plan

The Wrexham Unitary Development Plan was formally adopted in February 2005 and covers the period 1996 - 2011. It provides a framework for local decision making and the reconciliation of development and conservation interests in order that land use changes proceed coherently and with maximum community benefit.

The following policies within the Unitary Development Plan are directly related to access to the countryside and the rights of way network and support the Rights of Way Improvement Plans strategic aims-

- **Policy CLF6** The existing pattern of public rights of way will be protected, maintained and improved and any potential new routes will be identified and safeguarded.
- **Policy CLF7** The development of countryside and water resources for informal recreation will be permitted provided that it does not harm visual amenity or nature conservation interests. Built development (e.g. information centres, toilets and car parking) should be small scale and directly related to the use of the resource.
- **Policy T1** Proposals for new and improved public transport facilities for bus, taxi and rail services will be supported, to include public transport interchange facilities, park and ride facilities, car and cycle parking, cycle and walkway routes, and access for buses on new developments.

- **Policy T9** Development proposals will be required to provide walking and cycling routes, where feasible and appropriate, that link with existing or proposed walking and cycling routes, and integrate with the public transport system. Opportunities for horse riding along these routes will be secured where appropriate.
- **Policy T10** Land will be safeguarded for the development of the following walking and cycling routes:-
 - Minera to Brymbo (High Street)
 - Brymbo (High Street) to New Broughton (Dale Road)
 - New Broughton (Stryt y Bydden) to Wrexham (Watery Road)
 - New Broughton (Poolmouth Road) to Wrexham (Watery Road)
 - Caego (Gatewen Road) to Gwersyllt (Summerhill Road)
 - Gwersyllt (Dodds Lane) to Rhosrobin (Llay New Road)
 - Rhos (Llwyneinion Road) to Legacy (Bronwylfa Road)
 - Legacy (Bronwylfa Road) to Rhostyllen (Bersham Road)
 - Ruabon via Acrefair to Trevor (Denbighshire boundary)
 - Wrexham (Abenbury Road) to Overton (Cae Dyah Lane)
 - Bettisfield to Fenns Bank
 - Berwig Crossing to the Limestone Weighbridge, Minera
 - Opportunities for horse-riding along these routes will be secured, where appropriate. Additional walking/cycling routes will be provided within Wrexham Town.

The Wrexham Local Development Plan will replace the Wrexham Unitary Development Plan at the end of the plan period.

4.7 Broadly, the Rights of Way Improvement Plan fits into and supports these strategies in terms of –

- Sustainable transport - encouraging people to use more sustainable ways of accessing leisure facilities, schools, shops and healthcare, such as by walking or cycling.
- Encouraging people to become fitter and healthier through active walking, cycling and horse riding locally.
- Encouraging people to enjoy their local countryside and wildlife and encouraging people to be active and become involved as volunteers.

Underpinning all rights of way work is the need to follow statutory guidelines and the various Highways and Wildlife legislation. The Disability Discrimination Act is also driving the need to improve the accessibility of the network and its related services.

4.8 Strategic Environmental Assessment and Equality Impact Assessment

The Wrexham Rights Of Way Improvement Plan has been screened using the information supplied in “A Practical Guide to the Strategic Environmental Assessment Directive- practical guidance on applying European Directive 2001/42/EC” on the assessment of the effects of certain plans and programmes on the environment”. The screening by the Parks, Countryside and Rights of Way Manager and Sustainability Officer indicated that a Strategic Environmental Assessment did not need to be carried out on the Wrexham Rights Of Way Improvement Plan, as the plan did not fall within the scope of the Strategic Environmental Assessment. Views of the relevant consultation bodies, the Countryside Council For Wales and Environment Agency confirmed this approach. An Equality Impact Assessment screening was also undertaken for the plan and indicated further work to be done to make the network more accessible to people with disabilities. This is included within the plan.

5.0 Summary of the Assessment Phase

5.1 Survey of the network - How good or bad is the rights of way network on the ground ?

In attempting to answer this question as part of the Assessment Phase, the consultants for this piece of work, Resources For Change, commissioned specialist consultants “Exegesis”, to complete a survey of the rights of way network using standard Countryside Council For Wales approved methodology, based on a 16% random sample of the Wrexham County Borough Council network. The size of the sample meant it was statistically reliable and could be used to give projected estimates for the condition of the whole network.

The survey provided a detailed descriptive inventory of stiles etc., path obstacles and surfacing problems.

The survey showed nearly three quarters of the surveyed furniture was in a satisfactory condition, (the greatest failure was for stiles). The survey identified 293 problems associated with vegetation, fence obstructions and poor surfaces. Just over a third of these problems made the paths unusable, whilst the remainder were inconvenient (Getting Rights of Way Right in Wrexham, Resources For Change 2006).



Based on the data generated by the sample survey, it is estimated that there are approximately 3,400 path problems to be dealt with in the County Borough network, including 1,570 problems of unsatisfactory furniture. (Getting Rights of Way Right in Wrexham, Resources For Change 2006).

5.2 Performance Indicators

Through the Wales Programme for Improvement, the Council is required to report annually on the condition of its PROW network, using a nationally adopted Performance Indicator - "Paths or links that are easy to use". The data is collected through a survey each year of 5% of the network (following national guidelines for data collection).

The condition survey undertaken in January 2006 as part of this ROWIP Assessment Phase showed that 57% of the network had passed the performance indicator. Some of this improvement is likely to be due to methodology, in particular that the condition survey was based on a 16% random sample of links (sections of paths) rather than the annual Performance Indicator survey sample of 5% of paths.

Percentage of total length of rights of way which are easy to use.		
	Wrexham	Welsh average
2001/02	25%	39%
2002/03	32%	44%
2003/04	42%	44%
2004/05	39%	41%
2005/6	34%	41%
2006/7	35%	64%

It is difficult to get a true measure of the picture of the state of the rights of way network from the Assessment information and the existing National Performance Indicator. The assessment information suggests a reasonably good figure of 57%, the 5% annual random sample of the network shows a lower figure with little improvement in the range of 32-42% over the last few years. If the annual performance indicator figure of paths that are easy to use is accepted, then Wrexham County Borough Council's rights of way network is not particularly easy to use, is performing poorly compared with the national average and is in the bottom quartile of Local Authorities (however caution must be used when looking at the national returns, only 11 of the 22 Authorities appear to have made full returns, with decent samples of their network).

5.3 Review of the Definitive Map - What is the Definitive Map ?

The Definitive Map provides a legal record of public rights of way. It shows where paths run and who has the right to use them. The definitive map gives a snapshot of the state of the rights of way network at one particular date in the past; this is known as the "relevant date" of the map. The definitive map is accompanied by a document, the definitive statement, which includes a written description of routes and details of their widths and when paths have been diverted. If a route is shown on the definitive map and statement, this is conclusive evidence that the public have the right to use it, even if in practice it is blocked or has not been used for many years.

Wrexham CBC has a legal duty to keep the definitive map up to date and to make it available to the public.

5.4 What's the state of the Definitive Map ?

The Assessment Report on the state of the Definitive Map indicated there were many problems related to the Definitive Map for Wrexham, involving far more time to remedy than current staff resources are capable of giving the legal work. Such as –

- Only 1% of the rights of way network has a width legally defined in the statement.
- 151 Legal Event Modification Orders are needed to bring the record up to date.
- 32 Definitive Map Modification Orders are awaiting or are in the process of being dealt with (many of these have been waiting years to be dealt with).
- Between 130 - 500 anomalies have been identified on the Definitive Map as needing correcting.
- Unrecorded routes – possibly up to 25 kms of routes in the urban areas are not recorded as rights of way on the definitive map.

5.5 Consolidation of the Definitive Map

Can we publish a new consolidated Definitive Map ?

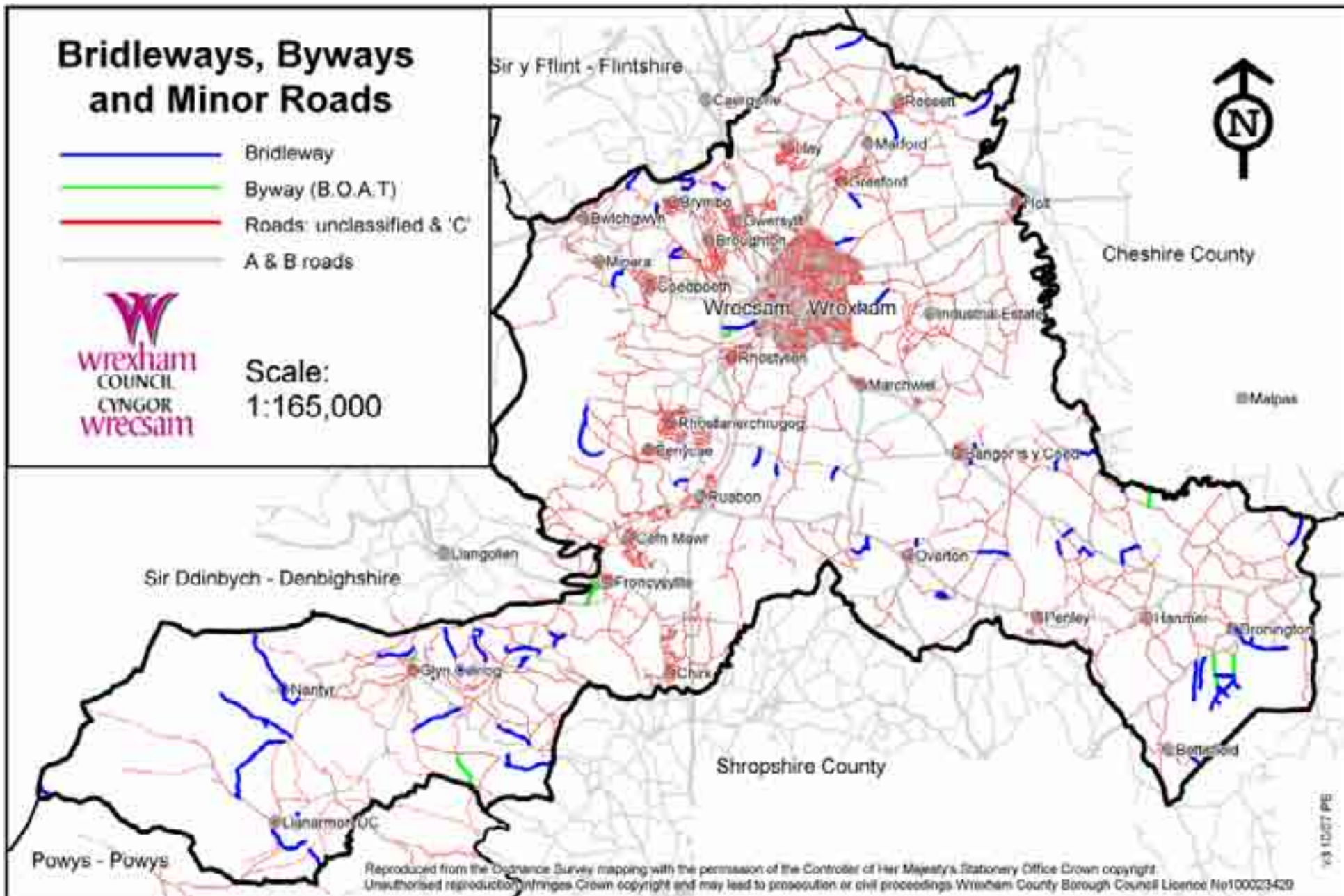
Consolidation is the process (contained within section 57 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act, 1981) whereby a new definitive map can be drawn up that incorporates the effects of all modification orders made since the last map was published. The new map carries a single relevant date. This process is only technically possible once all outstanding changes that require a modification order have been processed to completion. (Getting Rights of Way Right in Wrexham, Resources For Change 2006).

Bridleways, Byways and Minor Roads

-  Bridleway
-  Byway (B.O.A.T)
-  Roads: unclassified & 'C'
-  A & B roads



Scale:
1:165,000



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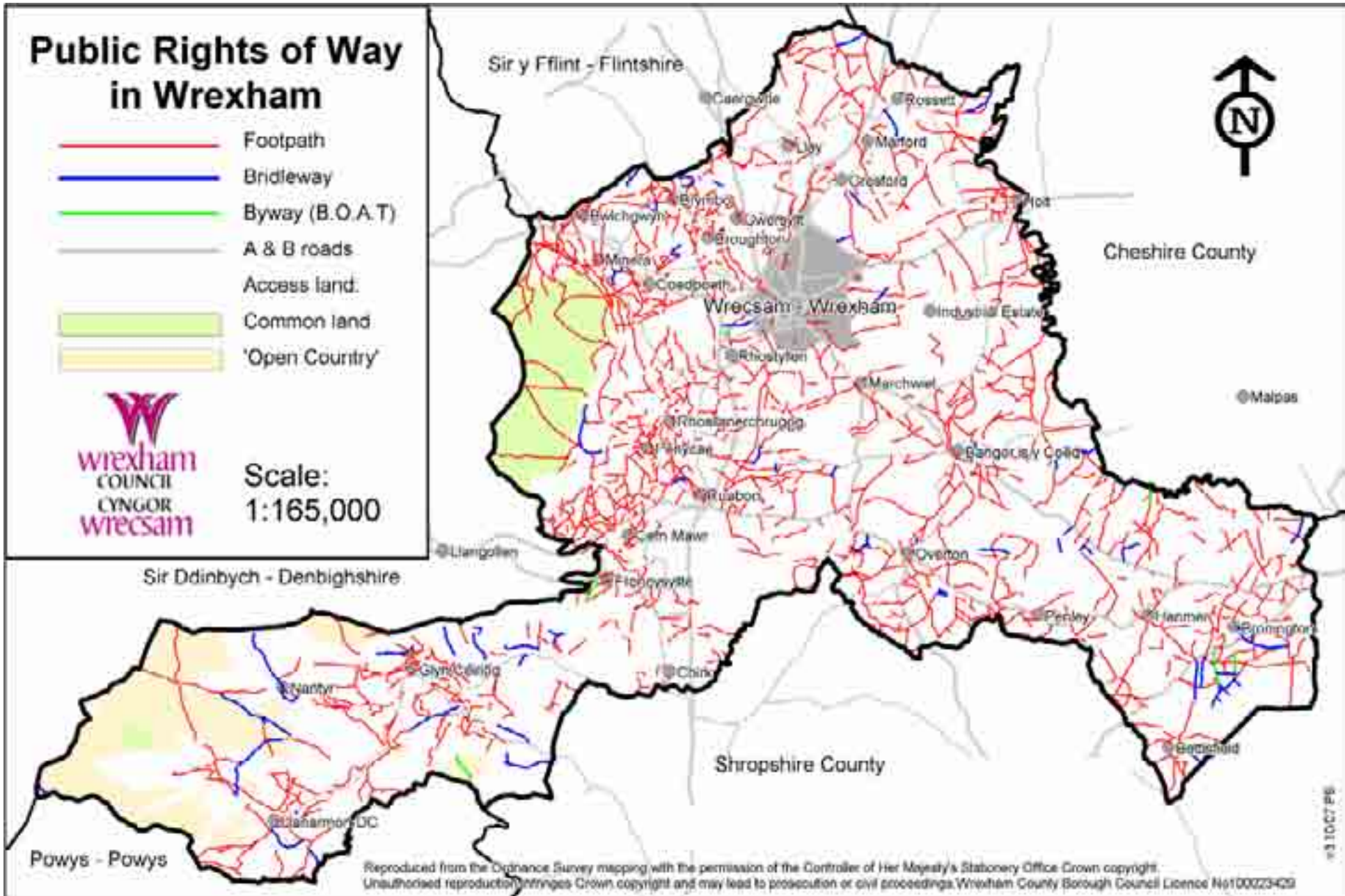
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Public Rights of Way in Wrexham

-  Footpath
-  Bridleway
-  Byway (B.O.A.T)
-  A & B roads
-  Access land.
-  Common land
-  'Open Country'



Scale:
1:165,000



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6.0 Public Consultation

6.1 What did people think about the rights of way network ?

The Assessment Phase consultation involved asking people their views on the rights of way network. In summary consultation was undertaken with –

- Community Councils, neighbouring Authorities and interest groups/statutory bodies via letter.
- Two open forums were held in which all Community Councils, interested groups (such as the Ramblers) and members of the public were invited.
- Targeted consultation was undertaken through presentation and discussion with the Wrexham Disability Forum, Over 50's Forum and young people (Duke of Edinburgh).
- The general views of the local community of Wrexham were obtained through the Citizens Panel and a questionnaire on the website.
- Wrexham Local Access Forum through workshops and regular discussions at its meetings helped steer the drafting of the plan.



There were over 500 responses, either written or through consultation, indicating the interest in the community about the rights of way network.

Results of the consultation are to be found in detail in the Assessment Phase Report (Getting Rights of Way Right in Wrexham, Resources For Change 2006). This was sent out to interested parties, Community Councils and WCBC Members and Officers to check if they agreed with the priorities that had come out of the consultation. The priorities were slightly amended to take into account their views.

Who we consulted	Number of people	Response
Letter sent out to all Community Councils, WCBC Councillors, statutory bodies, neighbouring Authorities.	Approx. 180 letters sent out	13 responses.
Views obtained from the People's Voice, Citizen's Panel.	500 questionnaires sent out.	303 questionnaires returned.
Open consultation on the Wrexham County Borough Council web.	Not known.	13 responses.
Rights of Way Staff consultation – SWOT analysis.	7 staff	Responses were received from everyone attending as part of the

Who we consulted	Number of people	Response
		consultation. workshop.
Workshops with Local Access Forum and Open Community Consultation (2 events).	7 people LAF. 42 people attended 1 st community event. 29 people attended 2nd community event.	Responses were received from everyone attending as part of the consultation workshop.
Targeted consultation with older people through over 50's Forum and Wrexham Walkabout leaders.	12 Disability Forum. 12 Walkabout Wrexham.	Responses were received from everyone attending as part of the consultation workshop.
Targeted consultation with young people – Duke of Edinburgh Award and Bettisfield Youth Club	9 DoE. 15 BYC.	Responses were received from everyone attending as part of the consultation workshop.

Who we consulted	Number of people	Response
Targeted consultation with people with disabilities- Wrexham Disability Forum.	12	Responses were received from everyone attending as part of the consultation workshop.
Consultation over Assessment Phase Report.	200 copies of Assessment report sent out.	33 people responded.
Rights of Way staff consultation – actions stemming from priorities workshop	9 staff.	Responses were received from everyone attending as part of the consultation workshop.
Local Access Forum consultation - actions stemming from priorities workshop.	3 LAF members.	Responses were received from everyone attending as part of the consultation workshop.

Who we consulted	Number of people	Response
Community Councils - further targeted consultation sent out to identify views on partnership working and maintenance arrangements.	All Community Councils in WCBC - 34 letters sent out.	16 Community Councils completed and returned the consultation questions.
Horse riders - further targeted consultation sent out to identify views on specific improvements to network.	Horse riding groups in Wrexham and individuals who had responded to original consultation - 12 letters.	5 responses received suggesting improvements to network.
The Wrexham Local Access Forum acted as the steering group for the whole process, receiving updates at each meeting and entering into discussions regarding the development of the plan and consultation process.	Full Local Access Forum	Responses received from the forum at each meeting.

6.2 What did people want ?

The community consultation gave us 23 priorities for action ranging from high to low priority. These were then grouped into broad areas and workshop sessions were run with staff and members of the Wrexham Local Access Forum to decide how we would turn these priorities into action. The list of priorities from the public consultation is included below.

LIST	GENERAL POLICY AREA	PRIORITY
1. Lack of bridleways. 2. Lack of suitable routes for cyclists. 3. Lack of suitable routes for motorised users.	Developing the network for different users.	1. H 2. M 3. L
4. Produce an updated Definitive Map. 5. Local Authority rights of way staff devoting time to resolving long-standing, complicated rights of way problems.	Updating Definitive Map.	4. H 5. M
6. Clearance of vegetation. 7. Removal of obstructions. 8. Maintenance of installations. 9. Lack of signposts and waymarks.	Opening up the network.	6. H 7. H 8. M 9. H

LIST	GENERAL POLICY AREA	PRIORITY
10. Tackle the accessibility issues presented by gates, stiles etc. 11. Improvement of surfaces for different users. 12. Lack of suitable routes for people with mobility and/or sight problems. 13. Create at least one access-for-all route in each Community Council area.	An improving network for all users.	10. H 11. M 12. M 13. L
14. Lack of signs with destinations and distance. 15. Better information about the network. 16. Promote better understanding of ROW network and responsibilities. 17. Availability of specific information for the less able. 18. Creation of more themed walks. 19. Create more circular routes.	Publicising the network for users.	14. M 15. M 16. M 17. L 18. M 19. M
20. Encourage community ownership of local rights of way e.g. adopt-a-path scheme. 21. Encourage more active involvement in local rights of way by Community Councils. 22. Encourage representative participation in developing the network.	Encouraging community involvement.	20. M 21. M 22. L
23. Tackle irresponsible and illegal behaviour.	Raising awareness.	23. M

6.3 Broad areas of interest emerge from the consultation, of what people want from their rights of way network and how it is cared for –

- A well maintained, signposted network, free from obstruction.
- An Updated Definitive Map.
- An improving network for all users.
- Better information about the network and awareness of people's responsibilities.
- Creation of themed and or circular routes.
- More community ownership and active involvement in the rights of way system.
- The tackling of irresponsible and illegal behaviour.

There are other themes identified by Officers and the Local Access Forum linking into strategic plans, such as access to Access Land, protecting rights of way from development, looking at improving the network through potential planning gain and the big health and fitness agenda, getting people fitter and healthier. There is also a strong lead through Welsh Assembly Strategies (see section on Policy Context) of the need to take a more environmentally sustainable approach to accessing the countryside, through less use of cars, encouraging more people to use the rights of way on their doorstep. All these areas of interest and themes can be incorporated into a series of strategic aims.

7.0 Strategic Aims for the Rights of Way Improvement Plan

- **Looking after our rights of way** - A well maintained, signposted network, free from obstruction.
- **Updating the map** - An updated Definitive Map.
- **Protecting our rights of way** – Making sure the rights of way network is protected from development and kept open, free from development obstructions.
- **More accessible, more opportunities** - An improving network for all users.
- **Better information** - Better information about the network and awareness of people’s responsibilities.
- **Getting people fitter and healthier** – Encouraging more people to use the rights of way network and use it more regularly.
- **Getting the community involved** - More community ownership and active involvement in the rights of way system.
- **Getting people out of the car** - Encouraging people to access rights of way without using the car or using rights of way for journeys to work



8.0 Statement of Action

The core of the Rights of Way Improvement Plan is a Statement of Action, which sets out the work the Authority, with its partners, proposes to undertake to secure an improved network of local rights of way and access opportunities. Proposed activities are presented under 8 aims, with an indication of costs, timescales and who needs to be involved. Each statement of action is supported by a section on the issues related to the aim, consultation feedback and a section on current work. This is followed by a statement of intent and the actions, targets and milestones for the project to be delivered. As stated previously, it is the intention to produce an Annual Action Plan, which will take the actions and targets of the Statement of Action and provide annual work plans to ensure the plan is delivered each year.



Statement of Action

9.0 Aim - Looking after our rights of way - A well maintained, signposted network, free from obstruction.

9.1 Issue – The current rights of way network is not a well maintained, signposted network free from obstruction. As indicated in section 5.2 on performance indicators, the annual random 5% survey of paths or links that are easy to use, suggests over the last 5 years approximately a third of paths were classified as easy to use. This is in the lower quartile of performance for Local Authorities in Wales.

9.2 Consultation feedback

The consultation feedback indicated that obstructions, such as locked gates, overgrown vegetation, crops and barbed wire across stiles were a problem encountered by users of the rights of way. This included people with a disability, young people and older people. Providing a well maintained, signposted network, free from obstruction is one of the top priorities that has come out of the consultation work and indicates the importance people put on this side of the management of the network.

9.3 Current work

Complaints

Complaints with regard to obstructions are dealt with promptly, and are prioritised according to the nature of the complaint and where in the network the complaint is located (higher priority is given to more heavily used routes). There is not, however, a systematic survey of the condition of the whole of the network.

The rights of way staff have started to target certain areas of the network, working with the landowners in areas of the County Borough where there have been problems in the past, over crops (such as maize) growing over and making it difficult to use the rights of way network. Enforcement of the legislation related to the reinstatement after ploughing began in 2006. Landowners have been reminded about their legal responsibilities.

Signing

Work on signing (with destinations on the signpost) rights of way has also made progress across the network.

Bridges

The management of bridges and structures is the responsibility of the Transport and Asset Management Department of the Authority. The rights of way section work closely with the bridges and structures officer to identify what work is needed and how it can be completed. The replacement of bridges is a major capital cost and remains a difficult issue for the small budget of the rights of way section to support. Some progress is being made in the bridge replacement work.

Stiles

The current working practice is to consider if a gap can be left instead of a stile, could a gate be used and finally if not, then a stile will be erected. Currently the landowner is supplied with a stile kit to put in place, however the need to check that the landowner has erected the stile in the correct place, in a safe manner and in a timely fashion, requires significant input in terms of staff time.

Surfacing

Surfacing work of paths is undertaken, if it's appropriate (such as urban areas), but due to the small rights of way budget, this work is only undertaken when there is a strong demand and need for the work.

Costings

Exegesis carried out a survey of 16 % of the network in 2006. This report commissioned for the Assessment Report by Resources For Change (2006), identified standard costings for improving the network and then maintaining the network. Extracts from their report are outlined below.

Based on the data generated by the sample survey, Exegesis estimated that the whole network has approximately 5,600 items of furniture and approximately 3,400 path problems to be dealt with. This figure includes about 1,570 problems of unsatisfactory furniture.

Each of these 3,400 problems has been identified as requiring work to resolve, for instance installing a stile or repairing a gate. Using fixed estimated costs for each of these work items (installing a stile is costed at £210); it is possible to calculate the cost of resolving all the problems on the existing path network . A similar approach can be adopted to estimate the cost of non-furniture problems such as overgrown vegetation.

The cost of resolving all existing furniture and other path problems is estimated at £105,382 for the survey sample and £658,750 for the whole path network. This equates to £775 per km, a very similar figure to the national average calculated in 2002 in relation to an all Wales survey.

Once all the existing problems have been resolved it is obviously important to keep the network in good condition. It is possible to estimate this by assigning a longevity figure to all furniture items and amortising the replacement cost through the lifetime of each item of furniture. This cost is estimated at £186,000 or £219 per km per year.

Additional to this is the cost of routine vegetation management work and other non-furniture related problems. This is particularly difficult to estimate as only a percentage of the network is strimmed. These costs were estimated at £250 per kilometre, per year (based on current contractor costs), with the assumption that only 20% of the network would need strimming, to give a cost of £50 per km, per year. No costs have been included for the major capital items, such as bridges.

In summary, this would give a cost of £775 per kilometre to improve the network. A further cost of £219 per km per year to maintain the network to a good standard would then be needed.

To put these costs in context, we currently spend approximately £70,000 per year on all management and maintenance of the network.

9.4 Statement of Intent - Looking after our rights of way – We will work towards a well maintained, signposted network, free from obstruction.						
Action	Priority	Target	Partnership	Milestone	Cost	Funding
9.4.1 Make the network easier to use - Work to improve the accessibility of the network.	High	By 2012 over 70% of the network will be easy to use. We will then review the target and publish a new target for ease of use of paths.	Lead –WCBC. Community Councils, Groundwork Wrexham & Flintshire	By 2010 60% of the paths will pass the performance indicator easy to use paths. By 2012 over 70% of the network will be easy to use	Upgrading network – £775per km Maintaining network - £219km Vegetation mgnt – £50km Total for improving 70% of network Capital = £461,125. Revenue per year =£160,055.	WCBC revenue, Countryside Council For Wales, Community Councils. Welsh Assembly Govt.

9.4 Statement of Intent - *Looking after our rights of way* – We will work towards a well maintained, signposted network, free from obstruction.

Action	Priority	Target	Partnership	Milestone	Cost	Funding
9.4.2 Survey and monitor the condition of the network	Medium	Undertake a complete inspection of the network every 5 years to check the safety of the network	Lead – WCBC. Community Councils, Groundwork Wrexham & Flintshire, Local Access Forum, Volunteers, Ramblers Association,	By 2010 60% of the network will have been surveyed.	WCBC staff time.. Existing resources.	WCBC revenue, Volunteer time.
9.4.3 Deal with obstruction and enforcement	High	Complaints will be dealt with according to a priority schedule, taking into account safety of the public and use of the route. This schedule will be published on the web.	Lead – WCBC.	Review progress annually to check on progress with target.	WCBC staff time. Existing resources.	WCBC revenue.

9.4 Statement of Intent - *Looking after our rights of way* – We will work towards a well maintained, signposted network, free from obstruction.

Action	Priority	Target	Partnership	Milestone	Cost	Funding
9.4.4 Enforcement work will be undertaken where there are crops growing over or obscuring the rights of way network.	High	All complaints regarding crops obstructing the rights of way will be investigated and landowners requested to ensure the paths comply with the Rights of Way Act 1990. Where there have been problems in the past landowners will be reminded of their responsibilities.	Lead – WCBC.	Review progress 2012 to check on general compliance by landowners.	WCBC Staff time. Existing resources	WCBC revenue.

9.4 Statement of Intent - *Looking after our rights of way* – We will work towards a well maintained, signposted network, free from obstruction.

Action	Priority	Target	Partnership	Milestone	Cost	Funding
9.4.5 Improving signs and waymarks- Work to improve the number of signs (leaving a metalled road) across the network. Signs will, where appropriate, have destinations and distances.	High	100 signs in place per year.	Lead – WCBC.	Review progress 2012.	£10,000 per year. Extra resources required.	WCBC revenue.
9.4.6 Management of Bridges (related to rights of way) - surveying and monitoring of their condition	Medium	All bridges (related to rights of way) put on the bridge register by 2009. New bridge inspection regime put in place 2010.	Lead – WCBC.	Check progress 2009.	WCBC Staff time. Existing resources	WCBC revenue.

9.4 Statement of Intent - *Looking after our rights of way* – We will work towards a well maintained, signposted network, free from obstruction.

Action	Priority	Target	Partnership	Milestone	Cost	Funding
9.4.7 Management of walls and structures (related to rights of way - surveying and monitoring of their condition)	Medium	All walls and structures (related to rights of way) put on the walls and structures register by 2012. New inspection regime put in place 2013.	Lead – WCBC	Check progress 2012.	WCBC Staff time. Existing resources	WCBC revenue.
9.4.8 Improving surfacing - Surface footpaths/bridleways where there is a demand and where it is appropriate for use.	Medium	Work will be identified through the Annual Work Programme.	Lead – WCBC. Community Councils, Groundwork Wrexham & Flintshire.	Review progress 2012.	Identified in the Annual Work Programme. Cost variable extra resources required- £10,000-£100,000. Extra resources required.	WCBC revenue, Countryside Council For Wales, Community Councils.

10.0 Aim - Updating The Definitive Map.

10.1 Issue – Updating the Definitive Map and ensuring Definitive Map Modification Orders and related orders are processed in a timely manner is probably the biggest issue facing the rights of way team. The amount of work required to bring the Definitive Map up to the stage where a consolidated map can be published is huge and is a very ambitious target, even for the 10 year life cycle of the improvement plan. However, there is a legal duty to carry out this work and therefore targets have been set in the statement of intent, indicating how we intend to address this issue. We will consider with neighbouring Authorities if there is any merit in working more closely together on Definitive Map issues.

At the time that the Definitive Map was being compiled in the early 1950's some routes failed to be included on the map. The public's right to use them is not recorded on the Definitive Map or statement. These unrecorded routes are sometimes called "lost ways".



Provisions contained within the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000 mean that any old (pre-1949) routes which are not added to the Definitive Map by 2026 (the “cut off date”) will be extinguished (CROWA 2000 s.53).

The council will take preliminary steps to quantify the resources required to take forward a project to research “lost ways” within the county borough and seek to have them added to the Definitive Map where appropriate.

10.2 Consultation feedback

The Definitive Map is perhaps to the majority of the public, something they haven’t heard about, perhaps are confused about, but have little interest, unless it impinges on their life through a planning matter, or an obstructed path. Nevertheless, to those who have an interest in the Definitive Map, the state of the map and the service they get related to its management from the rights of way service, are very important. This has come through in the consultation, with the Definitive Map, high on the list of priorities that people (from the interest groups) see are important to improve.

10.3 Current work

The backlog of work has been indicated in section 5.4. The Authority is struggling to cope with the demands from users and is consequently having to deal with Welsh Assembly directions and reports from the Ombudsman. With current resources and the allocation of these resources, the rate of processing these orders indicates that in future it will be very difficult to keep up with new applications and that any attempt to make inroads into the backlog will require a fresh approach.

10.4 Statement of intent - Updating The Definitive Map. We will work towards improving the accuracy and quality of the Definitive Map.

Action	Priority	Target	Partnership	Milestone	Cost	Funding
10.4.1 Definitive Map - reducing the backlog of Definitive Map Modification Orders - Work to reduce the backlog of Definitive Map Modification Orders.	High	Reduce backlog of DMMOs by 5 per year (currently standing at 32), and manage new cases.	Lead – WCBC.	Backlog of DMMOs reduced by 25 by 2012.	WCBC staff time. Existing resources	WCBC revenue.
10.4.2 Definitive Map- Produce Community Legal Event Orders on a Community Council area basis to reduce the backlog.	High	Reduce the backlog by processing 3 per year over the plan period.	Lead – WCBC.	15 Community Legal Event Orders processed by 2012.	WCBC staff time, Existing resources.	WCBC revenue.

10.4 Statement of intent - Updating The Definitive Map. We will work towards improving the accuracy and quality of the Definitive Map.

Action	Priority	Target	Partnership	Milestone	Cost	Funding
10.4.3 Definitive Map Gaps and Anomalies- Reduce the number of gaps and anomalies on the Definitive Map on a community basis.	Low	On a community basis review 3 Community Council areas per year on the Definitive Map to identify gaps and anomalies. This is a major undertaking and would take the full 10 years of the plan to complete.	Lead – WCBC.	15 Community Council areas reviewed for gaps and anomalies in the Definitive Map.	2 Officers needed for work or contract project staff set up to work on project - £50-60,000 per year. Extra resources required.	WCBC revenue.
10.4.4 Undertake a review of unrecorded routes as part of the “Lost Ways” Project	Low	Complete scoping exercise on the project by 2015 and quantify work.	Lead – WCBC.	Check work progression 2014.	Officer time not quantified until scoping exercise undertaken. Extra resources required.	WCBC revenue.

10.4 Statement of intent - Updating The Definitive Map. We will work towards improving the accuracy and quality of the Definitive Map.

Action	Priority	Target	Partnership	Milestone	Cost	Funding
10.4.5 Consider whether there are advantages to joint working or sharing of resources with neighbouring Authorities.	Medium	Identify areas of work where there maybe joint working benefit.	Lead – WCBC.	Check progress 2009.	WCBC staff time- Existing staff resources.	WCBC revenue.
10.4.6 Definitive Map- publish updated and consolidated Definitive Map- This would only be possible if all the above work had been completed.	High	Publish Definitive Map.	Lead – WCBC.	2012 -check how above work is progressing and assess if work is on target to allow Definitive Map to be published.	Cost of publishing- not identified. Extra resources required.	WCBC revenue.

11.0 Aim - Protecting our rights of way – Making sure the rights of way network is protected from development and kept open, free from development obstructions.

11.1 Issue

The Highway Authority (rights of way staff) is responsible for the protection of the rights of way network and for ensuring that it is always available for use by the public. Common obstructions of the network which require enforcement action include hedges, fences, crops and development.

The fast pace of change in the urban areas and urban fringes of Wrexham over the last 10 years has meant an increase in planning applications and the consequent increase in urban development. This urban development can cause problems if rights of way are illegally blocked or made unusable through building works. It has therefore become an increasingly important part of the role of rights of way staff to check planning applications and ensure the rights of way system is protected adequately during the planning process, through advice given to Planning Officers, members of the public and developers. The Town and Country Planning Act 1990 is used to ensure any issues related to the rights of way network are dealt with during the planning and development process.



11.2 Current Work

The rights of way staff are dealing with planning and development work related to rights of way on a regular basis and have a good relationship with the Planning Department. Advice is given to developers to help try and head off problems in development and planning applications before they become complicated and time consuming. The Local Access Forum and the Ramblers' Association also take an interest in planning applications that can affect the rights of way network or access in general.

11.3 Statement of intent- *Protecting our rights of way* – We will work to make sure the rights of way network is protected from development and kept open and free from development obstructions.

Action	Priority	Target	Partnership	Milestone	Cost	Funding
11.3.1 The rights of way network will be protected from development through the planning process.	Medium	Rights of way team will ensure planning applications are monitored and the relevant advice is given to developers and Planning Officers.	Lead – WCBC.	Review progress annually to check on ability to deliver commitment.	WCBC Staff time. Existing resources .	WCBC revenue.
11.3.2 Planning guidance will be written to help inform developers of the need to protect and enhance the rights of way network.	High	Planning guidance to be completed by rights of way staff in consultation with planning staff by 2009.	Lead – WCBC.	Review progress 2008.	WCBC Staff time. Existing resources .	WCBC revenue.

12.0 Aim- Making the network more accessible, with more opportunities for use.

12.1 Issue

The issue facing many horseriders, carriage drivers and cyclists today is where to ride safely away from road traffic, and gain access to the countryside. Issues facing many people with disabilities are how to access the countryside and negotiate the many obstacles put in place, such as difficult surfaces, stiles, gates and cattle grids. If the network were improved to accommodate the needs of cyclists, horse riders and disabled people, undoubtedly everyone benefits, especially families with pushchairs and experienced and not so experienced walkers. The needs of walkers tends to be focused on lack of maintenance, dog litter and accessible furniture (gates etc). (Assessment Phase Report -Getting Rights of Way Right in Wrexham, Resources For Change 2006).



12.2 Consultation feedback

Walking is the most popular recreational activity. The People's Voice Survey (Assessment Phase Report - Getting Rights of Way Right in Wrexham, Resources For Change 2006), gave a figure of 47% of people undertaking walking activity each week, compared to 3% cycling and horse riding . This figure rose to 87% of respondents had walked in the countryside in the last year, compared to 29% who had cycled and 6% had undertaken horse riding activities. There was not a great desire for more paths (75% of people were happy with the number of paths). The People's Voice Survey is an important survey in that it takes a representative sample of the local population and removes the bias often encountered when open events are attended by interest groups.

In terms of feedback across the consultations undertaken, the lack of bridleways came out top, with the need to tackle the accessibility issue presented by gates, stiles etc. also an important priority. The very high rating for bridleways was probably due to the strong presence of horse riders at the consultation events and their willingness to write into air their views (surveys such as the People's Voice indicate, the number of horse riders is small compared to the numbers of walkers using the network). Carriage drivers have been keen to improve their access to good quality safe facilities, avoiding heavy traffic and speeding drivers.

Some of the consultation arising from discussions with disabled groups has raised the issue of what are appropriate improvements for the rights of way network. Suggestions have included car parking, seating, toilets and information boards, which may be difficult to fund and maintain and may be more appropriate in a Country Park setting. Access is a big issue for people with disabilities and the demand for improvements in this area is likely to grow in future years.

12.3 Current work

Work on improving the bridleway network and connecting unclassified roads was undertaken in the Ceiriog Valley, through Chirk and Ceiriog Valley Partnership, a number of years ago. The Parks, Countryside and Rights of Way Service has been working to improve access to the countryside through the mobility impaired paths scheme, over a number of years. This has resulted in gated routes put in place of stiles, with the agreement of the landowner, such as at Gresford, Bangor on Dee and Acrefair, through Groundwork Wrexham and Flintshire. Surfacing work has also been undertaken where appropriate. There is certainly opportunity to work further with groups involved with the disabled, such as Scope, to identify how routes can be improved for people with disabilities.

12.4 Statement of intent- *More accessible, more opportunities* – We will work towards improving the rights of way network for all users

Action	Priority	Target	Partnership	Milestone	Cost	Funding
12.4.1 Improve the bridleway/cycle network through creating linkages and new routes- Consider mechanisms for developing the disused railway routes for walking, cycling or horseriding.	Medium	Acquire and open disused railway from Ruthin Road, Wrexham to Moss Valley, as a route for cyclists, walkers and horseriders. Review planning applications to determine if planning gain can be used to bring any of the other listed routes into the recreational network.	Lead – WCBC. Horseriders, cyclists WCBC Groundwork Wrexham & Flintshire.	Review progress 2010.	Cost of work built into and dependent on development permissions along route .	WCBC.

12.4 Statement of intent- *More accessible, more opportunities* – We will work towards improving the rights of way network for all users

Action	Priority	Target	Partnership	Milestone	Cost	Funding
12.4.2 Improve the bridleway/cycle network through creating linkages and new routes- Review the unclassified roads network and undertake signing work where this helps create riding/cycling routes.	High	As part of signage improvement works, sign one route per year and review progress 2010. Signing work will need prioritisation through agreement with users.	Lead – WCBC. Horseriders, Cyclists.Carr iage Drivers	Review progress 2010.	Signage – up to £1000 per year. Extra resources required.	WCBC revenue, Countryside Council For Wales, Community Councils, Landfill tax.
12.4.3 Improve the bridleway/cycle network through creating linkages and new routes Prioritise maintenance on unclassified county	High	One route per year improved, subject to support from volunteers and finance available.	Lead – WCBC. Horseriders, Cyclists.Carr iage Drivers.Moto rised Users.	Improvement work will be achieved over number of years on a phased basis. Action will be reviewed for	Cost of improvements to Unclassified Roads - Variable depending on work.	WCBC revenue, Countryside Council For Wales, Community Councils, Landfill tax

12.4 Statement of intent- *More accessible, more opportunities* – We will work towards improving the rights of way network for all users

Action	Priority	Target	Partnership	Milestone	Cost	Funding
road routes that form part of strategic riding/cycling/driving networks- Pilot volunteer work with interested parties to help improve the networks.				progress in 2012.	Between £10,000 - £100,000 depending on route conditions. Extra resources required.	
<p>12.4.4 Bridleways-improve the bridleway/cycle network through creating linkages and new routes Review the status of bridleways which change to footpaths, where the route has strategic significance for the</p>	High	<p>Review with the Local Access Forum the priorities for improving the bridleway network. Examples from consultees are listed below as suggestions for improvement.</p> <p>Suggestions for improvements to bridleways that change status to footpaths-</p>	Lead Local Access Forum, WCBC, Horseriders.	Priorities for action decided upon 2008. Incorporate into Annual Action Plan from 2008. Review progress 2012.	Not identified, but may involve CPO and compensation to landowner. Extra resources required.£10,000-£100,000.	WCBC revenue.

12.4 Statement of intent- *More accessible, more opportunities* – We will work towards improving the rights of way network for all users

Action	Priority	Target	Partnership	Milestone	Cost	Funding
riding network		<p>1. Project- Improve riding in Borrás/Gresford area- Footpath Gresford 12 and Bieston 9; Continue Bridleway Gresford13 (Carthagena Lane) along present footpath 11 to Borrás Road.</p> <p>2. . Project- Improve riding in Rossett area - Bridleway 26 Rossett (landlocked), bridleway 37 changes status to footpath 38 Rossett</p> <p>3. Project -Improve riding in Ceiriog Valley area - Bridleway Llanarmon 8 , southeast out of village ends in footpath for 200 metres</p>				

12.4 Statement of intent- *More accessible, more opportunities* – We will work towards improving the rights of way network for all users

Action	Priority	Target	Partnership	Milestone	Cost	Funding
		at community boundary, denying access to several miles of bridleway and UCR to the south. 4. Project –Improve riding in Minera/Brymbo area Investigate current status and ownership of Minera to Brymbo railway line.				
12.4.5 Ensure the new rural long distance routes, such as the Dee Way and Wat’s Dyke Path are open and usable	Medium	Work in partnership with the promoters of these routes to ensure the routes chosen are walkable and maintained to a satisfactory standard as a promoted route.	Lead-Wat’s Dyke Association / Dee Valley Way promoters, WCBC	2012 review progress of promoted routes in attracting new walkers.	WCBC maintenance costs not identified. Extra resources required.	WCBC Revenue, CCW.

12.4 Statement of intent- *More accessible, more opportunities* – We will work towards improving the rights of way network for all users

Action	Priority	Target	Partnership	Milestone	Cost	Funding
12.4.6 Consider the need to improve the quality of access to the proposed World Heritage site at Pontcysyllte and the adjacent Dee Valley.	Medium	Work in partnership with British Waterways to identify areas where upgrading of the existing rights of way network would be beneficial.	Lead – World heritage bid partnership. WCBC, British Waterways	Success of bid will be known in 2009. Project would support World Heritage Action Plan for the area, if bid was successful.	Not identified. Extra resources required.	WCBC, British Waterways. European funding.
12.4.7 Review Access to Access land	Medium	Review with the Local Access Forum whether there is a need to improve rights of way network connections to Access Land.	Lead Local Access Forum, WCBC.	2010 complete review of need for improvements in access to Access Land. Incorporate any actions in Annual Action Plan.	Not identified, but may involve Compulsory Purchase Order and compensation to landowner. Extra resources required.	WCBC Revenue, CCW.

12.4 Statement of intent- *More accessible, more opportunities* – We will work towards improving the rights of way network for all users

Action	Priority	Target	Partnership	Milestone	Cost	Funding
<p>12.4.8 Access for all-make the network more accessible for people with disabilities- Consider the needs of people with disabilities and the less able through using the gap/gate/stile method of considering path improvements. Gap first, gate next, stile last.</p>	High	Increase proportion of gaps or gates to stiles used, to open up access to more users.	<p>Lead – WCBC.</p> <p>Groundwork Wrexham & Flintshire, Community Councils Disability Forum.</p>	2012 -check how work is progressing and assess whether policy is opening up the network for less able users. If not revise Action.	<p>Cost of installing gates is higher than for stiles, therefore cost of implementation will require greater proportion of rights of way network spent on improving access.</p> <p>Estimated cost - £10,000 per year. Extra resources required.</p>	WCBC revenue, CCW.

12.4 Statement of intent- *More accessible, more opportunities* – We will work towards improving the rights of way network for all users

Action	Priority	Target	Partnership	Milestone	Cost	Funding
<p>12.4.9 Access for all-make the network more accessible for people with disabilities- As part of Community network improvement schemes. Look to improve surfacing to routes where it is appropriate and could be used to encourage more use of the network by less able bodied persons.</p>	<p>Medium</p>	<p>Wherever possible, each Community Council area will have one route accessible for less able bodied persons by end of 10 year plan.</p>	<p>Lead – WCBC. Groundwork Wrexham & Flintshire, Community Councils, Disability Forum, Scope.</p>	<p>2012 -check how work is progressing and assess whether policy is opening up the network for less able users. If not revise Action.</p>	<p>Cost will vary according to needs of surfacing. Work will be programmed on an annual basis, according to budget. Estimated cost of work- £10,000 per year. Extra resources required.</p>	<p>WCBC revenue, CCW.</p>

12.4 Statement of intent- *More accessible, more opportunities* – We will work towards improving the rights of way network for all users

Action	Priority	Target	Partnership	Milestone	Cost	Funding
12.4.10 Use planning gain when development takes place to improve the connectivity of the network.	Medium	Monitor planning applications and consider where arguments can be put forward for planning gain to improve the network, through Section 106 agreements.	Lead – WCBC. Local Access Forum.	2012- check success of approach. If no progress discuss with Chief Planning Officer.	Not identified.	Developers.
12.4.11 Consider whether there are advantages to joint working or sharing of resources with neighbouring Authorities/Local Access Fora on cross border projects.	Medium	Identify areas of work where there maybe joint working benefit.	Lead – WCBC/Local Access Forum.	Check progress 2009.	WCBC staff time- Existing staff resources.	WCBC revenue.

12.4 Statement of intent- *More accessible, more opportunities* – We will work towards improving the rights of way network for all users

Action	Priority	Target	Partnership	Milestone	Cost	Funding
12.4.12 Consider the need for small scale parking in rural areas to improve access to the rights of way network.	Low	Complete review of need for rural car parking and identify funding.	Lead- Local Access Forum project	Review to be completed by 2010.	Not quantified. Likely to be in region of £10,000-£100,000. Extra Resources required	European funding. Community Council

13.0 Aim - Better information about the network and awareness of people's responsibilities.

13.1 Issue

The issues raised under this aim are much more divergent than other aims, perhaps because information on rights of way covers such a large area, from basic information about the status of paths and where to walk, to more circular walks, production of simple maps, to the more complex questions about the definitive map.

Information is key to encouraging the local community to use the rights of way network, but it is important to help tourists coming into Wrexham to be aware of how they can access our beautiful countryside. One of the suggestions for improvement during the consultation was to make the Wrexham Tourist Information Centre more aware of the amount of information becoming



available via the web, for tourists to download and use, such as the web walks. We will continue to liaise with the Tourist Information Centre to keep tourists fully aware of the walking opportunities available.

There is a lack of awareness of the role of the Definitive Map in the management of the rights of way network and people's rights and responsibilities related to the map. There is a need to improve information for disabled people.

13.2 Consultation

Better information about the network and the promotion of a better understanding of the rights of way network and people's responsibilities, came out of the consultation as medium priorities. The Assessment Phase consultation highlighted the concern over the unlawful use of motorbikes and vehicular use in some areas and the lack of enforcement by the Police. The subsequent Local Access Forum workshop didn't consider this a major issue and it may be a more specific, local, issue dealt with through Police liaison.

The Local Access Forum has regularly discussed the issue of dogs in the countryside, which remains a great concern for farmers and landowners.

There is interest in locally sited information boards and for good information on walks supplied through leaflets and/ or the guide format.

13.3 Current Work

The WebWalks project has produced a series of walks in the countryside, with maps, which are downloadable from the Wrexham website. In partnership with Groundwork Wrexham and Flintshire, walk information has also been produced for less able people. Walk leaflet information has been produced, targeted at easy to walk routes, on good surfaces in the Country Park network, to encourage people to use their local countryside.

There is less information available for cyclists, although a cycling route has been created into the Ceiriog Valley from neighbouring Denbighshire, through work by Denbighshire Countryside Service. There is also a cycling route leaflet available at Alyn Waters Country Park.

A similar story exists for horseriders, with route information provided for horseriders in the Ceiriog Valley, and a route in the hills above Penycae, but little other information available to let riders know where they can ride.

In general terms, the Countryside Council for Wales has produced the Countryside Code which gives information about how people should behave in the countryside.

13.4 Statement of intent- <i>Better information</i>- we will continue to improve the information about the rights of way network for users and the local community and encourage people to be aware of their responsibility.						
Action	Priority	Target	Partnership	Milestone	Cost	Funding
13.4.1 Continually update web information	Medium	Update frequently asked questions on annual basis.	Lead – WCBC.	Review annually.	WCBC Staff time. Existing resources.	WCBC revenue.
13.4.2 Ensure the Wrexham Tourist Information Centre staff are aware of up to date information on the rights of way network.	Medium	Update Wrexham Tourist Information Centre staff on new web information, as it is published.	Lead – WCBC.	Review annually.	WCBC Staff time. Existing resources.	WCBC revenue.
13.4.3 Update volunteer web information	Medium	Create volunteer page to sign post people to volunteer opportunities.	Lead – WCBC.	Volunteer page created by 2008.	WCBC Staff time. Existing resources.	WCBC revenue.
13.4.4 Update link information	Medium	Continually update links with partner organisations.	Lead – WCBC.	Review annually.	WCBC Staff time. Existing resources.	WCBC revenue.

13.4 Statement of intent- *Better information*- we will continue to improve the information about the rights of way network for users and the local community and encourage people to be aware of their responsibility.

Action	Priority	Target	Partnership	Milestone	Cost	Funding
13.4.5 Update Definitive Map information	High	Continue to publicise updates on the Definitive Map Orders and provide information for people to understand the processes involved in the management of the Definitive Map.	Lead – WCBC.	Review annually.	WCBC Staff time. Existing resources	WCBC revenue.
13.4.6 Publish the Definitive Map on the web to give users better accessibility to the map.	High	Definitive Map published on the web by 2012 (there will still be anomalies etc on the map at this point).	Lead – WCBC.	Map published on web by 2012.	Not quantified, mainly officer time. Extra Resources required.	WCBC CCW.

13.4 Statement of intent- *Better information*- we will continue to improve the information about the rights of way network for users and the local community and encourage people to be aware of their responsibility.

Action	Priority	Target	Partnership	Milestone	Cost	Funding
13.4.7 Continue to develop the web walks programme to enable people from urban and rural areas to download walks	Medium	Publish 2 walks per year on the web. Routes for mobility impaired people and routes from Community First areas will be included in the target.	Lead – WCBC. Groundwork Wrexham & Flintshire, Community Councils, Disability Forum, Community First partnerships.	2 routes for mobility impaired people and Community First areas will be produced by 2012. Review target in 2012 to assess future need.	£6000 per year. Extra Resources required.	CCW, WCBC.
13.4.8 Provide web based information about horse riding opportunities in the County Borough	Medium	Create 2 new riding routes in partnership with horse riders.	Lead – WCBC. Groundwork Wrexham & Flintshire, Horse riders.	Information and 2 new routes published on the web by 2012. Review target in 2012 to assess future need.	£6000 for 2 new routes. Extra Resources required.	CCW, WCBC.

13.4 Statement of intent- *Better information*- we will continue to improve the information about the rights of way network for users and the local community and encourage people to be aware of their responsibility.

Action	Priority	Target	Partnership	Milestone	Cost	Funding
13.4.9 Provide web based information about carriage driving opportunities in the County Borough	Medium	Create 1 new carriage driving route in partnership with carriage drivers.	Lead – WCBC. Groundwork Wrexham & Flintshire, carriage drivers	Information and 1 new route published on the web by 2014. Review target in 2014 to assess future need.	£3000 for 1 new route. Extra Resources required.	CCW, WCBC.
13.4.10 Provide web based information about cycling opportunities in the County Borough	Medium	Create 2 new routes in partnership with cyclists.	Lead – WCBC. Groundwork Wrexham & Flintshire, Cyclists.	Information and 2 new routes published on the web by 2012. Review target in 2012 to assess future need.	£6000 for 2 new routes. Extra Resources required.	CCW, WCBC.

13.4 Statement of intent- *Better information*- we will continue to improve the information about the rights of way network for users and the local community and encourage people to be aware of their responsibility.

Action	Priority	Target	Partnership	Milestone	Cost	Funding
13.4.11 Continue to publicise the longer distance walking routes of the Maelor Way, Offa's Dyke National Trail and the Clywedog Valley Trail	Medium	Ensure the Maelor Way and Clywedog Trail are promoted through the website and appropriate Trail literature.	Lead – WCBC.	Review promotion of routes 2012 to determine success of uptake of literature.	Reprint costs - £5000-£10,000. Extra Resources required.	CCW, Landfill tax, WCBC, Lottery.
13.4.12 Promote new routes such as the Wat's Dyke Trail in partnership with Wat's Dyke Association and the Dee Way (with its promoter)	Medium	Through the web, support the Wat's Dyke Association and promoter of the Dee Way, in their promotion of the trails.	Lead – Wat's Dyke Association/ Promoter of the Dee Way. WCBC.	Trails promoted and used by 2012	WCBC staff time. Existing resources.	WCBC revenue.

13.4 Statement of intent- *Better information*- we will continue to improve the information about the rights of way network for users and the local community and encourage people to be aware of their responsibility.

Action	Priority	Target	Partnership	Milestone	Cost	Funding
13.4.13 Ensure all walks and related information has public transport information supplied to user.	Medium	All publicised information to include public transport links.	Lead – WCBC. Groundwork Wrexham & Flintshire.	Review current information and where public information is lacking update when republishing.	WCBC staff time. Existing resources.	WCBC revenue.
13.4.14 Review community map project and consider need to improve rights of way information for local communities through an information board system	Medium	Complete review of community map boards by 2010 and make decision on whether rights of way network should be publicised through information board system. If decision made to progress, target 1 board per year per community.	Lead – WCBC. Groundwork Wrexham & Flintshire, Community Councils.	Review date 2010. If decision made to progress.	£3000 per board. Extra Resources required.	CCW, WCBC, Community Councils.

13.4 Statement of intent- <i>Better information</i>- we will continue to improve the information about the rights of way network for users and the local community and encourage people to be aware of their responsibility.						
Action	Priority	Target	Partnership	Milestone	Cost	Funding
13.4.15 Publicise an annual events programme to encourage people to access the countryside.	Medium	Annual events programme published on the web and printed.	Lead – WCBC.	Annual publication of events programme.	£6000 per year. Existing resources.	CCW, WCBC revenue.
13.4.16 Promote walking through the WCBC Connect magazine	Medium	Promote one walk per issue of the WCBC Connect magazine to try and encourage wider audience for the walks programme.	Lead – WCBC.	2010- Review effectiveness of work,	WCBC staff time. Existing resources.	WCBC revenue.
13.4.17 Continue to promote responsible use of the countryside by users.	Medium	Continue to promote the Countryside Code, through our Visitor Centres, through CCW leaflets and on the web.	Lead – WCBC. CCW	2012- Review effectiveness of work, through CCW national research.	WCBC staff time. Existing resources.	CCW, WCBC.

13.4 Statement of intent- <i>Better information</i>- we will continue to improve the information about the rights of way network for users and the local community and encourage people to be aware of their responsibility.						
Action	Priority	Target	Partnership	Milestone	Cost	Funding
13.4.18 Continue to promote responsible management of the countryside by landowners.	Medium	Ensure farmers are aware of their responsibilities, through site visits by rights of way staff. Target 20 farm visits per year.	Lead – WCBC. Local Access Forum, Landowners.	Review target 2012 to determine effectiveness.	WCBC staff time. Existing resources.	WCBC revenue.
13.4.19 Continue to promote responsible management of the countryside by landowners.	Medium	Publish press releases at appropriate times of year to highlight legislative requirements, such as in relation to ploughing.	Lead – WCBC. Local Access Forum , Landowners.	Review target 2012 to determine effectiveness.	WCBC staff time. Existing resources.	WCBC revenue.
13.4.20 Promote responsible dog ownership.	Medium	Pilot a local project to make visitors more aware of problems dogs can cause to livestock through publicity campaign (completed by 2010).	Lead – WCBC. Local Access Forum Landowners.	Review target after campaign to determine effectiveness.	WCBC staff time. Existing resources.	WCBC revenue.

14.0 Aim - Getting people fitter and healthier

– Encouraging more people to use the rights of way network and use it more regularly.

14.1 Issue

All the relevant strategies that the Rights of Way Improvement Plan supports put forward the principle that we must get people out walking, not just for leisure but as part of their daily lives. This is probably the key aim in the plan and not easy to achieve. The target is to get people exercising 5 times a week for at least 30 minutes. Cycling and horse riding remain much less popular than walking. Therefore we need to build on the popularity of walking as a relatively cheap and easy form of exercise and try and



encourage a wider section of the population to start using the rights of way near to their homes. If people use their local rights of way more regularly, as well as getting them fitter it will keep the network more open and encourage people to keep an eye out for problems and report them.

14.2 Consultation Feedback

Consultation feedback from the People's Voice - Citizen's Panel survey (2005) indicated over three quarters of the respondents said local walks in their neighbourhood were most important to them, followed by circular and themed routes. They spent on average 30 minutes to 1 hour walking, horse riders spent longer on their activity.

14.3 Current Work

The Parks, Countryside and Rights of Way section have been leading guided walks for many years, as part of the general events programme aimed at encouraging people to use their local countryside. The walks are aimed at the general population and tend to vary between the short walks on a theme around the parks to the longer walks along the rights of way network. Groundwork Wrexham and Flintshire have led a very successful Walking the Way to Health scheme which has over the last 5 years succeeded in encouraging 3000 people to take up walking and become fitter and healthier in the process. This project has been particularly good at encouraging older people to take up walking.

Groundwork Wrexham and Flintshire have been successful in achieving Big Lottery Funding for the further development of walking opportunities in Wrexham.

14.4 Statement of intent- We will continue to encourage people from all sections of the local community to become fitter and healthier through outdoor exercise .

Action	Priority	Target	Partnership	Milestone	Cost	Funding
14.4.1 Continue to lead a guided walks programme for all sections of the community.	Medium	20 guided walks will be delivered each year as part of the annual events programme for the Parks, Countryside and Rights of Way network. We will pilot guided walks for people less able - Target 2 walks per year in the parks and rights of way network.	Lead – WCBC. Disability Forum.	Review target 2010 to determine effectiveness.	WCBC staff time. Existing resources.	WCBC revenue, CCW.
14.4.2 Continue to encourage school children and parents to walk or cycle to school. Schools will actively encourage all appropriate pupils to walk or cycle to school	Medium	All Wrexham schools to participate in the Healthy Schools Scheme and develop activities on physical activity and the environment. E.g. 'Draig Challenge, cycling proficiency.	Lead WCBC, Schools Groundwork Wrexham & Flintshire	All schools complete actions by 2012	WCBC Staff time. Existing resources.	WAG WCBC revenue.

14.4 Statement of intent- We will continue to encourage people from all sections of the local community to become fitter and healthier through outdoor exercise .

Action	Priority	Target	Partnership	Milestone	Cost	Funding
14.4.3 Improve and develop the Walking the Way to Health scheme.		To have 4000 people participating in the Walkabout Wrexham scheme managed by Groundwork Wrexham and Flintshire over the 3 year project period.	Lead - Groundwork Wrexham & Flintshire, WCBC, AVOW, Local Health Board, Community Councils	2010 check progress on targets.	Funded through Big Lottery programme.	Big Lottery Fund.
14.4.4 Walking the Way to Health - plan and promote walk leader training	Medium	To train 135 volunteer Walk Leaders over the 3 year period to lead walks across Wrexham County Borough.	Lead - Groundwork Wrexham & Flintshire, WCBC, AVOW, Local Health Board, Community Councils.	2010 check progress on targets.	Funded through Big Lottery programme.	Big Lottery Fund.

15.0 Aim - Getting the community involved- More community ownership and active involvement in the rights of way system.

15.1 Issue

The rights of way network cannot be improved by Wrexham County Borough Council alone. Even if the huge resources are found to open up the entire network, it would quickly become overgrown if people are not using it, reporting problems or getting involved in caring for it. One of the key areas to making a better rights of way network is to get local people and the Community Councils feeling they have a greater say in how the rights of way are managed and improved and become actively involved in the management.

15.2 Consultation Feedback

The Assessment Phase consultation indicated there was support from all types of users of the network to become involved in the improvement process. There was interest from motorised user groups and the Ramblers' Association. Staff



thought the Duke of Edinburgh scheme and Community Service Probationers could be encouraged to volunteer their help in practical improvements. In the open consultation events, there was interest in the use of volunteers for maintenance and network development, building on existing contributions. The Local Access Forum members considered volunteer involvement was important and could be used to help with path inspections.

As part of further consultation work, Community Councils were written to, to find out whether they were interested in taking over the management of the grass cutting in their area, whether the Community Councils would like a more active role in checking their rights of way through the use of a local volunteers network and if the Community Council would like to designate a person who would act as a volunteer path warden. They were also asked if they would be willing to work in partnership with WCBC and contribute money to specific improvements to the rights of way in their area.

The general view was they were keen to have a greater say in where strimming in their local area was carried out and were very interested in having a Community Council appointed local path warden who could monitor their rights of way and report back on problems and issues to the Parks, Countryside and Rights of Way Service. They were not interested in assuming any control over the strimming and maintenance schedules for their area, (with money devolved from Wrexham County Borough's rights of way maintenance fund). Some Community Councils were willing to put some money into improving their rights of way network in partnership with Wrexham County Borough, but most weren't.

15.3 Current Work

The Parks, Countryside and Rights of Way Service has worked with Community Councils or interested parties on improvements to a community's rights of way network, such as at Marchwiel, Overton and Brymbo. Here local volunteers have been involved in walking and surveying the paths network.

15.4 Statement of intent- *Getting the community involved*- We will encourage more community ownership and active involvement in the rights of way system.

Action	Priority	Target	Partnership	Milestone	Cost	Funding
15.4.1 Encourage volunteers to become involved in the inspection and reporting of problems on the rights of way network.	Medium	Establish a network of interested volunteers willing to report on their local footpath/bridleway network.	Lead – WCBC. Community Councils, Groundwork Wrexham & Flintshire, Ramblers' Association, Horseriders.	Review progress- 2010 to determine success of approach.	Staff time. Extra Resources required.	WCBC revenue, CCW.
15.4.2 Encourage Community Councils to form active partnerships to improve their local rights of way network.	Medium	Work with 1 Community Council per year to improve its rights of way network.	Lead – WCBC. Community Councils, Groundwork Wrexham & Flintshire.	Review progress and resources -2012 to determine if more Community Councils can be involved in scheme.	£18,000 per year. Extra Resources required.	WCBC revenue, CCW, Community Councils.

15.4 Statement of intent- *Getting the community involved*- We will encourage more community ownership and active involvement in the rights of way system.

Action	Priority	Target	Partnership	Milestone	Cost	Funding
15.4.3 Encourage interest groups and businesses to help in carrying out practical improvements to the rights of way network	Low	1 Project carried out per year.	Lead – WCBC. Business Community, Horseriders, Motorised users, Cyclists, Community Service Probationers.	Review progress and resources -2012 to determine uptake.	Dependent on project. Existing resources.	WCBC revenue, CCW, Business Community, Community Service Probationers.

16.0 Aim - Getting people out of the car

- Encouraging people to access rights of way without using the car or using rights of way for journeys to work

16.1 Issue

The People's Voice consultation indicated most people got to the start of their leisure walk by either walking (45%) or by car (43%). However, there are few incentives for people to leave their car at home, particularly if the walk is more than a mile from their home. It's also much more convenient to take the car, than try to use the public transport system and if people use the Country Parks network to park their car, it's free.

Wrexham County Borough Council staff account for a large number of people commuting daily into the Town Centre. Taking children to and from school also generates a large amount of traffic and congestion. If we could encourage more people to use footpath



and cycle path networks for their daily commuting, whether to and from school or work, then obviously there are benefits in terms of reducing car travel and getting people fitter and healthier.

16.2 Consultation feedback

It's interesting to note in the People's Voice consultation, more than a third of people use rights of way for a healthy activity, 29% for leisure and 15% for dog walking. Accessing other facilities was very low (2%), suggesting rights of way are seen as a place for leisure, not to access school or work.

16.3 Current Work

In recent years the Authority has invested heavily in the development of the cycling/walking network. With specific reference to cycling, a lot of the work undertaken has been through the creation of routes which follow the existing highway network. In many cases, this is the most direct route. There are circumstances however where alternative routes (e.g. public rights of way) can offer potential advantages for walkers or cyclists over the car in terms of directness and perceived safety. One of the major barriers to the upgrading of sections of the public rights of way is the cost.. The Authority has in the past made successful applications to the Welsh Assembly Government for transport grant funding to improve sections of the public rights of way, where they provide a transportation benefit for walkers and cyclists.

16.4 Statement of intent- *Getting people out of the car- We will encourage people to access rights of way without using the car or using rights of way for journeys to work*

Action	Priority	Target	Partnership	Milestone	Cost	Funding
16.4.1 WCBC will encourage the development of Travel Plans to encourage people to use more sustainable and healthy forms of travel (walking and cycling).	Medium	Travel Plans for schools (safe routes in the community), larger scale residential and employment developments will be encouraged.	Lead – Taith Travel Plan Coordinator Schools, Groundwork Wrexham & Flintshire, Developers.	Progress on uptake reviewed 2010.	Not identified.	WCBC Revenue, Developers, Welsh Assembly Government.
16.4.2 Where additional transportation benefits exist, every opportunity will be given to upgrading the rights of way network for sustainable transport users	Medium	WCBC Walking and Cycling strategies will be reviewed and updated to continue to improve sustainable transport links for commuters.	Lead – WCBC.	Revised plans to be published 2010.	Staff time. Existing resources.	WCBC revenue.

16.4 Statement of intent- *Getting people out of the car- We will encourage people to access rights of way without using the car or using rights of way for journeys to work*

Action	Priority	Target	Partnership	Milestone	Cost	Funding
16.4.3 Encourage people to use the bus to access the countryside for walking.	Medium	Groundwork Wrexham and Flintshire will develop a series of bus walks (routes close to bus links).	Lead - Groundwork Wrexham & Flintshire, WCBC,	Pilot project and review success.	Extra Resources required.	Big Lottery

17.0 Funding

The Rights of Way Improvement Plan is an ambitious plan with some difficult and stretching targets, requiring additional resources to fund the work, if it is to happen. Partnership working and financial contributions will be needed from Community Councils interested in improving their local networks to make them fit for all users. Grant aid from the Countryside Council For Wales is needed to support the rights of way work. It may be possible to bid for Welsh Assembly Funding through the North Wales Regional Transport Plan and Safe Routes in the Community. It maybe possible to access money to support improvement work through section 106 agreements with developers.

Where a project has a strong community basis and support, it maybe possible to access funding through the Rural Development Plan (a European funding source under Access 3) or future lottery funding streams, such as through the healthy living agenda. The Sports Council may also be a possible funding source, where the project achieves their “Climbing Higher Agenda”.

Core funding for the maintenance of the rights of way network is a statutory duty for the Highway Authority and will need to be supported by the Council.

18.0 Monitoring and Evaluation

The progress of the plan will be monitored through an annual report detailing achievements to date. Further survey work is needed to ensure improvements in the rights of way network and the service offered is appropriate to the community's needs, as the plan progresses. This survey work may be carried, perhaps at mid point in the plan period, through the People's Voice and / or with users of the service, such as walking groups or specific interest groups, like young people or older people. Further research work and partnership will be needed with disabled people and their associated groups, to try and understand their specific needs.

19.0 Your on-going involvement with Rights of Way in Wrexham

If you would like to become more involved with the County Borough's rights of way network, please contact the Rights of Way section of the Parks, Countryside and Rights of Way Service. Also, the Council has set up Wrexham Local Access Forum. This statutory body (mostly volunteers) acts independently of the Council and advises it and other bodies, on the improvement of public access in Wrexham County Borough, for the purposes of open air recreation and enjoyment. The forum meets every two or three months and members of the public are welcome to attend.

20.0 References

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