

Hertfordshire's Local Transport Plan 2006/07 – 2010/11

Rights of Way Improvement Plan 2006/07 – 2010/11

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1. ABOUT THIS DOCUMENT

- 1.1 This is the Rights of Way Improvement Plan (RoWIP) for Hertfordshire. It provides the context for the future management of, and investment in, the rights of way network and other access activities, to meet the needs and demands of the people of Hertfordshire and those visiting the county.
- 1.2 **What is a Rights of Way Improvement Plan?** Under the provisions of Sections 60, 61 and 62 of the Countryside and Rights of Way (CROW) Act, 2000 each Highway Authority in England and Wales is required to publish a RoWIP for their area. The plan should, build upon the Highway Authority's existing duties to:
- i. maintain and keep the 'Definitive Map & Statement of Public Rights of Way'; and
 - ii. ensure that routes are adequately signposted, maintained and free from obstruction.

Statutory guidance indicates that RoWIPs should be incorporated into Local Transport Plans (LTP) to help address sustainable transport and road safety issues. It directs that they should also take into account wider agendas such as biodiversity, community safety, culture and tourism, economic regeneration, health and social inclusion.

RoWIPs are to be the prime means by which Highway Authorities identify the changes and improvements to local rights of way networks, in order to meet the Government's aim of better provision for walkers, cyclists, equestrians and people with disabilities.

The Plan is divided into two main parts:

An Assessment. The statutory guidance issued by the Department of the Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (Defra, November 2002) indicated that, in drawing up their plans, Highway Authorities are required to assess:

- i. the extent to which local rights of way meet the present and likely future needs of the public;
- ii. 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 together with the enjoyment of the local area; and
- iii. the accessibility of local rights of way to blind or partially sighted people and those with mobility problems.

The Statement of Action. Following the assessment, a Statement of Action which addresses the identified issues, is required. It should outline

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strategic actions that will be used to bid for resources, especially from the LTP, and should be supported by work programmes.

- 1.3 Guidance from the Department for Transport acknowledges that the Statement of Action will be relevant beyond transport and the LTP. The Government has recognised the challenge of producing RoWIPs and has set a target date of November 2007 for completion

RoWIPs are separate plans within LTPs because not all of their potential improvements will be relevant to transport priorities. However, both the Department for Transport (DfT) and Defra anticipate that a full integration of local transport and rights of way planning will take place from 2010 onwards, building on the development of full RoWIPs.

- 1.4 In addition, the County Council, as the body responsible for the ROWIP, has been required to determine whether or not a Strategic Environment Assessment is necessary. The determination involved a screening report concerning the environmental impacts of the plan, consultation with the Countryside Agency, Environment Agency, English Heritage and English Nature, and subsequent referral to the County Council's Executive Member for Environment.

The Executive Member has determined that, under the transitional arrangements set out in the legislation, the County Council is able to publish the plan without having carried out a Strategic Environmental Assessment. Notice of the determination was published in the local press during January/February 2006.

- 1.5 The RoWIP, together with its subsequent local implementation plans, will act as a delivery and prioritisation mechanism in the on-going aim of increasing success in the reporting of the Best Value Performance Indicator 178 (BVPI 178) – "The percentage of the total length of footpaths and other rights of way that are easy to use by members of the public". This core indicator, which provides the overall measure for the total definitive rights of way network, is the one highlighted in the LTP which sets out the projections and targets to be achieved, directly linked to capital investment.

2. THE HERTFORDSHIRE CONTEXT

- 2.1 Hertfordshire overview. Hertfordshire is adjacent to Greater London and is bisected by key transport routes from the capital to the major cities of the Midlands and North.



Source:
<http://www.hertfordshire.com/pages/maps/hertfords-hire.asp>

- 2.2 Hertfordshire is one of the most densely populated counties in the UK with a population of over 1 million in an area of 1,640 sq. km. The county is a mix of New Towns, Garden Cities and historic market towns with around 80% of the population living in these settlements which cover only 20% of its area. Conversely, 20% of the population live in the remaining 80% which is considered rural. With its location close to London, 60% of the County is Metropolitan Green Belt, to prevent the spread and coalescence of settlements – the strength of which is currently being tested by the development of new Government growth areas.
- 2.3 The county is served by Hertfordshire County Council and 10 District or Borough Councils. Three Borough Councils are predominantly urban - Broxbourne, Stevenage and Watford - whilst East Herts and North Herts have the largest rural populations. Since April 2002 Hertfordshire has also been served by the Bedfordshire and Hertfordshire Strategic Health Authority.
- 2.4 **Age and gender.** the gender split of residents is roughly equal with around 49% male and 51% female. A quarter of the population is under the age of twenty whilst the elderly population is growing with the number

of people over 80 expected to increase by 20% in the next 10 years. The largest male age group is 35 – 39. For females it is between 30 – 39.

Ethnicity. Whilst Hertfordshire’s population is predominantly white British (88.8%) it is diversifying, with non-white groups representing 6.3% of the population. The overall population comprises

- White non British 4.9%
- Mixed 1.4%
- Asian 3.0%
- Black 1.1%
- Chinese / Other 0.8%

The most diverse is Watford, followed by Hertsmere, St Albans and Three Rivers. The least diverse is East Herts.

Employment. Hertfordshire is prosperous with high levels of employment although currently about 25% of the working population commutes to London. This makes the county more economically dependent on the capital than any other. Employers struggle as wage rates are lower than those in London but property prices are amongst the highest in the country.

Health. Hertfordshire is one of the healthiest counties in England, with life expectancy of 77 for men and 81 for women.¹ Over 70% of the population are described as being in “good health”. Local authority areas with the highest levels of “not good health” are Stevenage (7.3%), Broxbourne and Watford. The lowest is East Herts.

Stevenage, Welwyn Hatfield and North Herts have the highest levels of “long-term illness” (15.11%, 15.3% and 14.7% respectively of the county population). East Herts has the lowest with 12.5%.

Car ownership. The majority of households in Hertfordshire have access to at least one motor vehicle. The number of households without access to a motor vehicle ranges from 13% in East Herts to 23% in Stevenage.

Travel and transport patterns. There are a number of key north-south links with both road and rail routes radiating from London. Four motorways cross the County: the M1, M10, A1 (M) and M25, whilst the M11 lies just to the east. It is estimated that there are four million road journeys taking place each day within the county. In addition, there is a comprehensive A-road network, which covers 1,864.2 miles (3,818km). Every day, 140,000 people commute out of the county (nearly 100,000 to London) and 85,500 enter the county, mostly from London and Bedfordshire.

¹ Source: Health Profiles of Hertfordshire 2001, Public Health, Hertfordshire Health Authority
<http://www.nhsinherts.nhs.uk/hp/Hertfordshire.htm>

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Three branches of the National Rail network pass through Hertfordshire with routes to the north west and north east. There are good suburban services into London, linking with London Thameslink and the London Underground. Over 11 million rail journeys are made per year in Hertfordshire (over sixty thousand daily commuter journeys to London).

There are 3 major airports adjacent or near to Hertfordshire: Luton in Bedfordshire; Stansted in Essex; and Heathrow.

Open space. Hertfordshire contains regionally important areas including the Chilterns Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty, Colne and Lee Valley Regional Parks, and numerous other parks and open spaces including Aldenham Country Park, Broxbourne Woods National Nature Reserve, Hatfield House and Knebworth House.

Linear recreation routes. Hertfordshire contains more than 1,937 miles (3,100km) of Public Rights of Way (PRoW). 5,220 paths are maintained by the County Council or its agents and there are approximately 24 miles (38km) of cycle tracks, which are not part of the road network.

- 2.5 The issues facing Hertfordshire are complex and require a range of inter-related solutions. These range from a set of political promises that direct the County Council's service delivery, to local plans and strategies that address issues identified by national government.
- 2.6 The promotion of sustainable transport and road safety is achieved through the LTP which sets the vision for the future of transport in the county:

"To provide a safe, efficient and affordable transport system that allows access for all to everyday facilities. Everyone will have the opportunity and information to choose the most appropriate form of transport and time of travel. By making best use of the existing network we will work towards a transport system that balances economic prosperity with personal health and environmental well being".

The Vision contains 8 objectives:

- i. To improve safety for all by giving the highest priority to minimising the number of collisions and injuries occurring as a result of the transport system.
- ii. To reduce the need for the movement of people and goods through integrated land use planning, the promotion of sustainable distribution and the use of telecommunications.
- iii. To obtain best use of the existing network through effective design, maintenance and management.
- iv. To provide a transport system which provides access to employment, shopping, education, leisure and health facilities for all, especially those without a car and those with impaired mobility.

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- v. To minimise any adverse effect of the transport system on the built and natural environment and thereby improve personal health..
- vi. To ensure that the transport system contributes towards improving the efficiency of commerce and industry and the provision of sustainable economic development in appropriate locations.
- vii. To work in partnership with transport providers and users to achieve an efficient, affordable and enhanced transport system which is attractive, reliable, integrated and makes best use of resources.
- viii. To raise awareness and encourage the use of alternative modes of transport through effective promotion, publicity and information.

These objectives are delivered through area plans and county-wide themes. Relevant themes include rural transport, cycling, walking, horses, social inclusion and health. The Rural Transport Strategy, which addresses rural transport and travel issues, has been incorporated within the LTP. It recognises the significant contribution that can be made by the PRow network through the Rural Routes project to develop sustainable transport links between settlements and key employment sites.

- 2.7 The policy context for health improvement is described by the Health Improvement and Modernisation Plans (HIMPs) produced by the Primary Care Trusts (PCTs) and Preventative Strategies prepared by the County Council. The Government wants all public organisations to work together to tackle the wider aspects of health, by encouraging exercise and healthy eating, reducing pollution and addressing social isolation and exclusion.

There are 8 PCTs in Hertfordshire. Each has identified key targets and actions for health and exercise in their areas including:

- i. Tackling local health inequalities
- ii. Patient, public and partnership involvement
- iii. Promoting mental well being
- iv. Developing opportunities for healthy living
- v. Support for the physically disabled (including sensory loss)
- vi. Support for those with learning difficulties
- vii. Reducing incidence of Chronic Heart Disease & stroke

Most PCTs have also developed a programme focussing on key age groups such as children and young people, families and the elderly. Work around the county includes:

- i. Hertsmere Primary Care Group (PCG) has a “contract for health” that outlines a priority for exercise. Their target is to encourage and improve access to exercise facilities, especially among disadvantaged groups, and therefore to reduce inequality.

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- ii. Harpenden PCG has a “contract for health”, which outlines a priority for exercise and diet for older people. Working with Hertfordshire County Council and the Countryside Agency they have established a network of safe countryside walks.

A number of similar schemes are operating across the county supported by the national ‘*Walking the Way to Health*’ initiative; championed by the British Heart Foundation. Locations include Tring, Berkhamsted, Harpenden and Puckeridge.

- iii. Watford and Three Rivers PCG have a “contract for health” that outlines a priority for exercise and diet. Their target is to increase the number of cycle paths in the area by 20%.

In Watford there are also three community initiatives taking place:

- a. the Herts Healthy School’s programme which raises health awareness from an early age;
- b. a project to encouraging girls from Asian communities to enjoy and learn to teach sports; and
- c. a working group looking at encouraging older people to increase their levels of physical activity.

2.8 Until May 2005 the Development Plan for Hertfordshire included the Structure Plan, Minerals and Waste Local Plans and District Local Plans. However, due to such uncertainty from the Government about how to plan for the future of housing and transport in the county, the Council took the decision to postpone the examination in public concerning the Structure Plan. Instead the Council will respond to the Governments Regional Spatial Strategy which effectively replaces the Structure Plan. Additionally Local Development Documents will be produced by the District and Borough Council’s which the County council will inform and comment on from a strategic perspective.

- i. Minerals Local Plan. This Plan seeks to manage the extraction of sand and gravel within the County to meet government targets and ensure that suitable restoration takes place.
- ii. Waste Local Plan. This plan is produced by the County Council and aims to reduce the amount of waste and its environmental impact.

2.9 Promoting economic regeneration and development is led by the “Herts Prosperity” partnership, which contains a range of public, private and voluntary sector interests. It prepared an economic development strategy for 2000-2005, the key objectives of which were to:

- i. create a learning environment for all;

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- ii. develop a business friendly environment (and actively promote economic growth in selected activities);
- iii. strike a balance between the built and natural environment; and
- iv. promote social inclusion.

Implementation of the strategy is directed by Herts Prosperity.

2.10 Promoting culture and tourism (including leisure, sport and recreation) is guided by the following plans and strategies.

PPG 17 'Planning for Open Space, Sport and Recreation'. This requires District and Borough Councils to prepare strategies for assessing and meeting the needs of local people in the same way as the CRoW Act, 2000 requires Highway Authorities to prepare Rights of Way Improvement Plans. The two are seen to be complementary.

Enjoy! – Cultural Strategy. This is a countywide strategy and the following 6 priority areas reflect feedback from public consultation.

- i. Enjoy! Priority No 1: More young people involved in activities.
- ii. Enjoy! Priority No 2: Explore ways of promoting the use of sustainable transport to facilities/ events.
- iii. Enjoy! Priority No 3: Organisations working together to improve equal access to cultural and leisure activities.
- iv. Enjoy! Priority No 4: Activities to improve people's mental and physical health and welfare.
- v. Enjoy! Priority No 5: More learning opportunities for all.
- vi. Enjoy! Priority No 6: Develop a greater understanding of the social and economic impact of cultural and leisure activities on communities.

Individual Borough and District Councils have also prepared cultural strategies. Six of these local cultural strategies contain reference to, and actions associated with, public open space, countryside and rights of way.

2.11 Sport is championed nationally by Sport England whose objectives are to encourage people to start, stay and succeed in sport. It has a broad definition of sport that includes informal physical activity i.e. walking, cycling and horse-riding. Sport England has developed a regional action plan that includes the following actions:

- i. that sport will contribute to a 1% year on year increase in participation across the region through a 30 minutes a day campaign;
- ii. to maximise the investment in sport and active recreation through the land-use planning system;
- iii. to create a best practice forum to recognise, showcase and celebrate the value of sport and active recreation through innovation and creativity;

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- iv. development of greater opportunities for low participation groups through the promotion of effective partnerships and targeted communication;
- v. to increase participation levels in isolated rural communities through innovation and creativity;
- vi. to increase participation in wider forms of active recreation and sport; and
- vii. to increase opportunities for people to participate in sport and active recreation in their sports club, school, workplace or home through better access and improved understanding.

2.12 The Hertfordshire Biodiversity Action Plan (BAP) is the policy document that relates to biodiversity. It provides a 50 year vision for Hertfordshire, the main aims of which are:

- i. to establish a plan partnership by identifying and consulting with key partners in the process;
- ii. to produce an overview of our present knowledge about the biodiversity resource in the county;
- iii. to prepare a series of prioritised habitat action plans that will guide work to protect, restore and re-create a sustainable level of biodiversity;
- iv. to identify within each habitat action plan, detailed targets reflecting both national and local importance for the first ten years;
- v. to identify a list of priority species and to prepare concise target statements for each;
- vi. to identify within each habitat and species action plan, delivery mechanisms and sources of finance and advice;
- vii. to publish the plan and implement the agreed programme of action; and
- viii. to establish a long term monitoring programme to measure the effectiveness of the plan in achieving national and local targets.

These are translated into 7 Habitat Action Plans and 18 Species Action Plans e.g. in 50 years time, the area of woodland in Hertfordshire will have been increased from 15,000 ha to approximately 20,000 ha.

2.13 A number of designated areas exist in Hertfordshire including the Chilterns Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty, Lee Valley Regional Park and Broxbourne Woods National Nature Reserve. All have management plans that describe policy context and guide their development.

2.14 There are also a number of other organisations that provide access in Hertfordshire. British Waterways, for example, manage the Grand Union, and the Lea and the Stort canals. These provide both waterborne transport routes and access opportunities along their towpaths and there are examples of canal-side cycle routes that are linked to other networks, including rights of way.

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Other organisations include; Borough and District Councils, Crown Estates, Forestry Authority, Hertfordshire and Middlesex Wildlife Trust, National Trust, Thames Water and the Woodland Trust.

- 2.15 Under government plans, areas adjacent to Hertfordshire will be subject to significant growth over the next 15 years. Proposals for London will result in a substantial expansion in housing and employment. In addition, the 'Sustainable Communities Plan' identifies two growth areas affecting Hertfordshire; the Milton Keynes and South Midlands corridor, and the M11 (London/Stansted/Cambridge/Peterborough) corridor. In consequence, large scale development areas have been identified at Harlow and Luton together with further housing to be accommodated within Hertfordshire which may require the release of green-field sites. There are also proposals for the expansion of Stansted Airport. Together, such developments will increase pressure on the countryside and the current rights of way network which could result in negative impacts on protected landscapes and habitats.

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3. HERTFORDSHIRE'S RIGHTS OF WAY NETWORK

3.1 Hertfordshire has more than 1,937 miles (3,100km) of Public Rights of Way with 5,220 paths recorded in the Definitive Map & Statement and maintained by the County Council and its agents.

3.2 Public Rights of Way are highways that allow the public a right of passage. Common law allows one to pass and re-pass along highways at all times.

- Local rights of way are defined by (s) 60(5) of the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000 as:

“The footpaths, cycle tracks, bridleways and restricted byways within the authority’s area, and the ways within the authority’s area which are shown in a Definitive Map & Statement as restricted byways or byways open to all traffic.”

Public Footpaths provide the right to walk with any ‘normal accompaniment’ (e.g. dog, pram or a wheelchair). There is no right to ride or wheel a bike, nor to ride or lead a horse, or to drive a horse drawn carriage. 71% of the network is recorded as public footpath.

Public Bridleways allow the right to walk, ride or lead a horse or to drive animals. There is no right to take a horse drawn vehicle along a bridleway. 20% of the network is recorded as public bridleway.

BOATs (Byways Open to all Traffic) provide rights to walk, ride a horse, cycle and drive a vehicle (motorised or horse drawn). 5% of RoW in the county are recorded as BOATs.

RUPPs (Road Used as a Public Path) carry the rights of footpath, bridleways and there may be rights for motorised vehicles. 4% of RoW in the county are recorded as RUPPs.

Restricted Byways (RB) have been introduced by the CRoW Act, 2000. They will replace RUPPs once the legislation comes into force. RBs will have rights for pedestrians, cyclists, horse riders and horse drawn carriages but not motor vehicles, motor bikes etc.

- The extent to which the PRow network can be accessed by users is:
 - 100% by walkers;
 - 29% by cyclists and horse-riders;
 - 9% by carriage drivers;
 - 5% by drivers of motorised vehicles.*

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* Although a RUPP may have rights for motorised vehicle use the figures are based on the introduction of restricted byways.

- The Definitive Map show's recorded rights of way and is conclusive evidence of public rights. It is without prejudice to routes that may currently be unrecorded or rights that may not be shown. The Definitive Statement is a supporting document that describes the routes shown on the map.

The first Definitive Map & Statement (DMS) for Hertfordshire was published in 1953 using information collected through a series of parish based surveys. It has since been updated and re-published on a number of occasions. The current version was published in December 2005.

Copies of the DMS are held in major public libraries and local parish and district councils have copies of the relevant maps for their area. Extracts of the DMS are available on request from the Rights of Way unit at County Hall, Hertford. It is planned to have the Definitive Map on the County Council's website alongside the Definitive Statement.

The DMS can be modified where there is sufficient evidence to show it to be incorrect or through a legal order to create, divert or extinguish a PRow. There is currently a large backlog of outstanding applications to change the Definitive Map and Statement and ways of reducing it are being explored.

The methodology used in drafting the first DMS resulted in a number of errors and anomalies. For example;

- i. Approximately 240 routes come to a dead end, 50 at administrative boundaries (county and parish) and 190 that simply stop with no onward connection.
- ii. 94 paths that change status part way along the route of which 13 change status at the county boundary.
- iii. 46 paths are shown on the Ordnance Survey, but not on the DMS
- iv. There were 1315 "anomalies" recorded on the Definitive Map and Statement at December 2003 including drafting errors, missing statements and paths that appear on the Map or the Statement but not on both.

There are a number of other routes with public access that are not shown in the DMS.

- Cycle tracks are routes specifically designated for cyclists. It is normally permitted to walk along cycle tracks except when they are in or by the side of a made-up carriageway.

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- Permissive routes are accessible by permission of the owner and may be supported by formal agreement. Where there is no agreement permission can be withdrawn at any time. Where there is an agreement public access is usually for a limited period of time and it is normally the responsibility of the landowner to maintain the route. There are c.120 permissive routes in Hertfordshire extending for c.56 miles (90km). The majority of these are accessible only to walkers.
- Unclassified County Roads (UCRs) or 'White Roads' usually refer to the uncoloured '*road, drive or track*' shown on Ordnance Survey maps. These are often non-tarmac routes maintainable by Hertfordshire County Council and may or may not have motor vehicle rights. UCRs may or may not be shown in the DMS as other PRoW. Some are listed on the County Council's list of streets. There is currently no single reliable source for information on UCRs.

Statistics from condition surveys of the rights of way network indicate that 6% (115miles or 185km) falls within urban areas and that 54% (1050miles or 1675km) crosses arable land or pasture. Routes are often affected by seasonal factors including poor weather, vegetation growth or by agriculture e.g. ploughing, cropping etc. The various surfaces of the network may be described as:

37%	natural (unimproved)
22%	headland (arable field-edge)
14%	cross-field (arable cross-field)
13%	improved
12%	sealed (tarmac or concrete)

The nature and condition of the network is reflected in the range of reports received by the County Council over a 5 year period. Most reports were received on the condition of signs and waymarks, overgrown or overhanging vegetation, the adverse impact of crops and the poor condition of a number of structures.

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4.0 ASSESSMENT OF NEEDS AND DEMANDS

4A STRATEGIC CONTEXT – SECONDARY RESEARCH

A.1 Research undertaken by the Countryside Agency, local authority and countryside management organisations etc, to help understand the use of the countryside, has shown similar findings. These are used as a foundation for the work in Hertfordshire. 5 key headings are identified:

- Who uses the network? (The user groups)
- Why people use the network? (Motivation)
- Knowing where to go on the network? (Information)
- How to get to the network? (Transport)
- How easy is the network to use? (Ease of use).

A.2 Who uses the network? In Hertfordshire the main users are walkers, cyclists and horse riders. Others include carriage drivers and motorised users. Each group contains sub groups e.g. walking can cover running, dog walking, pushing a pushchair or access by wheelchair.

- **Walkers, dog walkers & runners.** Walking is the most popular form of leisure activity, ahead of cycling and horse riding, in the countryside².

Almost half of people surveyed in the National Rights of Way Use and Demand Survey said at least 1 person in their household had walked in the countryside in the last year. The majority made journeys of, less than 5 miles (8 kilometres) and over half started from their homes.

Walkers are the only users with access over the entire PRoW network and encounter fewer problems compared with riders and drivers.

Walkers prefer flat, firm and well drained surfaces such as turf or dry earth. Uneven, yielding or sticky surfaces like rough ground, mud or sand take more concentration and can slow the user down. Many walkers find artificial surfaces and uneven terrain tough on their feet.

- **Cyclists.** The National Rights of Way Use and Demand survey showed that a quarter of people had cycled in the past year.
- **Horse riders & equestrian users.**

'Horse riders, are faced with serious problems over higher status paths, averaging out at one every 2.4 km at National level'³

² Source: The State of the Countryside 2004 – The Countryside Agency

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During 2000, the British Horse Society (BHS) surveyed riders in Hertfordshire. The research showed that 89% of respondents were riding daily or several time's each week. Also, that:

- i. the majority of riders were female;
- ii. horse riding contributed nearly £1.8 million to the local economy;
- iii. 37% of respondents were dependent on local access to safe off-road routes;
- iv. the average ride was 1 hr 21 min. Nearly half of this was spent on roads and 43 min. on bridleways, tracks and private land;
- v. 10% of respondents regularly crossed dual carriageways;
- vi. 50% of the respondents had faced verbal abuse from other road users and 25% had suffered physical intimidation;
- vii. 5% of respondents had been in a road accident involving a horse and motor vehicle in the previous twelve months; and
- viii. there are a number of non-definitive riding routes built on old railways which provide extensive facilities.

The BHS is working to create a national bridle network. This will consist of existing national routes e.g. the Ridgeway and the Pennine Bridleway, regional routes e.g. the Swan's Way and the Icknield Way, and promoted circular rides. The aim is to build a comprehensive network of community circuits linked together by linear routes.⁴

Within Hertfordshire, there are 11 centres with links to the Riding for the Disabled Association. They organise riding and/or carriage driving for any disabled person who might benefit.

- **Carriage Driving.** There is limited data available that relates to carriage drivers who currently may only use byways.

'Carriage drivers and motorists, fared worst, faced with serious problems, and they averaged out every 0.74 miles (1.2 km) at National level' encountering twice as many problems as other users⁵

Carriage driving organisations in Hertfordshire include the Chiltern Harness Driving Club and a branch of the British Driving Society. Their membership is about 300. Also within the region is the East Anglian Carriage Driving Group (EACDG) which is affiliated to the British Horse Driving Trials Association (BHDTA). Their membership numbers 100 plus. All groups run events between March and October. They develop partnerships with landowners, with the purpose of providing circular routes and organised drives; carry out training and seek to extend the length of safe, useable routes.

³ Source: The Rights of Way Condition Survey 2000, The Countryside Agency

⁴ <http://www.ride-uk.org.uk/intro.htm>

⁵ Source: The Rights of Way Condition Survey 2000, The Countryside Agency

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- **Motorised users** include users of all off road motor vehicles including motorbikes, quad bikes and 4X4s. The Countryside Agency estimates that if all routes that could potentially have byway status were legally recorded as much as 17% of the network in England⁶ could be opened up to vehicles.

The Ramblers Association has campaigned for a ban on recreational motor vehicle use on rights of way where it is based on past use by horse drawn traffic. This has received wide spread public and governmental support and is likely to be made law in the near future.

- **Limited mobility.** There are numerous users who face restricted access on the rights of way network. These range from those who use a pushchair for young children, to those that are elderly or have a physical disability and need walking sticks or other aids.

The Disability Rights Commission has found that:

'8.5 million people in the UK that have some form of disability, and 1 in 10 of those people use a wheelchair'

Further research points to the fact that:

*'1 in 4 households has at least one disabled person as a household member. Nearly half the population benefits from changes, which are often made in the name of minority groups.'*⁷

There are approximately 42 day care centres and social clubs for adults with disabilities in Hertfordshire but it remains difficult to accurately assess how many potential limited mobility users there are within the county. The 2001 Census helped identify the age range of Hertfordshire's population and therefore assumptions can be made, such as those in the population who potentially have young children or who are elderly. This indicates those that may have some mobility issues but such assumptions are recognised to be tenuous.

The national Rights of Way condition survey (2000) identified that more than 80% of paths showed no disability provision, based on a survey of approximately 2% of the total network and that:

- not all people with limited mobility use wheelchairs and some only have problems with specific obstructions such as stiles and steps;
- surfaces like concrete and tarmac are excellent for wheelchair / pushchair users and should be flat with a minimum of cross slopes or loose stones, especially on corners or where the path is raised;

⁶ Source: Discovering Lost Ways in England & Wales. March 2002. The Countryside Agency

⁷ Source: The Paths for all Partnership (2003). 'Access for all – outdoor access for people with disabilities.'

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- the availability of ‘all terrain’ pushchairs has increased the expectation of parents who are now able to use more routes. They are however, expensive excluding ownership by many;
- people who cannot bend easily will find problems with overhanging vegetation and stiles;
- wheelchair users can experience difficulties when faced with a gradient steeper than 1:40 (2.5%), although some stronger users can cope with 1:20 (5%) or steeper;
- both traditional and powered wheelchairs users have problems on off-road paths. All terrain buggies and scooters designed for use on more rugged routes can help but remain limited; and
- people with limited mobility may require regular rest stops, accessible toilets, suitable car parking spaces and paths that have space for users to pass.

A.3 Why people use the network? The rights of way network is a valuable recreational resource. In addition, there are other benefits e.g. opportunities to improve health through exercise; increase road safety and opportunities for sustainable transport by providing a network for non motorised users; and economic benefits through tourism.

- **Health.** Generally, physical activity aids a healthy lifestyle. However, 6 out of 10 men and 7 out of 10 women in England are not active enough to benefit their health. The Department of Health recommendation for adults is:

“At least 30 minutes of physical activity on five or more days of the week. This physical activity should be of at least a moderate intensity – similar to brisk walking. Activity can be taken in bouts of 10 to 15 minutes, allowing for accumulation of activity throughout the day.”

The expert recommendation for young people supported by the Department of Health is that:

“All young people should participate in physical activity of at least moderate intensity for one hour per day. This hour can be made up from a variety of activities across the day, including organised sport, play, walking or cycling to school, physical education or planned exercise.”

The health benefits of regular exercise such as cycling and walking are well documented and this encourages more people to use rights of way for exercise and health improvements. This is supported by initiatives such as ‘Walking the Way to Health’ sponsored by the British Heart Foundation and the Countryside Agency:

‘Most regular participants in open-air recreation are motivated by the desire to exercise and enjoy fresh air and the need to walk dogs. Factors preventing or discouraging regular participants in countryside

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*activities more often included poor health, lack of time and inclement weather conditions.*⁸

In the 25 years between National Travel surveys in 1975-76 & 1999-2001 the total miles travelled per year on foot and miles travelled by bicycle fell by 26%.

This trend is supported by a 4% decline (down to 81%) in the number of people making any type of leisure day trip in England. The total number of countryside day trips is a down, by 10% to 1,126 million but the visits still generate nearly £10 billion a year to local economies⁹.

As part of a recent initiative, the Government distributed 10,000 pedometers¹⁰ to 110 care trusts to assess their use as a motivational tool for encouraging walking.

The Government has also given all public organisations a message to work together in tackling the wider determinants of poor health, e.g. improving housing stock, encouraging exercise and healthy eating; reducing pollution and addressing social isolation and exclusion.

- **Leisure and tourism.** The 2002 – 2003 Great Britain Day Visits survey findings reveal that for Leisure Day Visits:
 - i. 80% of adults in Great Britain had made a leisure day visit¹¹ within the previous two weeks.
 - ii. For Great Britain, 21% of the adult population had visited the countryside on such a trip.
 - iii. 63% of adults had visited the countryside.

The characteristics of people making leisure day visits, based on the visit having been made in the previous two weeks, revealed similar findings to the adult population as a whole, namely:

- i. in the twelve-month period of the survey in 2002-3, there were an estimated 5.2 billion leisure day visits from home (24% being to the countryside);
- ii. from 1998 to 2002-3, the volume of day visits to the countryside has decreased by 12% (from 1.43 billion to 1.26 billion trips);
- iii. The average expenditure of these trips was £8.60.
- iv. The main activities on day visits were; going out for a meal or drink (18%), walking (15%) and visiting friends & relatives (14%).
- v. In 2002-3, day visits to the countryside involved an average journey distance of around 19 miles.

⁸ Scottish Executive Rural Affairs Department and Scottish National Heritage (2001). 'Public Attitudes to access to the countryside'.

⁹ The State of the Countryside 2004 – The Countryside Agency

¹⁰ A pedometer is a technical aid which counts the number of steps you make.

¹¹ Source: 'A leisure day visit is defined as round trips made from home for leisure purposes to locations anywhere in Great Britain'. Report of the 2002-03 Great Britain Day Visits Survey. The Countryside Agency

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- vi. Over a third of countryside trips were less than an hour in length. The average length of stay at a destination was 2.3 hours.
- vii. 32% of countryside trips had the main purpose of walking (including walking with dogs).
- viii. Countryside trips tended to display the greatest seasonal variations – peaking in July.

Hertfordshire has the potential to have a rights of way network, which is used by residents, but also visitors and tourists from the surrounding counties and even overseas visitors who use the nearby airports.

A.4 Knowing where to go? More information specific to discreet groups was requested in order to increase awareness. Parents with children, for example, may need information illustrating what the network has to offer families e.g. the promotion of bed and breakfasts close to rights of way that can accommodate children, dogs etc. Equally,

‘Disabled people need to get accurate, honest and accessible information. They need to know whether there are parking facilities available. They need to be able to find the path when they arrive and not get lost. They must be able to physically travel on a path and negotiate the gates or barriers and be able to use adjacent facilities.’¹²

Additionally, clearer information on the ground could be helpful:

‘Clear waymarking is needed to detail the destinations, distance and general terrain or ground conditions’.¹³

A.5 How to get to the network? The majority of people accessing the network do so by car. Evidence from the 2002/03 Great Britain Day Visits survey showed that the car accounted for 58% of leisure trips to the countryside; walking was the second most common form of access (36%).

There is still a need to plan for those who don’t have access to a car or prefer to use public transport. However, the passenger transport infrastructure is currently limited to key routes between towns with irregular services to rural areas. It is likely that there will continue to be strong demand for safe and adequate parking in the countryside. However, the provision of car parks raises a number of issues for those managing them and rural parking can be a real problem in terms of cost and impact.

A.6 How easy is the network to use? National research suggests the majority of paths used by walkers, cyclists and horse riders are considered ‘usable’. Usability is measured through a national Best Value Performance

¹² Source: The Paths for all Partnership (2003), ‘Access for all – outdoor access for people with disabilities’

¹³ Source: The Countryside agency (2000), ‘Assessing the Demand Information in Relation to Countryside Access – a case study in the county of Lancashire’

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Indicator (BVPI 178). The indicator assesses the ease of use of paths, based on criteria including waymarking, surface condition and obstructions.

- **Obstructions.** The National Rights of Way Condition survey assessed paths from the viewpoint of different users. It showed that carriage drivers and motorists were able to travel about 0.74 miles (1.2km) between problems. Research undertaken by the Countryside Agency concluded that on average there were "5.2 obstructions per 10 km."¹⁴
- **Structures.** The poor condition of structures (gates, bridges etc) can present problems for users. In general structures that are in place for security reasons are considered an inconvenience by cyclists and horse riders. Horse riders felt they came second to cyclists and walkers when structures are planned.
- **Surfaces.** Poor surface conditions make some routes less accessible to people with limited mobility. In many cases, type of use determines type of surface. For example, routes leading to local amenities which are well used may have a higher standard of surface as they need to be accessible in all weather conditions. On the other hand a recreational route will typically have a natural surface and may be more difficult to use in winter. Users should be free to choose which routes they use rather than being constrained by poor surface conditions.

*'The Rights of Way need to enable the user to make the decision whether or not a route is suitable, not the physical obstruction across the route deterring or preventing the user.'*¹⁵

- **Shared paths.** The PRoW network is perceived to provide safe routes for cyclists, horse riders and walkers. Some, however, argued shared use is dangerous and collisions and disagreements between users is a safety issue. But conflict does not seem to be a issue for most people. Research shows that *'conflict is very infrequent'*¹⁶. *'Approximately 13% claimed that other users spoiled their enjoyment.'*¹⁷

There are situations where conflict is more likely to occur. These are environmental e.g. poor surface, poor signing, lack of lighting on paths, blind corners, pinch points or psychological e.g. fear of accidents or crime. Whilst the level of concern may be greater than the current risk of accidents, such anxiety undermines people's confidence and may discourage return visits. The unlawful use of motorbikes along rights

¹⁴ Source: The Countryside Agency (2002), 'Assessment of Hertfordshire's Performance on RIGHTS OF WAY (ROW) 2001

¹⁵ Source: Buckinghamshire Local Access Forum (2003), 'Improving Access to the Countryside – Making a Start'

¹⁶ Source: How People interact off-road routes' – Countryside Agency. Research Notes. Issue CRN32. March 2001

¹⁷ Source: British Waterways (2000), 'Tring Reservoirs'

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of way is a factor that can significantly affect people's enjoyment of the countryside.

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4B LOCAL NEEDS AND DEMANDS – PRIMARY RESEARCH

B.1 The following studies and surveys were conducted, to establish local need and demand. They tested whether or not the services currently provided were valued and met expectation and demand.

B.2 Methodology

a. General Interest Groups and Public Survey. During September 2003, the County Council undertook a survey to find out how people got to the countryside and how well routes were used. The survey was sent to:-

- 114 parish councils
- 110 ethnic minority organisations
- 68 riding schools
- 11 day care centres for the disabled
- 49 youth and community groups
- 125 recipients of the 'Walks and More' publication
- 26 babysitting and childminding groups
- 55 Countryside Management Service (CMS) Walk Wardens

It was also available on the County Council's website for 6 weeks.

b. User Focus Group. The group included - 6 horse riders, 8 walkers, 7 cyclists, a horse carriage driver and 2 motor vehicle users. The group was asked for views on rights of way based on the following 3 questions:

- i. What are the current key issues that prevent or detract from the experience you are seeking when using local rights of way?
- ii. What are the improvements we could make that would enable you to use local Rights of Way and increase your enjoyment of them?
- iii. How do you see the local Rights of Way network in 10 years time?

c. Parents Survey. A survey of parents with children in toddler groups and pre-schools was used to understand their current and future needs.

d. Satisfaction and Significance Survey. People were asked about the importance of footpaths, cycle tracks, bridleways and byways as well as how satisfied they were with the current provision.

e. General Public Focus Group. A second focus group was set up with 30 individuals who responded to the General Interest Group and Public Survey [a. above] and who had expressed interest in providing further detail. The aim of the group was to discuss key findings in order to:

- i. Confirm that they were priority issues;

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- ii. Identify and discuss realistic possible solutions; and
- iii. Identify quick wins and longer term objectives.

f. Level of Use Monitoring. 50 “Walk Wardens” and “Footpath Friends” were sent a survey asking them to review the condition of selected paths and measure the frequency of use. They looked at the condition of the structures, way marking and general ease of use.

g. Local Access Forum (LAF). The LAF is an advisor to the Council on public access to land for recreation and has been involved in the development of the RoWIP providing advice on a number of occasions.

h. Land owners and managers. A meeting was held with the National Farmers Union and Country Land and Business Association.

i. Hertfordshire Rights of Way officers. Meetings have been held with officers from the Rights of Way Unit who have detailed knowledge and extensive experience of the network. They helped to confirm those key issues and actions that could improve the network. Many were similar to those raised in surveys and questionnaires.

B.3 Research findings.

a. Why people use the network? (Motivation). The General Public Survey revealed that 35% of people who visited the countryside did so on a daily basis, 23% visited 2/3 times a week and 17% once per week. Furthermore, that:

- i. walking and dog walking accounted for 31% of visits to the countryside;
- ii. other reasons included carrying out parish council work, camping, mountain biking, Duke of Edinburgh Award Scheme etc.;
- iii. some people never visited the countryside or didn't go as often as they would have liked (the primary reason for this was that they were *'too busy'* which is consistent with national figures);
- iv. the weather was an issue; and
- v. people did not like visiting the countryside on their own.

Reasons for not visiting the countryside may be beyond the Council's control but it can influence issues such as people not wanting to go out on their own through the promotion of guided walks etc.

- vi. The dog walkers' questionnaire revealed that most owners walked their dogs twice a day (75%) although many owners take their dogs to a park (43%).
- vii. The runners' survey revealed that many tend to go running every other day (48%), ran for up to two hours (48%) and most (73%) drove to their chosen running route.

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b. Knowing where to go? (Information).

- i. The General Public Focus group identified the need for information about where to go in the countryside and how to get there. They also identified the need for it to be more organised, more co-ordinated and easier to obtain.
- ii. Respondents from the Satisfaction and Significance survey thought information about using countryside routes e.g. leaflets and guides, was important (45%). The majority were satisfied with the current information (82%) whilst pointing out that it is not available from a single source.

It was suggested that there should be one promoted website where all access information can be found. However, information from the internet was of limited importance (44%). Leaflets and information could be targeted e.g. those aimed at children could contain eye spy activities etc. Leaflets promoting walks from train stations could be promoted along the line as well as at the stations.

- iii. Dog walkers were asked; '*if they did not walk their dogs on Rights of Way, what was the reason?*' The findings revealed that 59% did not know where to go. Many users would like leaflets specifically designed for dog walkers. The same question was asked of runners and revealed that many would like to have information about routes on the internet (37%).

Overall, it was felt that a lot of the current information was generic whilst many want specific information, together with basic details of where to go and how to get there. Users wanted the information to be more accessible and some thought parishes could be encouraged to prepare parish maps to promote tourism and raise local awareness.

c. Getting access to the network? (Physical)

- i. From the General Interest Groups and Public survey (B.2.a above), 50% of respondents visited the countryside on foot. Car was the second most popular means (37%).
- ii. The parent's specific user group findings revealed that 67% take a pushchair with them when they take their children out.
- iii. Walkers and cyclists wanted short circular routes starting and finishing from settlements, as well as longer routes in more remote areas. Routes need to be the same status from start to end.

d. How easy is the network to use? (Ease of use).

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i. **General comments**

Results of the Satisfaction and Significance survey found that ease of use for walking, riding or cycling and standards of maintenance were important (69% and 64% respectively). Respondents were generally satisfied with these (66% and 79% respectively). The key factor influencing use was considered to be 'paths free from obstruction' (13%).

Many said that '*physical factors*' were the key issues stopping them from having a good experience when using PRow. Others highlighted dog mess (although many were against having more dog bins), vandalism, litter, and fly tipping.

The parents group revealed that the main reasons they did not take their children to the countryside was that they didn't know where to go or how to get there. This group also indicated that there was a need for new paths for walking and cycling (13%) as a priority along with making routes more suitable for pushchairs.

ii. **Obstructions**

Existing users who considered obstructions to be a problem thought this was acting as a deterrent for potential users. Both man-made and natural obstructions can be found along paths but it was illegal obstructions that caused greatest difficulty for those with limited mobility as it made trips difficult to plan. Users wanted the Council to take a stronger stance when clearing illegal obstructions.

Users would like the clearance of fly tips that block paths to be given a high priority. There was also a wish for farmers to reinstate their paths more quickly after ploughing.

Overhanging vegetation was an issue for horse riders and cyclists who needed greater headroom. They would like the vegetation at entrances and exits to be better managed to improve their field of vision. Vegetation can obstruct signposts and notice boards.

iii. **Structures**

Walkers and cyclists accepted that structures are required, although all agreed the fewer the better. The dog walker's survey revealed that 75% did not find the number of structures an inconvenience but conversely 75% of runners did not want any structures. People with limited mobility had the greatest concerns about structures as they often prevent access.

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Users felt that structures were often in an unsatisfactory condition. It was thought that stiles were acceptable if they were designed properly but that they were still a barrier for the elderly or people with mobility problems.

Horse riders agreed with walkers and cyclists, but expressed more strongly that structures must be easy to use. Heavy or damaged gates can cause problems as they are hard or impossible to open without dismounting. A greater route width is required to manoeuvre horses near structures and somewhere to mount and dismount would be helpful.

iv. **Signing**

Users wanted appropriate and consistent signs on the network, indicating whether the path is part of a circular route or a 'cul de sac'. Further information about the route would also be of interest. The signing of rights of way from public roads was considered to be highly important (78%) but respondents seemed satisfied with the level of current signing on the network (74%).

It was thought that lack of confidence amongst users could be helped by more information on signs at the beginning of paths. There was concern that signing was not consistently managed and that the lack of signing on byways was a particular issue.

The need for improved waymarking near farm buildings and residential areas, where maps are often insufficiently detailed, was identified. Greater clarity would benefit both landowners and users.

Users felt that misleading notices are a deterrent to people using PRow, undermining confidence and causing intimidation.

v. **Surfacing**

Surface type can cause problems but has to accommodate all legitimate users including those with private rights. Many users felt that poor surfacing was a problem, but recognised that surfacing can be unsuitable for some users and may be a visual intrusion.

Surfacing issues were a particular concern for cyclists who considered that routes should be accessible in all weather conditions, although they did not advocate hard surfacing on all paths. Horse riders preferred natural surfaces whilst cyclists preferred a more compact, hard, sealed surface. Walkers and dog walkers preferred a natural surface (grass or earth).

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Generally, users would accept a compromise on surface material on routes managed for the benefit of multiple users. Individual user groups have different views on what the surface should be, although it is recognised that not all surface types suit all users.

vi. **Safety Concerns**

Shared use

Walkers understand the need and accept the shared use of paths with cyclists and horse riders but they do not want to share paths with motorised users. The User Focus Group revealed that, on paths free from motor traffic, the main concern expressed by disabled users was being passed too closely by a cyclist, combined with the fear of being hit. If people perceived conditions to be unsafe they would not use the route. Walkers who use the towpaths and old railway lines commonly cited this as a complaint.

Cyclists carriage drivers horse riders indicated that they accepted shared use with other non-motorised users. However, they all wish to see a reduction in the illegal use of the network by motorised users, with steps being taken to reduce potential conflict.

Safety barriers, installed to prevent or deter motorcycles, also frequently deter legitimate users who find them inconvenient or awkward to use.

Road safety

Some routes require users to cross or pass along busy roads. This causes particular concerns for horse riders and cyclists. In some cases it deters people from using parts of the network.

People requested safer road crossings and safe off-road links. Roads were seen as a big problem for all non-motorised users as they are becoming increasingly busy and increasingly hazardous.

Equestrians, including carriage drivers, wanted more joined up routes, preferably starting at stables or livery yards. Some rights of way, used by stables, are difficult to access because of traffic, lack of safe verges and problems with major roads and low bridge parapets.

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Other

The parents group had concerns about safety and felt that there is too much dog fouling. This group believed that reductions of dog mess, litter and vandalism should be a key priority.

vii. Landowners' interests

Discussions with landowners and their representative bodies identified that:

- a. communication at an early stage with the highway authority to discuss project proposals would be welcomed;
- b. landowners should be recognised as users of the network and that their needs should be considered;
- c. permissive agreements designed to improve access should not increase a landowner's liability; and
- d. compulsory purchase as a means of securing additional access should not be used.

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4C SUMMARY OF NEEDS AND DEMANDS

General issues for all.

- i. Minimum number of obstructions
- ii. Circular routes
- iii. Better information both about the network and how to access it

Walkers want:

- i. Network free from obstruction
- ii. Short circular routes starting and finishing at key nodes
- iii. Long routes, not necessarily circular, in more remote interesting places
- iv. Structures kept to a minimum

Parents with children want:

- i. Better information about where to go and how to get there
- ii. Dog mess, litter and vandalism to be addressed as a key priority
- iii. To be able to access the countryside with a pushchair

People with limited mobility (and their carers) want:

- i. Acknowledgement that their needs are variable and depend on an individual's physical limitation
- ii. Paths with shallow gradients
- iii. Information about where to go and what to expect on arrival

Dog walkers want:

- i. Walks up to an hour
- ii. Sites or Rights of Way accessible from home/kennels
- iii. Natural surfaces
- iv. Better information

Runners want:

- i. Runs up to 2 hours
- ii. Routes that have a suitable natural surface
- iii. Routes that can take groups
- iv. Better information about available routes

Cyclists want:

- i. Access to a greater proportion of the network to enjoy circular routes
- ii. Surfacing enabling all weather access, not necessarily tarmac
- iii. Routes free from furniture i.e. barriers not seats

Horse riders want:

- i. Long circular routes, accessible from stables, avoiding roads
- ii. Routes for galloping, with a natural surface separate from improved path surfaces (especially in winter when damage is more likely)

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- iii. Structures kept to minimum - must be manageable from horseback

Carriage drivers want:

- i. More off road routes linked to byways and quiet lanes
- ii. Structures kept to a minimum, recognizing the need for restrictions of motorized vehicles
- iii. Long circular routes, typically 10 to 15 miles, accessible from stable yards and hard standing for horse boxes
- iv. Conversion of RUPPs to Restricted Byways (RBs) once legislation is complete.

Motorised users want:

- i. Routes with some physical challenge - gradients, water features etc
- iii. Clarity as to where they can or cannot go – unambiguous status
- iv. More off-road provision

Any proposals should be balanced against the **needs of land-owners and managers**. From discussions that have taken place with landowners and their representative bodies it was identified that:

- i. communication at an early stage with the highway authority to discuss project proposals would be welcomed;
- ii. landowners should be recognised as users of the network and that their needs should be considered;
- iii. permissive agreements designed to improve access should not increase a landowner's liability;
- iv. compulsory purchase as a means of securing additional access should not be used, and
- v. conservation land managers recognise that increased access, whilst welcome and a vital factor in the quality of life, can have potentially negative effects on protected landscapes and habitats.

N.B. In seeking to address the above, attention will be paid to meeting multiple needs e.g. in developing a circular route, efforts will be made, wherever possible, to ensure its suitability for say, joggers, dog walkers and people with pushchairs or wheelchairs, as well as people simply out for a stroll or getting from A to B.

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5. ASSESSMENT OF THE RIGHTS OF WAY NETWORK

5A ASSESSING THE CONDITION

A.1 Knowing where to go on the network?

- **Promoted routes.** There are over 180 promoted routes covering 1125 miles (1,800km) of the network. These are promoted by 25 different organisations, via leaflets, guide-books, the internet etc. Their purposes include; health improvement, routes from train stations, Rural Enterprise Walks starting from pubs and routes for cyclists and horse riders.

Analysis of promoted information reveals an uneven distribution across the county. Generally urban boroughs/districts have fewer promoted routes e.g. there are more promoted walking routes in Hertsmere and St Albans compared with North Herts, Stevenage, and Broxbourne.

For cycle routes the districts with the most information are Dacorum and St Albans. Elsewhere, the provision of cycling leaflets is spasmodic. For riders, runners, off-road motor users and dog walkers and those with limited mobility there is very little promoted information available.

- **Organisations.** Those involved in promoting local RoW include:
 - i. National agencies and organisations such as the Countryside Agency, British Horse Society and the Ramblers Association who provide National Trails and historic routes that cross county boundaries such as the Icknield Way and strategic and promoted routes within the county such as the Hertfordshire Way.
 - ii. The majority of promotion is carried out by local authorities (parish, districts and County); the regional park authorities (Lea Valley and Colne Valley); and the Chilterns Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty. Much of this promotion is jointly funded projects often co-ordinated by the Countryside Management Service.
 - iv. Other groups promoting the use of the network include local footpath groups, cycling groups and bridleway associations.
- **Guided Walks.** The County Council produces a leaflet, twice-yearly, called "Walks & More" which details a range of guided walks and events. On average, there are 40-50 items per leaflet and 20,000 copies are distributed through libraries, tourist information centres, the County Council's web-site etc. Other guided walks are promoted independently by several organisations. It is recognised that the lack of

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co-ordinated information causes some confusion for those who wish to access the countryside.

- **Ordnance Survey.** The county is covered by the Landranger 1:50,000 and Explorer 1:25,000 maps which show recorded rights of way open to the public. However, Ordnance Survey maps for Hertfordshire also show a number of other routes with public access including approximately 46 bridleways and footpaths that are not recorded on the Definitive Map. Ordnance Survey maps are also increasingly showing Open Access Land.
- **Rights of Way Unit's publicity.** The Rights of Way Unit is working on several campaigns to develop the use of the network and exploit the potential for transport, health and leisure. Preliminary contacts have been made to extend use of routes to school, by disabled users, commuters etc. A pack of 6 leaflets has been produced to answer 'frequently asked questions' and to broaden people's knowledge:
 - Public Rights of Way in Hertfordshire
 - Riding Horse and Bicycles on Public Rights of Way
 - Using a Motor Vehicle on Public Rights of Way
 - A Landowner's Guide to Gates, Stiles and other Structures
 - Making Changes to Public Rights of Way
 - A Landowner's Guide to Ploughing and Cropping

In addition an display has been produced that has been taken to events such as the County Show, the County Ploughing Match and to support talks to a range of organisations from Parish Councils to the BHS and from Councillors to Women's Institute groups.

A.2 How to get to the network?

- **Access to and from settlements.** Major settlements were analysed to assess whether residents had direct off-road access to the surrounding countryside. The 3 settlements with most links were St Albans, Welwyn Garden City and Hemel Hempstead. Stevenage has the greatest number of bridleways leading to the countryside. Welwyn Garden City and St Albans also have good bridleway links. 23 settlements do not have links to the countryside via footpaths or bridleways.
- **Access to and from stables or livery yards.** 62 stables and livery yards were assessed to see what access they had to bridleways. On average the distance to the nearest bridleway was 0.6 mile (1km).

A.3 How easy is the network to use? The information supporting the analysis is based on:

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- An annual 5% random survey of the network undertaken, in May and November, to generate the Best Value Performance Indicator (BVPI)
- A 100% condition survey first undertaken between 1999/2001. This survey is updated by 25% each year.
- Information collated nationally but based on small random samples.
- Analysis of the DMS to identify shortfalls in network provision.

- **Providing circular routes.**
 - i. Approximately 13 footpaths change status as they cross the county boundary, i.e. routes may change from footpaths into bridleways.
 - ii. 94 paths within the county change status along the route, and of these, some 39 require users to turn back on themselves.
 - iii. There are over 220 routes that stop abruptly forcing users to back track. 30 of these terminate at a parish boundary.
 - v. Some parishes don't have bridleways - Barley, Cottered, Elstree & Borehamwood, Markyate, Nash Mills, North Mymms, Northaw, Radwell, Stanstead St Margaret's, Stocking Pelham, Tring Rural and Watford Rural.
 - vi. A number of areas have a limited coverage of routes e.g. the area north of Ashwell, area around Westmill, south of Potters Bar etc.

- **Physical condition of the network**
 - i. **Signing and waymarking.** The 2003/04 BVPI survey for PRoW showed that 91% of paths met roadside signing requirements and 92% met the waymarking requirement. For signs to pass they must be; in place where a path leaves a road, indicate the correct status, point the correct way and be visible.
 - ii. **Obstructions on the network.** An obstruction is classified as anything that impedes the existing legal access and is an offence that could lead to prosecution. National research showed, on average, 5.2 obstructions/10 km and 5.5 obstructions in Hertfordshire. The results of Hertfordshire's own condition survey suggested the average number of obstructions was nearer 3.5 /10 km, and the BVPI 2003/04 indicated that 74.5% of all paths did not have any obstruction.
 - iii. **Ploughing and cropping.** Approximately 22% of the network runs across arable land. Landowners have a right to disturb land over which a right of way passes but legislation requires its reinstatement within 14 days. The Condition Survey revealed that failure to reinstate paths affected over 10% of the network. 43% of paths failed the BVPI 2002/03 due to ploughing and cropping.

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- iv. **Overgrown vegetation.** The Condition Survey showed that the up-growth and over-growth of vegetation affected almost 2% of the network.
- v. **Litter/fly tipping.** There have been c.250 reported incidents of fly-tipping in the last 5 years which amounts to 1 per week on average. Fly-tipping is mostly in the form of building materials, abandoned vehicles etc.
- vi. **Conflicts of use.** Conflicts have been identified between walkers and cyclists especially on towpaths and old railway lines. National research has revealed that 28% of footpaths showed evidence of illegal use by cyclists or motorised users and 20% of all bridleways showed illegal use by motorised users. There was also evidence to show that of 31% of footpaths were being accessed by cyclists, 10% by horse riders and 14% by motorised users.
- vii. **Road safety.** Busy roads isolate many sections of the rights of way network. Research has shown that a number of rights of way stop where they meet a primary road forcing users either onto busy roads or to turn back. There were approximately 98 routes that ended at a primary route.
- viii. **Structures on the network.** Structures on the network exist to keep livestock in or out and for public safety. All new structures require authorisation from the Highway Authority which would take into consideration both of these factors. Many structures on routes have been there since the paths were first dedicated.

There are over 19,000 structures on the PRow network in Hertfordshire. The 2002/03 BVPI survey indicated that about 86% of paths with stiles, gates and barriers were in good condition but there are a number of gates and stiles that have been put up without authorisation. In recent years the County Council has adopted an approach that encourages the removal of stiles and gates where they are no longer needed for controlling livestock.
- ix. **Surface condition.** Over 70% of all paths on the network are described as having a natural and unsealed surface. In particular 85% of all footpaths have a natural surface and many cross arable land and are subject to seasonal agricultural activity such as ploughing and cropping.

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5B SUMMARY OF THE CONDITION ASSESSMENT

B.1 Condition of the network. Evidence shows that the network is generally accessible. However, when assessed against the needs and demands of users it is possible to identify a range of shortcomings.

It is a **disjointed network**

- i. There is not a consistent coverage of the county especially from settlements and in certain cases there is a lack of bridleway provision.
- ii. Paths have been severed by development or are unusable due to inconsistent status e.g. bridleways becoming footpaths.
- iii. There are opportunities for short circular routes for walkers and cyclists but scope for longer circular routes are more limited due to paths coming to an end e.g. at administrative boundaries and major roads.
- iv. Few bridleways can be accessed directly from stables and livery yards.
- v. There are fewer opportunities for cyclists, horse riders, carriage drivers and motorised users to complete circular routes. This is due to the number of paths changing status.
- vi. There are many routes that end at or cross over busy roads where road crossings are not always provided.

It is a **network with barriers.**

- i. 15% of the network is affected by illegal obstructions.
- ii. Walkers making journeys of 8km or less are likely to encounter 3 structures per kilometre.
- ii. Cyclists and horse riders are likely come across a structure on average every kilometre when on a bridleway. Similarly, users of BOATs and RUPPs would encounter a structure every kilometre.
- iv. 12% of the structures on the network were found to be in an unsatisfactory condition with about 8% needing replacement.

The type and consistency of the **surface** has an impact on access.

- i. 22% of paths run over arable farmland and therefore, are likely to be affected by wet weather, ploughing and crop growth.
- ii. A third of all bridleways have a natural surface, which is not always suitable for cyclists and 11% of bridleways have a sealed surface that is not considered appropriate for horse riders. The current bridleway network seems to be more suitable for horse riders rather than cyclists.
- iii. Even though only a small percentage of the network is affected by overgrown vegetation it is still a factor that can disrupt a walk or ride.

A key component of access is the **provision of information** either on site or through promotion.

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- i. Evidence shows that the network is being consistently signed and waymarked. The results from the BVPI survey 2003/04 indicate that only 9% of paths do not meet signing requirements and just over 8% fail waymarking requirements.
- ii. It is recognised that there is a need to improve waymarking near farm buildings and in residential areas.
- iii. There is not a consistent approach to the promotion of the network with a number of different information sources and providers that are independent of each other.

The network currently does not make specific provision of allowances for people with disabilities including those with mobility problems or who are blind or partially sighted.

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6. STATEMENT OF ACTION 2006-12

6.1 The Statement of Action sits at the heart of the RoWIP and provides the opportunity to develop a long term plan for the PRow network. This section outlines a Statement of Action based on:

- i. the assessment of needs and demands;
- ii. the opportunities provided by the network; and
- iii. links to wider public benefits.

6.2 The Statement of Action and Action Plan (Section 9) will be used to develop Area Rights of Way Improvement Plans together with 5 year work programmes from which detailed annual work programmes will be developed.

6.3 The concept of the RoWIP is of a document that guides change, sets out a vision and is subject to review. In addition, the provisions of CroW Act, 2000 mean that the DMS is to be closed for applications to have routes added from 2026. With this in mind, it is proposed that a vision for Hertfordshire should be:

“To create, by 2026, an accessible and integrated off-road network for non-motorised users based on rights of way and other routes, that meets the current and perceived future needs and demands of Hertfordshire’s residents and visitors”

6.4 The issues identified by the assessment of user needs and demands are:

- 1) Difficulties in getting to the countryside without the use of a car.
- 2) Insufficient off road routes linking communities & services.
- 3) People have to use or cross-busy roads to link up sections of network.
- 4) The network does not adequately provide for cycling & horse riding.
- 5) Uncontrolled dogs and fouling are a deterrent to users.
- 6) Insufficient circular routes starting from settlements or other suitable locations.
- 7) Information provided about the off road network is neither adequate nor well enough co-ordinated or targeted.
- 8) There are too many barriers and structures.
- 9) The off road network does not meet the needs of many potential users.
- 10) Seasonal obstructions created by ploughing, cropping etc need to be addressed.

6.5 Core actions are proposed to meet need and demand; address shortcomings in the network; and to make links to a range of public benefits:

- 1) Develop routes that cater for the needs of people with limited mobility.

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- 2) Develop the network from significant public transport connections.
- 3) Reduce the number of unnecessary physical barriers on the network.
- 4) Promote Hertfordshire's countryside to residents and visitors.
- 5) Develop appropriate, well maintained links into the countryside.
- 6) Create and develop off road routes linking communities with places of work, schools and other local facilities.
- 7) Extend the network currently available to cyclists and horse-riders.
- 8) Help people wishing to improve or maintain their health by developing a range of circular off road routes.
- 9) Ensure that opportunities to protect, extend and enhance the off road network are included in proposals for new developments.
- 10) Where the off road network is affected by busy transport routes work to ensure that appropriate measures are taken to improve the safety and attractiveness of the routes for users.
- 11) Address problems of fly tipping, litter and dog-fouling in partnership with appropriate local and regional agencies.
- 12) Identify and address potential demand for access to the countryside amongst those who currently do not use the network.

6.6 Implementing the Statement of Action. The core actions on the RoW network will conform to the Council's agreed policies:

- i. **County Council policy:** The County Council's Executive Committee agreed in January 2001 that the authority's approach to the management of rights of way would be that:

"The County Council as Highway Authority seeks through its future investment to assert and protect the rights of the Public by providing a fully open, legally defined and easy to use public RoW network".

The Statement of Action seeks to build on this policy statement.

- ii. **Management principles.** To achieve this objective, working within the framework provided by statute and available finance, work on the network has been prioritised according to 3 management principles:

- a. Routes where public safety could be substantially improved;
- b. Routes according to the level of use; and
- c. Routes where the County Council's actions could result in a significant positive impact on the network.

- iii. **Operational procedures and standards.** The management principles are supported by 14 policies on the management of responsibilities that the County Council has as highway authority.

In order to ensure consistency of service delivery there is a Good Practice Guide that sets out operational procedures and standards.

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iv. **Achieving improvement by:**

- a. Improve quality + condition of routes to meet need and demand.
- b. Improving the information available on the network and promoting access opportunities to a range of users.
- c. Changing the status of existing routes to create new capacity to meet need and demand.
- d. Negotiating with landowners and property interests to create new routes through legal orders or permissive agreements (not compulsory purchase at this time).

v. **Establishing investment priorities.** The assessment process identified a range of needs and demands and a number of shortcomings on the network. It will not be possible to address all of these and priorities will be determined to ensure greatest public benefit. Suggested criteria include:

- a. Meets policy objectives and delivers a range of public benefits.
- b. Addresses the needs and demands of specific groups i.e. limited mobility or vision, people from different ethnic backgrounds etc.
- c. Increases the level of use where appropriate.
- d. Ease of development i.e. has a status that allows for multi-use.
- e. Ease of access, i.e. close to population centres.
- f. Provides a missing link in the network that enables the creation of a circular route or completes a linear route etc.
- g. Removal of barriers to access i.e. improves surfacing, removes structures such as stiles or makes them more access friendly.
- h. Proximity to services and facilities i.e. car park, toilets etc.
- i. Cost i.e. achievable within existing budgets or joint partnerships.

vi. **Working arrangements.** The RoW Unit manages the maintenance of the network and the management of the DMS. It is evident that, for the emerging range of actions, the future improvement of the network can only be achieved through a range of partnerships and service deliverers. There will still be the need to manage the network in accordance with its legal requirements, but the RoW Unit is unlikely to be the only delivery agent.

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7. CONSULTING ON THE DRAFT STATEMENT OF ACTION

- 7.1 The draft Statement of Action had been produced by autumn 2004 and was considered by a County Council Member panel and the Hertfordshire LAF. Following their endorsement a consultation exercise was held between January and April 2005.
- 7.2 The consultation exercise generated comment on strategic proposals but was also a practical exercise to allow people to log problems and issues about the PRoW and provided an opportunity to make suggestions for improvements. A leaflet/questionnaire was produced which was available from County Hall, libraries, consultation events and on the Council's website. Additionally, a number of consultation events were held. These were:
- staffed by County Council officers;
 - located in libraries, shopping and sports centres;
 - held on different days of week and at different times; and
 - provided opportunities to respond to the strategic questions;
 - enabled people to identify local problems and issues on routes and to make suggestions for improvements; and
 - a further session was held for people that attended the User Focus Groups.
- 7.3 In general, there was positive support for the core actions, whilst further comments and ideas were also raised (see below).

Top 10 comments from questionnaires

- More routes for horses/cyclists requested
- Replacement and new signs requested
- Footpath and bridleways damaged by horses
- New (missing) links
- Horse/dog fouling on footpaths and bridleways
- Request to replace stiles with kissing gates
- HCC to promote walks/safety
- Safety issues
- Better links to public transport
- Fields not being reinstated after ploughing

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Top 10 comments from road shows

- Circular/routes requested
- Replacement and new signs requested
- Safety issues
- Horses and cyclists on Footpaths
- Improve state of Rights of Way surfaces
- HCC to promote walks/safety
- Family friendly routes
- Improved Footpaths and bridleways
- Request to replace stiles with kissing gates
- Horse/dog fouling on footpaths and bridleways

Top 10 comments from map based exercise

- New bridleways/footpaths
- New (missing) links
- Greenways in Hertsmere
- More routes for horses/cyclists requested
- Upgrade to bridleway
- Improve state of Rights of Way surfaces
- Improved footpaths and bridleways
- Replacement and new signs requested
- More Circular/routes requested
- New routes to be created

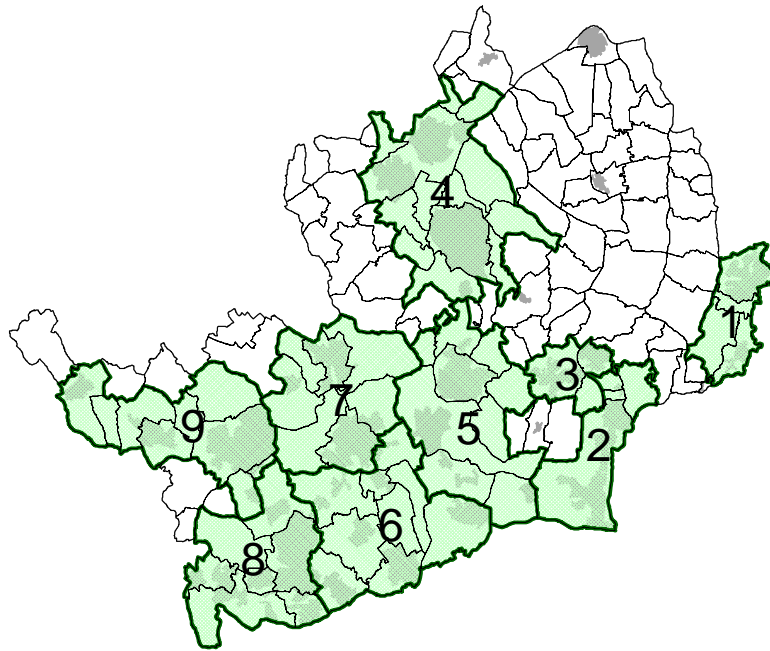
Top 10 comments from on-line questionnaires

- More routes for horses/cyclists requested
- Improved footpaths and bridleways
- More access to off-roading
- Problems with off-road vehicles
- Replacement and new signs requested
- Horses & cyclists on footpaths
- Concerns about safety issues
- Concern over state of Rights of Way surfaces
- More Circular/routes requested
- Fields not being re-instated after ploughing

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8.0 DEVELOPING THE IMPLEMENTATION PLAN 2006/07 - 2010/11

- 8.1 The RoWIP sets the overall scene and context for improvements and potential work across the county. However, it is not intended as a detailed programme of work with specific project costs and timetables. The action plans highlight indicative resource implications against each of the proposed areas of improvement. The key to the actual delivery of these on the ground, including detailed work programmes, budget estimates etc., is the production of locally based Implementation Plans – Area Rowips.
- 8.2 Key features of the RoWIP have overall public support and work has therefore begun on the development of an implementation programme that will deliver aspects of the RoWIP during its first 5 years of operation.
- 8.3 Initially progress and action will be concentrated within 9 Project Areas:
1. Bishop's Stortford, including Sawbridgeworth
 2. The Lee Valley area from Hoddesdon to Waltham Cross
 3. Hertford and Ware
 4. Stevenage and North Herts (Hitchin, Letchworth and Baldock)
 5. Welwyn and Hatfield
 6. Watling Chase Community Forest area
 7. Harpenden, Redbourn and St.Albans
 8. South West Herts, including Watford and Rickmansworth as well as the Colne Valley Regional Park
 9. West Herts, including Berkhamsted, Hemel Hempstead and Tring as well as the Chilterns Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty



Together these areas are home to over 870,000 people (Census 2001) and include around 54% of the rights of way network.

The boundaries of these have not been drawn directly to the settlement boundaries but have been set 2-3 kms from that point and then realigned to fit the parish boundaries.

Subject to funding, preparation of the plans will take place during 2006/07 [plans 1-5] and 2007/08 [plans 6-9] following a framework developed through a pilot project already implemented in the Hertford and Ware area [No.3 above].

The plans will involve further local consultation. They will also identify local work programmes and allied with the ongoing statutory management of the network, will aid the achievement of BVPI 178 targets. It is anticipated that draft plans will be submitted to the relevant Highways Joint Member Panels.

8.4 The common approach includes:

- i Identifying needs and demands through an assessment of the census 2001 results. This approach provides a profile of the local population and identifies concentrations of groups by age or ethnic origin. Travel information will be collected to identify modes of transport.
- ii Identify key locations such as bus and train stations, schools,

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hospitals, health centres and doctors' surgeries, large employment areas, formal leisure sites e.g. sports centres, livery yards and stables, open spaces and parks, public houses and facilities such as toilets,

- iii. Identifying public agendas and sources of local knowledge to identify opportunities for joint working and project development
- iv Identifying issues or barriers that limit the networks ability to meet potential demands including missing links etc.

8.5 An underlying principle of the RoWIP is that it should enhance and complement the existing network through improvement, extension and linkage and in this context legal processes and orders may be used.

8.6 Current legislation enables new rights of way to be added to the network using Creation Agreements or Creation Orders. This gives the impression of a ready tool with which to plug breaks and gaps in the network. In reality, both processes can be lengthy and expensive, to the extent that they are a constraint.

As a minimum, the time taken to process a Creation Agreement is about 6 weeks with attendant staff and advertising costs but this is only after the deal has been negotiated, which would normally take some considerable time [months] and involve staff costs. In addition, compensation may be payable. All other processes have the potential to be both longer and more expensive.

However, these processes are still the most likely means for putting new routes onto the ground and their constraining influence must simply be acknowledged and worked with. It is worth noting that a few dedications have been achieved by knowledgeable, local groups and where the occasion arises this approach could be repeated.

Another option is acquisition of the land needed to run a new route on, say along a field headland to avoid a dangerous section of road.

With little use being made of the above options to date, the financial implications are uncertain but levels of compensation and acquisition costs would emerge with use, enabling a better assessment of their value.

8.7 From the outset it has been the intention of central government that no new money would be allocated to implement RoWIPs. Rather, they would be financed through greater alignment with a range of economic, social and environmental agendas, becoming a legitimate draw on their existing funding regimes.

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- 8.8 The LTP is identified as a key source of potential finance, if the RoWIP is aligned with sustainable transport and road safety objectives. This has been achieved with half of the 12 Core Actions and the Project Areas, which are aligned with the boundaries of the Area Transport Plans.

As a result, a proposal has been made as part of the LTP for funding of up to £2 million covering the period 2006/07- 2010/11. This investment would be used in conjunction with existing budgetary provision to significantly improve the accessibility of rights of way within Project Areas. These improvements could include better signing and way marking, structures that are easy to use for all abilities, improvements to the surface and widths of paths, reduction in barriers and the removal of obstructions.

The work programmes should contribute to the primary delivery of LTP indicators and targets for Safe Routes to School, Rural Routes, Cycling, Road Safety and where appropriate to the reduction of congestion.

- 8.9 Alongside this work, action in the Project Areas will also need to address strategic issues as such health, economic development and enterprise, culture, leisure and biodiversity whilst, at the local level, being mindful of opportunities that present themselves for meeting the needs of minority user groups e.g. carriage drivers etc.

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9. ACTION PLAN

The Action Plan sets out a range of strategic actions at the county level. Further work will be undertaken to develop a series of detailed actions, through the development of Area Rights of Way Improvement Plans, that can be described within 5-year schedules of works and translated into annual work programmes.

The Action Plan indicates for each identified Core Action:

- i. Actions. A range of actions proposed in order to achieve the Core Action.
- ii. Who is it for? This column identifies the primary beneficiaries. I.e. those who will benefit most from implementing the actions. This will not include all those who will benefit, for example, where ‘people using wheelchairs’ are identified, it is understood that walkers, joggers etc. will also gain.
- iii. Who will do it? This column identifies potential partners and lead bodies. (The lead body is shown in bold).
- iv. How much will it cost? This column identifies estimated cost of the proposed actions:
 - £ The action could be implemented from current revenue budgets as part of ongoing management and maintenance programmes.
 - ££ The action would require planned investment but could be implemented from annual revenue budgets.
 - £££ The action will require planned investment and it is likely that it will be:
 - a. Subject to new money through a growth bid via the Local Transport Plan.
 - b. A bid for capital investment from the County Council.
 - c. Part of a larger project that may attract grant aid.
 - d. or a combination of all 3.
- v. Links to policy. This column makes reference to the primary public agendas and policy areas to which the action contributes.
- vi. Potential funding? This column identifies potential sources of funding for implementing the action.

CORE ACTIONS 2006/07 - 2010/11

Core Action 1: Develop routes that cater for the needs of people with limited mobility and visual impairments

Outcome

Increased number of people with limited mobility and visual impairments accessing the countryside. Addressing the key issue that the off-road network does not meet the needs of many potential users.

What will be done?	Who is it for?	Who will do it?	How much will it cost?	Links to Policy	Potential Funding?
1. Identify existing routes that meet the specific needs and demands of users with limited mobility *.	Wheelchair users & carers. People with children & pushchairs.	Rights of Way HCC (Adult Care Services) Disability Groups	£	Local Transport Plan Accessibility Planning	Local Transport Plan Primary Care Trusts
2. Provide new routes that meet the specific needs and demands of users with limited mobility *.	Those with limited mobility due to age. Those recovering from serious illness.	Pre-school child-care groups Other access	£££	Health Improvement Plan Cultural	Adult Care Services? British

What will be done?	Who is it for?	Who will do it?	How much will it cost?	Links to Policy	Potential Funding?
3. Promote routes (new and existing) in a format and medium that is accessible to those with limited mobility and in places where they will find it.			££		
4. When preparing Area Rights of Way Improvement Plans, identify and liaise with those carriage drivers and riding establishments that cater for the needs of disabled riders and those who provide carriage rides for them with the purpose of trying to develop safer, more continuous routes."	People with visual impairments.	Rights of Way HCC - Adult Care Services RNIB	£	Local Transport Plan Health Improvement Plan Cultural Strategy	Local Transport Plan
5. Undertake further research to establish the specific needs of people with visual impairments when accessing the countryside		Herts Assoc. for the Blind		Social Inclusion / Equalities Disability Discrimination	

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* Routes meeting the needs and demands of those with limited mobility should ideally:

- Start and end at the same place
- Have a flat, firm, well-drained surface
- Have toilets suitable for the disabled nearby
- Be clearly signed at the start including information about the surface, gradients, particular points of interest, location of seating
- Be less than 2 miles
- Have suitable car parking at the start of route e.g. pub car park, village hall, lay-by
- Be free of gates and stiles. Any gates must be easily opened and the least restrictive option should always be sought. [Refer BS 5709]
- Have benches at regular intervals

Core Action 2: Develop the Rights of Way network from significant passenger transport connections

Outcome

Increased proportion of people using passenger transport to access the rights of way network. Addressing the issue that there are difficulties in getting to the countryside without the use of the car.

What will be done?	Who is it for?	Who will do it?	How much will it cost?	Links to Policy	Potential Funding?
1. Develop a range of circular routes directly accessible from train stations.	Existing users of public transport (lower income groups, young people (under 16s), elderly, urban populations, visitors/tourists)	Rights of Way Countryside Management Service Passenger Transport Unit	£££	Local Transport Plan	Local Transport Plan
2. Promote routes through leaflets and information boards at railway stations in Hertfordshire and on lines serving Herts. I.e. North London, Luton, Cambridge.				Cultural Strategy	Cultural Partnership
3. Develop a range of circular walking routes accessible from locations with regular daily or weekend bus services.	People without a car or limited access to one. People seeking an alternative to the car.	Herts Tourism Partnership Intalink Partnership Rail companies Bus operators	£££	Health Improvement Plans	Health Improvement Plans
4. Promote selected routes through timetables and bus route information maps (county bus network map and area travel guides) as well as at key bus interchanges.				Intalink policy	Chilterns AONB* LVRPA**

* Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty

** Lee Valley Regional Park Authority

What will be done?	Who is it for?	Who will do it?	How much will it cost?	Links to Policy	Potential Funding?
5. Ensure that, wherever possible, guided and promoted walks are accessible by passenger transport.	Walkers. Users of passenger transport. Those without a car.	Rights of Way Countryside Management Service Other walk leaders	£	Local Transport Plan Cultural Strategy Health Improvement Plans	Local Transport Plan Health Improvement Plans Chiltern's AONB* LVRPA**

* Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty

** Lee Valley Regional Park Authority

Core Action 3: Reduce the number of unnecessary physical barriers on the network

Outcome

People using the rights of way network will encounter fewer structures when out on foot, horse, carriage or bike. Addressing the issue that there are too many barriers and structures on the network and the need for farmers and landowners to reinstate rights of way more quickly after ploughing. Wherever structure must be used, the least restrictive option should always be sought. [Refer BS 5709]

What will be done?	Who is it for?	Who will do it?	How much will it cost?	Links to Policy	Potential Funding?
1. HCC will positively seek the least restrictive option in relation to access onto and along RoW.	All current and potential users	Rights of Way Land Owners and representative groups (CLA / NFU)	£	Rights of Way	Herts County Council Chilterns AONB* LVRPA**
2. HCC to adopt a pro-active approach to removing structures between arable fields through negotiation with landowners in response to changes in farming practice. E.g. a reduction in livestock farming.	All current users.		£	Health Improvement Plan Disability Discrimination	
3. HCC to adopt a standard 'easy access' latch on all gates and to consider the needs of carriage drivers where appropriate.	Horse-riders. Young, old and people with a disability.		£	Culture Strategy	
4. HCC to adopt a proactive approach to removal of all other barriers.	All current users especially people with a disability.		£	Social Inclusion / Equalities	

What will be done?	Who is it for?	Who will do it?	How much will it cost?	Links to Policy	Potential Funding?
5. HCC to improve surfacing on routes that provide important links in the network, that are currently in poor condition and where improvement would bring significant public benefit.	All current users especially people with a disability.	Rights of Way	££		
6. Ensure, through negotiation and enforcement, that paths across arable land are reinstated promptly and kept clear of crops.	All users.	Rights of Way	£	Rights of Way	Herts County Council
7. The County Council will continue to take a robust stance on the removal obstructions.	All users	Rights of Way	£	Rights of Way	Herts County Council

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Core Action 4: Promote Hertfordshire's countryside to residents and visitors

Outcome

Visitors and residents take time to enjoy the Hertfordshire countryside using local rights of way and spend more time and money in rural areas. Addressing the need to provide better co-ordinated and targeted information about the off-road network.

What will be done?	Who is it for?	Who will do it?	How much will it cost?	Links to Policy	Potential Funding?
1. Develop a distinctive branding for Hertfordshire's countryside using Enjoy! Hertfordshire.	Residents of and visitors to Hertfordshire's countryside	HCC Cultural officer	££	Cultural Strategy	EEDA* (Rural Renaissance)
2. Ensure that new material promoting Hertfordshire's countryside includes the Enjoy! Hertfordshire branding and that opportunities are made to re-brand or re-package existing material.		Herts Tourism Partnership	££	Economic Development Strategy	Local Authorities
	Rights of Way			Rural Innovation Strategy	LVRPA**
		Countryside Management Service		Regional Economic Strategy	Countryside Agency

* East of England Development Agency

**Lee Valley Regional Park Authority

What will be done?	Who is it for?	Who will do it?	How much will it cost?	Links to Policy	Potential Funding?
<p>3. Develop joint promotional literature describing high quality routes that enable visitors to experience Hertfordshire's countryside. Use opportunities to further promote the rights and responsibilities associated with use and management of the countryside to users and landowners.</p>	Residents of and visitors to Hertfordshire's countryside	Rights of Way Countryside Management Service Herts Highways Access Partnership East of England Tourist Board	££	Cultural Strategy Economic Development Strategy Rural Innovation Strategy Regional Economic	EEDA* (Rural Renaissance) Local Authorities LVRPA** Countryside Agency

What will be done?	Who is it for?	Who will do it?	How much will it cost?	Links to Policy	Potential Funding?
<p>4. Expand the promotion and marketing of the countryside through Enjoy! Hertfordshire. To include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Inspected accommodation • Existing visitor attractions • Other service points including libraries, pubs, shops • Tourist information centres • Transport gateways including airports, train and bus stations • Out of county (North London and Cambridge) 	Residents of and visitors to Hertfordshire's countryside	<p>HCC Cultural officer</p> <p>Herts Tourism Partnership</p> <p>Rights of Way</p> <p>Countryside Management Service</p>	££		<p>EEDA* (Rural Renaissance)</p> <p>Local Authorities</p> <p>LVRPA**</p> <p>Countryside Agency</p> <p>London Development Agency</p>

* East of England Development Agency

**Lee Valley Regional Park Authority

What will be done?	Who is it for?	Who will do it?	How much will it cost?	Links to Policy	Potential Funding?
<p>5. Work with relevant agencies to develop a countryside access website that can advise people on:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Why to visit Hertfordshire's countryside? • Where to go? (To include public sites and routes, private places of interest and attractions and leaflets and publications) • How to get there? (including access by passenger transport.) • What to expect when you get there? • Countryside access activities and events in the county. • Links to other web sites 	<p>Residents of and visitors to Hertfordshire's countryside</p> <p>Service providers</p>	<p>Rights of Way</p> <p>Countryside Management Service</p> <p>Information Management</p> <p>District Councils</p> <p>British Waterways</p> <p>Thames Water</p> <p>National Trust</p> <p>Chilterns AONB</p> <p>Lea Valley User Groups</p> <p>Land Owners</p>	<p>££</p>	<p>Cultural Strategy</p> <p>Implementing Electronic Government</p> <p>Planning Policy Guidance 17</p>	<p>Local Transport Plan</p> <p>E-government</p> <p>Local Authorities</p>

Core Action 5: Develop appropriate well-maintained links into the countryside for use by local people.

Outcome

Increased use of the countryside around towns and villages by local leisure walkers and dog walkers, joggers and runners and cyclists. Addressing the issue that there are insufficient circular routes starting from settlements of other suitable locations.

What will be done?	Who is it for?	Who will do it?	How much will it cost?	Links to Policy	Potential Funding?
1. Identify a range of routes suitable for dog owners to walk for up to an hour on the urban fringe and develop solutions for resolving issues associated with dog-fouling.	Dog walkers.	Rights of Way	£££	Cultural strategies District Councils	Rights of Way District Councils
2. Promote routes through clear local signing and information boards.	All other users who suffer the effects of dog mess particularly children and those using wheelchairs.	District Councils			
3. Identify a range of circular routes for runners of different abilities to run for up to 2 hours in association with local running clubs.	Runners and joggers.	Rights of Way	£££	Sport England Health Improvement Plans	Rights of Way Sport England
4. Promote selected routes through running clubs, the internet and appropriate on-site information.		Sport England Running clubs District councils Leisure centres British Orienteering Federation Adventure racers			

Core Action 6: Create and develop off-road routes linking communities with places of work, schools and other local facilities

Outcome

Increased number of people using parts of the off-road network for walking and cycling to work, the shops and other local facilities. Addressing the issue that there are insufficient routes linking communities and services.

What will be done?	Who is it for?	Who will do it?	How much will it cost?	Links to Policy	Potential Funding?
1. Identify realistic cycle catchment areas by mapping: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • major settlements • key employment sites • secondary schools • shopping centres • hospitals • leisure centres and • transport interchanges. Identify opportunities to improve connections for cycle journeys using an integrated on and off road network by improvements to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • signing • safety especially at road crossings • surfacing [making it suitable for all types of bikes] • cycle parking 	Current and potential cycle commuters	Hertfordshire Highways Rights of Way Transportation Planning & Policy TravelWise Schools Businesses Health Surgeries / Hospitals Leisure centres	£	Local Transport Plan	Local Transport Plan EEDA* (Investing in Communities, Rural Renaissance) Rights of Way
		££	Economic Development Strategy		
				Rural Innovation Strategy	
				Health Improvement Plan	
				TravelWise	

* East of England Development Agency

What will be done?	Who is it for?	Who will do it?	How much will it cost?	Links to Policy	Potential Funding?
<p>2. Identify realistic walking catchment areas by mapping:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • major settlements • key employment sites • schools • local shopping centres • hospitals and surgeries • leisure centres and • transport interchanges. <p>Identify opportunities to improve walking routes linking homes with key services by improvements to signing and safety especially at road crossings.</p>	<p>School children</p> <p>Shoppers</p> <p>Employees</p>	<p>Hertfordshire Highways</p> <p>Rights of Way</p> <p>Transportation Planning & Policy</p> <p>TravelWise</p> <p>Schools Businesses</p>	£	<p>Local Transport Plan</p> <p>Economic Development Strategy</p> <p>Rural Innovation Strategy</p>	<p>Local Transport Plan</p> <p>EEDA* (Investing in Communities, Rural Renaissance)</p> <p>Rights of Way</p>

* East of England Development Agency

Core Action 7: Extend the network currently available to cyclists and horse riders

Outcome

Increased opportunity and continuity for horse riders and cyclists. Addressing the issue that the off-road network does not adequately provide for cycling and horse riding.

What will be done?	Who is it for?	Who will do it?	How much will it cost?	Links to Policy	Potential Funding?
1. Undertake more research into the needs and demands of mountain bikers.	Mountain bikers	Rights of Way British Mountain Bike Federation Cyclists Touring Club Mountain bike clubs and shops	££		Local Transport Plan Sport England
2. Develop off-road cycling routes with suitable dry surfacing that compliment the unclassified highway network especially where traffic volumes are relatively low and there is evidence of demand.	Touring and recreational cyclists	Rights of Way Herts Highways Cyclists Touring Club Cycling groups	£££	Local Transport Plan	Local Transport Plan Sustrans

What will be done?	Who is it for?	Who will do it?	How much will it cost?	Links to Policy	Potential Funding?
3. In partnership with livery yards and stables, investigate the development of suitable routes for riders that avoid busy roads and provide safe traffic free routes.	Horse riders	Rights of Way British Horse Society Riding groups Stables and livery yards Landowners	£££	Local Transport Plan	Local Transport Plan British Horse Society Equine businesses
4. Identify where horse-riders are using busy roads and investigate the development of solutions such as verge reallocation, permissive routes or dedications/creations.	Horse riders	Rights of Way Herts Highways Landowners	£££	Local Transport Plan	Local Transport Plan British Horse Society
5. Research means of addressing demands for riding routes suitable for cantering / galloping – seek permissive access, toll rides etc.	Horse riders	Rights of Way Horse riding associations Landowners	£	Local Transport Plan	British Horse Society

Core Action 8: Help people wishing to improve or maintain their health by developing a range of circular off road routes

Outcome

Increased use of the network by people who are recuperating following illness, surgery or poor health; people wishing to maintain their health, people wishing to improve their health.

What will be done?	Who is it for?	Who will do it?	How much will it cost?	Links to Policy	Potential Funding?
1. Identify, through mapping, areas or groups that have the greatest potential to improve their health from increased exercise using the off-road network.	Those suffering from chronic illness. Those recuperating from ill- health Those who have been advised by their doctor to lose weight through diet and exercise.	Primary Care Trusts Rights of Way District Councils Doctors surgeries and health clinics	£	Health Improvement Plans Walking Way to health Initiative	Primary Care Trusts British Heart Foundation Walking Way to Health Countryside Agency
2. Working with the health sector, increase opportunities for people belonging to groups or areas of identified need, to participate in programmes of regular short and progressive health walks guided by trained leaders.	Those wishing to increase their levels of exercise but lack the confidence and/or facilities.	Countryside Management Service	££	Sport England	District Councils Sport England

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What will be done?	Who is it for?	Who will do it?	How much will it cost?	Links to Policy	Potential Funding?
3. Publish self-guided walk leaflets aimed at people who are new to walking or less confident in areas of identified need and ensure targeted distribution.	Those wishing to increase their levels of exercise but lack the confidence and/or facilities.	Primary Care Trusts Countryside Management Service Rights of Way District Councils Community Development Agency for Herts	££	Health Improvement Plans Walking Way to health Initiative Sport England	District Councils Sport England

Core Action 9: Ensure that opportunities to protect, extend and enhance the off road network are included in proposals for new developments

Outcome

Planning process makes a greater contribution to an integrated non-motorised network. Addressing the issue that the potential to improve and enhance the network through the planning system has not been fully realised.

What will be done?	Who is it for?	Who will do it?	How much will it cost?	Links to Policy	Potential Funding?
1. Support the development of Supplementary Planning Guidance for new Local Development Frameworks in order to ensure that improvements to the non-motorised network are identified and incorporated in all new developments.	All users	<i>Rights of Way</i> Planning authorities Transport Planning Policy	££	Local Development Documents Local Transport Plan	Developers contributions S106 agreements

Core Action 10: Where the off road network is affected by busy transport routes work to ensure that appropriate measures are taken to improve the safety and attractiveness of the routes for users.

Outcome

Greater use of the off-road network resulting from the provision of safe crossings and verges for non-motorised users. Addressing the issue that people have to use or cross sections of busy roads in order to link up sections of the off road network.

What will be done?	Who is it for?	Who will do it?	How much will it cost?	Links to Policy	Potential Funding?
1. Identify where well used sections of the off-road network are crossed by the primary road network and develop solutions suitable for pedestrians, cyclists, horse riders, carriage drivers and disabled users as appropriate.	All relevant categories of network users.	Hertfordshire Highways Rights of Way	£££	Local Transport Plan	Local Transport Plan
2. Identify where well used sections of the non-motorised network run along busy roads and develop solutions including verge improvements, permissive routes, dedications or creations, or the promotion of 'Rural routes' and 'Quiet lanes'.	All relevant categories of network users.	Hertfordshire Highways Rights of Way	£££		

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What will be done?	Who is it for?	Who will do it?	How much will it cost?	Links to Policy	Potential Funding?
3. Identify locations where well used sections of the off-road network crosses the rail network and with appropriate authorities develop solutions to improve safety.	All relevant categories of network users.	Rights of Way Rail Authorities	£££	Local Transport Plan	Local Transport Plan

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Core action 11: Address problems of fly-tipping, litter and dog-fouling in partnership with appropriate local and regional agencies

Outcome

A Rights of Way management system that deals with fly tipping, litter and dog mess quickly and efficiently. A cleaner network where incidence of fly-tipping, littering, dog-fouling is reduced, particularly in areas where it is currently identified as a problem. Increased confidence of users that reporting a problem will result in it being resolved.

What will be done?	Who is it for?	Who will do it?	How much will it cost?	Links to Policy	Potential Funding?
1. Work with the appropriate agencies to ensure that the public: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Can easily report fly tipping etc. on rights of way, and • Can be confident that the report will be acted upon promptly. 	All users and landowners.	Rights of Way HCC WasteAware District Councils Environment Agency Landowners	££	Environmental Protection District Councils Right of Way Obstruction	District Councils Environment Agency Herts Waste Partnership

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What will be done?	Who is it for?	Who will do it?	How much will it cost?	Links to Policy	Potential Funding?
2. Work with district authorities to identify well used routes that are affected by litter, dog-fouling or fly-tipping and <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • implement preventative measures or • take enforcement action when necessary. 	All users and landowners Parents and their children.	Rights of Way District Councils	£££		District Councils

Core Action 12: Identify and address potential demand for access to the countryside amongst those who currently do not use the network

Outcome

Increased use of the countryside that better reflects the diverse population of Hertfordshire. Addressing the issue that the off-road network does not meet the needs of many potential users.

What will be done?	Who is it for?	Who will do it?	How much will it cost?	Links to Policy	Potential Funding?
1. Undertake research in areas of highest ethnic and cultural diversity to identify the potential demand for access to the countryside by ethnic minority groups.	Black & minority ethnic groups.	Rights of Way HCC (Equalities)	£	Local Transport Plan Cultural Strategy Social Inclusion / Equalities	Local Transport Plan Local Authorities
2. Where potential demand exists work to remove social or cultural barriers that currently prevent people from ethnic minority groups accessing the countryside.		BME groups E-Rainbow Network	££		
3. Identify further target groups of potential users and look to identify what currently prevents them accessing the countryside.	Potential Users E.g. Young people, women, single parents, 20-30s age group	Rights of Way University of Hertfordshire	££		