

Wokingham Borough Council

Rights of Way
Improvement Plan
2020- 2030

Consultation Draft

Table of Contents

Table of Contents	2
Introduction and Executive Summary	3
The Rights of Way Improvement Plan process	5
Review of the ROWIP 2010	6
Achievements from the 2010 ROWIP	7
Strategic policy context	8
Analysis of current provision, spatial data and future demand	10
The existing PROW network.....	10
Significant ongoing projects.....	11
Greenways and Loddon Long Distance Path.....	11
Byway resurfacing programme.....	13
Market research & stakeholder engagement.....	14
Fragmentation of the network	14
Impact of new technology on ROWIP	15
Delivery Plan and Statement of Actions	16
Statement of Action 1: Improving information	17
Statement of Action 2: Creating New Links	20
Statement of Action 3: Encourage use of the PROW network.....	22
Statement of Action 4: Access for all	25
Statement of Action 5: Looking after the Network.....	28
Statement of Action 6: Planning for the Future	31

Appendices

- Appendix 1: WBC overarching policy and strategy context
- Appendix 2: Assessment of Need Consultation Report
- Appendix 3: Network Fragmentation analysis
- Appendix 4: ROWIP 2020 Proposed New Routes
- Appendix 5: Greenways Strategy Plan

Introduction and Executive Summary

The Public Rights of Way (PROW) network makes up 18% of the total highway network within Wokingham Borough Council, and is used by thousands of people, to get to school, to get to work, and to relax and enjoy the countryside. At its core it consists of the public footpaths, bridleways, restricted byways and byways, but it forms a crucial part of a wider network which includes public parks, SANGs, permitted routes, cycle routes and the wider highway network. The public rights of way network is free to all users regardless of age, race or gender and provides physical and mental health and wellbeing benefits to all.

Wokingham Borough Council has a duty under Section 60 of the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000 to prepare and update a Rights of Way Improvement Plan every 10 years. The review of the plan provides an opportunity to re-assess and re-align our strategy and priorities for the management and improvement of the network.

The 2010-2020 ROWIP delivered a number of improvements to the PROW network, during a challenging financial climate. The Rights of Way Improvement Plan for 2020-2030 builds on this work and takes it further, verifying and clarifying the needs of the public 10 years on and developing a revised suite of 76 actions to meet these needs, based on 6 broad headings:

Improving information	Creating new links	Encouraging use of the network	Access for all	Look after the network	Planning for the future
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Deliver and maintain an up to date legal record of PROW, expand and improve the information available to the public online and assist others to do the same and promote more routes 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Create more routes between towns and villages, fill gaps in the network for walking, cycling and horse riding & create more circular routes 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Encourage use of the network for sustainable transport and fitness, increase confidence for people using PROWs and reduce conflict between users 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop more accessible paths and improve structures to cater for users with restricted mobility 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improve the surfacing of paths and reduce river side damage, manage vegetation and enforcement issues, seek improvements such as street lighting in certain areas and work in partnership with other organisations. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Make sure that the network is considered as part of the planning process, secure funds for improvement and enhancing the network and ensure future developments do not cause problems for the network.

The plan assesses the extent to which the public rights of way network meets the needs of the public now, and in the future in providing opportunities for exercise, leisure and open air recreation, delivers safe and active travel options and contributes to sustainable development and to a healthier, inclusive community

These actions are informed by research, spatial analysis of the network and - crucially - consultation with stakeholders to define where we should be heading. It identifies the gaps in the network for walkers, cyclists and horse riders, providing a

framework for assessing priorities and directing efforts to achieve the maximum benefit for the public.

It addresses the current deficiencies in the network and ways to encourage increased use of the network for sustainable travel, leisure and health. It links and feeds into existing Council strategies and policies, and identifies where there is synergy and common goals.

As well as being strategic in nature, specific details have been captured as part of the process of creating the plan. These have been recorded and mapped so that they can form part of the overall solutions to be implemented over the course of the plan and be shared across the Council to maximise opportunities for improvement.

The Rights of Way Improvement Plan process

The process of reviewing and creating this revised plan is as follows:

Stage 1 – Review and undertake a new assessment of need

A review of the existing assessment of need was conducted in March – May 2019, with a consultation with all WBC Councillors, Parish Councils, user groups, local residents, tourist organisations, neighbouring local authorities and other stakeholders in April 2019.

A review of all current strategic plans was also conducted to ensure that the revised plan feeds into the wider Council objectives.

Stage 2 – Review and update the statement of action

The results of the review and assessment of need fed into the review and update of the existing statement of action, forming the Wokingham Borough Council Draft Revised Rights of Way Improvement Plan 2020/2030

Stage 3 – Publish a draft revised Rights of Way Improvement Plan

Following approval of the draft plan it has now been published for a statutory 12-week consultation. The results of this consultation will be analysed and fed into the final Wokingham Borough Council Rights of Way Improvement Plan 2020/2030

Stage 4 – Adopt and publish a new Rights of Way Improvement Plan 2020-2030

The final plan will be published in 2020

Review of the ROWIP 2010

The Rights of Way Improvement Plan published in 2010 was based upon an assessment of the current and future needs of the public. This was gathered primarily by a public consultation, questionnaire, and parish council and user group focus groups. A summary of the assessment is below:

Use of the network: Public rights of way are used more frequently than other countryside attractions. The top 4 majority uses was identified as walking, then cycling, dog walking and running. The network is also used by horse riding, motorcycling, 4x4 driving and carriage driving.

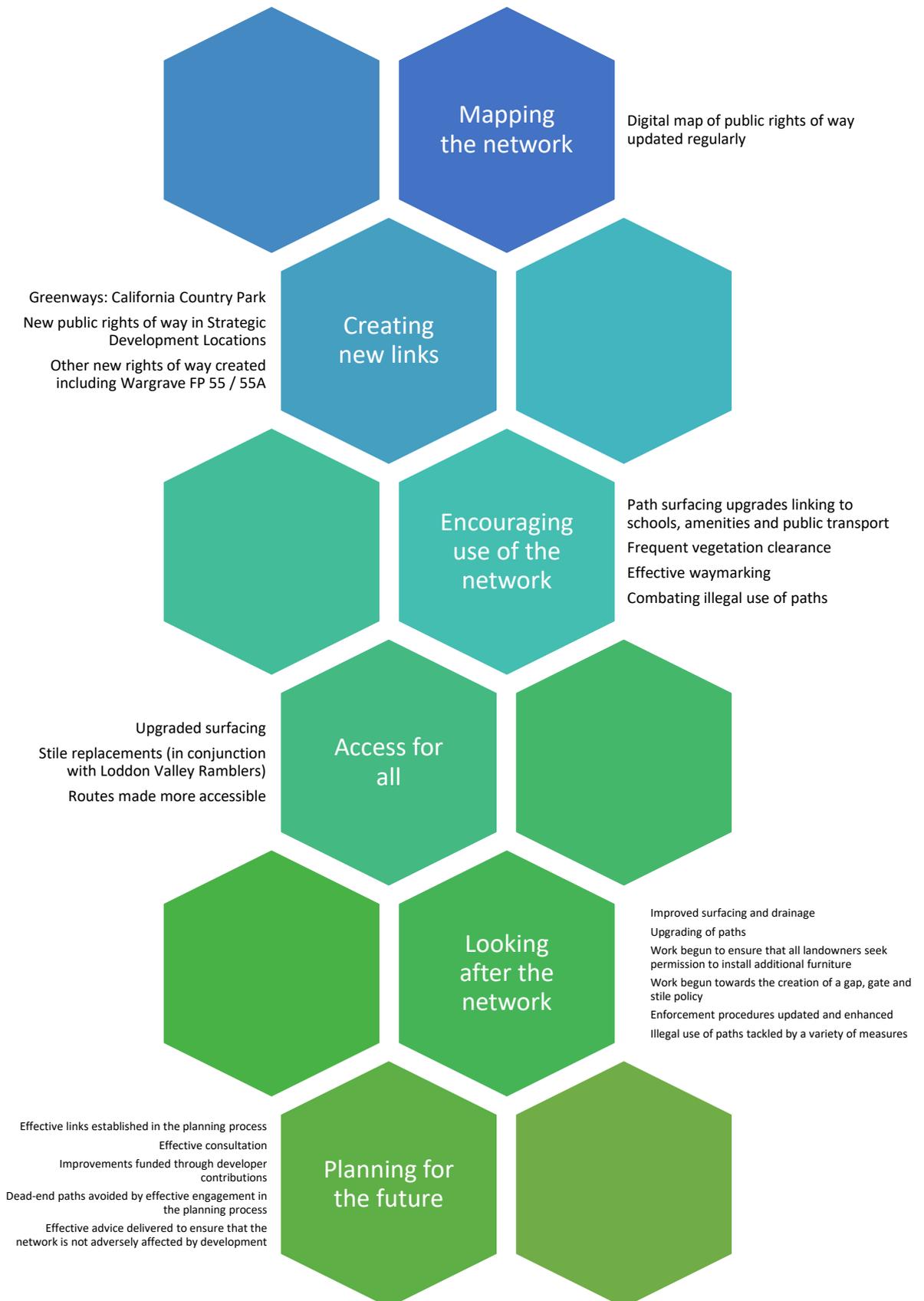
Key themes identified in 2010 plan:

- Improved information
- Improved accessibility for wheelchairs and pushchairs (gap, gate stile policy)
- Seasonal restrictions on some byways
- Continuing maintenance of PROWs
- Linking up paths/creating circular routes for walkers, cyclists and horse riders
- Reducing personal safety concerns

Main improvements sought:

- Guided walks
- Improved accessibility for wheelchairs, including specific information, toilets and parking
- Better signage, surfacing and information about existing routes
- Restriction of motor vehicles on vulnerable byways
- More off-road paths to link the network, particularly where network is fragmented
- More routes and links for pedestrians, horses and cyclists including circular routes
- More byway routes for motor vehicle users
- Better communication and engagement with landowners
- Improved information provision about routes with poor surface conditions
- Links to PROW network from public transport, links from urban areas to the countryside
- Specific route suggestions

Achievements from the 2010 ROWIP



Strategic policy context

The importance of the PROW network, the countryside, riverside and publicly accessible green space is recognised in many national and local strategies and is afforded strong protection in law. An estimated 4000 individual statutes, regulations and judgements have a direct relevance to its protection, use and development.

Due to the wide variety of uses of the PROW network by the public, the ROWIP directly contributes to the delivery of many Wokingham Borough Council policies and strategies. The diagram below shows the policies and strategies that share common objectives with the ROWIP. A more detailed analysis of the policy context is included in 'Appendix 1: WBC overarching policy and strategy context'.



Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan (LCWIP)

In addition to the strategies outlined above the Council is also in the process of developing the Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan. This plan will identify cycling and walking improvements required for the Borough over a 10-year period to increase the number of trips made on foot or by cycle. There are a number of common goals between the ROWIP and the LCWIP and the actions details in this plan will link into the LCWIP.

Wokingham Greenways Strategy Plan

The Wokingham Borough Council's aspiration is to have Greenways (which are continuous generally traffic-free multi user routes) linking the major Strategic development Locations (SDL's) in the borough (Arborfield Garrison, Shinfield, North Wokingham and South Wokingham) to each other and also to the existing communities and places of interest/employment. Linked to the Core Strategy (CP10 policy CP10 items 20 and 21 and SDL policies CP18-21), Greenways has also been highlighted in ROWIP 2020-30, Local Transport Plan and LCWIP (in progress). (Appendix 5: Wokingham Greenways Strategy Plan)

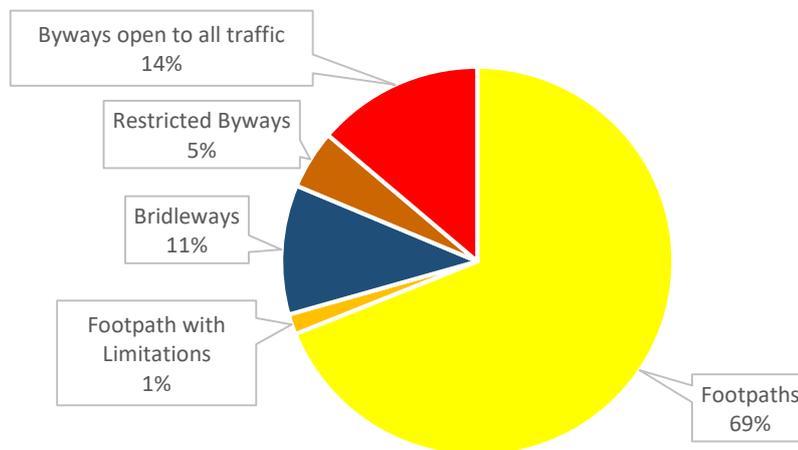
Analysis of current provision, spatial data and future demand

The existing PROW network

The Wokingham Borough Council Public Rights of Way network consists of some 164km of paths, which represents 18% of the total highway network within the Borough. The network is split between 17 parishes/administrative areas:



Percentage of rights of way by type



Full details for each parish can be seen in the table below:

Parish	Footpath (m)	Footpath with limitations (m)	Bridleway (m)	Restricted Byway (m)	Byway (m)	Total (m)
Arborfield and Newland	2949.76	0.00	275.10	0.00	4258.20	7483.06
Barkham	2447.27	0.00	2990.14	0.00	1827.76	7265.17
Charvil	3081.94	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	3081.94
Earley	6487.93	0.00	39.06	0.00	0.00	6526.99
Finchampstead	13483.57	0.00	4330.90	797.24	2708.18	21319.89
Remenham	8176.14	2761.20	0.00	0.00	0.00	10937.34
Ruscombe	1767.17	0.00	3080.42	0.00	0.00	4847.59
Shinfield	11869.20	0.00	1855.48	543.29	3969.28	18237.25
Sonning	3713.94	0.00	0.00	0.00	927.04	4640.98
St Nicholas Hurst	11965.56	0.00	1478.67	0.00	1343.44	14787.67
Swallowfield	7192.91	0.00	818.59	0.00	3915.52	11927.02
Twyford	979.48	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	979.48
Wargrave	15454.84	0.00	761.24	5330.93	0.00	21547.01
Winnersh	3291.90	0.00	427.85	297.15	769.49	4786.39
Wokingham	8871.00	0.00	0.00	1022.96	923.03	10816.99
Wokingham Without	8303.80	0.00	0.00	0.00	1880.15	10183.95
Woodley	2737.56	0.00	1557.86	0.00	0.00	4295.42
Totals	112773.97	2761.20	17615.31	7991.57	22522.09	163664.15

The majority of the network (69%) consists of public footpaths, however there exists a significant percentage of byways (14%) compared to the other “higher rights” paths, which pose particular challenges and opportunities for the management and improvement of the network.

Significant ongoing projects

Since the development of the 2010 Rights of Way Improvement Plan there have been a number of significant projects that have started and will continue through in the revised Rights of Way Improvement Plan 2020/2030.

Greenways and Loddon Long Distance Path

The Greenways Project includes the strategic network of multi-user paths that connects the Strategic Development Locations to the existing settlements as well as linking sites of historic interest and recreational value and provide a continuous traffic free routes in the Borough. The Greenways Project may include existing Public Footpaths, Byways, restricted byways, Bridleways as well as identification of new greenways which when connected will deliver a comprehensive and connected series of traffic free routes for pedestrians, cyclists and potentially equestrian users away from the main roads.

The Greenways Project also includes River Loddon Long Distance Path (LDP) that links the Thames Valley Path in the north of the borough in Wargrave to the Blackwater Valley Path in the South of the borough in Swallowfield.

This internal network of Greenways to extend beyond the Public footpaths to public green space, and point of interest in Wokingham borough. WBC will continue discussions with private land owners with regards to the acceptability of providing a route through land not owned by WBC. Should these discussions prove successful, further route assessments can be completed and details of the preferred route can be finalised.

Strategic Context:

Greenways are referred to in Appendix 7 of the Core Strategy and are captured in policy CP10 items 20 and 21 and SDL policies CP18-21, and the council will include reference to Greenways in the Local Transport Plan update due for adoption in 2019. It is intended that the Greenways also be included in the Local Plan as well as within the Rights of Way Improvement Plan 2020/2030.

The Greenways Strategy and implementation plan is detailed out in ‘Appendix 5: Greenways Project’

Scope of Greenways Project:

The project will:

- Stage 1 Greenways network is an SDL-focused network to satisfy the requirements of the current Core Strategy to deliver the traffic free commuting and leisure routes connecting the existing and new settlements and point of interest.
- The Project will link with and align to additional greenways and paths proposed to improve the connectivity within the Borough and to adjoining boroughs, For example: River Loddon Path project, ‘Wokingham Wheel’ project, An Urban Network, My Journey Project.

Greenways Project Objectives:

The key objectives of the project are detailed in the table below.

Objective Number	Project Objectives
GW1	To deliver sustainable transport network in accordance with the Council’s vision that aim to provide traffic free commuting and leisure routes connecting new Strategic Development locations with the existing settlements.
GW2	To deliver the Project to High Quality, Cost and Time.
GW3	To help achieve WBC policies such as Sustainable Community Strategy and Local Development framework, Core Strategy (CP10), Local Transport Plan, Active Travel Strategy

The Greenways Network:		
Route Name	Description	Length (km)
Route A	South of M4 SDL - Arborfield - Barkham	5.5
Route B	Arborfield SDL - Barkham - Wokingham	7.6
Route D	Arborfield SDL – Barkham – South Wokingham SDL - Wokingham	7.0
Route E	River Loddon – Arborfield	2.1
Route F	Arborfield – Arborfield SDL	4.0
Route I	Arborfield SDL - Finchamstead	1.9
Route J	Arborfield SDL – Blackwater Valley	2.9
Route K	Arborfield Cross	2.5

River Loddon LDP		
Route Name	Description	Length (km)
LDP Section A	Blackwater Valley Path, Swallowfield to A327 Reading Road	6.8
LDP Section B	A327 Reading Road to Showcase Cinema, Winnersh	8.42
LDP Section C	Showcase Cinema, Winnersh to Waggon & Horses Pub, Twyford	6.55
LDP Section D	Waggon & Horses Pub, Twyford to River Thames	8.84

Byway resurfacing programme

As detailed above, the Wokingham Borough rights of way network has a significant number of byways compared to other similar authorities. A lot of these byways serve as the main entrances to residential properties. This can change the maintenance needs for these byways where the main use is by motor vehicles.

In light of this the Council has an ongoing project to upgrade the surface of these byways to cater of this use, providing a sealed surface. This project is separate to the normal 'day-to-day' maintenance of unsealed byways. It is based on a priority list developed taking into account a range of criteria including surface condition, level of use by vehicles vs other users, strategic location and historic level of complaints.

Market research & stakeholder engagement

The consultation on the existing assessment of need showed that the existing assessment remains on the whole a valid assessment of the public need. The feedback identified the following themes, categorised into three broad headings:

Improved Information

- Improved signage and information
- Development of guided routes

Maintenance and management of existing routes

- Increased accessibility for more vulnerable users
- Improved maintenance
- Improved surfacing
- Improved enforcement procedures
- Managing vehicle use on byways
- Improved partnership working

New and improved routes

- Filling gaps in the network
- Development of long distance routes
- Increased circular routes
- Increased off-road cycle routes / Greenways
- Improved integration with wider highway network
- Cross-boundary improvements

These themes above match closely with those identified in 2010, and accordingly many of the associated actions remain current and valid. These actions have been updated and retained for the revised 2020/2030 ROWIP action plan.

A complete analysis of the consultation responses is included in 'Appendix 2: Assessment of Need Consultation Report'.

As part of the consultation a number of specific routes have been suggested, along with a revision of the routes previously identified in light of developments and changes in demand since the 2010 ROWIP. These have been incorporated into the revised ROWIP suggested route map included in Appendix 4: ROWIP 2020 Proposed New Routes'

Fragmentation of the network

The feedback from the assessment of need consultation has highlighted that the fragmentation of the network remains one of the main barriers for use, and a key area to focus on for the improvement of the network over the life of the plan.

Spatial analysis of the network has identified various key areas to focus on where there large gaps in the network for access for different user groups as follows and allows us to prioritise efforts to improve access in these areas where it will be the most beneficial to the public as a whole.

The maps of these areas are included in 'Appendix 3: Network Fragmentation analysis'. They identify focus areas on gaps in the network in general, and from the viewpoint of different user groups based on current and future needs.

Impact of new technology on ROWIP

Since the publication of the last ROWIP in 2010 there have been considerable improvements in technology which has changed the way that members of the public prefer to access information. In particular the demand for more traditional publications such as paper leaflets and maps has declined in favour of on-demand information such as GPS enabled maps.

This increase in the uptake of technology services has also opened up more many more opportunities to be able to provide information tailored to individual need, for example enabling a person to know what where they can walk based on their own ability or in their own vicinity, or knowing in advance what type of structures they may encounter, or even the type of footwear they may need. It also presents opportunities to provide improved facilities for other users who may have difficulty accessing the network, for example visually impaired users.

Delivery Plan and Statement of Actions

This section details the actions that WBC aims to achieve as a result of the 2020/2030 ROWIP. The Statement of Action consists of a revision of the 2010 actions, with alterations and additions made in light of the 2019 assessment of need. For ease of reference new or updated actions have been highlighted in **bold**. For continuity the actions are labelled as Statements of Action (SOA) numbered from 1 through to 6 corresponding to the 2010 plan. Each item has been analysed as follows.

Action

This details the specific action(s) proposed to address the identified objective

Monitoring – how will progress be monitored?

The progress on the implementation of the plan will be reported on an annual basis via a Rights of Way Improvement Plan Progress Report. This will detail progress against all targets and will also include the site specific suggestions included in Appendix 4. Where appropriate additional monitoring plans are included for specific ROWIP actions, these are detailed in the table below.

Timescale

The actions are classified as follows:

- Short term (1 to 3 years)
- Medium term (3 to 7 years)
- Long term (7 to 10 years)

Resources – what resources are needed in order to achieve the aim?

The resources needed for each item are classified as follows:

- Deliverable within existing resources
- Low – up to £5,000
- Medium - £5,000 - £50,000
- High – over £50,000

Actions will only be undertaken when the opportunity, funds and resources become available.

Partnerships – what partnerships are required in order to achieve the aim?

The Council aims to work in partnership as much as possible in order to achieve the aims of the plan. Where specific groups and teams are known these have been listed in the table for that particular objective.

Strategic Links

This section details where actions link to the other policies identified in the strategic policy context analysis.

- Core Strategy (CS)
- Managing Development Delivery Local Plan 2014-2026 (MDD)
- Local Plan
- Local Transport Plan 2011-2026 (LTP)
- Active Travel Plan 2011-2026 (ATP)
- Joint Strategic Needs Assessment (JSNA) and the Joint Health and Wellbeing Strategy (JHWS)
- Sustainable Environment Strategy (SES)
- Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan (LCWIP)
- Greenways Strategy Plan (Greenways)

Statement of Action 1: Improving information

One of the main barriers for people identified in the assessment of need was the provision of information, both as part of the formal legal record, and also by providing additional information to enable people to use the network. The actions take into account the changing demand for information in different formats to the traditional leaflet, seeking to provide information in the most appropriate form for the target audience.

WBC has a legal duty to maintain an up to date definitive map and statement (DMS) for the borough. WBC's DMS was last updated in 2000 and there have since been several modifications which need to be added to both documents. It is also important that applications for path creations, diversions or extinguishments (known as Definitive Map Modification Order (DMMO) and Public Path Order (PPO) applications) are prioritised and efficiently processed and subsequent changes then added to the DMS.

Objective	Action	Monitoring	Timescale	Resources	Partnerships	Strategic links
1.1 Deliver an up to date Definitive Map and Statement (DMS)	(a) Consolidate and republish the DMS at least every 5 years		Short term	Existing		
	(b) Update and maintain the web-based interactive map of public rights of way		Ongoing	Low		ATP / Obj 4
	(c) Process DMMO and PPO applications efficiently	Monitor time taken to determine DMMOs and PPOs	Ongoing	Existing		
1.2 Enable the PROW network to be included modern navigation apps	Include public rights of way data is included in the National Street Gazetteer (NSG)		Short – Medium term	Existing	WBC Highways Geoplace	ATP / Obj 4
1.3 Improve public rights of way	(a) Produce a mobile accessible web based map of the WBC public rights of way network including		Short term	Existing		ATP / Obj 4

network information		permitted paths and off-road urban paths					
	(b)	Develop and promote circular routes utilising the existing network and new routes as required <i>[links with SOA 2.3]</i>		Ongoing	Low-Medium	WBC Communcations Parish & Town Councils MWBLAF LVR BHS	JSNA JHWS / Aim 1
	(c)	Provide information in formats that allow easy printing at home for people to take with them			Existing		
1.4 Improve information available for users with restricted mobility	(a)	Survey and record all existing path furniture / structures/surfaces on the network		Short – Medium term	Low	LVR Disabled Ramblers Disabled user groups	
	(b)	Produce mobile accessible interactive web based maps including information about furniture and surfaces.		Short— Medium term	Low		LTP / AT3 JHWS / Aim 1
1.5 Encourage use of the network by the elderly by providing tailored information		Produce a tailored app to encourage elderly people to access the public rights of way and wider path network via Smart Cities challenge		Medium term	Medium	WBC Adult Services	JSNA JHWS / Aim 1 LTP / AT3
1.6 Encourage use of the network by minority groups and groups	(a)	Provide basic level information about the rights of way network, including information about what to expect, suitable clothing, maps etc.		Short – Medium term	Existing		JSNA JHWS / Aim 1 LTP / AT3

unfamiliar with the network	(b)	Produce information in different languages		Short term	Low	WBC Communications	JSNA JHWS / Aim 1
1.7 Improve signage along the network		Produce destination signage in strategic areas to facilitate use of the network for travelling to work / school / shops etc.		Short – medium term	Low - Medium	WBC Adult Services Parish & Town Councils	ATP / Obj 1 & 4 JSNA JHWS / Aim 1 SES / Priority 2
1.8 Assist other groups in promoting the network and developing PROW information		Seek to assist Parish Councils and other groups in developing public rights of way maps and other information		Short-Medium term	Low	Parish & Town Councils	

Statement of Action 2: Creating New Links

From the consultation it can be seen that there is a priority to create circular routes, long distance routes and utility routes linking strategic locations. The fragmentation analysis included in Appendix 3 highlights the particular areas to focus on for filling gaps in the network; WBC aims to identify these gaps and then conduct feasibility studies for creating new paths. Paths will be prioritised for creation by their contribution to fulfilling the objectives of the ROWIP and the wider strategic objectives. Creating new paths can be a long and expensive process; therefore opportunities to extend the network through the planning process will be investigated, as well as through liaison with landowners.

Objective	Action	Monitoring	Timescale	Resources	Partnerships	Strategic links
2.1 To develop off road routes to link major development areas and to link towns and villages	(a) Develop and implement the Greenways network (Appendix 5)		Medium term	High		CS / A7.7 CS / A7.35 CS / A7.47 LTP / AT1 ATP / Obj 1-4 JSNA / Priority 1 JHWS / Aim 1 SES Priority 2 Greenways LCWIP
	(b) Develop and implement the Loddon Valley Long Distance Walk (Appendix 5)		Long term	High		JSNA / Priority 1 JHWS / Aim 1 MDD / CC03 Greenways LCWIP
	(c) Develop more cycle paths to link towns and villages, utilising the existing network and new routes as required		Med-Long term	Medium-High		LTP / AT1 ATP / Obj 1-4 JSNA / Priority 1 JHWS / Aim 1 SES Priority 2 LCWIP
2.2 To develop a better joined-	(a) Conduct feasibility studies on proposed new paths,		Short – Medium term		Parish & Town Councils LVR	

up PROW network		based on identified priorities (Appendix 4)				MWBLAF	
	(b)	Seek to create new routes to join up the gaps in the network for walkers, cyclists and horse riders		Med-Long term			LTP / AT1 & 2 ATP / Obj 2 LCWIP
	(b)	Seek to create new routes to join up the gaps in the network near to schools, amenities, green spaces and public transport		Short term			LTP / AT1 LTP / AT2 ATP / Obj 3 LCWIP
	(d)	Assess fragmentation of network between local authority areas and liaise with neighbouring authorities to create new paths to increase cross-border connectivity		Short-medium term		MWBLAF	
	(e)	Identify and utilise opportunities to create new paths as part of new developments and also through liaising with landowners		Ongoing	Existing		Core Strategy MDD / CC03
2.3 To develop additional circular routes	(a)	Identify opportunities for the creation of circular routes for walkers, cyclists and horse riders		Short-term	Existing	Parish & Town Councils MWBLAF LVR BHS	
	(b)	Prioritise and develop new circular routes based on opportunities		Med-Long term	Medium		LTP / AT1 - 3 LCWIP

Statement of Action 3: Encourage use of the PROW network

Objective	Action	Monitoring	Timescale	Resources	Partnerships	Strategic links
3.1 Encourage use of sustainable transport to work / school	(a) Develop improved information and publications aimed at encouraging transport to work/schools using the rights of way network	Annual report	Short-medium term		WBC MyJourney WBC Communications	ATP – Obj 4 JSNA JHWS / Aim 1
	(b) Identify and utilise opportunities in the planning process to create new paths or upgrade surfacing of existing paths that are near to schools, amenities and public transport	Annual report	Short-medium term			Core Strategy MDD CC03
	(c) Carry out more frequent vegetation clearance on PROWs that are near to schools, train stations and bus stops	Monitor level of complaints of these paths being overgrown	Ongoing			ATP / Obj 2
	(d) Produce destination signage in strategic areas to facilitate utilitarian use of the network (for example travelling to work / school / shops)		Short – medium term	Low - Medium	WBC Adult Services Parish & Town Councils	ATP / Obj 4 JSNA JHWS / Aim 1 SES / Priority 2
3.2 Increase confidence using	(a) Improve way marking on popular routes		Short term			

the rights of way network	(b)	Review existing signage and look to install more detailed signage information, for example destination signage where appropriate.		Short-medium term			JSNA JHWS / Aim 1 LCWIP
	(c)	Develop guided walks		Medium term		Parish & Town Councils WBC Countryside Service	JSNA JHWS / Aim 1
	(d)	Identify key locations and where possible seek to improve road crossings where paths cross busy roads		Med-Long term	Medium-High	WBC Highways Parish & Town Councils Disabled groups LVR MWBLAF	LTP / AT1 ATP / Obj 2 & 4 SES / Priority 2 LCWIP
	(e)	Where possible seek to improve the interaction between the rights of way network and the wider highways network by making adjustments (for example improved road signage or implementing speed limitations)		Med-Long term	Low – Medium	WBC Highways	LTP / AT1 ATP / Obj 2 & 4 SES / Priority 2 LCWIP
3.3 Reduce conflict between users	(a)	Ensure signage is clear and that new paths are wide enough to accommodate all users		Ongoing			LTP / AT2 & 3
	(b)	Identify problem areas and work with police, local communities and parish councils to reduce illegal use of paths	Monitor level of complaints regarding conflict and illegal use	Ongoing		Police, local communities, Parish & Town Councils	

3.4 Encourage more people to use the PROW network to improve fitness	(a)	Increase promotion of Wokingham Borough Health Walks Scheme in health centres		Medium term		PCT, Wokingham Borough Health Walks Scheme, Sports Development Unit, Grant bodies	JSNA JHWS / Aim 1 LTP / AT2
	(b)	Create new Health Walks routes and information		Short-medium term			JSNA JHWS / Aim 1 LTP / AT2
	(c)	Provide PROW information tailored for sports centres and for fitness		Short-medium term			JSNA

Statement of Action 4: Access for all

One of the key aims of the ROWIP is to identify ways to improve access on public rights of way for those with visual or mobility impairments. The Equalities Act 2010 requires “reasonable adjustments” to be made by public bodies to enable disabled people to make use of the PROW network. WBC will aim to improve the accessibility of green areas and public rights of way where possible.

53

Objective	Action	Monitoring	Timescale	Resources	Partnerships	Strategic links
4.1 To develop a network of paths for utilitarian and leisure use suitable for people of restricted mobility, visually impaired and other vulnerable groups	(a) Engage with local user groups and assess the fragmentation of network for mobility restricted users, visually impaired users and other vulnerable groups and identify potential improvements and priority areas		Short term	Existing	Parish & Town Councils Disability groups LVR	
	(b) Develop and promote network of routes based on identified priorities and improvements, utilising existing network and new paths as required.		Med-Long term	Medium		CS / CP2 CS / CP3 CS / CP6 MDD / CC03 LTP / AT3 JSNA / Priority 1 JHWS / Aim 1 SES / Priority 2
	(c) Ensure, as far as possible, that all new routes are constructed to be suitable for use by mobility restricted and visually impaired users		Ongoing	Existing		CS / CP2 MDD / CC03 LTP – AT3 JSNA JHWS / Aim 1 LCWIP
4.2 Improve surfacing on high-use paths	(a) Identify and prioritise high use paths and possible funding sources		Short-Medium term	Existing		

	(b)	Develop a programme to resurface high use paths		Short-Medium term	High	WBC Highways	LTP / AT2 & 3 ATP / Obj 2 SES / Priority 2 LCWIP
4.3 Upgrade or improve bridges to cater for users with restricted mobility	(a)	Identify high-use bridges, works needed and possible funding sources	Every 2 years monitor the percentage of the network that is fully accessible	Short-term			
	(b)	Develop a programme to replace bridges to enable greater accessibility		Short-medium term			JSNA LTP / AT3 ATP / Obj 4
	(c)	Seek to improve bridges to accommodate users with restricted mobility as part of the planning process		Ongoing		WBC Development Control	CS / CP2 MDD / CC03 JSNA SES / Priority 2
4.4 Replace non-accessible structures on the network with more accessible options	(a)	Develop a Stiles and Gates policy for all new structures on public rights of way, in line with BS5709:2018		Short-term			
	(b)	Continue and develop existing programme in partnership with user groups and volunteer groups to replace stiles and inaccessible gates with more accessible structures		Short-medium term		LVR BHS	JSNA LTP / AT2 ATP / Obj 2 & 4
	(c)	Develop new procedures to ensure landowners apply to WBC for		Short-term			

		permission to install additional furniture					
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Statement of Action 5: Looking after the Network

WBC has a duty to maintain the PROW network across the borough for the usual traffic, i.e. for pedestrians on a footpath; for pedestrians and horse riders on a bridleway. Maintenance issues that arise when managing rights of way include: surfacing, vegetation clearance and installing/repairing stiles, gates and bridges. Enforcement issues are mainly concerned with ploughed paths, obstructed paths and encroachment. Fly tipping and the Illegal use of footpaths and bridleways by motorcyclists (mostly children) are ever-present problems which require co-operation between the local authority, the police, parish/town councils and local people.

Objective	Action	Monitoring	Timescale	Resources	Partnerships	Strategic links
5.1 Improve surfacing	(a) Identify rights of way with recurring surface and drainage problems; investigate cause of the problem and most effective solution, e.g. Traffic Regulation Order or drainage works	Monitor level of complaints regarding surfaces	Ongoing			
	(b) Seek to improve and upgrade path surfaces where appropriate in response to changes in demand		Med-Long term	High	Parish & Town Councils	ATP / Obj 2 & 4
	(c) Seek to improve and upgrade path surfaces where appropriate in urban areas		Short-Medium term	High		ATP / Obj 2 & 4 LCWIP
	(d) Seek to improve and upgrade surfaces of paths that provide links to schools, amenities and public transport		Ongoing			
	(e) Seek partnership working with volunteer groups to improve paths		Ongoing		LVR, GLASS	
5.2	(a) Continue annual vegetation clearance programme	Monitor level of complaints	Ongoing			

Manage vegetation issues effectively			regarding paths being overgrown				
	(b)	Review policy and procedures for reactive maintenance, in particular for fallen trees		Short term	Existing		
	(c)	Review service standards, policy and procedures for vegetation and debris clearance from path surfaces		Short term	Existing		
	(d)	Work in partnership with user groups and volunteer groups to undertake vegetation clearance along rights of way		Ongoing	Low		
5.3 Manage enforcement issues effectively	Review policy and procedures for enforcement action, in particular for: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ploughed/cropped paths (complete) • Obstructions • Encroachment 	Monitor time taken to carry out enforcement action and results	Short term				
5.4 Reduce illegal use of paths	Identify problem areas and work with police, local communities and parish councils to reduce illegal use of paths	Monitor level of complaints regarding illegal use	Ongoing				
5.5 Seek to install street lighting or illumination on urban paths where appropriate	Investigate options for street lighting or illumination to be installed along high-use urban paths, and identify possible sources of funding		Med-Long term	High			LTP / AT1 ATP / Obj 2 & 4 SES / Priority 2 LCWIP
5.6 Manage network of byways effectively	(a) Upgrade and provide sealed surfaces along byways where predominate use is by motor vehicles						

	(b)	Work with user groups to improve the surfaces of rural byways		Short-Medium term	Low	GLASS	
	(c)	Investigate feasibility of implementing seasonal restrictions on sensitive byways		Short term	Existing	Parish & Town Councils GLASS LVR BHS	
5.7 Build and develop partnership working with external organisations	(a)	Maintain membership of the National Trail Thames Path Partnership (TPP) and the Association of Directors of Environment, Economy, Planning and Transport (ADEPT)		Ongoing	Existing	ADEPT TPP	
	(b)	Foster closer links with user groups and work in partnership to improve the network for all users		Ongoing	Existing	LVR BHS GLASS TRF	
	(c)	Foster closer links with parish councils and neighbouring local authorities and work in partnership to improve the network for all users		Ongoing	Existing	Neighbouring Local Authorities	
5.8 Protect riverside paths from loss due to bank erosion	(a)	Identify priority areas where river bank erosion has occurred or is a particular risk of occurring		Short – medium term	Existing	TPP LVR	
	(b)	Develop a programme to repair eroded riverbanks and protect against further erosion		Medium – Long term	High	TPP Environment Agency	

Statement of Action 6: Planning for the Future

Wokingham Borough Council is a proactive local planning authority, seeking to shape future development through a carefully managed approach. Our approach is enabling the delivery of sustainable, infrastructure rich new communities which includes investment in new schools, strategic roads, neighbourhood centres, sports hubs and improved public transport. Through the planning process, WBC aims to maintain and improve the current PROW network and create new access where possible.

Objective	Action	Monitoring	Timescale	Resources	Partnerships	Strategic links	
6.1 Obtain funding from developers & grant bodies to improve countryside access	(a)	Ensure proposed routes and ROWIP objectives are incorporated in the Local Plan		Short term	Existing	WBC Planning	Local Plan
	(b)	Secure a committed amount of funds per new household from developers towards countryside access improvements (Planning Advice Note 2)	Every 2 years monitor the level of proposed routes and improvements that have been implemented	Short term	Existing	WBC Planning	Core Strategy MDD / CC03
	(c)	Secure access improvements through appropriate development proposals		Ongoing	Existing	WBC Planning	Local Plan Core Strategy MDD / CC03
	(d)	Establish sound evidence and justification for access requirements for developers		Short term	Existing	WBC Planning	Local Plan Core Strategy MDD / CC03
	(e)	Develop guidance notes for planners and developers		Short term	Existing	WBC Planning	
6.2 Ensure development does not result in dead-end or extinguished paths	Monitor DMMO and PPO applications to ensure no paths become dead-ends or are extinguished with no new route		Ongoing	Existing	WBC Planning	Core Strategy MDD / CC03	

6.3 Ensure development does not adversely affect existing PROWs <i>Links with SOA5.4</i>	(a)	Respond to all planning applications that materially affect rights of way and ensure case specific informatives and/or conditions are included as part of planning consents where appropriate		Ongoing	Existing	WBC Planning	Local Plan Core Strategy MDD / CC03
	(b)	Monitor developments closely to ensure that paths do not suffer encroachment and developers pay for any damage done during a development	Monitor cases of encroachment and damage as a result of development	Ongoing	Existing	WBC Planning	