

Appendix 4

RIGHTS OF WAY IMPROVEMENT PLAN 2012 - 2017 REVIEW

ROWIP aim - 1. Improve management of the rights of way network

1.1 Develop a structured, pro-active approach to rights of way network management, based on targeting and prioritisation of resources

| | Outcome | Review |
|---|----------------------|---|
| a. Specify and prioritise seasonal vegetation clearance (SVC) programme in collaboration with parish councils and user groups | Target met | Area officers will be review their area SVC cuts annually and decide on any removals or additions for future contracts, basing their decisions on survey results. Important to maintain dialogue with Parishes. Roll over into ROWIP 3. |
| b. Carry out programme of works to byway network arising from the 2011 management plan | Target met | Forty Foot Lane between Santa Pod and railway bridge has been relandscaped and is now fully accessible. Worked with landowners adjacent to Forty Foot Lane to try and restrict illegal access to the Lane and arable land. Sandye Lane has had some surface improvements throught the wooded area. White Lane has had some further surface treatment through the wooded area. Some tree work completed for Scotts Street to open the lane to try and aid the drainage. Clearance works programmed for the Farndish section of Farndish Lane. Farndish Lane bridge will be replaced 2017. Proposed surface improvements to Cross End Lane, Dawes Field Road and Yelow Lane. Byways managemen can be considered a controvesial and expensive priority. Roll over into ROWIP 3. |
| c. Review bridle gates to consider removal or replacement of 10 structures per year with assistance of landowners and volunteers | Target met | Keep Parishes informed. Need to consider user priorities and links. Works are identified from ongoing Parish condition surveys. Roll over into ROWIP 3. |
| d. Replace 10 bridleway sleeper bridges with culverts per year | Target partially met | Keep Parishes informed. Need to consider user priorities and strategic links. Works are identified from ongoing Parish condition surveys. Roll over into ROWIP 3. |
| e. Carry out a rolling annual inspection and condition survey over one third of the rights of way network per year and share results with users | Target partially met | First 3 year programme to be completed in September 2017. Data informs management programmes. Roll over into ROWIP 3. |
| F. Compile list of bridges to be inspected and integrate with Highways bridge inspection process | Target met | First phase complete. Highways structural engineers started programme of repairs. Survey data informs capital programme. Roll over into ROWIP 3. |
| g. List and inspect those smaller structures not covered by Highways bridge inspection process | Target partially met | Smaller structures and sleeper bridges condition arising from Parish surveys. Programme repairs based on public safety, user priorities and strategic links. Roll over into ROWIP 3. |

1.2 Improve accessibility works to structures and rights of way signage and waymarking

| | | |
|--|------------|---|
| a. Deliver a rolling programme of erecting signposts with destination and distance information and yellow topped 'Hi-Vis' way markers (targeting 9 parishes per annum) | Target met | All WMP's installed are now yellow topped, apart from specific exceptional circumstances. The destination Sign Post arms have been ordered and are in stock at LFR depot. Programme for installation and repairs arising from Parish surveys. Volunteers tasks have installed many WMPs throughout Borough and will continue to do so. Keep Parishes informed. Need to consider user priorities and prioritise promoted routes. Most cost effective amd popular improvement to date. Roll over into ROWIP 3. |
| b. Work with landowners to remove 30 stiles or upgrade 30 existing gate structures to easy access standard per year (targeting 9 parishes per annum) | Target met | Parish surveys inform structure condition. Always aim to install easy access structures where possible. However new trend emerging of demand from land owners to ininstall more structures to minimise impact of illegal use by motorcycles and Quads. Must ensure these incoorporate ease of use features. Roll over into ROWIP 3. |

1.3 Invest in capital asset management system for rights of way

| | | |
|---|----------------------|--|
| a. Develop a capital asset investment programme based on condition survey and assessment of key assets (bridges/ surfaced paths, etc) | Target partially met | Still developing a ROW asset management system linked to Highways asset management. Despite having no ROW capital budget we have still earmarked and organised larger projects (such as the Pinchmill bridges, Chawston bridge, Byway works, Ravensden culvert etc.) when Highways funds have become available. We will continue to work this way moving forward until programmes are finalised. Need to involve BoBLAF in annual review of propose ROW capital programme priorities. Roll over into ROWIP 3. |
| b. Install revetments to 20 metres of footpath adjacent to River ouse at Roxton | Target not met | No progress. Project still reamins aspirational and subject to Environment Agency constraints..Major project which comes with some risks and disruption. Aspirational Project. |
| c. Replace/upgrade Kempston back channel bridge | Target not met | The bridge was surveyed by Amey in March 2016 and small remedial works were recommended. Then in summer 2016 the BBC structures engineer looked at it and said the poor state was terminal. Engineering plan to replace it in due course some time in 2017. Need to request the bridge is suitable for bikes and look to upgrade the FP to BW as it provides a strategic link to the new Country Park area. Roll over into ROWIP 3. |

| | | |
|--|----------------|--|
| d. Deliver a programme of access improvements in Bedford River Valley Park (BRVP) linked to BRVP framework plan | Target met | The ROW anomalies have all been rectified and there is now a public BW running around the entirety of BRVP, with BW links to Renhold, Bedford and Willington/Great Barford, allowing horses, cyclists and walkers to enjoy the route. Development of BRVP ongoing possible access improvements arising from Gravel extraction restoration schemes in the area. |
| 1.4 Develop a system for recruiting and managing volunteers in the protection and management of rights of way | | |
| a. Develop and support volunteer engagement in reporting problems and undertaking basic routine maintenance tasks | Target met | Working in collaboration with the Ramblers established regular monthly practical volunteers task which also contributes towards the RA "Ripple" programme. Tools and equipment purchased which is also shared with community volunteers e.g Thurleigh Environmental Group. Continued support for Wilstead P3 group. Volunteering programme continues. Need to investigate how we can improve supervision and programming of tasks. Trained volunteers could complement work of ROW Officers and free up some time. This is seen as a priority especially in keeping the useable PRoW network in good order. Parish based. Roll over into ROWIP 3. |
| b. Pilot use of CAMS volunteers module for Borough wide bridleways survey and programme work tasks | Target met | Continuing to add Vols to CAMS database, condition survey data entered into database to create job sheets or Vols tasks. Whole Parish based programmes for survey. The volunteer input complements the whole Parish surveys being carried out by staff. Roll over into ROWIP 3. |
| c. Train volunteers to assist in updating the ROW network condition survey | Target met | Trained large group of volunteers to carry out paper based network condition survey. Consider new training programme to make use of digital technologies and link with the Ramblers "Big Pathwatch". Could be groups of local Parish based Volunteers. Roll over into ROWIP 3. |
| ROWIP aim 2. Increase community use and enjoyment of the rights of way network | | |
| 2.1 Market rights of way network to sustain existing and attract new users | | |
| | Outcome | Review |
| a. Promote benefits of rights of way through a marketing plan | Target not met | Access Development was stopped through restructuring. More people must be made aware of the importance of the network. Reaching RoWIP targets and regular contact with Parish Councils will help. |
| b. Review all promoted walks and rides and produce a recreational routes policy | Target not met | Access Development was stopped through restructuring. Could be considered lower priority in short term. Do need to sort out future of the Ouse Valley Way. |
| c. Develop and deliver a programme of targeted rights of way promotional material, events and activities | Target met | Supporting Ramblers Walking festival and British Horse Society leisure rides 2015-2017. Supporting events such as the Walking Festival, Leisure Rides and publishing walks and rides through LetsGo! Will raise the profile of the RoW network. Roll over into ROWIP 3. |
| d. Maximise use of digital technology to promote rights of way. | Target met | Using Social Media - Facebook and Twitter. Ongoing. Need to make use of opportunities as they arise. Roll over into ROWIP 3. |
| e. Put all promoted walks information on Let's Go website | Target met | Done. New walks added as they are developed. Must keep up dated. Roll over into ROWIP 3. |
| 2.2 Support community led initiatives such as health walks, guided walks/ rides and events | | |
| a. Support 10 health walks in the Borough through walk leader training, improved infrastructure, signage and promotion | Target met | ROW only funded facilitation by BRCC of Walking for Health. Can only deliver this through Partnership working. Still remains an important programme but must secure resources to facilitate this. |
| 2.3 Support promoted route development/ management linked to marketing plan, rural business development and visitor attractions | | |
| a. Develop and promote John Bunyan trail with Ramblers Association and Economic Development team | Target met | Bunyan Trail Waymarked by Ramblers volunteers. Permissive path Licence to Bunyan birthplace agreed, commence improvement works. Ongoing development. |
| b. Research demand/ need for x-country mountain biking route targeting Green Lane network/ bridleways. | Target not met | No progress - no access development. Work with user groups and Cycling and Walking Officer in Highways to start project. Aspirational Project. |
| c. Promote 6 themed walks/rides per year using digital technology | Target not met | Some routes identified and added to website, Let's Go and through Social Media. Must be prioritised and targets set. Aspirational Project. |

2.4 Develop a system for managing improved customer contact

| | | |
|---|----------------------|--|
| a. Improve and extend content on Rights of Way interactive web site | Target not met | No progress due to limited access development. Ongoing updates where possible but there have been technical limitations. New Borough Council Digital Working Model should see some progress on this in 2017. |
| b. Direct and manage all Rights of Way customer issues through Highways Help Desk | Target partially met | Initial work with Customer Services to facilitate issue reporting and integrate with Insight management system. Started to explore our requirements with Customer care team and created guidelines ofr operative with "Insight" codes for defects/issues reorted.Will require major changes in working practices and retraining staff acroos the service. New Borough Council Digital Working Model should see some progress on this in 2017. |

ROWIP aim 3. Extend and enhance the Rights of Way network

3.1 Reduce rights of way network fragmentation

| | Outcome | Review |
|--|----------------------|--|
| a. Open 15 kilometres of previously unusable path through resolution of Definitive Map anomalies by 2016 | Target not met | Continue to open up RoW network. Take into account 2026 cut off date. Priority policy of resolution should be reviewed to ensure urgency is given to those cases that will enhance the network and open up new sections of path. Realistic targets for completion must be given for each of the next 3 years. Give priorities to unrecorded not unused paths. This links to "drive to 2026 and the excluded area projects". Should this be about the quality and not the quantity of the links. Aspirational Project. |
| b. Quantify, identify and cost out routes which could offer benefits to reduce fragmentation through Public Path Orders | Target not met | Review statement of priorities to Identify quick wins with maximum benefit value and agree DM work programme. Take into account that paths may be lost and ways to resolve anomalies will be reduced at the 2026 cut-off date, and prioritise such paths/potential paths. As a general principal the relative cost of each target should be identified and shown how it is spread across the RoWIP period. User Groups and Parish Councils should be consulted on the potential routes and a plan produced following this giving the schedule of works. This links to "drive to 2026 and the excluded area projects". Should this be about the quality and not the quantity of the links. |
| c. Work with Highways to develop an action plan to improve strategic/significant road crossings and maximise access opportunities associated with management of verges | Target not met | Having joined Highways work jointly to scope programme and share data sets. This has to be a partnership approach with Highways, HE, User groups and Parishes to ensure success. Could be considered a lower priority in short term. Need to work with Walking and Cycling officer to develop this. Aspirational Project. |
| d. Produce Definitive Map for excluded (not mapped) areas of Bedford Borough | Target partially met | This is a new project for 2017 - will recruit staff and train volunteers. There are many unrecorded rights of way in the excluded area. A definitive map is therefore essential before 2026. This is an important piece of work and there should be a priority in 2017 - 2020 . Project plan/methodology has been developed and a timeframe mapped out. This plan should be realistic taking into account the expected workload on other projects by the officers involved. Roll over into ROWIP 3. |
| e. Managing the drive to 2026 and closing the Definitive Map | Target partially met | There are possibly many unrecorded rights of way in the Borough area. An up to date definitive map is therefore essential before 2026. The excluded area map will begin this by looking for some "legal events" in the excluded area (old diversion orders etc), and data from the List of Streets could be used to then publish a DM with those events/streets recorded. Then go about the serious business of adding paths and getting a volunteer base to assist with research. The final DM for the whole borough will eventually incorporate these initial routes and any subsequent routes which are added from evidence. The increased staff resource dedicated to DM work should ensure progress is made on these projects. Roll over into ROWIP 3. |

3.2 Link, improve and extend National Cycle Network Route 51 with rights of way network

| | | |
|---|----------------------|---|
| b. Support development of NCN Route 51 (Bedford- Sandy) to NCN standard and adoption/ maintenance as public highway | Target partially met | Ongoing. New route sections added as they arise from development opportunities. These are being dedicated as bridleways to ensure multi user functionality as far as possible and ensure they are maintained by the Borough Council. Roll over into ROWIP 3. |
| c. Support development of NCN Route 51 (Bedford-Marston Moretaine) realignment project and adoption/maintenance as public highway | Target partially met | Working with BBC teams (estates, planning, transport, engineering etc.), Sustrans, Waterways trust and MVFC to create a surfaced BW from Bedford to Marston Vale that NCN51 can run along. Working group meeting held approx. every 3 months. See above. Roll over into ROWIP 3. |

3.3 Integrate rights of way into emerging strategic plans and maximise planning gain

| | | |
|---|----------------------|---|
| a. Produce training/ guidance for planners and developers on managing and improving rights of way through the planning system | Target not met | Identify lead officer, Use new Borough Plan and CIL process opportunities to explain value of ROWs - make use of support from LAF document - Digital working and IDOX. Could be possible to identify RoW improvements paid for with developer support. Need to work in collaboration with Planning Policy team and Parish Councils. RoW improvements need to be spelt out in any Neighbourhood Plans as well. Could be opportunities to develop this with expanded ROW Legal and Technical Team. |
| b. Deliver a programme of access improvements in Bedford River Valley Park (BRVP) linked to BRVP framework plan | Target met | Loop Bridleway dedication complete. Talk to BBC Estates and revisit Grange Farm rationalisation scheme, Renhold S106 improvements and future mineral workings linking back to BRVP framework plan. |
| c. Improve access to/ within Biddenham Loop country park | Target partially met | Access improvements arising from development. Explore access opportunities arising from new Bypass route. Aspirational Project. |
| d. Undertake Wixams / North Marston Vale ROW review and implement access plan | Target not met | Nominate lead officer, scope plan. Liaise with Forest of Marston Vale and BBC Cycling and Walking Officer. Not considered short term priority for ROW. |
| 3.4 Implement Green Wheel access improvements to achieve 20 km of total route by 2016 | | |