

Walsall Borough's Rights of Way Improvement Plan

Summary Version – June 2008



Walsall Council

Foreword

Public rights of way are an important local amenity. They can play a vital role in supporting local neighbourhoods, through the opportunities they provide for access to key local services, amenities and the countryside. They need to be preserved and improved for two main reasons:

- Firstly, so that they meet the present and likely future needs of this area; and
- Secondly, to encourage better use of the network, particularly more walking, horse riding and cycling.

Walsall Borough's Rights of Way Improvement Plan outlines the local importance of the public rights of way network in the borough, along with opportunities for improvements. It aims to provide an action plan which outlines weaknesses or problems in the current provision and provides a robust programme of improvements to be undertaken.

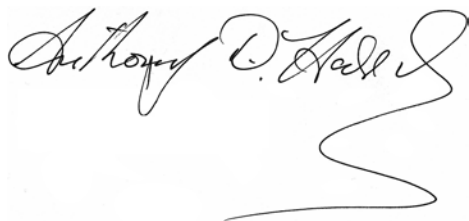
We have consulted residents and visitors of Walsall to gain their views on what they like and dislike about public rights of way in the Borough of Walsall. The condition and use of our public rights of way network was examined, along with key strategic local regional and national policies and strategies. We have also considered requests for changes to our network of public rights of way.

From the views and information collated we were able to draw a list of priorities for making walking, cycling and horse riding safer and easier for residents and visitors to Walsall borough. This formed the basis of the action plan which sets out proposals to improve the network and maintain it better, including linking public rights of way with pedestrian-friendly streets, safe crossings and routes across parks and open spaces. The plan will also help us to improve access for people who have mobility problems and provide an opportunity for a better network for our dedicated walkers, cyclists and horse riders.

These measures will make it easier and more attractive for people of all abilities to improve their health by cycling, walking or horse riding for leisure and for travel to work, school's, shops and other local facilities. Improving the extensive public rights of way network and links with other areas in neighbouring councils will benefit the whole of the community.

By creating opportunities for sustainable travel modes to become part of our everyday lives, we will be helping to reduce the impact on our environment by cutting down the CO2 carbon footprint for every individual who uses the network of public rights of way.

This plan sets out a long term programme of improvements subject to availability of resources. We will review the proposals periodically in line with other local and national policies to ensure they continue to meet the needs of the people of Walsall.



Councillor Anthony Harris
Portfolio Holder for the Environment

Summary

All local authorities within England and Wales have a statutory duty under the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000 to produce a Rights of Way Improvement Plan. It must outline potential improvements to public rights of way which are needed to meet present and future needs of both residents and visitors, with particular focus upon the needs of the mobility or visually impaired.

Walsall Council, as highway authority for the area manages a network of public rights of way, which comprises those which are recorded on the definitive map and statement and list of streets. These form the core network of public rights of way in the borough. This comprises footpaths, bridle paths, restricted byways and byways open to all traffic, which can be used by walkers and horse riders primarily, but may have a right of access for cyclists, horse drawn carriages or occasionally motor propelled vehicles, dependent upon their classification. They generally include off road routes such as urban alleyways or routes across parks and open spaces.

There are also a number of other types of routes, which may be the responsibility of third parties that can also play an important role in terms of access to local amenities and the countryside. This includes, for example, canal towpaths, promoted routes such as the Beacon Way, and permissive routes across privately owned land. Improvements to the core network of highways paths is the core focus for improvements outlined within Walsall Borough's Rights of Way Improvement Plan, but wherever possible improvements will be made which will promote linkages to the wider network.

Investigation into the current public rights of way network, including maintenance regimes, inspections and improvement programmes, has highlighted a number of potential weaknesses and areas for improvement. Further issues have been highlighted during consultation with rights of way users. A newsletter and survey was distributed during July and August 2007, which was published in local press and on the councils website and invited views on both positive and negative aspects of our network. This was supported by a structured programme of presentations with various user groups and interested parties, which was undertaken between July and December 2007. A review of local, regional and national strategies, along with relevant legislation has been undertaken to ensure proposals for actions are aligned with key proposals and statutory duties.

An action plan and ten themes have been introduced based upon the above findings. Each theme has introduced an overall aim and robust actions for improvement. Key partners and resources which will be required to deliver these actions are detailed within the following pages. Please note this is not an exhaustive list. If you have suggestions for partners or would like your details to be added please contact us as detailed below.

Walsall Borough's Rights of Way Improvement Plan was adopted as approved council policy by council on the 21 April 2008. Walsall Borough's Rights of Way Improvement Plan must be reviewed within 10 years of approval in accordance with statutory requirements. Specific actions outlined will be reviewed and monitored on a periodical basis.

Consultation on the document itself has now ended. Despite this further consultation is proposed on the delivery of specific improvements to Walsall Borough's Public rights of way network and its maintenance, as outlined within the 10 themes for action. If you would like to receive details of consultation on specific actions, please contact us to register your interest, at:

Public Rights of Way

Engineering and Transportation
Walsall Council
Civic Centre
Darwall Street
Walsall
WS1 1DG
Fax: 01922 653780
E-mail: publicrightsofway@walsall.gov.uk

Action Plan

Information collected on public rights of way has highlighted a number of local issues which can be categorised into the following themes:

Theme 1 – Improved access for all

There is a need to improve disabled access not only to meet the requirements of the Disability Discrimination Act 1995, but also to ensure that with an ageing population, Walsall borough's public rights of way network can meet the future needs of residents and visitors. Different user groups have distinct needs and preferences so improvements to the existing public rights of way are needed in line with the needs of all users, including the local community and visitors.

Aim – To improve access for all users, with particular emphasis on improving access for the mobility and visually impaired.

Actions	Tasks	Staff time and partnership involvement	Costs	Potential source(s) of funding	Timescale
1. Improved Access to Public Rights of Way for all user groups					
1. Improve access for all users, with particular emphasis on improving access for the mobility or visually impaired	1.1 Develop audit criteria with assistance of Disability Forum and proofing group	Some additional public rights of way staff time. Internal support of Countryside, Leisure and Equalities. Potential to develop criteria with volunteers including Local Access Forum Members, Walk Leaders, Ramblers Association, and Disability Forum & Proofing Group	Under £5,000	Can be covered by existing resources	1-5 years
	1.2 Undertake audit of all public rights of way	As above	Under £5,000	As above	1-5 years
	1.3 Develop programme of improvements in line with findings of audit	Public rights of way staff time. May require involvement of Countryside, Leisure and Equalities staff during development of solutions. Will require landowner agreement/support. Potential to involve probation services, Youth Offending Service, Forest of Mercia and other volunteers in installation of improvements will be investigated. Links with NHS PCT to be investigated	Over £20,000	Additional funding required to meet costs. Investigate funding through Aggregates Levy or Landfill Tax, Local Area Agreements or Multi-Area Agreements. Potential to fund physical improvements by pooling and aligning resources from appropriate service area, or with partner organisations	5-10 years

Theme 2 – Regeneration

The borough of Walsall currently experiences areas of deprivation higher than the national average and has a high proportion of land which is ear-marked for strategic regeneration. This represents an opportunity to secure improvements to existing public rights of way, or to create new routes within the priority regeneration areas. This will ensure that the public rights of way network is improved to meet the changing use of the area and to improve connectivity between new housing, industry and local amenities.

Aim – To ensure that improvements to existing public rights of way and creation of new routes are secured during regeneration of priority areas to meet present and future demand.

Actions	Tasks	Staff time and partnership involvement	Costs	Potential source(s) of funding	Timescale
2. Regeneration					
2. Secure improvements to existing public rights of way and create new routes during regeneration and development of key sites to ensure that present and future needs are met	2.1 Review current links between public rights of way and planning and regeneration services and identify scope for improvements to existing or creation of new public rights of way during ongoing regeneration and development	Public rights of way staff time. Will require support of officers in highways development control, planning and regeneration services	Under £5,000	Can be covered by existing resources	1-5 years
	2.2 Introduce improved systems for commenting on planning applications and securing improvements to public rights of way, which co-ordinate with highways development control and strategic aims e.g. the UDP	Public rights of way staff time. Will require support of officers in highways development control, planning and regeneration services	Under £5,000	As above	1-5 years
	2.3 Improve information for potential developers on diversion, creation or extinguishment of public rights of way, including information on the legal order processes and pricing	Public rights of way staff time. Will require support of officers in highways development control, planning and regeneration services	Under £5,000	As above	1-5 years
	2.4 Pursue necessary legal orders, advise on construction and implement physical improvements to the network. Legal support also required	Public rights of way staff time. Will require legal support, and possibly support of officers in highways development control, planning and regeneration services	Over £20,000	Construction and legal order costs are typically met by the developer. Section 106 funding, Landfill Tax credits or commercial sponsorship will be investigated in cases where this is not possible	Ongoing

Theme 3 – Definitive Map and Statement

Public rights of way are currently recorded in two different ways; on the Definitive Map and Statement and on the list of streets. At present the Definitive Map and Statement is divided into nine surveying authority areas, which are conversant with the old district boundaries and changes to the borough boundary. Adopted footpaths recorded on the list of streets are not currently recorded on the definitive map. Some of the public rights of way shown on these two documents are currently inaccurate, so procedures to keep the Definitive Map and Statement up to date need to be improved. Investigation into the extent of the problem will be needed initially, followed by a review of procedures and implementation of priority based programme of actions to bring the Definitive Map and Statement up to date.

Aim – To improve procedures for updating the Definitive Map and Statement and ensure that they are up to date.

Actions	Tasks	Staff time and partnership involvement	Costs	Potential source(s) of funding	Timescale
3. Definitive Map and Statement					
3. Improve procedures for updating the Definitive Map and Statement and ensure they are up to date and effectively maintained.	3.1 Review definitive map and statement, including diversion extinguishment or creation orders which have been undertaken, to identify any discrepancies.	Public Rights of Way legal services - will require increased legal support.	Under £5,000	Can be met by existing resources.	1-5 years
	3.2 Review adopted footpaths on list of streets and identify whether these need to be added onto the definitive map and processes which would need to be followed.	Public Rights of Way legal services - will require increased legal support.	Under £5,000	Can be met by existing resources.	1-5 years
	3.3 Investigate consolidation of definitive map from nine surveying authority areas into one borough wide map and statement.	Public Rights of Way legal services - will require increased legal support.	Between £5,000 and £20,000	Additional funding for legal costs. Strategic Choices, Local Area Agreements (LAA) or Multi Area Agreements (MAA)	5-10 years
	3.4 Implementation of all necessary Orders including Definitive Map Modification Orders and Consolidation.	Public Rights of Way legal services - will require increased legal support.	Over £20,000	Additional funding for legal costs. Strategic Choices, Local Area Agreements (LAA) or Multi Area Agreements (MAA)	Modification orders-ongoing, Consolidation 10-15 years

Theme 4 – Create new public rights of way

There is a clear requirement for creation of new public rights of way to meet demand from certain user groups in certain areas of the borough. For example, consultation has identified a clear need for more bridle paths, shared use routes for cycling and walking and additional footpaths to improve links between existing public rights of way. Current safer routes to school work and school travel plan development is allowing identification of areas where safe off-road routes for walking and cycling for access into schools is required. The importance of developing cross boundary routes by working with neighbouring authorities is also paramount.

Aim – To create new public rights of way which will strengthen links to local amenities and improve connectivity of the existing network.

Actions	Tasks	Staff time and partnership involvement	Costs	Potential source(s) of funding	Timescale
4. Create New Public Rights of Way					
4. Create new public rights of way which will strengthen links to local amenities and improve connectivity of the local network	4.1 Identify areas for creation of new public rights of way for walking, cycling and horse riding	Local Access Forum members Local Neighbourhood Partnership / Community Action Groups, Leisure and Countryside Services, Planning and Regeneration Services	Under £5,000	Can be covered by existing resources	1-5 years
	4.2 Prioritise routes	Public rights of way, Local Access Forum members	Under £5,000	Can be covered by existing resources	1-5 years
	4.3 Develop and publish Register of Definitive Map modification orders	Public rights of way officers, ISS or Legal support may be required	Under £5,000	Can be covered by existing resources	1-5 years
	4.4 Pursue Definitive Map modification orders	Public rights of way officers. Legal support required	Over £20,000	Legal Order costs	5-10 years
	4.5 Install improvements required	Public rights of way officers. Investigate potential to work with Forest of Mercia, Probation Services, Youth Offending Service and NHS PCT for implementation of some of the improvements	Over £20,000	Existing resources will partly cover this. LAA, Landfill tax credits, section 106 funding, commercial sponsorship to be investigated	5-10 years

Theme 5 – Information provision for users of the network

Availability of information on public rights of way within the borough of Walsall is currently poor. Various leaflets are produced to promote public rights of way, but these are concentrated in specific locations, such as parks and nature reserves, or focus upon one user group only. There is considerable scope to introduce improved and co-ordinated information on public rights of way.

Improved information provision, including leaflets and on-line information, which details public rights of way and any barriers to access along the route, will enable potential users to make informed decisions about whether the route is suitable for their use. There is potential to link promotion of public rights of way in the borough into the newly developed national school travelwise database, and to introduce a new borough-specific geographical information system on the Walsall Council website. Both options are to be investigated.

On-route information was reported to be problematic in some locations and this is supported by findings of routing inspections. Installation of signs and way markers is important to allow users to clearly follow the route of the public right of way and to help to prevent trespass. Regular inspections and installation is important, as signs and way markers can often be subject to vandalism, wear and tear or damage by vehicles. Where there are shared use routes, signs are important to inform users of the presence of others. There is also scope to introduce route specific information on signs, including a reference number to enable easy identification of locations where problems are identified.

There is also considerable scope to raise the profile and awareness of public rights of way procedures and practices. Improvement of on-line information or production of leaflets/ fact sheets would raise the profile of our work and outline how others can become involved. Information on the rights of way improvement plan, diversion or extinguishment orders, public path creation orders, crime prevention, the role of Walsall's Local Access Forum and problem reporting are all areas which may benefit from improved information.

Aim – To introduce improved and co-ordinated information, which promotes and encourages all users to access public rights of way, and raises the profile, awareness and understanding of our roles.

Actions	Tasks	Staff time and partnership involvement	Costs	Potential source(s) of funding	Timescale
5. Information provision and promotion					
5. Introduce improved and co-ordinated information, promoting and encouraging use of public rights of way by all, particularly focusing upon the needs of the mobility or visually impaired	5.1 Develop on line information investigate using Travelwise and / or Geographical Information System (Similar to planning portal) then implement	Public rights of way officers with support from countryside services, print and design, leisure services and information system support	Under £5,000	Can be covered by existing resources	1-5 years
	5.2 Develop public rights of way leaflets containing route specific information which highlights potential barriers to access, enabling users to determine suitability of the route for their use	Potential to involve Forest of Mercia to produce co-ordinated information	£5,000-£20,000	Can mainly be covered by existing resources. Investigate potential to pool resources with other service areas and external organisations	5-10 years
	5.3 Improved on site information including signs and way marking	Potential to involve Local Access forum members or other voluntary/ community organisations to assist with numbering signs	£5,000-£20,000 (annual commitment likely to be required)	As above	1-5 years
	5.4 Improve information on the key roles of public rights of way	Develop promotional leaflets or guidance sheets, web-based information and newsletters. Review topics highlighted for promotion, which include the Rights of Way Improvement Plan, searches, diversion, extinguishment and modification orders, Local Access Forum, crime prevention and problem reporting to ensure all key areas are included	£5,000-£20,000	Can be covered by existing resources	1-5 years

Theme 6 – Inspections and maintenance

Not all public rights of way are inspected on a regular basis and with the abolition of Best Value Performance Indicator 178 which records the ease of use of public rights of way in the borough, there is a possibility that routine inspections may become less of a priority. However, it is considered important that routine inspections, similar to BVPI 178 surveys, are continued to allow an understanding of the overall condition of the rights of way network which can in turn be used for monitoring effectiveness of improvements. Inspections will also allow identification of routes which require improvements to ensure public safety, enable preventative maintenance and ensure that potential problems are identified and resolved.

There is currently a highways maintenance and procurement strategy in development which will introduce improved inspections for public rights of way in the borough. There is also scope to introduce improved clearance and maintenance on some of the more rural rights of way in the borough, by working with external partners including Forest of Mercia.

Aim – To review current maintenance and inspection procedures (pending introduction of the new maintenance and procurement strategy) and to investigate the scope for further improvements.

Actions	Tasks	Staff time and partnership involvement	Costs	Potential source(s) of funding	Timescale
6. Inspections and Maintenance					
6. Review maintenance and inspection regimes (pending introduction of the new maintenance procurement strategy) and investigate the scope for further improvements	6.1 Review Highways Maintenance and procurement strategy	Public rights of way staff time. Potential to involve Local Access Forum members	Under £5,000	Can be covered by existing resources	1-5 years
	6.2 Introduce new in house inspections, similar to Best Value Performance Indicator 178	Public rights of way staff time. Potential to involve Local Access Forum members, countryside and leisure services, external organisations such as Forest of Mercia	£5,000-£20,000	Can mainly be covered by existing resources. Investigate potential to pool resources with other service areas and external organisations	1-5 years
	6.3 Investigate potential sources for clearance of Rural Public Rights of Way and their maintenance.	Public rights of way staff time. Potential to involve Local Access Forum members, countryside and leisure services, external organisations such as Forest of Mercia	£5,000-£20,000 (annual funding needed)	As above	1-5 years
	6.4 Introduce regular cleaning and tidying of Public Rights of Way within the borough	Investigate the use of the Probation Service or volunteers to keep Public Rights of Way clean and tidy	£5,000-£20,000 (annual funding needed)	As above	1-5 years
	6.5 Review and improve current access land management practices	Public rights of way staff time. Legal service and leisure and countryside service involvement is required, along with Local Access Forum	£5,000-£20,000	As above	5-10 years

Theme 7 – Rationalization of the existing public rights of way network

In several of Walsall borough's open spaces, there are differences between the definitive line of the route and as walked or promoted route. The inherent effect of this is that definitive routes have fallen out of use in favour of alternative routes. It will be necessary to carry out investigation into the extent of this problem and to rationalise the network across each of the borough's open spaces to ensure that definitive routes match with the used or promoted routes. Each affected site will be very different by nature, so will be considered on a case by case basis.

Aim – To investigate potential for re-aligning definitive routes with promoted and as walked routes, allowing pooling of resources for improvements and providing a more joined up network.

Actions	Tasks	Staff time and partnership involvement	Costs	Potential source(s) of funding	Timescale
7. Rationalisation of the existing public rights of way network					
7. Investigate potential for re-aligning definitive routes with promoted and as walked routes, allowing for provision of a more joined up network and pooling of resources	7.1 Review all promoted walks across countryside services sites, in the borough, and how well they match definitive routes. Each area is to be reviewed individually on a prioritised basis	7.1 Public Rights of Way, with involvement of Countryside Services and Leisure Services. Potential to involve Local Access Forum members, Walk Leaders "Friends of" groups and other user groups. Investigate potential to work with NHS PCT	Under £5,000	Can be covered by existing resources	1-5 years
	7.2 Introduce a program to rationalise network bringing promoted route in line with definitive routes. This will include a program of diversion, extinguishment and modification orders, followed by infrastructure improvements	7.2 Legal orders will require Legal Services support potential to pool resources from other service areas to achieve high standard of overall improvements and co-ordinated approach to infrastructure	Over £20,000	Additional funding required to meet legal costs. Investigate funding through Aggregates Levy or Landfill Tax, Local Area Agreements or Multi-Area Agreements. Potential to fund physical improvements by pooling and aligning resources from appropriate service areas to be investigated. Additional funding essential to allow project to go ahead. Investigate other partner funding, e.g. NHS PCT	5-15 years (specific areas to be implemented on a case by case basis)

Theme 8 – Crime and anti social behaviour

Walsall Council has already introduced a policy to deal with crime and anti social behaviour on public rights of way, which has had some successes. Issues of crime and anti social behaviour continues to be a key concern of the community of Walsall, affecting mainly urban alleyways. The policy is due to be reviewed with the introduction of Gating Orders under the Clean Neighbourhoods and Environment Act, 2006. Current procedures and practices implemented with the Safer Walsall Borough Partnership will continue to be used to address the problems of crime and anti social behaviour. Any problems with implementation experienced previously will be addressed during the policy review.

Aim – To review existing crime prevention and “alley gating” procedures on public rights of way, particularly focusing upon revision of the current policy to include implementation of new Gating Orders.

Actions	Tasks	Staff time and partnership involvement	Costs	Potential source(s) of funding	Timescale
8. Crime and Anti-social behaviour					
8. Review existing crime prevention and “alley-gating” procedures on public rights of way, particularly focusing upon revision of the current policy to include implementation of new Gating Orders	8.1 Review policy following introduction of Gating Orders	Public rights of way, with support of Safer Walsall Borough Partnership and Legal Services. Local Access Forum involvement also required	Under £5,000	Capital funding until March 2009 (managed by SWBP). Additional funding required after this, examples include Local Area Agreements or Multi Area Agreements	1-5 years
	8.2 Continue to support Safer Walsall Borough Partnership's crime and anti-social behaviour measures implemented on public rights of way	Public rights of way, Safer Walsall Borough Partnership, Local Neighbourhood Partnerships and Community Action Groups	£5,000-£20,000 (ongoing annual costs likely to be required)	As Above	1-5 years, ongoing if problems persist
	8.3 Improve Information for Councillors, Local Neighbourhood Partnership and Community Action Groups on “Alley gating” schemes	8.3 Safer Walsall Borough Partnership, Community Action Groups, Local Neighbourhood Partnerships and Local Access Forum members to be consulted	£5,000-£20,000	As Above	1-5 years

Theme 9 – Improvements to existing public rights of way

Within the borough of Walsall, funding for maintaining and improving public rights of way has typically been low. This has resulted in a backlog of public rights of way which are in need of resurfacing or reconstruction work. Much progress has been made recently to improve public rights of way in line with the requirements of BVPI 178, which has received Local Area Agreement Funding. An increased number of footpaths have been resurfaced, cleared of vegetation or fly tipping, and received new signs or way marking. A notable improvement has been seen in several public rights of way in the borough, with some previously obstructed routes being brought back into use or significantly improved, promoting use. Continuation of improvements to public rights of way, post Local Area Agreement funding, which is currently secured until the end of March 2008, needs to be addressed.

There is only a limited amount of access land located within the borough, with several small pockets located to the North East. This can also play an important role in terms of promoting access for leisure and recreation including walking, cycling and horse riding. Progress made toward improvements to access land has been slow and there is considerable scope to improve accessibility of this.

Aim – To review and improve as necessary, current management and improvement programmes for public rights of way and access land, building upon the success of recent programmes.

Actions	Tasks	Staff time and partnership involvement	Costs	Potential source(s) of funding	Timescale
9. Improvements to existing public rights of way					
9. Review and amend as necessary, current improvement programmes for public rights of way to ensure continued improvements in line with users' needs	9.1 Review current improvement programmes, primarily the Local Area Agreements funded programme	Public rights of way officers, Walsall Borough Strategic Partnership, Planning and Regeneration, Highways Development Control, Leisure and Countryside Services. Potential to involve Local Neighbourhood Partnerships Community Action Groups and other local partners to assess the effectiveness of measures to date at addressing locally identified priorities	Under £5,000	Can be covered by existing resources	1-5 years
	9.2 Ensure continuation of improvements which are meeting key local priorities	Public rights of way officers, Walsall Borough Strategic Partnership, Planning and Regeneration, Highways Development Control, Leisure and Countryside Services. Potential to involve Local Neighbourhood Partnerships Community Action Groups and other local partners to assess the effectiveness of measures to date at addressing locally identified priorities	Over £20,000 (ongoing annual costs will be required)	Local Area Agreement funding currently secured until March 2008. Potential continuation until March 2009, other funding e.g. further Local Area Agreement or Multi Area Agreement to be investigated	1-5 years
	9.3 Develop robust enforcement procedures in line with requirements of the Highways Act 1980	Public rights of way officers, Walsall Borough Strategic Partnership, Planning and Regeneration, Highways Development Control, Leisure and Countryside Services. Potential to involve Local Neighbourhood Partnerships Community Action Groups and other local partners to assess the effectiveness of measures to date at addressing locally identified priorities	Under £5,000	Can be covered by existing resources	1-5 years

Theme 10 – Byways open to all traffic

All Roads Used as Public Paths have recently been reclassified as Restricted Byways, under the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000. Our definitive map and statement still shows them as Roads Used as Public Paths. There are ten Byways Open to All Traffic which were historically incorrectly recorded on Land Terrier maps as footpaths and have been managed incorrectly as a result of this. Investigation is required into the implications of this and a programme of actions is required to ensure that they are correctly recorded and brought up to an appropriate standard.

Aim – To investigate reclassification of roads used as public paths as restricted byways and previously incorrectly recorded byways open to all traffic and introduce a programme for reclassification and improvements

Actions	Tasks	Staff time and partnership involvement	Costs	Potential source(s) of funding	Timescale
10. Byways open to all traffic					
10. Investigate reclassification of roads used as public paths to restricted byways, and byways open to all traffic and introduce a programme for reclassification and improvement	10.1 Review all byways open to all traffic and roads used as public paths recorded on the definitive map and statement	Public rights of way officers, Legal support needed, potential to involve Local Access Forum Members	Under £5,000	Can mainly be covered by current resources	1-5 years
	10.2 Check legal processes or procedures for reclassification	As above	£5,000-£20,000	Can mainly be covered by current resources	1-5 years
	10.3 Identify physical improvements or legal orders which are required at each affected site and introduce a programme of planned improvements as necessary	As above	Over £20,000 (ongoing annual costs likely to be required)	Additional funding required for Legal costs and necessary improvements	5-15 years

Quick Wins

A number of quick wins have been introduced which are actions which will commence within the first 12 months of adoption of Walsall Borough's Rights of Way Improvement Plan as approved council policy. These will include

- Investigate and commence development of improved Geographical Information Systems on Plan Web
- Introduce audit criteria and a programme of accessibility audits, commence audit process
- Introduction of improved planned maintenance and inspections
- Development of enforcement procedures
- Review Situational Interventions (Alley Gating) Policy to include Gating Orders

Deliverability Issues

Actions outlined within the above action plan have currently been prioritised into actions for implementation in the short, medium and long term. Investigation into the deliverability of each of the actions has begun, and it will be necessary to further prioritise these actions giving consideration to key local priorities, along with factors which may affect deliverability such as availability of resources, meeting legal requirements, negotiation/agreement of third parties to implementation. The first stage in the deliverability of the above actions will therefore be to introduce a structured programme to ensure delivery within the specified time frames. This will be undertaken within 6 months from the endorsement of the final Rights of Way Improvement Plan and has been supported within the service plan for Engineering and Transportation.

Regular reviews and monitoring of specific actions will be undertaken in line with ongoing reviews including local transport plan monitoring, service planning and local area agreement/multi area agreement monitoring where applicable. Walsall Borough's Rights of Way Improvement Plan must be reviewed within 10 years of approval in accordance with statutory requirements. This document shall be reviewed not more than 10 years after its approval as approved council policy by council on 21 April 2008.

This improvement plan does not negate the need for consultation to be undertaken in relation to individual actions outlined. Further consultation in relation to specific actions will be undertaken with relevant parties, whenever applicable.

A list of potential partners is included within each of the ten action themes. This is not an exhaustive list and may be subject to change as a result of reviews and consultations undertaken.

Glossary

Public right of way A way over which the public have a right of access to pass and repass, primarily on foot, horse back, to lead a horse, or on bicycle and sometimes using motor propelled vehicles

Rights of Way Improvement Plan (ROWIP) Policy document which establishes a programme of actions to improve public rights of way and their maintenance

Definitive Map Legal map which provides conclusive evidence on the existence of public rights of way in the borough

Definitive Statement Legal statement which accompanies the definitive map and provides further conclusive evidence of the existence of public rights of way in the borough

List of Streets (Sometimes called the Road Register) Record which details all highways within the borough created through adoption agreements undertaken in accordance with the Highways Act 1980

Adopted Footpaths Public footpaths which are shown on the list of streets

Alley Gating Installation of gates to urban alleyways, for the purpose of reducing opportunities for crime and antisocial behaviour

Safer Walsall Borough Partnership Walsall's Crime and Disorder and Drug Misuse Reduction Partnership, established to improve working practices between partner organisations to reduce crime and anti social behaviour

Situational Intervention The term given to physical measures used to deter crime and anti social behaviour, for example installation of alley gating, vehicle barriers or fencing

Gating Orders A legal process which can be followed to authorise installation of gates on public rights of way to close them at certain times of the day to reduce anti social behaviour and crime

Diversion Order Legal process which must be followed to authorise diversion of a public right of way onto a new route. Until diverted using a legal order, the public right of way remains in existence on its current line

Extinguishment Order (Sometimes termed Stopping up Order) Legal process which must be followed to authorise extinguishment or closure of a public right of way. Until extinguished using a legal order, the public right of way remains in existence on its current line

Walsall Borough Strategic Partnership (WBSP) Partnership comprising organisations with a responsibility for service delivery, tasked with pooling and aligning resources to improve service delivery

Local Neighbourhood Partnership (LNP) Walsall borough is divided into 9 LNP areas which are local forums, established under the Walsall Borough Strategic Partnership with the aim of working with local residents to discuss and make progress on key community issues

Community Action Groups (CAG) Work alongside LNP's to identify local issues and priorities.

Local Access Forum (LAF) Advisory group comprising local rights of way users and land owners established to provide advice to the council on public rights of way issues

Best Value Performance Indicator 178 (BVPI 178) Performance indicator which measures the ease of use of public footpaths within the borough, which was used to collate information on the condition of footpaths and measure the council's performance against other authorities nationally.

Local Area Agreements (LAA) Funding stream, with a strong focus upon improving efficiency and value for money of service delivery. which may be applied for to assist with delivery of projects at a local borough wide level.

Multi Area Agreements (MAA) As Local Area Agreements, but with a focus projects implemented at a regional level.

NHS PCT (National Health Service Primary Care Trust) The local health care authority for the area.

Public Rights of Way

Engineering and Transportation Services
Walsall Council
Civic Centre
Walsall
West Midlands
WS1 1DG

Tel: 01922 652445
Fax: 01922 653780

Email: publicrightsofway@walsall.gov.uk
Website: www.walsall.gov.uk