

RIGHTS OF WAY COMMITTEE - 25TH JULY 2005

SUBJECT: PROVISION OF NEW BRIDLE ROUTES

REPORT BY: DIRECTOR OF ENVIRONMENT

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

1.1 To inform Committee of progress to date on bridle routes throughout the County Borough.

2. SUMMARY

2.1 Information on new and possible bridle routes.

3. LINKS TO STRATEGY

3.1 Regeneration - Beacons Group for Tourism. Developing efficient transport systems including public transport, cycling and walking networks.

3.2 Environmental improvements, sustainable development.

4. THE REPORT

4.1 To progress the Long Distance Bridleroute throughout the County Borough, as mentioned in my report of 24th May 2004, questionnaires were circulated to as many horse riders as possible.

4.2 The Authority is currently undertaking a study in the Upper Sirhowy Valley area and it is hoped that funding will be available to improve the area to provide various walking/cycling and horse riding routes.

4.3 As funding would become available in the Upper Sirhowy Valley area meetings were held to discuss horse riding in this area. Horse riders were asked at the meeting to mark on a map where they ride and where they have problems with access. It was agreed that the routes be walked to gather information on these and ensure the correct routes were being considered.

4.3 Two horse riders met and walked the routes with June Piper, CROW Support Officer; James Bower, Country Warden and Dee Ashurst of the Forestry Commission. These routes are now being investigated as funds will soon become available. It is hoped that a decision on the line of the routes can be made soon. These routes will become part of the Long Distance Bridleroute.

4.4 The horse riders in the Oakdale area stated that they had problems with riding along the busy roads in Oakdale and were looking to find safe off-road routes, especially connecting to the Penyfan and Manmoel areas. Two horse riders met June Piper and walked routes around the Oakdale Business Park indicating where they ride and where they wish to ride. Some of the routes were not available due to land drainage ditches. These routes were informal routes that have been established by the horse riders since the reclamation works on the Oakdale

Colliery site has been completed.

- 4.5 The Oakdale Business Park is still being developed and one of the routes is on Site 2 (see Doc. No. 1) which it is hoped to attract further businesses in future years when the Sirhowy Enterprise Way has been completed. When the site is developed the routes the horse riders are using would not be protected.
- 4.6 Investigations have been undertaken with the Economic Development Unit who confirmed that they were prepared to allow horse routes to be provided around the Business Park. However, in order to prevent misuse of the routes, suitable crossings should be provided to allow the horses access over the land drainage ditches and barriers erected to prevent new routes being used by motorcyclists and off road vehicles.
- 4.7 It has been agreed with Economic Development that there be two routes, one would become a permanent route of 5.5 miles and the other, due to possible development of the site, would become a permissible route. It is hoped that when development takes place the permissive route can be diverted around any such development to provide a route for the horse riders to use. In keeping the route as permissive it will not be necessary to formally divert the route and incur legal and advertising costs of diversion.
- 4.8 The Oakdale and Trinant Partnerships appreciated the problems being encountered by horse riders in their areas and the need to find alternative safe off road riding routes. June Piper therefore met the Partnerships and suggested they put a bid in for key fund allocation money to implement works to provide the horse riding route.
- 4.9 Following the presentation it was agreed that both partnerships would make an application for funding. The key fund allocation was successful for both partnerships with a total project cost of £27,788.00. The scheme is now referred to as 'the Community Route'. It will allow access for horses, walkers, pedestrians and cyclists and will provide a safe route from Oakdale to Penyfan and will also link to a route around the lanes to Trinant.
- 4.10 As part of the key funding allocation the Rights of Way Section have agreed that when the community route has been created the route it will be added to the Definitive Map and will be maintained by the Authority. Both Partnerships will enter into a leasing agreement with Economic Development for lease of the land and will also arrange for public liability insurance.
- 4.11 Tenders are currently awaited from the Rights of Way Contractors in respect of erection of barriers, bridges, land drainage, fencing, levelling and ground clearance.

5. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 The Authority will be responsible for the maintenance of the community route following the first year of the lease by both of the Partnership Groups

6. PERSONNEL IMPLICATIONS

- 6.1 None.

7. CONSULTATIONS

- 7.1 Oakdale and Trinant Partnerships which include the local Councillors for the area.

8. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 8.1 The Rights of Way Committee agree to add the routes to the Definitive Map and take over the responsibility for the maintenance of the routes.

9. REASONS FOR THE RECOMMENDATIONS

- 9.1 To progress the Transport Plan in providing a long distance bridle route throughout the County Borough.

Author: Mrs. J.E. Piper, CROW Support Officer.