

FOREWORD

On behalf of Caerphilly County Borough Council, we are pleased to introduce you to the Council's Rights of Way Improvement Plan (RoWIP) prepared as part of its duty under the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000.

The plan sets out the Council's rights of way strategy for the next 10 years and it aims to provide local communities and visitors with a sustainable opportunity to enjoy the countryside in their close locality. The plan complements the Authority's wider objectives for access for all to the countryside within the County Borough and neighbouring authorities.

The plan details the Authority's ambitions and objectives to improve its rights of way network and includes an action plan to deliver these improvements. Seeking and securing additional funding that may be made available by the Welsh Assembly Government and/or other funding bodies will be a vital component of the plan to undertake improvements to the Rights of Way network and invest in additional resources where required.

The plan will focus upon the legal network of paths registered in the definitive map and statement. It will complement and interact with other key Council Policy documents, raise the profile of the rights of way network, identify areas where continued improvement is required and ensure continual assessment of the demands placed upon the network by its users.

This plan has been subject, at various stages of its production, to widespread consultation. We thank all those who have contributed towards this final document.

Signed

Councillor Keith Griffiths Chairman of the Cabinet Rights of Way Committee

and

Cabinet Member for Transportation and Planning

**This publication is available in other languages or formats on request.
Mae'r cyhoeddiad hwn ar gael mewn ieithoedd neu fformatau eraill ar gais.**

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Section 1 - Introduction

1.1 Introduction

- 1.1.1 Under the Countryside and Rights of Way (CRoW) Act 2000, all highway authorities must have produced a 'Rights of Way Improvement Plan' (RoWIP) by the end of Autumn 2007. The Welsh Assembly Government (WAG) has indicated that they wish all authorities to produce a RoWIP by 1st November 2007.
- 1.1.2 WAG Statutory Guidance directs that the Improvement Plan must assess/consider the following areas:
- i. The extent to which local rights of way meet the present and likely future needs of the public;
 - ii. The opportunities provided by local rights of way for exercise and other forms of open-air recreation and enjoyment;
 - iii. The accessibility of local rights of way to blind or partially sighted persons and people with mobility problems.
 - iv. Such other matters as prescribed by WAG who expect local highway authorities to use the RoWIPs to plan strategically for; the development, better management and promotion of their existing local rights of way; and changes or additions to the rights of way network.
- 1.1.3 The plan must contain an action statement outlining how, as an Authority, Caerphilly County Borough Council (CCBC) can better manage the local rights of way network and undertake improvements with particular regard to the issues highlighted in the assessment process.
- 1.1.4 The Caerphilly Local Access Forum (LAF) advises the Council on countryside recreation matters and is a statutory body established under section 94 of the CRoW Act 2000. Throughout the production of this plan, the LAF have provided guidance on the approach taken and research methods used. The Forum has had an advisory role during the production of this plan and will continue to input into the implementation of any actions arising from it.
- 1.1.5 The CRoW Act gives a range of powers and responsibilities to public bodies to enable its implementation. Depending upon the powers granted to these bodies they will be known as either Access Authorities (AA) or Relevant Authorities (R Au). CCBC is an AA. The Countryside Council for Wales (CCW), the three National Parks and the Forestry Commission (FC) are R Au's. As an AA, CCBC has a range of powers to implement the open access provisions of the CRoW Act.

1.2 The Duty on Local Highway Authorities

- 1.2.1 Under Section 60 of the CroW Act 2000, each local highway authority is required to publish a RoWIP to cover their respective area. In developing the RoWIP, authorities are required to assess the extent to which local rights of way meet the present and likely future needs of the public; the opportunities provided by local rights of way (and in particular by footpaths, cycle tracks, bridleways and restricted byways) for exercise and other forms of open-air recreation; the enjoyment of their area; and the accessibility of local rights of way to blind or partially sighted persons and others with mobility problems.
- 1.2.2 RoWIPs should also include a statement of the action local highway authorities propose to take for the management of local rights of way, and for securing an improved network of local rights of way.
- 1.2.3 As a local authority, CCBC is already required to undertake statutory duties to protect the public rights of way network from interference by natural or manmade obstacles. The duties involve the maintenance of the network due to usage, removal of obstructions, signposting and waymarking. There is also a duty to keep the legal documents up to date. A full list of duties and responsibilities is included under Appendix X.

1.3 The Role of the Local Access Forum

- 1.3.1 It is the statutory function of a Local Access Forum (LAF) to advise the Council on the improvement of public access to land for the purposes of open-air recreation and the enjoyment of the area.
- 1.3.2 The LAF's statutory areas of work includes:
- o Byelaws relating to access land
 - o Wardening of access land
 - o Long term exclusions and restrictions to access land
 - o Rights of Way Improvement Plan
- The LAF provides advice on these functions.
- 1.3.3 In achieving their statutory function (CRoW Act S61 (1) (e)) Highway Authorities are required to consult with LAF's before preparing or reviewing a RoWIP. The Caerphilly LAF was consulted during the production of the RoWIP from its early development stage, receiving regular updates at each of its meetings. It has taken an active role in the various stages of consultation and in the future the LAF will be the key body for monitoring progress for the RoWIP.
- 1.3.4 Since 2002, the Caerphilly LAF has taken an active role in improving access in the county borough. Some of the projects, which the LAF has taken an active role in

developing, include the Open Access Management Plan as referred to in Section 4.21 as well as ‘The Lower Ebbw Valley Report’ that looks at developing access opportunities in the lower Ebbw Valley area and ‘Access for the less able in the country parks of Caerphilly County Borough’ which has assessed how accessible the parks are for less able people. The Forum will continue to monitor progress with these reports and also look at developing access in other areas of the borough and how these works will assist in the delivery of the RoWIP.

1.3.5 At an early stage in the conception of the Plan the LAF identified nine issues that they believed should be given due consideration to ensure the RoWIP meets with the aforementioned aims set out by WAG. These were as follows:

1. Raise the profile of rights of way.
2. Marry the plan to the health improvement agenda.
3. Integrate the management of rights of way and the countryside with the community planning process.
4. Ensure Disability Discrimination Act 1995 (DDA) compliance where practicable, through cost effective measures.
5. Focus the rights of way budget where it can be used most effectively.
6. Make the RoWIP a bid document for the equestrian route.
7. Ensure all open access land can be reached easily from the highway system and be signed.
8. Develop circular walking routes and ensure their sustainability and use.
9. Agree a programme to finalise an accurate definitive map.

1.4 Policy Content

1.4.1 The RoWIP is required to complement the aims and objectives of existing plans prepared by the Authority.

1.4.2 Identifying and reflecting the policies in other relevant documents will give the Plan the best chance of delivery and lend weight to funding bids from both the Highway Authority and bodies with complementary aims and objectives. It also provides potential opportunities for partnership working between the Authority and external partners. This will allow for the pooling of resources to ensure more efficient working practices and continued improvements to service delivery.

1.4.3 The RoWIP supports and shares the Local Transport Plan’s overall vision of a strategy that enhances quality of life and economic prosperity by connecting people, communities, employment, goods, services and amenities.

1.4.4 The following strategies and plans were considered and referred to during the development of the RoWIP. Guidance was drawn from each in relation to accessibility, sustainability and environmental impact with particular emphasis on how to protect whilst also enhancing the local environment.

- o Local Transport Plan
- o Unitary Development Plan/Local Development Plan
- o Community Strategy
- o Open Access Management Plan
- o Walking and Cycling Strategy
- o Countryside Strategy
- o Active Wales
- o Heads of the Valleys' Strategy 2020
- o Commons Management Plan
- o Country Parks Management Plan
- o Local Bio Diversity Action Plan
- o Rhymney Valley Riverside Walk
- o Emerging Local Diversity Plan & SEA
- o Rural Development Plan

- 1.4.5 The SEA Directive requires plans that have a significant impact on the environment to produce an environmental report. This RoWIP, however, will not have a significant impact on the environment, and examination of the SEA information website and its Criteria for Application to Plans and Programmes confirms that no assessment is required. Nevertheless, all proposed improvements would pay due regard to sustainability, conservation and preservation of the environment and biodiversity.

Section 2 - Vision Statement

2.1 Vision Statement

Caerphilly County Borough Council aims to provide local residents and visitors to the borough with sustainable opportunities to access and enjoy the ‘countryside in their close locality’. In particular this Improvement Plan will aim to ensure that access opportunities within the area, for both new and existing networks meet the present and likely future needs of the public for outdoor recreation, exercise and general travel. The Authority will ensure where practicable, to implement cost effective measures in accordance with the Disability Discrimination Act 1995 (DDA).

The LAF has supported the Authority’s production of this RoWIP in identifying the issues to be considered during the life of the plan. Consideration has also been given to user survey returns when establishing the key issues in this RoWIP.

2.2 Objectives

- To raise the importance and profile of the local rights of way network as an alternative, healthy, safe and sustainable way to travel.
- To continually improve the network to encourage more people to change their modal habits and travel patterns.
- To continually assess future demands and the different needs and abilities of existing and future users of the local rights of way network.

2.3 Policy Statements

- i. To create and maintain a safe and sustainable network for bona fide users to suit the needs of different user groups.
- ii. To create an open and accessible network for all users and identify missing links in the network for all types of user.
- iii. To develop a communication strategy to maximise the involvement and engagement with local communities in developing the rights of way network.
- iv. To identify and promote routes for public use and create confidence while using the network.
- v. To develop and maintain an accurate definitive map and statement.
- vi. To resolve conflicts between users and landowners, whilst developing an understanding of practical solutions to assist landowners and the public to ensure a safe, usable and trouble free network.

Section 3 - Rights of Way Improvement Plan Process

3.1 Delivering the RoWIP

- 3.1.1 Early on a timetable was considered which would allow for the preparation of the RoWIP by the target date identified by WAG of 1st November 2007.
- 3.1.2 The Authority identified initial preliminary works to be undertaken in these early stages of the development of the plan, such as a survey of users, condition reports, review of other council documents, current policies and future proposals. All these stages have filtered into and influenced this plan.

3.2 Key Issues that have been considered

- 3.2.1 The aforementioned nine issues identified by the LAF as being key to the success of the RoWIP (section 1.3.5) are discussed below. Whilst these points are central to the development of this plan, additional issues raised in the user survey and condition report process, also influence and contribute to the key objectives and actions of this plan and are discussed later in the document.

1. Raise the profile of Rights of Way:

In endeavouring to raise the profile of the rights of way network the Authority should consider how it could best advertise the network through different media. One method may be to consider highlighting certain routes due to their circular nature, giving distance, terrain and walking time. The Authority could consider short, medium and longer walks and link these walks to historical sites along the way whereby appealing to a wider audience.

The Internet is one medium that is yet to be fully explored and its full potential utilised. It is intended to promote the network via the Internet in a format that can easily be read by the public, even providing the facility to download walks/route maps and allow user reviews. This has the added benefit of enabling people not living in the immediate area to plan their visits in advance. This facility could also allow users to feed back maintenance and access problems noted by users along the network.

In order to promote routes, more information on their condition use and purpose is necessary. This will require the assessment and estimation of the current condition of the network, albeit without the need to undertake extensive surveys of the entire network. It will require a report on the use of the network and the importance the community attaches to it. Currently there are 846km of registered public paths on the definitive maps and statements. Since Local Government reorganisation in 1996 the Authority has conducted surveys of this network.

Both table 1 below and appendix I details the information held by the Authority on the network, surveyed at various times since 1996.

	% By Number	% By length	Lengths in metres
Un-surveyed paths	28	21	165,967
Good Condition	19	19	150,161
Good condition based on older surveys	32	39	308,199
Fair Condition	18	19	150,161
Works completed and available for public use	3	2	15,806

(Table 1: Condition of Rights of Way Network)

A breakdown of the Rights of Way Network and its condition can be viewed in Appendix II.

2. Marry the plan to the Health Improvement Agenda:

Since Local Government re-organisation the Rights of Way Committee has supported its Officers in contacting user groups not only to encourage them to assist with the upkeep of the network but also to use it for their own benefit, facilitating a way of exercise and healthy living. Physical activity is a key factor in maintaining a healthy lifestyle. In older people the physical activity enjoyed while using the rights of way network in walking on level and undulating ground, climbing stiles, and taking the stairs can help protect against heart disease, cancer, diabetes and obesity. The Authority must promote walking by providing up to date accurate information about the network to the public to encourage and promote organised walking groups. CCBC and Caerphilly Local Health Board are currently promoting the following joint initiative:

- o Walking the way to Health.

It sets out specific priority areas that aim to improve health opportunities within the borough by encouraging sedentary populations to become more active. The Council is organising a “Healthy Walking” project in the Upper Rhymney Valley as part of the Healthy Living Centre Initiative. This is funded by grant aid from the Big Lottery. In the remainder of the County Borough the Council is running a Walking the Way to Health project, which is part funded by CCW (through the Lottery) and the WAG. This project is being developed in partnership with the Caerphilly Local Health Board (LHB).

Walking for Health Initiative:

Caerphilly County Borough Council in partnership with the Caerphilly Local Health Board are pursuing and supporting the initiative of ‘Walking your Way to Health’ and offer a number of routes suitable from gentle exercise to the more strenuous routes.

Leaflets have been published which detail the routes and the type of terrain to be expected together with a travel time.

3. Integrate the management of Rights of Way and the Countryside with the Community Planning Process:

There is a recognised need to involve voluntary groups like the Ramblers Association and various partnerships in making bids for funds. Therefore emphasis must be placed on developing countryside management groups. A recent example of this is the Oakdale and Trinant Partnership and their bid for a circular bridle route at the Oakdale Business Park. Three new projects are also being prepared with community/voluntary groups, which will hopefully be funded by the Forestry Commission's Cydcoed grant scheme. Two of these are located at Argoed and the Darren Valley, which are in Community First areas. These are being developed with the community councils and will improve access to woodland. The third at Rudry is being developed along with the voluntary group SAFE and will improve access for horse riders to the woodlands in that area. Partnerships will be important for feeding information from all stakeholders at all levels into the plan:

4. Ensure compliance with the Disability Discrimination Act 1995 (DDA) through cost effective measures:

The authority is aware of the difficulties encountered by disabled people when accessing some of the rights of way (RoW). Although the Statutory Guidance directs Authorities that the Improvement Plan must assess the accessibility of local rights of way to blind or partially sighted persons and people with mobility problems, CCBC proposes to assess how the rights of way network caters for people with all kinds of disabilities. The DDA and the Amendments made within the 2005 Act will be used as guidance and the terms with which it outlines an individual as being disabled.

The assessment criteria and Pro-forma that were used to evaluate the RoW network can be found in Appendix XI.

CCBC will endeavour to follow the Disability Rights Commission code of practice relating to part 3 of the DDA when overcoming physical barriers. The Authority will aim to provide reasonable alternatives to those RoW that have access related problems.

The Authority recognises that due to the topography of the area that some RoW will never be fully accessible to all, and therefore "ensuring compliance" may be unachievable. However for those RoW that are not accessible the Authority will establish and record why they are not, at the same time establishing and recording those that are user friendly and have good signage with Braille for example. The assessment and record of information will be incorporated into the communication strategy (Section 5).

5. Focus the rights of way budget where it can be used most effectively:

It is important for the Authority to agree and prioritise an annual programme of works with members, balanced between planned and reactive (a programme already exists but it can be refined and more formally agreed). The Rights of Way Cabinet Committee will prioritise works for the forthcoming financial year based on the Action Plan. This will need to be reviewed subject to any change in user priorities.

6. Make the RoWIP a bid document for the Equestrian route:

The Authority will continue to develop the routes to a stage of some certainty and where appropriate liaise with partnerships and adjoining LA's. These partners should formally be brought into the bidding process and support their bids. Currently the Authority is actively promoting the creation of a county wide equestrian route together with associated link paths and circular paths. The majority of the route can be accomplished by use of the existing network. There are however areas where new routes will need to be established through agreement or creation. The creation and development of these routes could become an important mechanism for attracting tourism

7. Ensure all open access land can be reached easily from the highway system:

CCBC must complete the open access planning work and identify routes to open up land. Appropriate funding will need to be sought to ensure completion of the works in accordance with relevant legislation.

8. Develop circular walking routes and ensure their sustainability and use:

There is a need to identify possible routes with walking and community groups and ensure clearance and maintenance as necessary. Appropriate advertising and publicity will be essential to the success of a route. The Authority will continue to promote the enormous possibilities of the network with the various user groups and continue to clear the network where necessary through in house staff, user groups or contractors.

9. Agree a programme to finalise an accurate definitive map:

Identify deficiencies in both the definitive plan and statement. Secure funding for staff and IT work to turn over to a GIS based system. Agree program that will interface best with corporate systems. The Authority must agree a new nomenclature where necessary, publish and obtain approval. A formal timetable must be set for this work.

Section 4 - The Assessment

4.1 A Rights of Way Improvement Plan for Caerphilly

4.1.1 As well as over 846km of rights of way in the county, there are many ways in which people enjoy Caerphilly's countryside – for example, Caerphilly Countryside Service manages over 5 sites, and other organisations such as the Forestry Commission, and Caerphilly Wildlife Trust provide many other options. Local farmers may offer permissive or informal paths, and since 28th May 2005 the public also has access on foot to designated open access land and registered commons totaling 5783ha. The Open Access Management Plan deals primarily with this access and accordingly duplication will be kept to a minimum. The role of the Open Access Management Plan is discussed further in Section 4.21.

4.1.2 The purpose of the RoWIP is to respond to local needs in modernising the access network to make the countryside a welcoming place for everyone to enjoy. In consideration of this the Authority needs to be aware of a number of factors including Statutory Guidance, advice from the Countryside Council for Wales, results of the User Questionnaire and input of the LAF.

4.2 Document and source information

4.2.1 CROW Act 2000 Section 60(5) defines local rights of way as:

- a) the footpaths, cycle tracks, bridleways and restricted byways within the Authority's area, and
- b) the ways within the Authority's area which are shown in a definitive map and statement as restricted byways or byways open to all traffic

4.3 Definitive Map and Statement - Legally defined

4.3.1 The definitive map and statement is a record of all existing rights of way in the Caerphilly County Borough. These maps and statements were transferred from Mid Glamorgan and Gwent County Councils at Local Government re-organisation in 1996 and are held at the Local Authority Offices in Pontllanfraith. The inclusion of routes on the definitive map is conclusive evidence that they are rights of way. The definitive map is also held on a digitised Geographical Information System (GIS).

4.3.2 The map usually requires amendments and updating as a result of requests to create, divert or extinguish paths. Development, or the discovery of new historical evidence, may also result in amendments having to be made. A major part of maintaining this document is modifying it by legal order to add previously unrecorded rights of way to the map. However, many routes with public rights may be unregistered. This is particularly relevant in respect of "lost ways". Legislation has been passed which

effectively creates a cut off date of 2026 after which no routes can be considered supported purely by historical information. This will inevitably lead to an increased number of applications nearer the cut off date.

4.3.3 The procedure by which these claimed routes can become definitive rights of way, and have the same legal status, is by means of a complex and often contentious legal process, known as a Legal Event. This is usually dependent on historical documentation and testimony of user evidence. Legal Events can recognise new paths, extinguish paths, divert paths or change the status of paths. The processes to make these changes include:

- i. Public Path Orders (PPOs) agreed by the landowner, the Unitary Authority and users. These orders are processed under the Highways Act 1980 and Town and Country Planning Act 1990.
- ii. Definitive Map Modification Orders (DMMOs) confirmed as a result of presumed rights, claims or the discovery of relevant historical evidence. These orders are processed under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981.
- iii. Section 116, Highways Act 1980 Power of magistrates' court to authorise stopping up or diversion of highway.

4.3.4 Following the 'cut-off' date of 2026, which has been introduced by the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000, no claims using historical documentary evidence can be made. However, a study of the Definitive Map shows that there are many additional routes, currently unrecorded, which may carry public rights of some sort.

4.4 **Definitive map and statement - Definitions of Paths**

- o **Public Rights of Way (PRoW)** comprise Footpaths, Bridleways, Restricted Byways and Byways Open to All Traffic (BOATS). All public rights of way are highways and are shown on the Definitive Map held by the local Highway Authority.
- o **Footpath** means a 'highway over which, the public has a right of way on foot only, not being a footway or pavement, (Section 329(1) Highways Act 1980 and Section 66(1) Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981).'
- o **Bridleway** means a 'highway over which the public have the following, but no other, rights of way, that is to say, a right of way on foot, and a right of way on horseback or leading a horse, with or without a right to drive animals of any description along the highway (Section 329(1) Highways Act 1980 and Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981).'

Section 30(1) of the Countryside Act 1968 gave as a right of way, 'the right to ride a bicycle, not being a motor vehicle, on any bridleway, but in exercising that right cyclists shall give way to pedestrians and persons on horseback.'

- o **Roads Used As Public Paths - RUPP's** National Parks and Access to the Countryside Act 1949 (NPACA 49) defined this type of path as meaning; a highway other than a public path, used by the public mainly for the purposes for which footpaths or bridleways are so used

The processing by the Welsh Assembly Government of an order under the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000 (Commencement No.8 and Transitional Provisions) (Wales) Order 2006 brought into force certain provisions of Part II of the CRow Act 2000. This order made on the 11th May 2006 in relation to Wales, reclassified all routes recorded as Cart Road Footpaths and Cart Road Bridleways (RUPP's) on the Definitive Map and Statement to Restricted Byways. This new status confers public rights on foot, on horseback or leading a horse and a right for vehicles other than mechanically propelled vehicles. It further appears that the method of "claiming or acquiring" vehicular rights is becoming more difficult which may result in a shortage of road access within the County Borough.

- o **Restricted Byways** means a 'highway over which the public have restricted byway rights, with or without a right to drive animals of any description along the highway, but no other rights of way (Section 48(4) Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000.)'

"restricted byway rights" means-

- i. a right of way on foot,
- ii. a right of way on horseback or leading a horse, and
- iii. a right of way for vehicles other than mechanically propelled vehicles.

- o **Byways Open to All Traffic (BOATs)** means a 'highway over which the public have a right of way for vehicular and all other kinds of traffic, but which is used by the public mainly for the purpose for which footpaths and bridleways are so used. (Section 66 (1) Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981)'.

4.4.1 Descriptions of Routes that do not appear on the definitive map but are frequently used by the public for recreational purposes:

- o **Green Lanes** are unimproved public roads, usually with similar rights to BOATs.
- o **Cycle Track** is a way over which the public has a right of way on pedal cycles, with or without a right of way on foot.
- o **Footway** means a way comprised in a highway, which also comprises a carriageway, being a way over which the public has a right of way on foot only, (Section 329(1) Highways Act 1980)

4.5 Background to the area of Caerphilly

- 4.5.1 Caerphilly County Borough is an area of approximately 277.58km² (107.17 square miles) stretching from Graig Llanishen in the south bordering with Cardiff City County Borough to the Heads of the Valley Trunk Road A465 in the north bordering Powys and from Newbridge/Abercarn in the east bordering Torfaen County Borough to Nelson in the west bordering Rhondda Cynon Taf and Merthyr Tydfil CBC
- 4.5.2 There are 846 km (526 miles) of public rights of way in the Caerphilly area which are divided up into footpaths, bridleways, restricted byways (formerly RUPP's) and Byways Open to All Traffic.
- 4.5.3 The network crosses various terrain and land uses with 22% of the network is crossing pasture, 22% on arable land, 21% across mixed agriculture, 9% woodland, 19% being urban.

4.6 Country Parks

- 4.6.1 There are 5 major country parks within the county borough, 2 of which comprise of more than 200ha of Forestry Commission land with significant access and numerous smaller countryside sites and nature reserves. In May 2005, a new right of access was introduced to 5783ha of land claimed as Open Country and Registered Common Land. These areas of Open Access land are documented in the Open Access Management Plan as discussed in section 4.21.
- 4.6.2 The Countryside and Landscape Section of the Planning Division have a management responsibility for the country parks with the day to day management being undertaken by a team of 16 rangers (13 full time, 3 part time) from the Ebbw, Rhymney and Sirhowy Valley Countryside Services (Caerphilly Countryside Service) headed by a Chief Ranger.
- 4.6.3 The costs of the Caerphilly Countryside Service and the management costs of the country parks are met by CCBC with the assistance of grant aid where possible.
- 4.6.4 Open access management responsibilities fall mainly with the Countryside Access Officer with the support of colleagues in the Countryside and Landscape Service Section and the Rights of Way Section.
- 4.6.5 The cost to run projects arising from the CRoW Act are met by WAG, CCW and CCBC with the assistance of grant aid where possible.

4.7 Urban Development

- 4.7.1 The County Borough's main urban settlements are Caerphilly Town, Bedwas, Bargoed, Nelson, Newbridge, Risca, Rhymney, Blackwood and Ystrad Mynach

4.7.2 Key Statistics from the 2001 census show the following:

Population of Caerphilly -	169,519
Male population -	82,594
Female population -	86,925

- o 29% of households in the County Borough have no car or van
- o 26.3% of people have a limiting long-term illness
- o 22.4 of working age have a limiting long-term illness
- o 15% do not enjoy good health
- o Approximately 21.6% are under 16 years of age, 22.1% are over 65

4.7.3 From the statistics it is clear that better access to the rights of way network will benefit a considerable proportion of the population while promoting social inclusion, a sustainable method of travel, and access for people without cars.

4.8 The Public Rights of Way Network

4.8.1 Caerphilly County Borough Council comprises parts of the former Mid Glamorgan and Monmouthshire County Councils together with Islwyn Borough Council and Rhymney Valley District Council.

4.8.2 The Public Rights of Way network is a valuable recreation resource enabling people to gain access to, and enjoy the countryside. The network is made up of footpaths, bridleways and roads used as public paths (RUPPs) which were originally defined in the National Parks and Access to the Countryside Act (NPACA) 1949. Paths are definitive if shown on the definitive map.

4.8.3 The area that formed part of Mid Glamorgan (west of the Rhymney River) underwent a Special Review, which updated the definitive map and statement acknowledging all legal orders since the relevant date of 14th September 1954. This exercise also allowed for the reclassification of cart road footpath or cart road bridleway to a footpath, bridleway or byway open to all traffic. The area that formed part of Gwent has not been updated since the relevant date of its definitive map and statement 1st July 1952 and accordingly records the original paths as either footpath, bridleway or cart road footpath, cart road bridleway (RUPP).

4.8.4 The network within the County currently covers approximately 846.8km of public rights of way. This is distributed across the County, under the different classifications as indicated in the table 2 below:

Definitive Classification	For use by	Length (km)	Number of paths	Approx. network %
Footpath	Walkers	656.4	1672	78
Bridleway	Walkers, Horse Riders, Cyclists	83.2	164	10
Byway (formerly RUPP's)	Walkers, Horse Riders, Cyclists, Horse Drawn	94.8	277	11
Byway Open to All Traffic	Walkers, Horse Riders, Cyclists, Horse Drawn and Motor Vehicles	12.4	12	1
Total		846.8	2125	100

(Table 2: Proportionate spread of Rights of Way in Caerphilly County Borough)

4.8.5 Map modifications in the County Borough up to August 2006:

Definitive Map Activity	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006
Path Claims Determined	1	2	3	1	1
Modification Orders Made/Confirmed	1	2	2	1	1
Modification Orders subject to Objection	0	0	0	0	0
Public Inquiries Held	0	0	0	0	1

(Table 3: Map modifications 2002 to August 2006)

4.8.6 Modification Order Applications resolved through Creation Agreements:

Some modification applications can be resolved through the processing of a Creation Agreement under Section 25 of the Highways Act 1980. This method is only available when all parties are in agreement. The following is a table of creations already processed.

	2002	2003	2004	2005
Creation Agreements	0	1	1	1

(Table 4: Creation agreements 2002-05)

4.9 Condition of rights of way network

4.9.1 The network should be legally defined, properly maintained, ensuring that public rights of way are open and available to use in accordance with their legal status. The network should also be well publicised. Users should be able to find the start of any public right of way and be able to follow the line of the route using waymarks, guidebooks or maps.

4.10 Public Path Maintenance

4.10.1 The following table indicates the results derived from the 2004-05 and 2005-06 Performance Indicators. The paths surveyed cover an area of 25km² and were in the communities of Bedwas and Machen, Bedwellty, Gelligaer, Mynyddislwyn and Van areas.

4.10.2 Rights of Way Best Value Performance Indicators:

Performance Indicators Year	No. of Paths Surveyed	Easily Accessible %	Requires Major works %	Unusable %	Signposted from road %
2004-05	206	85.9	1.4	12.7	25.7
2005-06	155	84.5	14.2	1.3	33.6

(Table 5: No. of paths surveyed and their condition 2004-06)

The survey is undertaken on all rights of way within an identified 25km² area. The area changes from year to year and therefore accounts for the apparent discrepancy in the percentage of unusable paths between the two surveys. There may be considerable fluctuations of the figures calculated from the surveys due to the conditions encountered within the designated survey area.

4.11 The Rights of Way Network and its Management

4.11.1 Under Section 53 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981, local authorities have a duty to keep the definitive map and statement under continuous review. This section of the act permits a member of the public to challenge the contents of the definitive map and statement to add, delete or reclassify a path. A path can be added through usage, for example a path that has been used through prescription by virtue of twenty years uninterrupted use (Section 31(6) Highways Act 1981) or historic evidence. The claims are recorded by CCBC on the working copy of the definitive map, and investigated in date order. The Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000 has introduced a cut off date (2026) for claims made for rights of way that were in existence before 1949 and it is anticipated that this will inevitably place greater pressure on existing staff to resolve these applications as quickly as possible as it is expected the number of claims will increase prior to the cut off date. Any route not claimed by the cut off date will be extinguished. Currently the Authority is processing 3 claims applications per year. There are 75 outstanding applications awaiting investigation.

4.12 Assessment and Evaluation

4.12.1 The Need to Evaluate the Network:

4.12.2 One of the major purposes of the CRoW Act legislation was to enable Highway Authorities to work towards an accessible network which reflects its historic foundations but meets modern needs and objectives. Having looked at the needs of different users, factors affecting demand for access and the complex picture of current provision, it is now possible to evaluate these factors against one another.

4.12.3 Access for Specific User Groups

- o Walkers – footpaths
- o Cyclists – cycleways
- o Horse riders – bridleways
- o Disabled – improved access
- o Non motorised vehicles
- o Motorised vehicles

4.13 Rights of Way User/Condition Surveys

4.13.1 Over the last five years the authority has as part of the Performance Indicators been collecting information in regard to the condition of the network through the completed forms returned by the Ramblers Association, British Horse Society and a number of community councils. From the results of this information, the Authority has been able to identify key areas where improvement will be necessary to improve access to the countryside.

4.13.2 In addition the Authority has undertaken an “improvement survey questionnaire” Which involved contacting the local members, Community Councils, user groups and the community at large through advertising and face to face surveys asking for their opinions on the network.

4.13.3 The results from the PI’s and condition surveys have been taken into account and form the basis of the proposed improvements.

4.14 Analysis of User Surveys

4.14.1 Approximately 1500 surveys were sent out with only 211 completed forms being returned. The questions and recorded replies can be found in Appendix III.

4.14.2 A number of people did not complete all the questions in the rights of way survey. Accordingly this plan has disregarded the “no replies” and focuses on the remaining five points listed in 4.14.5.

- 4.14.3 Analysis of the questionnaires showed that 65.4% of respondents were from Caerphilly County Borough and the remaining 34.6% were from other counties. The highest rate of response from outside the Borough was from Cardiff 15.6%.
- 4.14.4 All respondents to the questionnaire indicated that they used the rights of way network for leisure and recreation. Of the 211 respondents of the questionnaire, all used the public rights of way network for leisure and recreation. No one completed a questionnaire indicating that they used the route for work or school.
- 4.14.5 The overall condition of the rights of way network is good having regard to the Performance Indicator results over the last 4 years. However there are always areas that can be improved and here we should look to the replies of the 211 User Survey forms and the priorities given in them. The top five priorities listed by users were the same, although often given in a different order of priority. The top five are listed below:
1. Misuse
 2. Obstruction due to overgrowth
 3. Signing
 4. Publication of Routes
 5. Waymarking
- 4.14.6 The full list of results may be viewed in Appendix IV
- 4.14.7 In addition respondents were also asked what they considered were the main faults that deterred them from using the network and required improving. These were:
- o 53% felt that there was a lack of waymarking resulting in users being unsure of their location.
 - o 31% considered that too many rights of way are not recorded.
 - o 22% felt that there are too many stiles/barriers.
 - o 65% considered that too many routes are blocked.
 - o 36% of respondents considered that the structures along the path such as stiles/gates are in poor condition.
 - o 36% considered that there is a lack of information about routes.
 - o 44% considered that the route information is difficult to use.
 - o 60% considered misuse to be a significant factor and fault on the rights of way network.
 - o 65% considered the network to be overgrown and unusable.
 - o 1% considered that the surface of the paths was unsuitable for public use.
- 4.14.8 The full results of replies can be viewed in Appendix V.

4.15 Evaluation Summary

4.15.1 The condition surveys indicate that there is a need to continue the work the Authority already undertakes annually to ensure the network is continually improved for users. Such measures include:

- o Legally defining the definitive map and statement
- o Maintaining the existing network
- o Inspect the paths not already surveyed
- o Continue sign posting and waymarking
- o Continue processing of additional claims
- o Additional off road equestrian routes
- o Promotion, information and feedback on the network
- o Assessing the needs of different classes of user
- o Resolving conflicts between users and landowners
- o Consideration of additional routes where there are omissions in the existing network for walkers, equestrians, carriage drivers and motorised vehicles
- o Links to other access opportunities
- o Need to improve the most frequently used paths which are primarily urban paths to a higher standard to reflect the benefit they offer the community and reduce the possibility of insurance claims.
- o Need to complete the signposting of restricted byways where they terminate on a metalled highway.
- o Need to prepare for the number of applications for lost ways as the cut off date draws near.

These measures have been considered and have been fed into the action plan.

4.15.2 Having regard to the results of the Performance Indicators 85% of the network or approximately 719kms of path are available for public use. Accordingly 15% or 127Kms of the network is unavailable.

4.16 Resources available and required

4.16.1 There is a real need for additional funding if progress is to be made in resolving the current issues and if the contents of this RoWIP are to be realised. For the financial year 2006-07, the allocation for rights of way was £75,000. This budget was used for:

1. Reacting to complaints from Members of the Authority, Community Councils, the public and user groups in respect of signposting, misuse, overgrowth as well as other general duties.
2. Implementing two projects identified by the Rights of Way Committee.

4.16.2 Existing Staff Levels are:

- o 1 No. Senior Assistant Engineer Rights of Way
- o 1 No. Support Officer
- o 1 No. Rights of Way Warden
- o 1 No. Assistant Rights of Way Warden/Technician

4.16.3 To safeguard staff while undertaking their duties and responsibilities in connection with rights of way work there is also a small budget for staff equipment.

4.16.4 Some of the works identified through the RoWIP will be accommodated as part of the day to day maintenance of the map and statement and network as a whole. However these works will not complete the various schemes identified. In order to make real progress in these areas additional sustained funding will be necessary to allow substantive progress to be made in the different areas to deliver the RoWIP and to satisfy the stakeholders.

4.16.5 In the short term, it is likely that no substantial increase in funding will be forthcoming from the Authority and additional funding will need to be sourced externally through bids to CCW, WAG and other potential funding bodies. To be able to utilise any substantial increase in funding, consideration would have to be given to increasing staff resources and/or recruiting more volunteers.

4.17 Assessing the needs of different classes of user

4.17.1 Potential conflicts identified



Misuse of footpath by motorcyclist.

- 4.17.2 There are many different and competing demands for access, both in terms of the mode of travel and the reason for it. Due to the predominantly linear and restrictive nature of the local rights of way network, there is considerable potential for interaction between different users or between users and those who control the land over which a route may pass. For example:

Conflict	Problems encountered	Solution	Actions required
Cyclists' v Pedestrians	Cyclists are quick but often silent	Split lanes	The Authority publishes information leaflets and proficiency training for cyclists
Disabled v Motor vehicles and cyclists	Problems with preventative barriers	Consider disabled barriers to allow only bona fide users	Construct disabled barriers where necessary
Equestrians' v pedestrians	Problems with restricting access to various user groups	Install access stiles and kissing gates	Construction of stiles/kissing gates
Users v Landowners	Some landowners consider access as an invasion of their property	Understanding landowners concerns	Authority to discuss solutions with landowners and users groups

(Table 6: Conflict of interest between various user groups)

4.18 Different Users and their Needs

4.18.1 CCBC's Statutory Requirements

- 4.18.2 There is a statutory requirement that all areas, urban or rural, have a definitive map of public rights of way. These maps will establish a clear legal status for different types of use, such as walking (footpaths), horse riding (bridleways), non-mechanically propelled vehicles (restricted byways) and vehicular routes (Byways Open to All traffic).

- 4.18.3 In this regard local authorities should: -

- Fully and accurately maintain the Definitive Map of public rights of way by recording all the changes that take place.
- Identify missing links in public rights of way and the unclassified road network.
- Properly maintain public rights of way and ensure their availability especially those, which are most used and are close to communities.
- Improve monitoring and reporting of PRowS so that complaints can be more effectively responded to and resolved.

- v. Develop a horse-riding network on a countywide basis.
- vi. Develop and promote National Horse Networks and long distance trails.
- vii. Implement and adequately resource the Rights of Way Improvement Plan by seeking out alternative methods of funding.
- viii. Link PRow Improvement Plans with Local Transport Plans/Regional Transport Plans and the Local Development Plan.
- ix. Improve accessible routes.
- x. Encourage original usage i.e. purposeful utility trips.

4.18.4 Welsh Assembly Government's Walking & Cycling Strategy

4.18.5 There is significant scope for increasing non-motorised travel such as walking, cycling and horse-riding in Wales. The modes of non-motorised travel in Wales are:

- o Walking is the second most used mode of transport after the car
- o 27% of purposeful journeys are made wholly on foot
- o 2% of purposeful journeys are by bike
- o 17% of journeys by car are less than 1 mile and 39% of journeys by car are less than 5 miles in distance. Many of these journeys could comfortably be made on foot or by bicycle.

(Source: WAG Walking and Cycling Strategy for Wales 2003)

4.18.6 Cycling



Hengoed Viaduct, part of the NCN route 47.

- 4.18.7 Cycling is a very popular and low cost method of transport. The increase in mountain biking in recent years has enabled far greater cycle access to the countryside, in general, and onto unmetalled tracks in all areas, both urban and rural.
- 4.18.8 Put into a national context, the 1996 UK Day Visits Survey found that:
- o 32% of the population own a bicycle
 - o At least one bicycle is available to 50% of homes
 - o 1.6 million people ride daily
 - o 5.4 million ride at least weekly
 - o 17 million (30% of the population) ride occasionally
- 4.18.9 These statistics show that by increasing the opportunities for people to cycle as well as implementing a programme of promotion, there is potential to attract large numbers of bike owners to access the countryside and the rights of way network not only for recreational purposes, but also as means of greater access within their community via sustainable means.
- 4.18.10 Cyclists, like pedestrians and equestrians are classified as vulnerable road users, and the primary requirement is to be in a traffic-free environment. In July 2006, there was 47.7 Kms of National Cycleway stretching across the County Borough. In addition there are 3.5Kms of informal cycleway routes in the Aber Valley, 5Kms from Bargoed to Parc Cwm Darren and 1Km between Aberbargoed and New Tredegar.
- 4.18.11 Horse Riding**



Equestrians enjoying part of the bridleway network available throughout CCBC.

- 4.18.12 According to The British Horse Society Riders' Charter, fewer than 20% of public rights of way in England and Wales are legally open to horses. However, there are nearly one million horses and 2.4 million riders and drivers in the UK. As a result of this, there are approximately three thousand accidents per year involving horses on roads in the UK.
- 4.18.13 Riders, therefore, want all legal rights of way which are obstructed to be reopened, historic routes to be brought back into use for horses and new routes created to link the presently fragmented network. Alternative arrangements should be made where roads sever bridleways and safe riding routes are required alongside roads, including useable verges.
- 4.18.14 The British Horse Society Riders' Charter's action list states that the Government is to include provision for horse riders and drivers in access legislation and give political impetus to creating more horse routes. It also states that Local and Unitary Authorities are to carry out their statutory duties and public agencies and landowners are to be more pro-active to riders needs.
- 4.18.15 The existing network of registered paths permitting equestrian access is attached as Appendix VI. The Authority is already working towards establishing additional bridleways as both circular and linear routes as shown in Appendix VII. So far this has been accomplished through negotiation and creation agreements (Section 25 of the Highways Act 1980). It is the intention to create further routes that will link established bridleways without the need to utilise metalled maintainable highways, thus keeping equestrian/motor vehicle conflict to a minimum. The Authority will seek to achieve this through external grants and other funding. Appendix VIII shows the proposed circular county route, which may vary slightly depending on negotiations.
- 4.18.16 Carriage Driving**
- 4.18.17 Carriage drivers are entitled to use the rights of way network along the newly classified Restricted Byways. There is however a need to use maintainable highways as a link between the start and finish of these routes. Cyclists, equestrians and pedestrians, are classified as vulnerable users, however carriage drivers due to the width of their vehicles take up more road space and accordingly motorists are less likely to try to inhibit their passage along the carriageway.
- 4.18.18 Motorised Vehicles**
- 4.18.19 Over recent years there has been a noticeable increase of off road vehicular activity in the countryside. The reclassification of Roads Used as Public Paths to restricted byways has clarified the law in regard to the use of these routes by motorised vehicles. CCBC has very few paths (BOATs), which permit legal use, and accordingly much of the use of the network is through illegal trespass. This illegal use is very difficult to

control. In many cases some form of preventive measure must be considered which will permit bona fide use and simultaneously prevent misuse. Due to complaints received it is known that there is some use by four-wheel drive vehicles, though the vast majority of off road vehicle use is by quad bikes and motorbikes. Users vary from enthusiasts with licensed vehicles to illegal users on unlicensed machines. The misuse of the network appears to be a county wide problem in urban and rural areas, but there are concentrated pockets and rights of way are often used to access sites, regardless of status.

4.18.20 Non-Users

- 4.18.21 The Rights of Way Improvement Plan must have regard to future use as well as current demands. It is, therefore, necessary to look at the non-users of the network, as they are potentially future users. The reasons for non-use of the network are varied. Whilst some non-use is due to a lack of information or provision, much non-use is as a result of a lack of interest or desire to use the local public rights of way network, which must be overcome through a combination of a wide reaching communication strategy and promotion such as the 'walking for health initiative'.

4.19 Assessing the needs of people with mobility problems

4.19.1 Access for All

- 4.19.2 The Disability Discrimination Act 1995 (DDA) and the amendments made under the DDA 2005 brought in a range of requirements upon service providers to prevent discrimination against disabled people. Although local Highway Authorities and the Highways Agency are recognised as service providers at present they should aim to comply with Part III of the DDA until such time as a legal precedent has been set to confirm their status. Part III of the DDA is based on the principle that disabled people should not be discriminated against (through non-provision of services or a different level of provision) by service providers when accessing everyday services that others take for granted. This will be a particularly difficult area when dealing with access on the general network of rights of way. The five Country Parks within Caerphilly offer good access. Similar access to the remainder of the network will not be achievable unless there is a considerable financial input and may prove to never be fully accessible.

4.20 Links to other access opportunities

4.20.1 Open Access

- 4.20.2 The CROW Act 2000 gives a new right of access on foot for the purposes of open-air recreation to open country, common land and land dedicated as access land
- 4.20.3 The work to identify the land that would be affected by this new right of access was carried out by the CCW on behalf of WAG. In Wales, some 400,000 hectares of open

country, registered common land and dedicated Forestry Commission freehold woodland has been mapped and has become available for public access since the 28th May 2005. This means that about 25% of the land area of Wales, some half a million hectares has become available for public access.

4.21 Countryside Open Access Management Plan – Actions and Targets

- 4.21.1 Within CCBC, CCW has designated 5728 hectares of land as access land. The designation of this land as access land offers great opportunities for informal recreation in the county borough. However, with these opportunities come rights and responsibilities for the public who wish to use the land and the landowners and farmers who manage the land.
- 4.21.2 CCBC and the LAF feel that the way to secure a successful implementation of the open access provisions of the CRow Act is to provide a framework, which will guide the opening up of access land in a rational and cohesive manner. The Council and the forum have therefore agreed to work together to prepare an Open Access Management Plan, which will provide this framework.
- 4.21.3 The aim of the management plan is to provide an assessment of all the sites of Open Country within Caerphilly County Borough. Only areas of Open Country were assessed at this stage, these are new areas now available under Crow Act 2000 legislation. Using the management plan the Council can identify what needs to be provided to provide or improve access, what assistance the landowner may need with the management of access and what measures are needed to advise the public how to use their rights in a responsible manner.
- 4.21.4 Works needed to make Open Access land more accessible are effectively split into two sections. Essential works are required to be carried out as soon as possible and desirable works are works that should be carried out when funding becomes more readily available. Effectively all works labelled as essential are actions, and those labelled desirable are targets. The majority of essential works have been undertaken.
- 4.21.5 **Essential**
- 4.21.6 All entry points to access land should have national open access symbols in place.
- 4.21.7 CCW and the Countryside Agency have agreed a symbol, which can be used to identify where land has been designated as access land. The sub group (Local Access Forum) feels that if users are to be aware of where open access land exists on the ground then national open access symbols should be installed at all entry points and also where necessary on boundary fences. The sub group feels that this is essential if both users and landowners are to gain confidence in the implementation process.

- 4.21.8 No access symbols
- 4.21.9 CCW and the Countryside Agency have agreed a symbol, which identifies where open access is not allowed. The sub group felt that it was also important that these symbols should be erected where required.
- 4.21.10 Repairs to ‘furniture’ on Rights of Way
- 4.21.11 It is essential that ‘furniture’ (i.e. stiles, gates etc) on rights of way, giving access onto access land should be in good condition. If they are difficult to use it defeats the objective of making land available for public access. For example, it was noted that stiles on public rights of way at Nant Felin were in poor condition or were difficult to use and that this could deter people from using the access land.
- 4.21.12 Rights of way leading to access land should be well maintained
- 4.21.13 All rights of way leading to access land should be well maintained and passable. If access points cannot be reached, it defeats the objective of the land being available for open access and of works being done to repair/upgrade access points. Links to access land need to be surveyed and works carried out where necessary.
- 4.21.14 Forestry Commission Dedicated Access land
- 4.21.15 The Forestry Commission is dedicating 1698ha of its freehold land as access land. This will form an important part of the land available for open access in the county borough. A close working relationship with the Forestry Commission is required to ensure open access symbols are present at all entry points to land dedicated as access land by the Forestry Commission and that public rights of way linking to this land and rights of way within this land are properly maintained.
- 4.21.16 Ancient Monuments, Sites of Special Scientific Interest and Sites of Importance for Nature Conservation
- 4.21.17 The sub group felt that it was important that the affect of open access on sites subject to such designations should be monitored and appropriate action taken, should open access prove to be detrimental to the site.
- 4.21.18 Desirable**
- 4.21.19 If additional funding becomes available or, in cases where furniture is being renewed the sub group recommended that the following should be implemented.

- 4.21.20 All entry points to access land to have information signs
- 4.21.21 These signs should include information on the public's rights and responsibilities, the name of the site, location plan showing you are here, rights of way and also where access points are located.
- 4.21.22 Stiles changed to kissing gates
- 4.21.23 The sub group would like to see stiles at entry points to access land changed to kissing gates where there are direct links from roads or rights of way with no intervening stiles. This would meet DDA requirements of the least restrictive option.
- 4.21.24 Stiles to have dog latches
- 4.21.25 Dog owners often experience problems in lifting their dogs over stiles. Sometimes this can lead to fences next to the stile being cut or the stile itself being damaged. If dog latches were installed on all stiles at entry points to access land this would aid dog owners gaining access to access land and reduce the problem of fences adjoining stiles being cut to allow access for dogs.
- 4.21.26 Stiles to be made easier to use.
- 4.21.27 Some people find stiles difficult to use. Access over stiles could be made easier if extra steps and a long upright were provided which would assist the less able to cross them. Further examples of enhancements could be a hinged top bar of the stile which can be lifted to lower the height of the stile. This would meet DDA requirements for the least restrictive option.
- 4.21.28 Provide detailed information on some sites
- 4.21.29 The sub group noted that some of the access land had features which could be of interest to the public, the best example of the pilot study sites being Twmbarlwm. It felt that where this occurred more detailed information could be provided. For example, at Twmbarlwm, information could be placed at access points giving its history, folklore and explaining what can be seen in the area.
- 4.21.30 Provide information on open access at key visitor attractions
- 4.21.31 There is an opportunity to raise public awareness about open access by providing general information about open access e.g. what it means and where access land is located at key visitor attractions such as Llancaiach Fawr, Cwmcarn Forest Visitor Centre and the five country parks in the county borough.

4.21.32 Waymarking of routes on open access land

4.21.33 The aim of open access is to allow the public to walk freely. However, the sub group recognised that there may be instances where it was necessary for management purposes, e.g. to take walkers away from a sensitive ecological area, that specific routes should be identified and way marked. This must be done with the full cooperation of the landowner.

4.21.34 Creating new entry points to access land

4.21.35 The sub group considered the issue of providing new entry points to access land. There are currently no guidelines as to how many entry points there should be at each site. The sub group therefore felt that for sites where there was a public right of way in existence there would be no need for new entry points as long as existing entry points were clearly signed.

4.21.36 The sub group felt that new entry points should only be created when absolutely necessary and this should only be done with the landowners full cooperation.

4.21.37 Creating internal entry points to access land

4.21.38 Most of the land designated for open access does not appear to have internal boundaries, but this is something that may need consideration if an internal boundary crosses a site. The sub group felt that the creation of internal entry points should only be undertaken after full consultation with the landowner and that if a new entry point was to be provided, then the least restrictive option should be adopted.

4.21.39 Creation of paths on overgrown sites

4.21.40 The sub group was aware that some sites were already overgrown or were becoming overgrown so that open access would not be possible. It felt that landowners should not be pressed into forming and maintaining new paths through such sites.

4.21.41 Parking

4.21.42 Car parking facilities should be considered at sites of open access. For example, what car parking facilities exist, are they in close proximity to access points, are there opportunities for creating/enhancing car parking?

Section 5 – Promotion and communication

5.1 Issues influencing usage

- 5.1.1 There are three aspects to influencing the quality of the rights of way network and increasing usage. These are:
- o Promotion
 - o Information
 - o Feedback
- 5.1.2 Consideration should be given as to the best way of publicising the rights of way network and giving users confidence while using the network. The work involved in updating the definitive maps and statements will take a considerable time to complete and involves the checking of the route for correct alignment.
- 5.1.3 Many routes are currently included in leaflets and this method of publication will continue, especially as more paths are being identified within special schemes. These leaflets will be available at all the Council offices, tourist information offices and libraries.
- 5.1.4 Although many routes are currently included in such leaflets, consideration should be given to publishing the maps on the Authority's website. This would allow anyone with a computer with Internet access to view the maps from anywhere in the country/world. This would be particularly useful to people visiting the area. In addition reporting difficulties will be made easier either through a web based complaint/feedback form or through more conventional methods.

5.2 Promoted Walks

- 5.2.1 There are many opportunities for walkers in Caerphilly Borough to explore the countryside using promoted trails. These are a mixture of circular routes and the more challenging long distance linear routes. All of the named walks and trails listed below are leafleted and are self-guided.
- 5.2.2 There are three long distance routes, the Sirhowy Valley Walk, the Raven Walk and the Rhymney Valley Ridgeway Walk. There are two promoted circular walks, the Machen Forge Trail and the Alien Invasion Trail and there are also a series of walks promoted under the title Classic Walks and also within the Sirhowy Valley Country Park. In addition, there is also a leaflet for Historical Walks around Gelligaer.

Long distance routes:



View from part of the long distance route.

- Sirhowy Valley Walk: A challenging 27-mile linear way marked walk from Newport to Tredegar with spectacular views of the Sirhowy Valley.
- Raven Walk: A challenging 12 mile circular walk around the Ebbw and Sirhowy Valleys. There are great views across the Bristol Channel and north to Brecon Beacons.
- Rhymney Valley Ridgeway Walk: A walk around the Caerphilly Basin across the Rhymney Valley. The walk follows countryside paths, rural lanes, through Beech woodland and across panoramic mountaintops.

Promoted circular walks:



One of the many spectacular views awaiting those wishing to explore the public path network.

- Machen Forge Trail: A 5-mile circular walk around the quiet village and countryside of Machen. Discover the hidden past through local people's reminiscences.
- Alien Invasion Trail: A short children's walk around Pen y Fan Pond Country Park.

Classic Walks:

- A series of 5 to 8 mile circular walks through some of the most scenic and spectacular landscapes in the county borough. These are promoted in the 'Classic Walks' leaflet pack.

Sirhowy Valley Country Park:

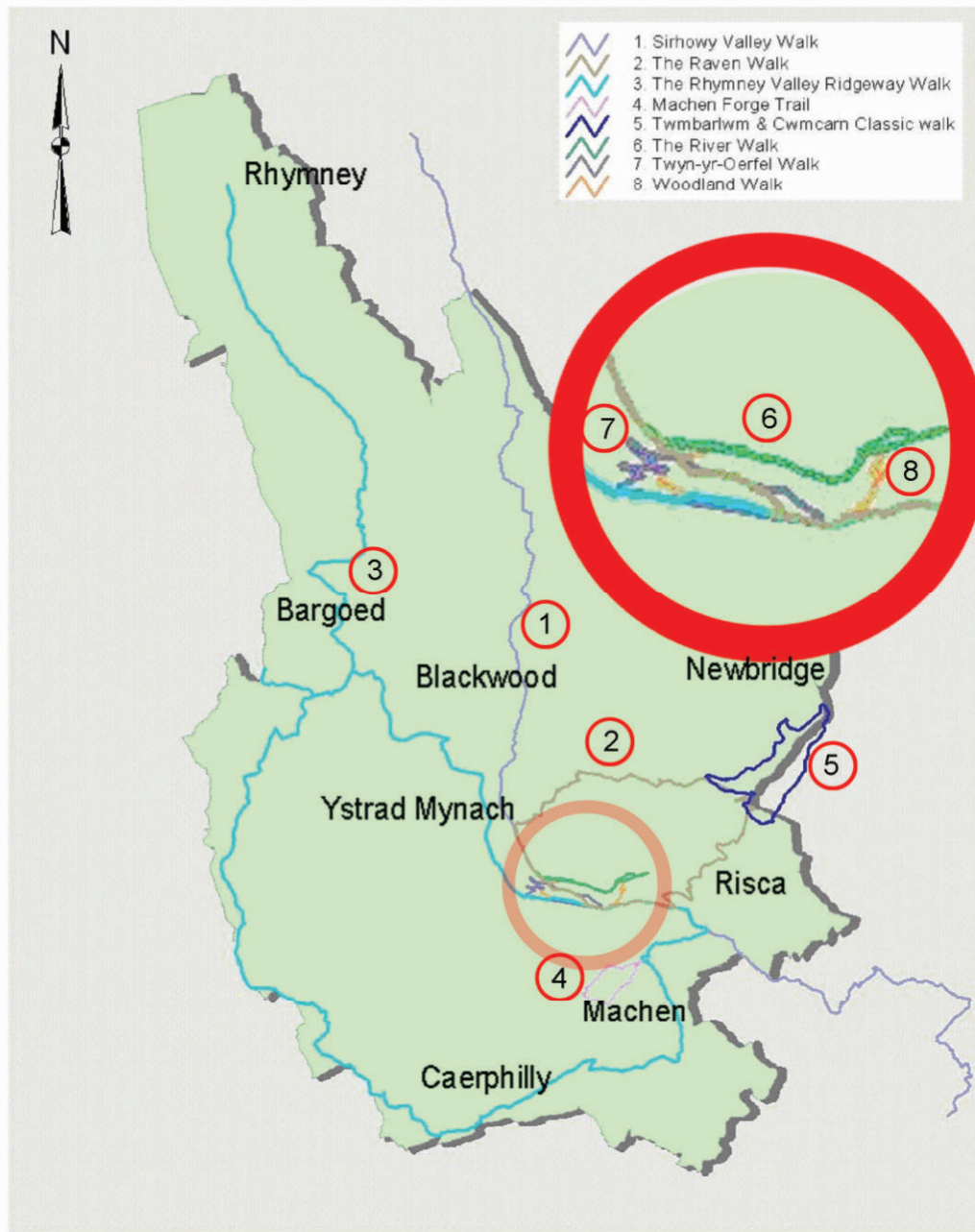
- There are three circular promoted walks within the country park. These are the River Walk, Woodland Walk and Twyn Oerfel Walk, which are advertised in the Sirhowy Valley country park leaflet.

(The location and route of each of the above walks can be viewed in plan overleaf).

Figure 1:

Caerphilly County Borough Council
Promoted Walks

1:150000



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Atgynhychwyd o fapiau yr Arolwg Ordnans gyda chaniatod rheolwr Llyfrau ei Mawrhydi hawffraint y Goron. Mae atgynhychu heb awdurdod yn torri hawffraint y Goron. Gall hyn arwain at erlyniad neu achos sifil. Cyngor Bwrdeistref Sirol Caerffili, LA09004L, 2005.

Section 6 - Rights of Way Improvement Plan Partnership Working

6.1 Who is involved and how?

- 6.1.1 The following diagram identifies key groups and organisations and summarises their involvement with the rights of way network and this RoWIP:

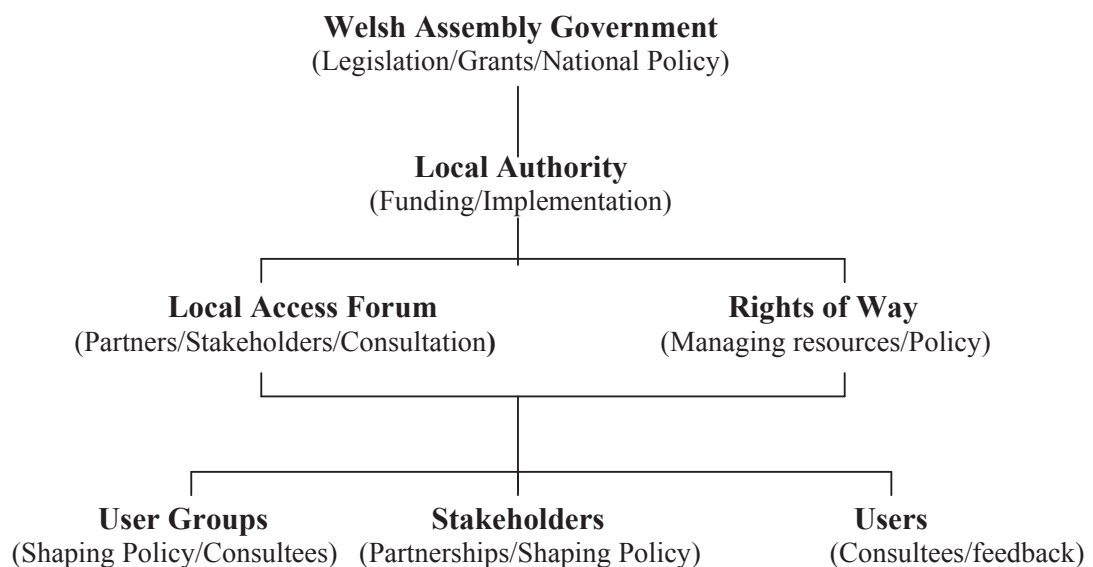


Figure 2: Organisational Structure

6.2 Accommodating the interests of land managers

- 6.2.1 It must be recognised that the land on which the public have access on the rights of way network is in the main owned by private individuals working the land through farming. Some of these landowners may consider the public access as an infringement as many town folk would see if they had a stranger walking across their gardens.
- 6.2.2 In considering the expansion, improvement and increasing number of visitors to the countryside, the Authority must take into account the impact of additional access. The Authority will continue to work with landowners in protecting existing access and accommodating their concerns when considering new access routes, which will benefit both parties and keep any possible conflict to a minimum.

6.3 Involving the public

- 6.3.1 The surveying authority is responsible to the public in providing a network of rights of way. One of the areas for consideration of the RoWIP is to expand the network so that it can support the present and future needs of the public. In this regard the public have been asked for their considerations when using the network and their comments have influenced a number of key objectives within the RoWIP.

6.4 Local Access Forum

- 6.4.1 As discussed in section 1.3, it is the statutory function of a Local Access Forum, to advise as to the improvement of public access to land for the purposes of open-air recreation and the enjoyment of the area. Its statutory areas of work being:

- o Byelaws relating to access land
- o Wardening of access land
- o Long term exclusions and restrictions to access land
- o Rights of Way Improvement Plan

6.5 Other Key partners

AEU
All Wheel Drive Club
Area Forums
Auto Cycle Union
British Driving Society
British Horse Society
Campaign for the Protection of Rural Wales (CPRW)
Commoners Association
Community / Town Councils
Community Partnerships
Country Landowners and Business Association
Countryside Council for Wales
Cyclist and Touring Club
Driving Organisations:
Green Laners
Landowners' Representatives (Farmers Union of Wales etc)
National Farmers Union
Off Road Vehicle Organisations
Open Spaces Society
Ramblers Association
User Groups:

6.6 Agri-Environment Schemes and their role in improving the Public Rights of Way Network

6.6.1 Tir Gofal

6.6.2 Tir Gofal is an agri-environment scheme run by the Welsh Assembly Government. It is available to farmers throughout the whole of Wales and rewards farmers for caring for the wildlife, historical and cultural features on their land. Tir Gofal is designed to support the farming community in protecting the rich heritage of rural Wales and reflects the National Assembly Government's priorities for a sustainable farming industry, and creates greater opportunities for public access and enjoyment of the countryside.

6.6.3 Aims of Tir Gofal:

- o To benefit wildlife by promoting the positive management of existing sites as well as habitat restoration and habitat creation.
- o To protect characteristic rural landscapes and to promote both management and restoration of important landscape features.
- o To protect and enhance historic and archaeological features; and
- o To provide opportunities for new public access to the countryside.

6.6.4 Encouragement through additional payments is made to increase public access to farmland, in areas where it is safe and environmentally sound. This is achieved through creation of permissive footpaths, bridleways and cycle paths.

6.6.5 Tir Cynnal

6.6.7 Tir Cynnal is the new entry-level agri-environment scheme run by the Welsh Assembly Government. Introduced in 2005, the scheme will give Welsh farmers more opportunities to protect areas and features of environmental importance on their land in return for payment. Tir Cynnal requires greater levels of environmental protection than the Single Payment Scheme Cross Compliance requirements, but is not as demanding as Tir Gofal.

6.6.8 Aims of Tir Cynnal:

- o Prevent loss of bio-diversity by protecting wildlife habitats
- o Protect important landscape features on farmland
- o Safeguard archaeological and historic sites
- o Protect and improve the quality of water, soil and air

6.6.9 Under both the Tir Gofal and Tir Cynnal schemes it is conditional that farmers comply with their obligations with regards to the PRow network which crosses their land. Both these schemes can assist the local highway authority in maintaining and

improving the condition of the PRow network within the County Borough. New applications to join these schemes could therefore assist with the main aims and objectives of the RoWIP.

Section 7 – Statement of Action and Associated Costs

7.1 Introduction

7.1.1 The RoWIP details both existing and future issues confronting CCBC, lists the strengths and weaknesses within the area of work and offers solutions to resolve these matters over the ten year life of the plan.

7.1.2 Having regard to the points raised in the Evaluation Summary (Section 4.15) the condition surveys indicate that there is a need to continue the work already undertaken in providing an improved network for users. There is a need to address numerous additional problems that were identified that are currently beyond the resources available to the Authority. Actions relating to the above are as follows.

7.2 Legally defining definitive map and statement

There are currently 75 outstanding Definitive Map Modification Order (DMMO) applications requiring investigation. CCBC employ a Rights of Way Support Officer whose primary task is to investigate the DMMOs in preparing reports for consideration by the Rights of Way Cabinet Committee. If, after due consideration the Rights of Way Cabinet Committee supports the application, then a Modification Order is made and advertised in a local newspaper. The cost is approximately £1250. Provided no objection is received to the order then it can be confirmed as unopposed and a second notice appears in the local newspaper at a further cost of approximately £1000. Therefore the cost for advertising a Definitive Map Modification Order is in the region of £2,250. Total cost for processing the outstanding DMMO's is approximately £170k.

Action:

- It is therefore CCBC's intention to identify all legal events affecting public rights of way since relevant date of map and statement by 2009.
- Following this exercise, CCBC will prepare Omnibus Orders of the identified legal events by 2010.
- Will consider identifying anomalies between map and statement and prepare Modification Orders to formalise map and statement by 2011.
- Finally, update map and statement having regard to the processed Modification Orders by 2014.

7.3 Maintaining the existing network

The current annual budget for the maintenance of the network is £75k, which is used to maintain and undertake minor improvements to the existing 846.80km (526.19 miles) of registered rights of way within the administrative area of Caerphilly. A proportion of this yearly allocation, £20k is used on special projects identified by the

Cabinet Rights of Way Committee. There is no yearly percentage increase on the budget, but this figure will be influenced by the amount received from WAG. This is an ongoing exercise.

The Performance Indicators between 2004 and 2006 revealed that on average 85.2% of the network as a whole was 'easy to use'. Conversely 14.8% of the network is 'not easy to use'. Over the same period 7.8% of the network required major works. Assuming that the unavailable part of the network is inaccessible due to heavy overgrowth, then it is estimated that it will cost approximately £250k to open the network for public use.

Action:

- Commencing immediately CCBC will continue to identify special projects through the Cabinet Rights of Way Committee and bid for funds for additional schemes as they are identified.
- Clearance of the 15% (127 kms) of the network identified as being overgrown or obstructed by 2013.

7.4 Disability Discrimination Act 1995 (DDA)

The authority has a responsibility to treat people with disabilities on an equal basis.

Action:

- CCBC will provide reasonable access by introducing a phased programme of work, where a proportion of the existing maintenance budget is allocated where specific DDA problems exist. For example this work will include, replacing stiles with kissing gates and improving access for wheelchair use.
- CCBC recognise that a number of changes, adaptations or alterations would have to take place to cater for everyone's needs and that there is no single solution to enable access for all.
- Anticipated cost £5,000 per year.

7.5 Sign posting and waymarking

Signing – Under the terms of the Countryside Act 1968, a Highway Authority has a duty to sign all footpaths, bridleways and byways where they leave a metalled road. As previous indicated, WAG have reclassified all RUPP's to restricted byways and in this regard the Authority will now look to signpost all these routes where they terminate on a metalled highway.

Waymarking – This is an addition to signing to assist the public along a route, which may be particularly difficult to follow on a map. The Countryside Act 1968 allows the Authority to place signs at points along a path or way where the Authority considers it necessary to have a signpost or waymark to assist persons unfamiliar with the locality.

This power may be exercised only after consultation with the owner or occupier of the land concerned. The requirement is to consult not to obtain consent, as a land owner cannot refuse to allow waymarking. However, most waymarking is carried out by either painting on, or fixing signs to, objects such as gateposts, stiles, trees or walls. Since these will be the property of the landowner, permission is needed to waymark on them. If permission is not granted the Authority may avail itself of its power to erect signs in the surface of the path.

In Caerphilly there are 1668 footpaths, 127 bridleways, 343 restricted byways and 12 Byways open to all traffic terminating on metalled roads, making a total of 2150 public paths terminating on metalled highways.

The current cost for the provision and installation of each sign is £50. The total cost for signing the network would therefore be £110k

Action:

- Identify locations by end of 2008, and cost projects to a limit of £2500 per year.
- There are 343 restricted byways terminating on metalled highways. These will now form the base of a scheme to complete their signing. In regard to previous information it will cost an additional £20k and completion expected by the end of 2010.
- In this regard the Authority will consider schemes to waymark the network on an area by area basis.

7.6 Additional off road equestrian routes

Consideration of additional routes (where no registered path presently exists) is difficult to cost as there are a number of variables to take into account. If a Creation Order (Section 26 of the Highways Act 1980) is processed then the advertising cost will be in the region of £2,500. In addition a landowner may seek compensation for the loss of land and this figure will be dependant on:

- o Whether or not the land is considered agricultural
- o The length of the path
- o Ground conditions and whether substantive works are required to bring the route up to a standard suitable for public use

Action:

- Estimated cost of each new path £7,500 and anticipate to complete two links per year. Programme to continue until completed.
- It appears that the only way of approaching this type of scheme will be to cost each route as they arise and then budget for the following year.

7.7 Long Distance Bridleway routes and Circular routes

In the main the long distance path and circular routes will be by way of existing registered paths. The Authority will seek funding for this scheme and only a small proportion will be from the yearly maintenance budget. Each section of the long distance path and circular routes will be costed separately for the following years action. Estimated cost of new path is £7,500 per link.

Action:

- Identify the long distant route by end of 2008.
- Identify missing links and improvements to existing network mid 2009.
- Commence negotiations for missing links end 2009.
- Commence improvements of existing network mid 2009 for completion by 2011.
- Complete missing links as soon after as possible dependent upon negotiations.

7.8 Open Access:

The Open Access Management Plan identifies essential works that would provide access to open land and desirable works, which would be beneficial in improving and enhancing access for the public. The costs would be £15k and £50k respectively.

Action:

- CCBCs Countryside Section is currently implementing a program of works to complete works identified as 'essential' in Section 4.21.5. Once all essential work has been completed, works identified as 'desirable' in the plan will take priority.

7.9 Raise Profile – Publicising/Promotion

Publication of routes – Probably one of the best methods of advertising the rights of way network is through the Internet. Before this can be considered however, a considerable amount of work is necessary to ensure that the information is correct. This will require the updating of the definitive map and statement, and the checking of the alignment of each path. This work should be considered as additional to that currently being carried out and accordingly additional staff will be needed to ensure progress by continuing to investigate claims and the processing of the required Modification Orders.

The public need confidence to use the network. The Authority has many tools available to achieve this:

- o Leafleting walks, where accurate details are given through descriptions of the route and terrain together with a plan- cost of £1000 per 650 leaflets, including design and printing.

- o Website based walks, where the public may download specific routes. This would allow anyone with a computer with internet access to view the definitive maps from anywhere in the country/world and be of particular interest for individuals and families visiting the area.
- o An easy method of reporting any difficulties encountered while using the network is through the Council's web based complaint/feedback form. This allows for an easy, quick and recorded report to be investigated by the Authority.

Action:

- Estimated cost of promotion £1000 per annum. Commence raising profile mid 2008 process will be ongoing.

7.10 Misuse of the Rights of Way Network



Misuse of the right of way network (Photo with kind permission of the Gwent Police Roads Policing Unit).

Misuse appears high on all users priority list. Consideration will wherever necessary be given to restricting use of routes to bona fide use, whilst having due regard to all existing legislation.

The Authority currently has a number of methods of preventing the misuse of the network. This area will be difficult to cost, as the full problem cannot be accurately evaluated. Accordingly, it will best be dealt with on a rolling programme where the Authority will identify an amount each year to combat misuse. Initial anticipations are in the region of £3,500 per annum.

Actions:

- Complete the survey of the outstanding length of the network not previously surveyed. This will probably be best achieved with the help of volunteers at an estimated cost £5000. Completion by end of 2009.
- Resolution of conflicts between various types of users through the provision of structures and signs. Estimated cost £5000 per annum.

7.11 Improvement of existing urban paths

Approximately 19% of the existing network lies within the urban environment. This accounts for 160 Kms of path.

Action:

- The Authority would wish to improve these routes for the benefit of residents and reduce the 3rd party insurance claims. The estimated cost for this work is £810k for the life of the plan.

7.12 Lost Ways - New legislation is imposing a cut-off date for historical rights of way

A Lost Way can be described as a route, which is not, recorded on either the definitive map and statement or maintainable highway records but has public rights through historical use. A lost way can also be where it is believed bridleway rights may exist on a registered footpath. The question of unrecorded vehicular rights existing on registered paths has been made clearer through the Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act 2006, (NERC Act 2006), which instructs that no public vehicular rights can be claimed unless they were applied for before 19th May 2005.

Under Section 53 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981, local authorities have a duty to keep the definitive map and statement under continuous review. It is possible for a member of the public to claim a route as public by virtue of twenty years uninterrupted use or through historic evidence. All such claims when received are recorded by the Council and investigated in date order. The Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000 has introduced a cut off date (2026) for claims made for rights of way on historical grounds, such routes being in existence before 1949. This will inevitably place greater pressure on existing staff to research these claims on this basis. Such routes will be unable to be claimed as carrying public rights beyond 2026, even if they continue to be in use. It is considered that this will inevitably lead to a greater number of claims being made to amend the Definitive Map and record new or higher public rights of way. It is difficult to anticipate the number of applications that can be expected for these historical routes, but it can be assumed that the number will increase nearer the cut off date. Any further increase in applications will put more pressure on existing staff.

Action:

As the authority is unable to estimate the additional number of claims that may be received as we approach the cut off date, it is difficult to judge the additional pressure that these will place on existing staff resources. In this regard it is considered appropriate that the authority review the position periodically.

7.13 Cycling

Action:

- Progress will continue to be made with implementation of the Authority's Safe Routes to Schools initiative (current priority due to end 2008/09 – Newbridge Comprehensive), which promotes both walking and cycling and disabled access. The Council's next priority will be St.Cenydd Comprehensive School.
- As part of the Local Transport Plan cycling will be promoted as a sustainable and healthy mode of transport.
- As part of the Council's approved Unitary Development Plan (UDP) former railway lines will be safeguarded for transport related development, particularly those that facilitate walking and cycling.
- As the Council's Local Development Plan (LDP) is developed, consideration will be given to ensure provision for cyclists is safeguarded and a network of cycle routes developed as it is now under the current UDP.
- It is intended to make continued progress with the development of both the Local and Regional Cycling Networks.
- Routes 4 and 47 of the National Cycle Network (NCN) through CCBC have been completed. The next priority within the Authority is for the National Cycle Network, Heads of the Valleys Route (NCN 46).
- As part of the South East Wales Transport Alliance (Sewta) the Authority will support the Walking and Cycling Strategy for South East Wales, within the context of the developing Regional Transport Plan.
- Cycling initiatives will be promoted to improve sustainable community access, improve access for people with disabilities, improve health and fitness, aid regeneration and improve the environment and tourism opportunities.
- The Authority will actively seek to promote and publicise cycling throughout the Borough.

7.14 Improving existing routes

Clearly a lot of the enjoyment of using the network can be taken away through poorly maintained paths and the Authority will continue to strive to maintain the network in the future through its own efforts and with the assistance of user groups. As stated earlier in the report, the Rights of Way Cabinet Committee identifies two schemes per year that are considered to require additional works, above and beyond that which is considered daily maintenance. The Authority will bid for additional funding in order to complete additional works above those already identified. The user groups will be encouraged to continue with their support in maintaining the network and also bid for their own schemes. The Authority will provide support in this process.

Action:

- The Council will actively seek to identify and secure additional funding to increase the number of RoW improved via this process, whether it is external or a bid for additional funding from the Council's Capital budget.

7.15 Carriage Driving

The processing by the WAG of an order under the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000 (Commencement No.8 and Transitional Provisions) (Wales) Order 2006, brought into force certain provisions of Part II of the CRow Act 2000. This order made on the 11th May 2006 in relation to Wales, reclassified all routes recorded as Cart Road Footpaths and Cart Road Bridleways (Roads Used as Public Paths, RUPP's) on the Definitive Map and Statement to Restricted Byways. This new status confers public rights on foot, on horseback or leading a horse and a right for vehicles other than mechanically propelled vehicles. This status raises a particular problem as to the protection of the landowner/farmer and to simultaneously retain access in a horse drawn vehicle.

Action:

- The only method currently available appears to be construction of a corral system of gates that only permits one gate to open at a time. This construction will be costly for whoever bears the cost of installation be it the Authority or the landowner. Alternatives will also be actively sought and investigated.

7.16 Cost Evaluation in summary

- 7.16.1 Table 7 below, provides indicative costs of all potential works identified in the RoWIP.
If the objectives of the RoWIP are to be met, funding to match the projected annual and 10 year spend profile for each of the identified work areas must be obtained.

7.16.2 The table also indicates under ‘Author’, who identified each area of improvement as each interested party has their own concerns when prioritising improvements to the RoW network. Priorities identified by the LAF, Local Authority (LA) and Users have been listed and considered at length earlier in the Plan.

Action required	Cost £k per year	Cost £k over 10 year	Author
Raise Profile – Publicising/Promotion: Action: 1. Commence raising profile mid 2008 – Process will be ongoing	1	10	LA and LAF
Marry the Plan to the health improvement agenda Action: 2. Liaise with LHB to progress joint initiatives	TBC	TBC	LA and LAF
Link the management of rights of way and the countryside with the community Planning process Action: 3. Work with Community Partnerships to develop bids/schemes	TBC	TBC	LA and LAF
Disability Discrimination Act 1995 (DDA) Action: 4. CCBC will provide reasonable access by introducing a phased programme of work, where a proportion of the existing maintenance budget is allocated where specific DDA problems exist. For example this work will include, replacing stiles with kissing gates and improving access for wheelchair use. 5. CCBC recognise that a number of changes, adaptations or alterations would have to take place to cater for everyone’s needs and that there is not one solution to enable access for all. 6. Anticipated cost £5,000 per year	5	50	LA and LAF
Maintaining the existing network Action: 7. Commencing immediately, CCBC will continue to identify special projects through the Cabinet Rights of Way Committee and bid for funds for additional schemes as they are identified 8. Clearance of the 15% (127kms) of the network identified as being overgrown or obstructed by 2013.	75 25	750 250	LA and LAF

Clearance of paths identified through PT's Action: 9. Arrange clearance	25	250	LA
Additional off road equestrian routes Action: 10. Estimated to complete two links per year. 11. Programme to continue until completed. 12. It appears that the only way of approaching this type of scheme will be to cost each route as they arise and then budget for the following year.	7.5	75	LA and LAF
Long Distance Bridleway routes and Circular routes Action: 13. Identify the long distant route by end of 2008. 14. Identify missing links and improvements to existing network by mid 2009. 15. Commence negotiations for missing links by end 2009. 16. Commence improvements of existing network by mid 2009 for completion by 2011. 17. Complete missing links as soon after as possible dependent upon negotiations.	7.5	75	LA and LAF
Open Access Action: 18. Implement a programme of works to complete works identified as 'essential'. Once all essential work has been completed, works identified as 'desirable' in the plan will take priority.	5	50	LA and LAF
Develop circular walking routes and ensure their sustainability and use Action: 19. Identify and promote available leisure routes.	5	50	LA and LAF
Legally defining definitive map and statement Action: 20. Identify all legal events affecting public rights of way since relevant date of map and statement by 2009. 21. Prepare Omnibus Orders of the identified legal events by 2010. 22. Identify anomalies between map and statement and prepare Modification Orders to formalise map and statement by 2011.	17	170	LA and LAF

23. Update map and statement having regard to the processed Modification Orders by 2014.			
Misuse Action: 24. Complete the survey of the outstanding length of the network not previously surveyed. Completion by end of 2009. 25. Resolution of conflicts between various types of users through the provision of structures and signs.	5	50	User
Obstruction Action: 26. Clear obstructions when reported.	5	50	User
Signposting and Waymarking Action: 27. Identify locations by end of 2008. 28. There are 343 restricted byways terminating on metalled highways. These will now form the base of a scheme to complete their signing. 29. In this regard the authority will consider schemes to waymark the network on an area-by-area basis.	11 5	110 50	User and LA
Survey the paths not already surveyed Action: 30. Undertake surveys.	5	50	LA
Continue processing claims Action: 31. Investigate claims.	7.5	75	LA
Assessing the needs of different classes of user and resolving conflicts between users and landowners Action: 32. Undertake surveys where necessary.	5	50	LA
Links to other access opportunities 33. Improve Links	TBC	TBC	LA
Improvement of existing urban paths Action: 34. Improvement of urban paths.	81	810	LA

(Table 7: Identified actions against cost)

As indicated in the table above, the Authority is ambitious in its proposals. Currently there is an annual budget of £75k, which allows for the maintenance of the existing

network, with minor improvements for disability, clearance, misuse and obstructions. Additional claims are being processed together with the defining of the definitive documentation. If real progress is to be made however, it is imperative that additional external funding is secured.

7.16.3 The Authority will actively seek funding and resources to meet the objectives of this plan from sources including:

- o National Assembly for Wales
- o Local Authority budget
- o European Commission
- o Public Sector
- o Lottery
- o Voluntary Groups

7.17 Monitoring/key performance indicators

7.17.1 The Authority is able to produce records on the progress being made in many fields of the rights of way work area beyond those required by WAG each year. The Authority will continue to report these figures through various reports to Authority committees and Access Forum. The Authority will aim to remain in the top quartile of Welsh Authorities on National Performance Indicators (PI's). Subject to available funding, the Authority will seek to make and identify more accessible rights of way in partnership with stakeholders.

7.17.2 Two of the PIs identified by the Audit Commission in regard to Public Rights of Way are:

1. The percentage of total length of rights of way, which are easy to use by members of the public.
2. The length of promoted rights of way as a percentage of the total length of the public rights of way network.

7.17.3 The Authority will continue to survey the network as described previously and report to the Cabinet Rights of Way Committee and Local Access Forum on an annual basis.

7.17.4 It is understood that the promotion PI is under redevelopment by the Local Government Data Unit. If the current indicators evolve, then CCBC will contribute to the performance improvement programme through the PI system.