

7 Delivering the Aims

7.1 Statement of Action

7.1.1 The statement of action is a table of key aims (initially set out in 1.3), together with detailed objectives and actions required. Listed below are the objectives of the Improvement Plan under each of the seven aims.

Aim 1: Improve Resourcing

7.1.2 Resourcing improvements to public rights of way and countryside access is always a challenge. It is, therefore, important that potential opportunities to gain improvements to the network, such as those highlighted in Aim 1, are identified and secured.

Aim 1 Objectives

- 1.a. To take advantage of any suitable grant funding for public rights of way related projects.
- 1.b. Seek to secure benefits to the public rights of way network from major developments and road schemes.
- 1.c. Seek to secure benefits to areas of open access.

Aim 2: Improve Partnership Working

7.1.3 Following on from improving resourcing is the need to improve working with various partner organisations and individuals to help deliver the Council's commitments. The County Council recognises that some organisations, such as parish councils and voluntary groups, are often in a better position to achieve this. The objectives set out in Aim 2 are designed to build upon the Council's existing achievements in partnership working.

Aim 2 Objectives

- 2.a. Encourage volunteers to help with work on public rights of way, including improvement work as well as basic maintenance.
- 2.b. Improve working with land managers.
- 2.c. Improve working with town and parish councils, other authorities and organisations

Aim 3: Improve Safety and Convenience

7.1.4 Aim 3 will mainly deal with reducing the fragmentation and improving the safety of the rights of way network. This aim also addresses the need to resolve of various anomalies in the rights of way network such as dead-end paths.

Aim 3 Objectives

- 3.a. Make crossings of busy roads safer.
- 3.b. Make roadside verges safer for horse riders and other users.
- 3.c. Close obvious gaps in the rights of way network.
- 3.d. Seek adjustment of the existing rights of way network to improve safety and opportunities for users.

- 3.e. Seek the addition of new paths to the public rights of way network to improve opportunities for users.
- 3.f. Limit the use of legal orders to control the public use of byways

Aim 4: Improve Access for All

- 7.1.5 Making more of the rights of way network available to as many people, with differing abilities, as possible, is a key priority for future improvement, promotion and management of rights of way. It is also important that people of differing backgrounds and abilities feel able to use the rights of way network for their health, well-being and enjoyment. The objectives in Aim 4 are designed to achieve this.

Aim 4 Objectives

- 4.a. Take the needs of disabled people into account when carrying out work on public rights of way.
- 4.b. Improve and promote a series of routes designed with disabled people in mind.
- 4.c. Recognise that some users of motor vehicles on byways open to all traffic (BOATs) are disabled and this may be their main method of accessing the countryside.
- 4.d. Improve the surface of specified bridleways and byways to facilitate use by cyclists and people in wheelchairs.

Aim 5: Improve Information

- 7.1.6 It is increasingly important for the County Council to provide good quality information and education about access to the countryside to the public through the internet. Aim 6 addresses this, but also recognises that improved information on the internet should be complemented by improvements in the provision of information in other forms such as leaflets, newsletters and signposting on-the-ground.

Aim 5 Objectives

- 5.a. Improve and make more accessible the information held on the Definitive Map of public rights of way.
- 5.b. Provide a wide range of accessible information on opportunities to enjoy the rights of way network.
- 5.c. Improve the information 'on the ground' on rights of way.

Aim 6: Improve Access to the Countryside from Urban Areas

- 7.1.7 It is important for the health and well-being of a community that they have adequate access to the local countryside. There is evidence to suggest that people do not wish to walk too far from their homes in order to reach a point to access the countryside. Therefore, it is the intention of Aim 3 to make suitable provision on the edge of towns and villages to meet this potential demand.
- 7.1.8 There is also a need to make popular dog walks more accessible for the benefit of both the dog walker and the land holder. There are various problems associated with dogs in the countryside and resolving at least some of these is one of the objectives in Aim 3.

Aim 6 Objectives

- 6.a. Develop a series of short, circular walks from urban areas that are attractive and easy to use, especially aimed at those who do not necessarily access their local countryside on a regular basis.
- 6.b. Improve access and facilities on popular dog-walking routes.
- 6.c. Provide more 'open' access to the countryside around towns and villages.

Aim 7: Improve Promoted Routes

- 7.1.9 Long distance paths and circular routes are an important part of the rights of way network, often attracting visitors to the county specifically to enjoy these routes. It is therefore important for these routes to be maintained and promoted to a high standard. The objectives under Aim 4 are designed to continue the high standard of work already achieved by the County Council in this area and to widen it to other routes that have not, so far, been treated as priorities.

Aim 7 Objectives

- 7.a. Promote a strategic network of primary LDPs which are maintained and promoted to a high standard.
- 7.b. Record and maintain secondary LDPs (such as the Vanguard Way and Sussex Border Path) to a reasonable and consistent standard.
- 7.c. Promote a variety of circular routes which are maintained to a high standard.
- 7.d. Record and maintain circular routes promoted by non-County Council sources (for example other local authorities, organisations, walking groups or independent guide books) to a reasonable and consistent standard.
- 7.e. Seek the provision of facilities to complement the LDPs and circular routes.
- 7.f. Improve opportunities for promoted off-road rides for equestrians and cyclists.

- 7.1.10 Following on from each objective, there are then a number of more specific actions required to meet the objective. Within each action is a reference to the text of the Plan, a target, projected cost and potential partner organisations. The full statement of action is included as Appendix A.

7.2 Prioritising and Delivery

- 7.2.1 The prioritising of the actions listed in the statement of action (see Appendix A) follows similar principles to those that have previously been adopted for the Rights of Way Priority Statement (referred to in 4.5).
- 7.2.2 The top priority for improvements will be to improve the safety of rights of way users. However, other improvements will be undertaken should the opportunity arise. Improvements will also depend on the funding opportunities that are available to the County Council.

- 7.2.3 The Improvement Plan is intended to set out the County Council's plan for developing and enhancing the provision of access in East Sussex over a ten year period. However, this time-frame may be reviewed if, as anticipated, Rights of Way Improvement Plans are absorbed into the Local Transport Plan (LTP) process when LTP3 is due to be adopted in 2011.

Objective 1.a.

To take advantage of any suitable grant funding for public rights of way related projects.

7.3 Monitoring the Rights of Way Improvement Plan

- 7.3.1 The success of the Rights of Way Improvement Plan will be measured by the ability of the County Council to deliver the aims (see 7.1) through the Statement of Action. The Plan's delivery will be regularly monitored, with updated reports going to the East Sussex Local Access Forum (which normally meets four times a year). A full annual report will be presented to the Lead Cabinet Member for Transport & Environment as part of the annual Milestones Statement.

Objective 2.c.

Improve working with town and parish councils, other authorities and organisations.

7.4 Quick Wins

- 7.4.1 The Rights of Way Improvement Plan guidance (Defra, 2002) highlighted the need for 'quick wins'. The East Sussex Local Access Forum, after its initial feedback on the priorities for the Plan, was keen to see the County Council work on two main quick wins that met some of its priorities.
- 7.4.2 As a result, the County Council identified a suitable parish for a programme of bespoke signposting and worked with Sedlescombe Parish Council in delivering this project during 2004.
- 7.4.3 The other quick win has been part of a long-term project to secure a safe route for walkers, horse riders, cyclists and the disabled alongside the B2116 between Ditchling and Offham. This route could potentially link a number of bridleways and footpaths allowing the public to travel safely both alongside the road and across it at various points. This ties in with the aims of a local group, the Westmeston Jubilee Pathway Trust.
- 7.4.4 As part of the delivery of this project, the County Council has helped finance the Trust's upgrading of a section of roadside verge to create a new length of path between Ditchling and Westmeston. This will be suitable for horse riders, walkers and other users. Completion of this section is due in 2007.