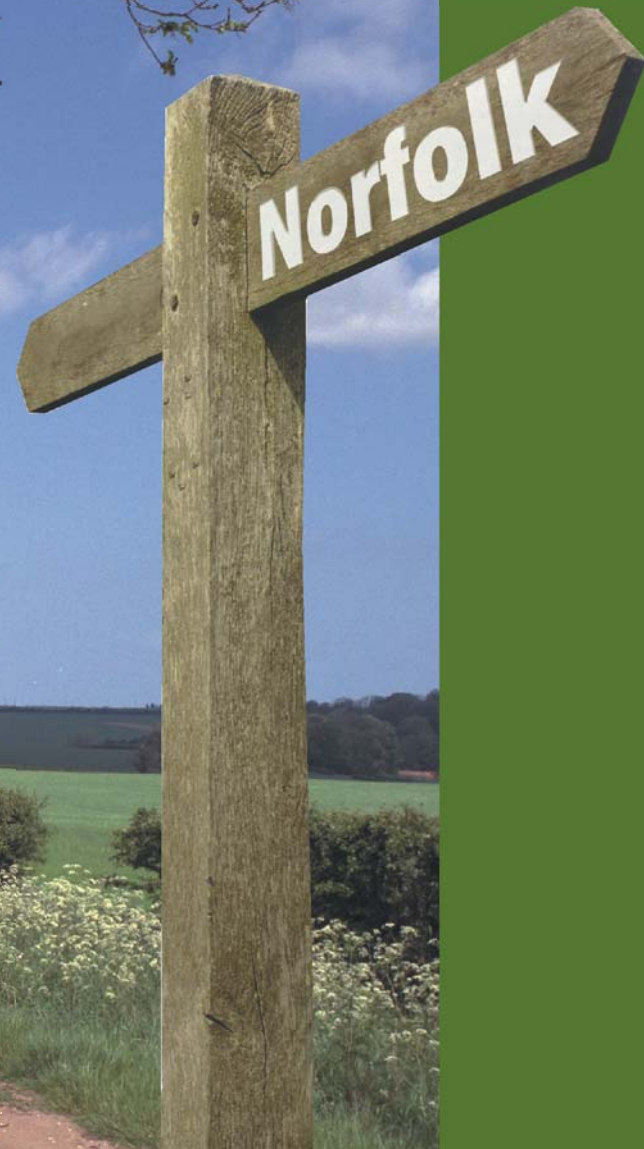


Norfolk County Council
at your service

Rights of Way Improvement Plan 2007-2017



Foreword by Cabinet Member with responsibility for Public Rights of Way

Foreword

I am pleased to be able to introduce this Rights of Way Improvement Plan for Norfolk 2007 - 2017. It heralds a new era extending opportunities to visit the Norfolk countryside to all of our community.

The Norfolk Local Access Forum, the Broads Local Access Forum, and County Council Officers have contributed to this plan. Significant public involvement was secured through a consultation campaign; Citizens' Panel research, and direct approaches made to disability, elderly, ethnic, and Sure Start groups. On 20 October 2004, a public conference of interested parties discussed both the assessment and proposed objectives.

Norfolk County Council's countryside access work has long recognised the breadth of benefits that the service can bring. Just three examples:-

- Half-an-hour's walking a day helps to prevent high blood pressure and osteoporosis, and reduces the risk of some cancers, type II diabetes, and depression
- Walking in England supports between 180,500 and 245,500 full-time equivalent jobs annually

- There were an estimated 3.6 billion leisure trips to the countryside in 2005, with the average spend per trip being £13.38. The estimated total value to the rural economy was £9.4 billion.

I see great benefit in the Council aligning its major statutory transport planning documents on walking, cycling, horse-riding, soft-road driving, transport planning and health. Again, treating statutory and permissive countryside access like public transport, as part of the wider transport network, will make opportunities for getting out and about more useful and enjoyable. Enhanced management and awareness should result from more people getting involved and sharing responsibility. Understanding of the scope of the Council's work, and satisfaction with it, should be boosted as the public gets directly involved in planning and monitoring progress.



Ian Monson



Executive Summary

Executive Summary

We have produced this Rights of Way Improvement Plan for Norfolk 2007 - 2017 to set out our future aspirations for improving our network of local rights of way. The Plan provides an assessment of the needs of the county's residents and visitors and of Norfolk's existing local rights of way network. It is based upon wide-ranging research.

In preparing the Plan, we first sought the views of people involved in managing the network and then asked locals, visitors and different community groups about their current and likely future needs. Communication with the county's two Local Access Forums was also maintained throughout and we also worked closely with other partners such as the Broads Authority and The Norfolk Coast Partnership. Substantial revisions have been undertaken between the publication of the draft Plan and the production of this final Plan. In particular, and in response to comments made on the draft, we have developed a framework of processes and practices which will guide our work in the future.

We also undertook an audit of the public access opportunities throughout Norfolk, including the Broads Executive Area,

looking both at the extent of the network and area-wide access and its condition.

Conclusions from the two assessments have led to us identifying a number of shortfalls where provision fails to meet needs. From this, we have developed seven major objectives and a ten-year programme of actions.

Steering group annual business plans will direct and report implementation as it contributes to the objectives of this plan. Our Goals, Aims and Objectives are as follows:-

Goal: Norfolk County Council continuously reviews and improves efficient management of both Public Rights of Way (PRoW) and Access, as well as cycletracks, and permissive access in Norfolk, promoting national and regional routes, and parish networks.

Aims

- Maintain the network so that it is better able to meet the varying demands placed upon it
- Increase public benefit
- Actively seek involvement of the public
- A collaborative approach to responsibilities and resources

Objectives

Objective 1: Develop a well signed, maintained and easily accessible network.

Objective 2: Develop and maintain an integrated network that provides for the requirements of all users.

Objective 3: Improve promotion, understanding and use of the network.

Objective 4: Encourage community involvement in improving and maintaining local rights of way.

Objective 5: Develop a safe network of local rights of way.

Objective 6: Prepare and make publicly available an up to date digitised Definitive Map.

Objective 7: Protect and enhance biodiversity associated with the network of public rights of way.

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1. Introduction

Introduction 1

Key Points

- Local rights of way are important in Norfolk
- The Rights of Way Improvement Plan will help us develop and manage the network to better meet needs of residents and visitors, now and in the future
- We have followed best practice in preparing the Plan
- We are grateful to the help provided by our colleagues in the Broads Authority, the Steering Group and the two Local Access Forums in the county

1.1 Why have we prepared the Rights of Way Improvement Plan?

Norfolk is a very rural county – with 68% of the area undeveloped. Enjoying the countryside is an important activity for many people. Local rights of way¹ provide one of the best opportunities for countryside access, whether for informal recreation or for simply getting from 'A to B'. The network of local rights of way is however based largely on historical patterns of use and consequently is not always suitable to meet modern day demands. There is a need for a strategic approach and a framework for actions which will help to

develop a network more able to satisfy the current and future needs of Norfolk's residents and visitors.

This is the focus of Norfolk's Public Rights of Way Improvement Plan (the Plan). The Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000, which provided the impetus for the Plan's production, re-focuses policy from being duty-oriented and based on the public record surveyed fifty years ago, to catering for the current and likely future needs of the community.

The Plan covers the whole of Norfolk, including the Broads Executive Area and the North Norfolk Coast Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB).



1.2 Plan Preparation Process

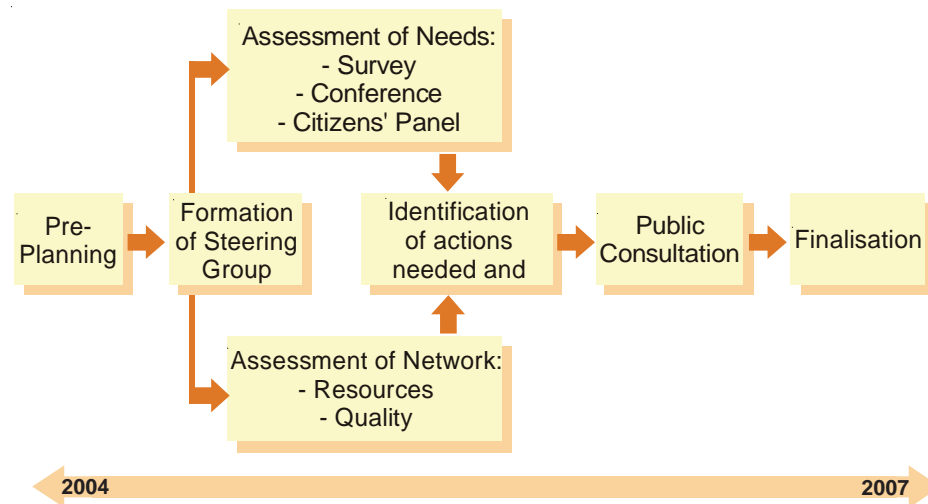
1.2.1 Overview

In preparing the Plan, we have followed the process set out in:

- sections 60 and 61 of the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000;
- statutory guidance produced by the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (Defra)²;
- good practice contained on the IPRoW website³.

The process we have followed is shown diagrammatically in Figure 1.1.

Figure 1.1: Plan Preparation Process



In preparing the Plan, we have had considerable support from the Broads Authority, the Norfolk Coast Partnership, a dedicated ROWIP Steering Group and two Local Access Forums.

¹Local rights of way are public footpaths, bridleways, restricted byways, byways open to all traffic and cycleways. What this means is described further in Section 2.

²See: <http://www.defra.gov.uk/wildlife-countryside/cl/rowip/rowip.pdf>

³See: <http://www.iprow.co.uk/index.php?page=page&catId=5>

1.2.2 The Broads Authority and Norfolk Coast Partnership

Norfolk County Council is responsible for the management and maintenance of local rights of way in the Broads and the North Norfolk Coast AONB, although the Broads Authority and Norfolk Coast Partnership (respectively) take the lead in other aspects of managing countryside access. The Broads Authority has for example status equivalent to that of a National Park and the Authority has specific responsibilities over access land in its area which are set out in the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000. We have consulted closely with our colleagues in the Broads Authority when preparing this Plan and have reached agreement over how we will work together to maintain and promote opportunities for public access to the countryside. The Broads Authority has produced an Action Plan that will run in parallel to that of Norfolk as a whole, and this is included in **Section 9**.

Norfolk County Council is a member of the Norfolk Coast Partnership and so has been able to co-ordinate this Plan with the work of the Partnership.

1.2.3 Peddars Way and Norfolk Coast Path National Trail

In partnership with Natural England, Norfolk County Council manages East Anglia's only National Trail. The Peddars Way and Norfolk

Coast Path is a nationally significant route which attracts substantial economic return for Norfolk.

1.2.4 The Steering Group

To manage countryside access in Norfolk, Norfolk County Council relies on support from many people, both from colleagues within Norfolk County Council and from other organisations. Consequently a Steering Group was set up in December 2003 to secure even greater co-ordinated effort to prepare the Plan by bringing together diverse - though relevant - interests. Membership comprises representatives from:-

- Broads Authority
- Norfolk Coast Partnership
- Communications in NCC
- Passenger Transport
- Local Access Forums
- Transport Planning
- Disability groups ● Rural Development
- Health interests ● Tourism interests
- National Trail ● Walking Cycling

The group met regularly during the Plan preparation and will continue to meet to produce annual business plans to direct and report on implementation.

1.2.4 Norfolk's Local Access Forums

Norfolk County Council and the Broads Authority have each set up a Local Access Forum covering their respective areas. These forums have legally defined terms of reference which broadly are to advise their respective appointing authorities and a range of other bodies on:

- Draft maps showing open country and registered common land (collectively referred to as 'access land')
- Byelaws affecting access land
- The appointment of wardens on access land
- Directions that would restrict or exclude access on access land for more than 6 months
- Rights of way improvement plans
- Making of dog control orders affecting access land
- General matters relating to countryside access.

Both Local Access Forums comprise a balance of representatives of related countryside interests such as walkers, horse-riders, farmers, landholders, common rights holders, and local council members.

1.2.6 Public Consultation

A draft Plan was made available for public consultation in late 2005. In total, over 70 different organisations were invited to comment (a list of organisations consulted is given in **Appendix 1**). 24 responses were received by the deadline of 3rd February 2006.

In the light of these comments, it was clear that further work was needed on the Plan to bring it to the standard sought by the public. We commissioned consultants to assist with this process, and by doing so, drew on best practice experience of other authorities where relevant.

Strategic Context

2

2. Strategic Context

Key Points

- The Plan will have to fit within a framework of other plans, especially the Local Transport Plan and Green Infrastructure Strategies
- Many other documents have influenced the preparation of the Plan
- The objectives of the Local Transport Plan and of the Green Infrastructure Strategy will only be fully realised if people are able to make best use of the local rights of way network

2.1 Planning Framework

Improvements to local rights of way do not exist in isolation from the rest of Norfolk County Council's work. The Rights of Way Improvement Plan sits within a planning framework, and information about the strategic documents we have reviewed is given in **Appendix 2**.

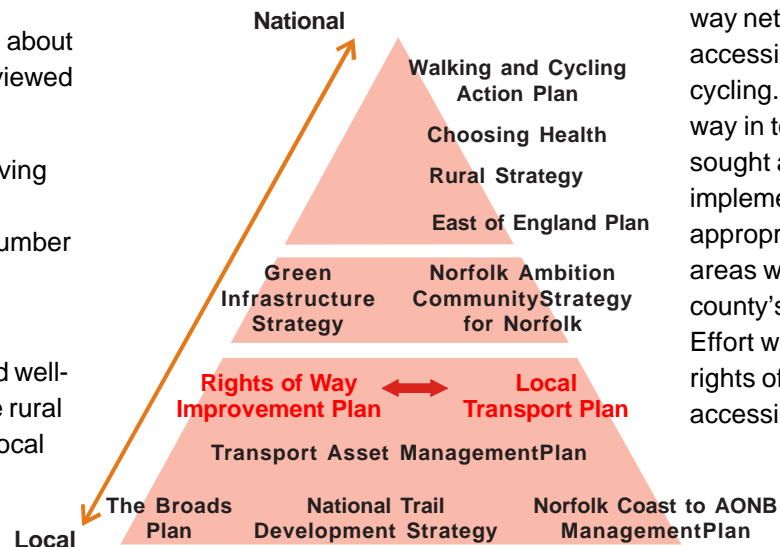
It is clear from this review that improving local rights of way and their use can contribute to the achievement of a number of other local, regional and national strategic objectives. These are:

- promoting enjoyment, health and well-being as an important part of the rural tourism resource to supporting local economies;

- contributing to diversification of rural economies;
- re-engaging people with their countryside and the natural environment;
- that they can be a driving force in encouraging a more environmentally sustainable use of the countryside, when viewed as part of an Integrated Transport Network;
- the development and implementation of Green Infrastructure.

The ROWIP sits within a planning framework, described diagrammatically in **Figure 2.1** below.

Figure 2.1: The Planning Triangle



2.2 Local Transport Plan

A key element of Norfolk's 2nd Local Transport Plan (LTP2) is promoting better accessibility to jobs and services, particularly by sustainable modes like public transport, walking and cycling. LTP2 recognises the importance of providing an environment for pedestrians and cyclists that is properly planned and makes people feel safe and secure. Priority is given to implementing safe and convenient walking and cycling networks within the main urban areas and market towns, particularly where networks are used for utility trips such as accessing places of work or education. Where necessary reducing traffic in town or city centres to create more 'people friendly' public spaces will be promoted. LTP2 identifies the role the public rights of way network plays in facilitating enhanced accessibility for people walking and cycling. Improvements to public rights of way in towns or urban areas may be sought as part of the LTP2 implementation plan, and where appropriate, public rights of way in urban areas will be adopted for inclusion in the county's highway maintenance program. Effort will also be made to ensure public rights of way in rural areas continue to be accessible and safe for pedestrians,

cyclists and horse riders. For example, opportunities for making best use of public rights of way through improved management, maintenance and better information will be explored along the North Norfolk Coast.

2.3 Green Infrastructure

The draft East of England Plan has set out clear targets to be achieved by 2021 and has identified Greater Norwich and Thetford as key centres for development and change in the East of England. In October 2006, the Norwich and Thetford Areas were named as two of a number of New Growth Points in the region.

In March 2007, Norfolk County Council and Breckland District Council respectively, began the process of preparing Green Infrastructure Strategies and Action Plans to be completed by August 2007.

“Green Infrastructure” may be broadly understood as:

“the multi-functional network of ‘greenspaces’ and inter-connecting green corridors in urban areas, the countryside in and around towns and rural settlements, and in the wider countryside. Green infrastructure is a natural life support system providing benefits for people and wildlife. It

encompasses ‘natural greenspaces’ (colonised by plants and animals and dominated by natural processes) and man-made ‘managed greenspaces’ (urban parks and designed historic landscapes), as well as their many connections (footpaths, cycleways, green corridors and waterways). The provision of publicly accessible natural greenspace is a vital component in securing benefits for communities where this can be balanced with the needs of private landowners and biodiversity conservation objectives”.

The Green Infrastructure Strategies will comply with the East of England Plan Panel Report requirement to protect and provide networks, consisting of protected sites, nature reserves, green spaces and greenway linkages.

This network should be multifunctional and meet a range of social, environmental and economic needs. The network will operate at all spatial scales from urban areas (including business areas) to the wider countryside. It will also include connections between urban and rural settlements and between settlements and the countryside.

Examples of Green Infrastructure and its benefits are included in **Appendix 5**.

2.4 Conclusion

The objectives of the Local Transport Plan and of the Green Infrastructure Strategy will only be fully realised if people are able to make best use of the local rights of way network. To work towards this position, we need to understand the needs of different users, including potential users. Our assessment of user needs and those of others with an interest in local rights of way follows in the next section.

Assessment of Needs

3. Assessment of Needs

3

Key Points

- The local rights of way network is enjoyed by a wide variety of users
- The biggest user group is walkers, although this can be further broken down into different sub-groups (e.g. dog walkers)
- Each group and sub-group has its own specific needs and preferences
- Common needs are:
 - Safe, circular routes free from obstructions
 - Appropriate surfaces and infrastructure
 - Information about routes (available before a visit and *en route*)
- Landowners have a vital role in local rights of way provision and want more flexibility in making changes to the network
- Many sectors of society do not currently use local rights of way, although their reasons vary

3.1 Introduction

Statutory guidance suggests consideration is given to the current, and likely future, needs of the public, in particular people with restricted mobility or impaired vision. We have made substantial efforts to find out what people want from the local rights of way network in Norfolk. This research extends beyond the statutory guidance and includes women, young people, people with learning difficulties, older people, and diverse ethnic groups.

We have assessed the needs of the different groups of people who may wish to use Norfolk's network using a variety of methods:

- an **on-line survey** and **paper questionnaire**. Invitations for people to participate in the survey were widely distributed. We also publicised the survey more generally within Norfolk. In total, we sent out around 5,000 questionnaires. We had a total of 265 responses to the survey. The responses have been analysed for us by consultants Mott MacDonald (August 2004).

- a **conference** held in Norwich on 20th October 2004. It was organised under the auspices of the Norfolk Local Access Forum. At this event, the findings of the assessments were confirmed, and the proposed actions discussed in four seminars.

- asking questions of a **Citizens' Panel**. The Norfolk Citizens' Panel is made up of 7,000 people across Norfolk willing to be consulted about public services. As the Panel is broadly representative and reasonably large its findings are a valid basis for policy decisions. 3,888 responded to the outdoor activity questions in the 2004 questionnaire.

research undertaken by others. Many others, both local authorities and national government agencies, have undertaken research into the needs and preferences of users of local rights of way.

Findings from our assessment surveys

3.2 User Groups

Local rights of way are used most commonly for informal recreation and as a means of getting from 'A to B' (e.g. commuting to work or travelling to school). Our on-line and questionnaire survey shows that about half the respondents walk or run, and a quarter use cycles. A full breakdown of responses to our survey is given in **Figure 3.1**.

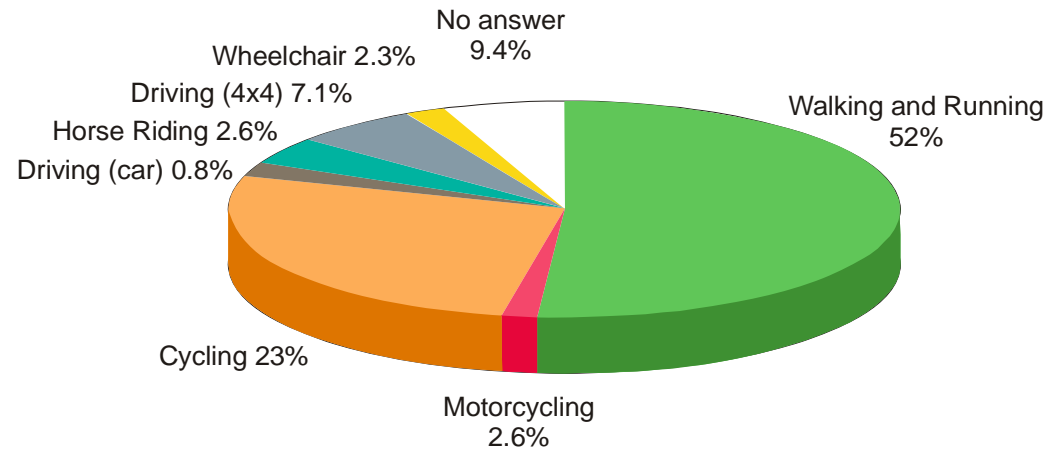
The needs of each user type is given below.

These requirements have important implications for our maintenance and management efforts, which we discuss further in Section 4 and 5.

3.2.1 Walkers

Walking is the most popular form of recreation associated with the countryside. It is a means of transport in its own right and usually accounts for at least part of journeys made by other means, for example walking to and from the bus, train or car. Two in five of those who responded from the citizens' panel (42%) use countryside routes for walking or running at least once a week, with one in five (21%) using them every day.

Figure 3.1: How people get out and about at the moment (n=265)



Walking has health and recreational benefits as well as functional uses and yet many of us do not walk enough to gain these benefits.

Walkers are possibly the most diverse group of users as they include everybody from the very young to the very old and those with a wide range of disabilities (we have identified the needs of these specific groups below). Those able to walk can also be separated into two distinct groups:

- those that walk for practical reasons (to get to work, school, shops etc.) and
- those that walk for pleasure, recreation or health.

Assessment of Needs

The latter may be further divided into groups such as dog walkers, casual walkers and ramblers.

Research carried out by other authorities whilst preparing for their Rights of Way Improvement Plans has studied the needs of walkers. This research recognises that there are many categories of walker, each with different needs and preferences. Common needs expressed by walkers are for routes that are:

- short (or a choice of lengths from short to more challenging) and circular
- safe and free from obstructions
- appropriately surfaced
- easy to follow on-the-ground
- close to home
- shown in publicity material
- equipped with suitable infrastructure including seating

A split of recreational walkers into three groups is sufficient to consider the needs of different sub-groups. Many of the findings are relevant to walkers using our network of local rights of way. The findings from a study by ADAS for Bedfordshire¹ are typical and are summarised in the following boxes.

Needs of casual walkers

- natural looking paths – not smooth, artificial surfaces
- variety of surfaces and terrain (but not too muddy)
- maps and information about routes, so you can choose a route suitable for your ability
- paths clear of obstruction
- way marking – reassurance you are on the right track
- safety
- some areas with activities for children
- benches
- safe car parking
- wildlife interest/attractive environment
- no litter, fly tipping
- no children on bikes

Needs of dog walkers

- Sufficient dog bins which are emptied regularly
- room for the dog to run off the lead
- safe for the dog to run off the lead i.e. no vehicles, other walkers, livestock
- controlled undergrowth
- no stiles or dog gates as dog gates are only suitable for small dogs
- clear and sufficient signage
- clear routes across fields
- lighting in winter on local routes near to the road
- attractive environment
- opportunities for the dog to drink (natural streams, ditches or water supplied by pubs).

¹See: <http://www.iprow.co.uk/docs/uploads/Bedfordshire...Walkers.Needs.pdf>

Needs of ramblers

- Variety – differing grades, surfaces, scenery
- natural surface and environment
- not too muddy
- adequate signage and way marks
- ideally no busy road crossings, or at least a safe crossing point
- paths not obstructed - clear across field paths, no obstructions caused by farmers - headlands not ploughed, narrow paths, rubbish or slurry on paths
- furniture and bridges in good repair, with gaps or kissing gates instead of stiles·adequate public transport for linear routes
- safe and sufficient parking
- effective response to complaints
- access to Definitive Map as required

Many people walk for purposes other than recreation. However, these utilitarian journeys make use mainly of roads, footways and cycletracks rather than public rights of way. Nevertheless,

if local rights of way were able to meet the needs of these walkers (and cyclists), there is a large 'market potential'. Utilitarian users are likely to need:

- good route surfaces;
- routes that are safe to use (not sharing with traffic, safe road crossings, possibly lighting along some sections);
- good linkages with key destinations (schools, retail outlets, major employment areas).

3.2.2 Cyclists

Cycling can mean the use of cycles along roads and 'off-road' cycling (often referred to as mountain biking). Many cyclists use their bikes to get to and from work or school, or for other utilitarian journeys like going to the shops or to access other services.

Others cycle for recreation, or sport. The International Mountain Bicycling Association² estimates that there are about 5.5 million mountain bikers in the UK, who undertake 78 million rides each year.



² See: http://www.imba-uk.com/index.php?page=MTB_Usage_Stats

Assessment of Needs

According to research, off-road cyclists can be placed in several categories, each with their own needs:

- Family groups, who need the security of knowing that they are unlikely to get lost or meet major difficulties (steep hills etc).
- Casual or occasional cyclists, who have similar needs to family groups.
- Ramblers on two wheels, who are usually more map literate and so will probably venture onto the local rights of way network and tend to be more accepting of the variable conditions they will find.
- Serious enthusiasts whose key need, according to the Cyclists Touring Club, is a route of up to 5 hours' duration, over terrain suited to their interest.

In addition, the type of cycle that these groups use also affects their needs; for example, cycles with panniers, child seats or even tandems can be severely restricted by cycle barriers such as double chicane barriers and those that are put in place to control movement. Also cycles with small wheels, such as children's bikes will be more affected by rough textured surfaces than larger wheeled or all terrain cycles.

3.2.3 Equestrians

Equestrians include those who ride horses and those who drive horse-drawn carriages.

A survey undertaken by the British Equestrian Trades Association³ reveals that "the number of horses in Britain, including those kept by private owners and in professional establishments, has reached 1.35 million. They are owned or cared for by 720,000 people, or 1.2% of the UK population." The study shows that around 2.1 million people ride at least once a month, with a further 2.2 million having done so during the last year,

making a total of 4.3 million participants. Leisure riding remains the most important single type of riding, up by 5% since the last survey (1999).

Research by Rural Resources for Shropshire County Council⁴ revealed that horse riders, like walkers and cyclists, need off-road routes and safe crossing points where a route crosses a busy road. Routes of at least 5 miles long are the most useful. It is important that these off-road routes are:

- free from obstruction and other obstacles like difficult gates, electric



³ See: <http://www.iprow.co.uk/docs/uploads/Salop.Horse.and.Cycle.Study.pdf>

⁴ See: <http://www.beta-uk.org/>

fencing, dogs, bulls, cows and other horses;

- not overgrown with vegetation such as brambles and nettles, overhanging branches and low trees;
- are well signposted and way marked;
- generally level and preferably free from pot holes; and
- well drained to prevent poaching, preferably with a natural unsealed surface.

Horse riders are vulnerable when using trafficked roads⁵; indeed, they could be considered more vulnerable than other users due to the sometimes unpredictable behaviour of their mounts. Young and inexperienced riders are at particular risk. The bridleway network in Norfolk is limited and is fragmented with many routes being severed by main roads, which have to be used to connect with the next off-road section.

Riders who use roads are most concerned about the speed of motorists and their attitude to riders. Slippery road surfaces and narrow verges are also problematic, although many riders prefer to ride on the carriageway rather than on verges, which are often uneven and may hide litter which

can startle horses. By riding on the road, vehicles are often forced to slow down in order to pass.

Driving of horse-drawn carriages also occurs on public rights of way. The number of people who take part in carriage driving is small compared to horse riders but, according to the British Driving Society, is growing. Research into their needs is limited but Sheffield Hallam and Rural Resources both considered this in the course of their respective studies. In short, the needs of carriage drivers are similar to those of horse riders with additional need for:

- adequate parking for manoeuvring carriages and horses;
- an area close to the chosen route to park, to tack up and harness the horse to the carriage;
- long distance routes with gates wide enough to allow the carriage to pass through;
- absence of blocking vegetation.

Finally, it is notable that many businesses (e.g. liveries, as well as other equine related businesses) depend on horse riders and carriage drivers for their income.

3.2.4 Drivers of Motorised Vehicles

Recreational off-road driving/motorcycling is generally carried out within a rural environment, where drivers can experience the challenge of more difficult terrain than offered by surfaced roads. The public has a right to drive motor vehicles on byways open to all traffic (byways), as well as a presumed right on unclassified county roads.

The national rights of way use and demand survey by Entec in 2001⁶ suggests that 4% of households has a member who undertakes off-road driving of some description, but it is recognised that some of this use may be on private land, or other open land, and paths and tracks that are not recorded as rights of way. In the survey, around 10% of respondents said that they undertook recreational off-road activities whether on 2 or 4 wheels. Nationally, there is some illegal use, which suggests a latent demand for off-road routes.

A study by Faber Maunsell⁷ (for Defra) asked a range of organisations that represent off-road motor vehicle drivers what their members sought from routes. Each group made a similar response but they embraced the following points:

⁵ See: <http://www.iprow.co.uk/docs/uploads/forest.of.eversley.draft.plan.pdf>

⁶ Reviewed by Hickey in 2003 (see:<http://www.iprow.co.uk/docs/uploads/RevisedUse.Demand.pdf>)

⁷ See: <http://www.defra.gov.uk/wildlife-countryside/cl/mpv/pdf/researchrep-veh.pdf>

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- unsurfaced routes that are 'different' from ordinary roads (LARA);
- routes that are free from obstructions and do not conflict with other users (All Wheel Drive Club);
- good surface, free from obstructing vegetation, preferably with some character and history (Trail Riders Fellowship);
- challenging natural gradient and surface (Association of Classic Trials Clubs);
- reasonable length and interesting topography (Association of Rover Clubs);
- routes that are not damaged by light vehicle use (Green Lane Association).

3.2.5 People with Mobility or Visual Impairments

There are many different groups of people who have mobility impairment:

- the elderly
- people with chronic conditions (e.g. long-term limiting illness or infirmity, poor physical fitness, recovering from surgery, and people with physical handicaps)
- those with young children.

The needs of each of these groups are considered in turn below, together with those who have visual impairment.



Elderly

Just over a fifth of the population of Norfolk are more than 65 years old (2001 Census). Decreasing fitness and income following retirement can sometimes increase dependence on walking and cycling on the one hand, whilst increased leisure time means that many older people will seek to access the countryside more frequently than when they were working. Sensory impairment and fear for personal safety may hinder use of routes. Some older people require regular rest points to be able to use routes.

Libraries, supermarkets, doctors' surgeries, and day centres could be used for easy access to accurate and clear information.

Organised walks such as the Norwich Health Walks are valued for the social contact and physical and mental exercise they provide.

People With Chronic Conditions

The 2001 Census records that 17.5 % of the population over 15 years-of-age in Norfolk had a long term illness, health problem, or impairment that affected their daily lives. Disabled people often have more than one impairment (Norfolk Joint Disability Strategy, 2003). More paths suitable for wheelchairs and linked to public transport are needed and should be promoted.

People with Young Families

People with young children and those pushing prams are affected by restricted mobility. There is consequently often an assumption by this group that the countryside is inaccessible.

Households with dependent children comprise 26% of Norfolk's population (2001 Census).

Thetford Forest and the North Norfolk Coast are favourite attractions. The rural 'Poppylands' and other Sure Start projects provide information, introductions and transport, for business and pleasure to help connect young families with services.

Information was requested on the health and personal development benefits of physical activity outdoors. People with young families needed to know how long a walk or ride would take and if refreshment or toilet facilities were available.

People with Visual Impairments

An estimated 2.1% of Norfolk's population over 15 years-of-age could have registered as blind or partially sighted in 2001 (Norfolk Joint Disability Strategy, 2003).

Popular destinations in Norfolk, with good and bad examples of provision, include



North Norfolk Coast, Thetford Forest, and the Broads. Surfaces and structures may prevent use as do inappropriately parked cars, kerbs, street furniture, and motorcycle barriers can also impede progress. Lack of dedicated parking can deny use of some sites or routes, for example sections of Marriott's Way.

A number of access groups across the county advise on and campaign for, better facilities. The Norfolk, and West Norfolk, Disability Information Services produce newsletters and offer advice. Accurate information is essential to allow users to assess suitability. Things to note include: slopes, bends, narrow places, seating, parking, toilets, and turning spaces. An example of how this information might be displayed can be seen on Norfolk County Council's interactive countryside access website⁸.

Blind people are generally accompanied so paths that can accommodate two abreast are helpful. Nettles and ploughed

fields are difficult to tackle. Routes need to be smooth and well defined. Signs should be accessible and prominent with bold contrasting print. It is often difficult to find the walk or facility from a bus stop or station. Information should be available in electronic text, audio, and tactile versions. Norfolk and Norwich Association for the Blind lead walks and they are producing a guide pack and recommend routes full of the sounds and smells of the countryside. The Association has recently advised the Broads Authority on accessibility improvements on Barton Broad.

Limitations with public transport timetables, identification of stops and services, and support from personnel can all prove problematic.

⁸ See: www.countrysideaccess.norfolk.gov.uk

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Needs of People with Disabilities

People with impaired mobility have different needs, usually related to their capabilities. Research was done for the City of York into the physical conditions needed by people with impairments and is reproduced in **Table 3.1** below.

Table 3.1: Needs of People With Disabilities

Visually impaired people need:

- space to pass other path users
- clear edges to paths
- even and clearly marked steps
- warning of hazards at head height
- even path surfaces
- easy to use catches on gates

Wheelchair users need (some applicable to those with pushchairs):

- signs at eye level
- catches which are easy to reach and operate
- space on car parks to transfer from their car to their chair
- accessible toilets
- views unrestricted by handrails or walls
- hand rails at appropriate heights
- surfaces which are firm, level and non-slip
- gates which are easy to open and close
- minimum crossfall on paths or even cambers
- spaces to sit next to companions at seats and accessible picnic tables
- space to pass other path users
- space to turn corners
- minimum gradients on all paths
- level space next to ramps or gates

People with walking difficulties or dexterity/balance problems need

- level, even surfaces on paths
- steps with handrails and even treads and risers
- seats that are easy to rise from
- minimum gaps in the path surface
- minimum gradients along and across paths
- easy to negotiate stiles and gates
- gates that are not heavy and catches that are easy to operate
- passing places on paths
- resting places at regular intervals
- horseriders need places to mount and dismount, plus easy catches on bridlegates

Over and above the physical requirements of the network, a key factor is a need for information that allows the aspiring user to judge the difficulties of the route against his or her own capabilities and requirements.



3.3 Findings from Other Sections of the Community

From the consultations we have carried out, we have been able to identify the needs and preferences of other important sectors of society within Norfolk, including some who do not normally make good use of the network.

3.3.1 Landholders

Almost all countryside access opportunities rely on, and have implications for, private landholders. Examples range from government agencies like the Forestry Commission, and national charities like the National Trust, through county, district, and parish councils, to large estates, small family farms and even people's gardens. The public rights of way network affects all of these but farmland probably carries the highest proportion.

In order to be eligible for subsidies under the Single Payment Scheme, farmers are required to meet all their responsibilities on public rights of way and access land.

Public access opportunities can be enhanced by permissive access schemes, for example through a Defra agri-environment scheme or by agreement with parish, district or county councils.



Finally, our survey indicates that landowners and managers would like to be able to make changes to legal routes over their land more quickly and easily. New provisions, introduced by the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000, will allow landowners to make temporary short-term diversions in some circumstances. They are however required to follow the correct legal procedures governing any proposed change to local rights of way, whether temporary or permanent.

3.3.2 Women

Over half of the population of Norfolk are women (2001 Census). We found that:

- Choice of route and opportunity to visit the countryside may be limited by responsibilities towards children, or people with disabilities or who are elderly. This can be resolved by providing toilets, changing facilities, and paths designed for two, for prams, or for wheelchairs.
- Limited self-confidence, free time, and money, as well as fear for personal safety, can prevent or discourage women from going outdoors.
- Woodland walks and group trips to the coast are enjoyed and valued.

3.3.3 Young People

Just under a fifth (18%) of Norfolk residents are under 16 years-of-age (2001 Census). Many young people without experience of outdoor activity are unlikely to explore, thinking that the countryside is not for them. If they do, it is likely to be spontaneous and random, directed by physical features rather than by set routes, rights, or ownership. Promotion must be visually attractive and stimulating, possibly web-based, but not

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associated with authority. The main activities are informal cycling, skating, or playing football, usually in an urban or fringe environment. A few young people cycle or walk to school. Significant numbers take part in formal activities with Guide and Scout Groups, Cadet Corps, and other sailing, birding, and conservation clubs in the county.

3.3.4 Mental Illness

In 1997, 16.7% of Norfolk's population was estimated to suffer from psychiatric illness (Norfolk Joint Disability Strategy, 2003). People who are anxious and depressed or with other mental health conditions may need encouragement, support and motivation to help them use public transport/countryside access facilities.

"Mind" day centres use rural transport partnership minibuses to take groups to places like Sandringham and Downham either to enjoy the countryside, or for the shops. "Rethink" provide "Bridges" day centres and trips for people with severe mental health conditions. Norfolk Mental Health Care Trust operates a mobile drop-in centre called the Heron Coach from Hellesdon.

3.3.5 Deaf

Of Norfolk's adult population (i.e. over 15 years-of-age), 4.5% was estimated to be severely or profoundly deaf in 2001. Over half of people over sixty are deaf or hard of hearing (Norfolk Joint Disability Strategy, 2003).

Deaf people's reliance on hands and vision for communication tends to impact on their enjoyment of the countryside. The significant number that use British Sign Language may find written English difficult to understand. This can reduce the usefulness of leaflets and the like, and can present communication difficulties with landholders. They are not otherwise restricted though some may not be aware of other road or path users approaching. The basic need, therefore, is for information in appropriate formats. Norfolk Deaf Association provides communication services and training.

3.3.6 Ethnic Minority Groups

The 2001 Census provides us with a breakdown of the ethnicity of our resident population:

	% of population (2001 Census)
British	96.23
Other white	2.25
Mixed, Indian, Chinese, African, Asian, Caribbean, Pakistani, Bangladeshi, Other	1.52

Another factor for the future is the growing number of Europeans (especially Portuguese and Polish) joining the resident population of some of our major towns.

The Countryside Agency (2005) and the Black Environmental Network (BEN undated) in their research have demonstrated that many of the factors that prevent people in the ethnic minority groups going into the countryside stem from the lack of habit and the insecurity felt when travelling outside their home areas. Barriers confronted by black and minority ethnic communities are listed in the box below.

Barriers Confronted by Minority Ethnic Groups

- **lack of cultural habit:** Enjoyment of the countryside may not be part of their family life; when they do explore, it is likely that they will rarely meet similar people and feel a lack of hospitality. ;
- **lack of knowledge:** Minority ethnic communities do not always appreciate that countryside access opportunities are available to all. Researchers have shown that there may be no pool of knowledge about where to go and what to do when they get there. Fear of trespassing is shown to be a barrier too. They are also not sure how local people will react to them.
- **cost of visiting the countryside:** Minority groups tend to be less well off than white British, and therefore the costs of transport, food, accommodation, visiting tourist sights and activities will be too high for many. As it is common to visit with family and friends, the total costs can be prohibitive. However, those who do visit the countryside feel that the costs are lower than city-based leisure activities;
- **transport:** Many residents from minority groups live in market towns and the city, even if they take agricultural work, and may not have a car. Even for those that do, the costs may be high. In addition, travel to the countryside may be travel into

the unknown, and there will be stress in travelling long distances to seemingly remote places. Even if they have already been to a place with a group, they would often like to return but find that public transport is not available;

- **different patterns of use** (of the countryside): The ethnic minority groups prefer to spend their leisure time with relatives and friends. This may be because of personal security issues, and may also be because it is their culture to spend time together *en famille*. Picnics and barbeques were found to be popular, and the researchers found a preference for managed sites which offer structured activities;
- **lack of culturally appropriate provisions:** Going out as a cultural group enables non-English speakers to be included safely and comfortably but, for some groups, the countryside does not cater for their basic cultural or religious needs such as appropriate food and praying facilities. BEN (undated) add that there may be a difficulty where women only groups are expected to have male drivers or organisers.

Source: *Tourism South East (2005)*

The fundamental need for minority ethnic groups is the removal of these barriers.

3.3.7 People with Learning Difficulties

About 0.3% of Norfolk's population was estimated to have learning disabilities (Norfolk Joint Mental Health Strategy, 2001 estimated 2600 people).

The Scout and Guide Associations, and the Duke of Edinburgh Award Scheme involve people with learning difficulties. Yet for most, reliance on the support of others, and the need for specialised equipment, can make visits to the countryside difficult.

3.4 Conclusion

From the review of needs and preferences of different sectors of Norfolk's resident population, it is apparent that users of the local rights of way network have very diverse needs. The extent to which these needs are met, or can be met, from existing resources therefore needs to be seen against the background of this diverse array of requirements.

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4. Assessment of the Network

Key Points

- The local rights of way network extends to 2355 miles (3767 km)
- The majority of the network is available only to people on foot
- In contrast, barely 1% of the network is available to off-road motor vehicle drivers
- The network is not well-distributed or connected, although pedestrians are best catered for with provision declining progressively for cyclists, horse riders, carriage drivers and off-road motorists
- Although Norfolk County Council's performance has improved, users still encounter a number of problems in using the network
- Common problems reported are:
 - poor maintenance (vegetation not cut enough, uneven surface, muddy paths);
 - safety issues (primarily from motor traffic);
 - obstructions (locked gates, barbed wire fences);
 - poor continuity and connectivity of cycle and bridle routes;
 - poor signposting/waymarking.
- Respondents to the draft Plan indicated a need for a framework of supporting practices and procedures for work to improve the network in future

4.1 About the Assessment

This section of the Plan assesses the extent and current condition of the network of local rights of way in Norfolk, together with other facilities related to countryside access.

Information on the extent of the network has been obtained from checking and analysing records, summaries from officers, and interviews with team members from across the Department of Planning and Transportation. We have obtained information about access facilities in Norfolk from a number of sources.

Map 4.1 shows the distribution of local rights of way in the county.

Finally, the condition of the network has been described from our routine monitoring work and comments made to us by existing users (in responses to our on-line/questionnaire survey and public conference).

4.2 Extent of the Local Rights of Way Network

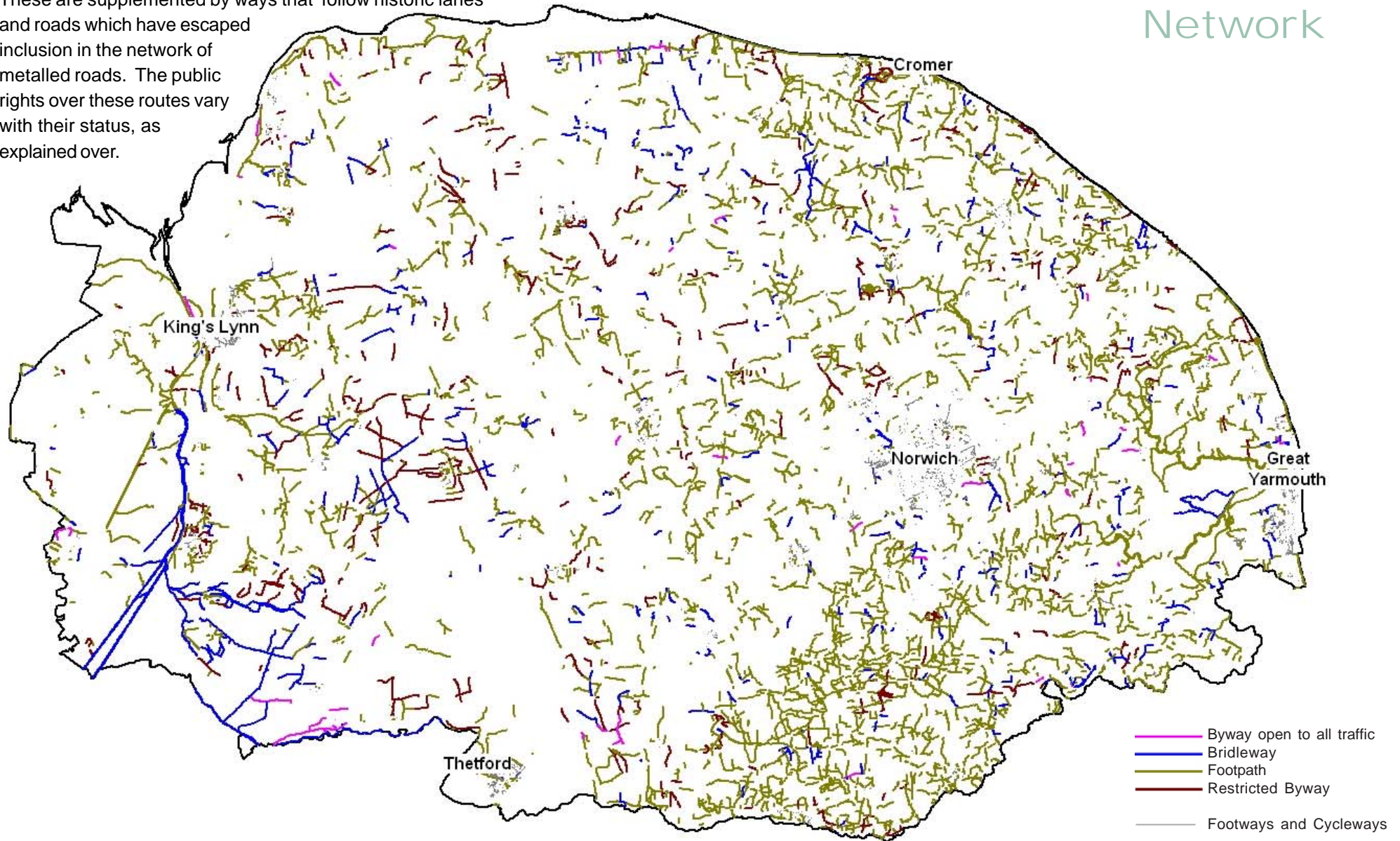
Local rights of way, and the current length of each type, within Norfolk are:

Type	Length (km)	Length (miles)	% of total
Footpaths	2635	1647	70
Bridleways	547	342	15
Cycleways	48	30	1
Restricted Byways	486	304	13
Byways	51	32	1
Total	3767	2355	100

Map 4.1 : Local Rights of Way in Norfolk

Map 4.1 shows the distribution of Norfolk's public rights of way network. The ways that make up the network include many that cross farm land or run alongside field boundaries.

These are supplemented by ways that follow historic lanes and roads which have escaped inclusion in the network of metalled roads. The public rights over these routes vary with their status, as explained over.



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4.2.1 Footpaths

Walkers have the right to use any public footpath running over private land as shown on the Definitive Map and Statement. Walkers have exclusive use of the footpaths that make up 2635 km (1647 miles - 70%) of this network. 35 footpaths have been added since 1997.

As can be seen from **Map 4.1**, the density of paths varies across the county, with the fenland areas less well-served than elsewhere.

A proportion of these routes have been developed as 'Access for All' – easy to use by walkers of all abilities. One example is the promoted walk through Norwich Cemetery in Earlham .

Earlham, Norwich Cemetery



boundaries. Short sections with lesser rights can prevent the use of a substantial route whilst a special problem for horse riders is the risk encountered when crossing roads.



4.2.2 Bridleways

Horse riders and cyclists have a right to use byways, restricted byways and bridleways. There are 547 km (342 miles – 15%) of bridleways in Norfolk, which are managed for horse riders, and not therefore always suitable for all cyclists, particularly in urban areas. Since 1997, 10 bridleways have been added to the Definitive Map, 2 by dedication.

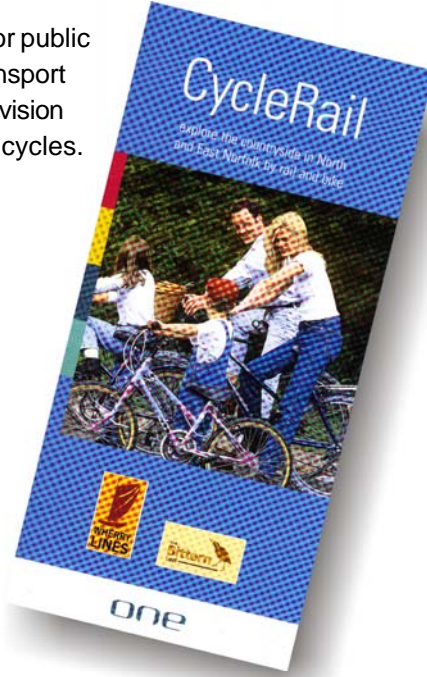
The network available to horse riders is extremely sparse and scattered. One limiting factor is a change in recorded status where paths cross administrative

4.2.3 Cycleways

About 480 miles of routes of all types (including all bridleways and excluding footpaths) can be used by cyclists but only about 1,132 km (708 miles) of these are purpose built cycleways (i.e. separated from a road), although many are shared with other types of users. In 2003/2004, Norfolk County Council, developers, or other organisations funded twenty-one schemes including tracks or junction improvements and 213 parking facilities. Norfolk County Council pays for inspections and maintenance.

Cycling can be hindered by:

- route and bridge design;
- barriers and surfacing;
- presence of vegetation, litter and dirt;
- lack of information and secure parking; and
- poor public transport provision for cycles.



4.2.4 Restricted Byways

Restricted Byways (previously Roads Used mainly as Public Paths) are public rights of way for walkers, pedal cyclists, those on horseback or leading a horse, and for all non-mechanically-propelled vehicles such as horse-drawn carriages.

Direction signs will show their status. They are not required to be hard surfaced, but are maintained with regard to the character of the highway and the traffic reasonably expected to use them.

Restricted Byways extend to approximately 486 km (304 miles) in Norfolk.

Until recently, there existed an obligation to re-classify Roads Used as Public Paths and where re-classification has started the process will be completed. There are 6 Roads Used as Public Paths currently being re-classified in Norfolk.

4.2.5 Byways Open to All Traffic

Norfolk has roughly 51 km (32 miles) of byways, and these are available for all types of users but are not linked into a network. Maintenance tends to be to bridleway standard since that (together with pedestrians) is their primary use. There is no requirement to provide a surface suitable for the passage of vehicles. However, agricultural vehicles sometimes leave tracks that make public use difficult or impossible. 13 have been added in the last ten years with 34 routes becoming byways through a change in status.

The introduction of the Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act

2006 has effectively brought an end to any further additions to the byway network, except in some rare circumstances. In Norfolk, we have 10 outstanding claims for byway status which were received before the cut-off date (20th January 2005) and these will be assessed under the previous rules. Some routes may meet the new criteria.

In Norfolk there are a number of routes recorded as vehicular roads rather than as public rights of way on the Definitive Map and Statement. They are shown on other records as carrying rights for the public to drive motor vehicles. However, these routes are not easily identified on maps usually used by the public when in the countryside.



Assessment of the Network

4.3 Condition and Quality of the Network

4.3.1 Best Value Performance Indicator 178

Since 1993, Norfolk County Council has successfully managed countryside access by combining duties toward public rights of way and discretionary access development. The approach was set out in a strategy¹. Best Value Performance Indicator 178 now measures “the percentage of total length of footpaths and other rights of way which were easy to use by members of the public”. So, this measures our performance with respect to compliance with our duties over public rights of way. Results for the last six years shows substantial improvements (see **Table 4.1** below).

Table 4.1: Results Of Norfolk’s BVPI 178

Year	Score (%)
2001	45
2002	56
2003	66
2004	72
2005	72
2006	75

This compares favourably with the rate of improvement in the country as a whole. We have set ourselves the target of increasing the score to 76%, 78% and 80% over the next three years respectively.

¹ Norfolk County Council (1993). Public rights of way: a strategy for Norfolk

4.3.2 Promotion

BVPI 178 does not reflect our use of discretionary powers such as the development and promotion of public rights of way. Nevertheless, we have invested a lot of effort into promoting the best of Norfolk’s network. Recent achievements include leading the Wherryman’s Way project and Norwich Health Walks, as well as commissioning the website www.countrysideaccess.norfolk.gov.uk. We have also developed a series of circular walks springing from the Wherryman’s Way and promoted access opportunities at Local Nature Reserves such as at Southrepps Common.

In partnership with Natural England (and its predecessors) Norfolk County Council has promoted the Peddars Way and Norfolk Coast Path National Trail for 20 years, along with transport, accommodation and circular walks associated with the route.

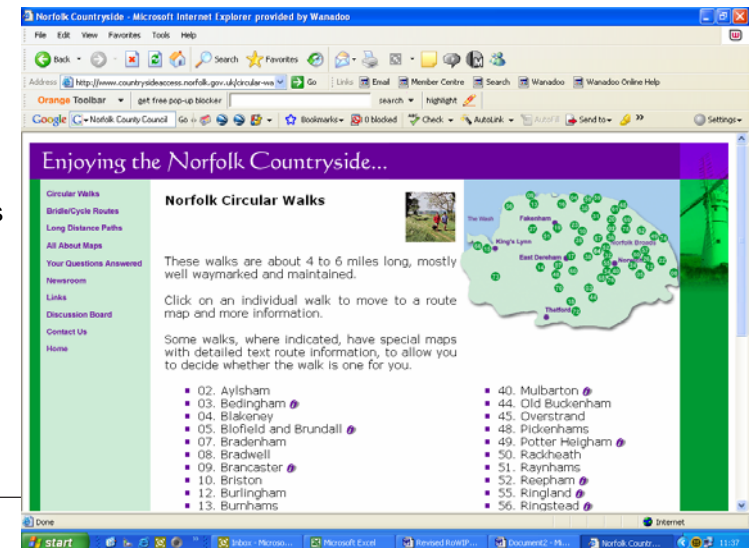
Cycling and riding opportunities have been promoted through leaflets such as:

- “Riding and Walking in the Norfolk Fens”
- “Norfolk Bridle and Cycle Routes”

More established examples of route promotion are the valued provision of the permissive shared use on disused railway lines, such as Marriott’s Way and Weavers’ Way, and ‘Parish Walks’ information boards. The latter show public rights of way and some additional permissive routes alongside access funded by agri-environment schemes. Other long distance routes that we have developed and maintain are:

- Fen Rivers Way
- Nar Valley Way
- the Angles Way
- Tas Valley Way
- Paston Way
- Ketts Country
- Boudicca Way

Some walks are promoted through our website - <http://www.countrysideaccess.norfolk.gov.uk/>.



4.3.3 Legal Issues

As the surveying authority for Norfolk, we are responsible for maintaining and keeping under continuous review the Definitive Map and Statement of public rights of way (note – the Definitive Map only records footpaths, bridleways, restricted byways and byways). However, like other authorities' Definitive Maps, some errors exist and conditions on the ground are constantly changing (e.g. through new roads being built, or areas being developed for housing). As a result, journeys may be interrupted by occasional, though sometimes significant, dead-ends and changes in status.

Changes to the legally-recorded network can arise as a result of, for example:

- Definitive Map Modification Orders – where the map requires updating to reflect established but unrecorded rights;
- Public Path Orders – where the network has been changed (by a route being created, diverted or closed);
- Dedication Agreements;
- Side Road Orders;
- Stopping Up Orders.

In 2004, there was a list of 50 changes to the legal record awaiting a decision, one dating back to 1992. As at February 2007, there are ??? changes and applications for changes to be made. Natural England (formerly the Countryside Agency) is working to record unregistered paths before a change in the law prevents them being added (scheduled for 1st January 2026). District Councils deal with orders relating to planning applications.

We maintain a register showing applications for Modification Orders and how they are progressing, which the public may view.

4.3.4 Responses to the Questionnaire

We always welcome comments from the public about the rights of way network. This gives us another way to monitor our performance and whether changes lead to improvements. For example, the establishment of planned vegetation cutting contracts in 2000 significantly reduced the number of complaints. In addition, the preparation of the Plan has provided us with an opportunity to get comments about what we can do to improve the network over the next 10 years.

An analysis of responses received via our on-line and questionnaire survey has been

undertaken. This includes both responses to direct questions about the network as well as 'open' questions. The full responses to relevant questions are reported in **Appendix 3** and summarised below.

There are many positive comments to offset the negative ones. Recurring themes amongst the negative comments are:

- poor maintenance (vegetation not cut enough, uneven surface, muddy paths);
- safety issues (primarily from motor traffic);
- obstructions (locked gates, barbed wire fences);
- poor continuity and connectivity of cycle and bridle routes;
- poor signposting/waymarking.

There are many other site-specific comments, as can be seen by consulting the data in Appendix 3.

4.3.5 Responses to the Draft Plan

We have received a number of comments in response to the draft Plan which we made available for public consultation. Our review of these comments finds that

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our policies need to be strengthened in a number of areas. In sum, respondents believe we ought to have policies in the following areas:

- Improved use of technology;
- Protection, enhancement and promotion of the environment;
- Improved access to the countryside;
- Definitive map work;
- Planning and development control;
- Creation of access for all routes;
- Safe road crossings/safe routes to school;
- Access to external resources;
- Maintenance and signage standards.

Our current approach to management and maintenance of public rights of way is considered in more detail in **Section 6**. We also use this section to provide a framework of practices and procedures, produced in response to the suggestions made by respondents, which we intend to use to increase our effectiveness in implementing our Statement of Actions (see Section 7).

4.4 Other Access Resources and Features

4.4.1 Areas of Land with Rights of Public Access

In October 2005, approximately 9,000 ha (22,240 acres) of private land in Norfolk became subject to the new public right of area-wide access on foot for informal recreation. The new right applies to about 450 Registered Commons and around 60 small scattered areas of heaths and downs. The distribution of access land across Norfolk is shown in **Map 4.2** over.

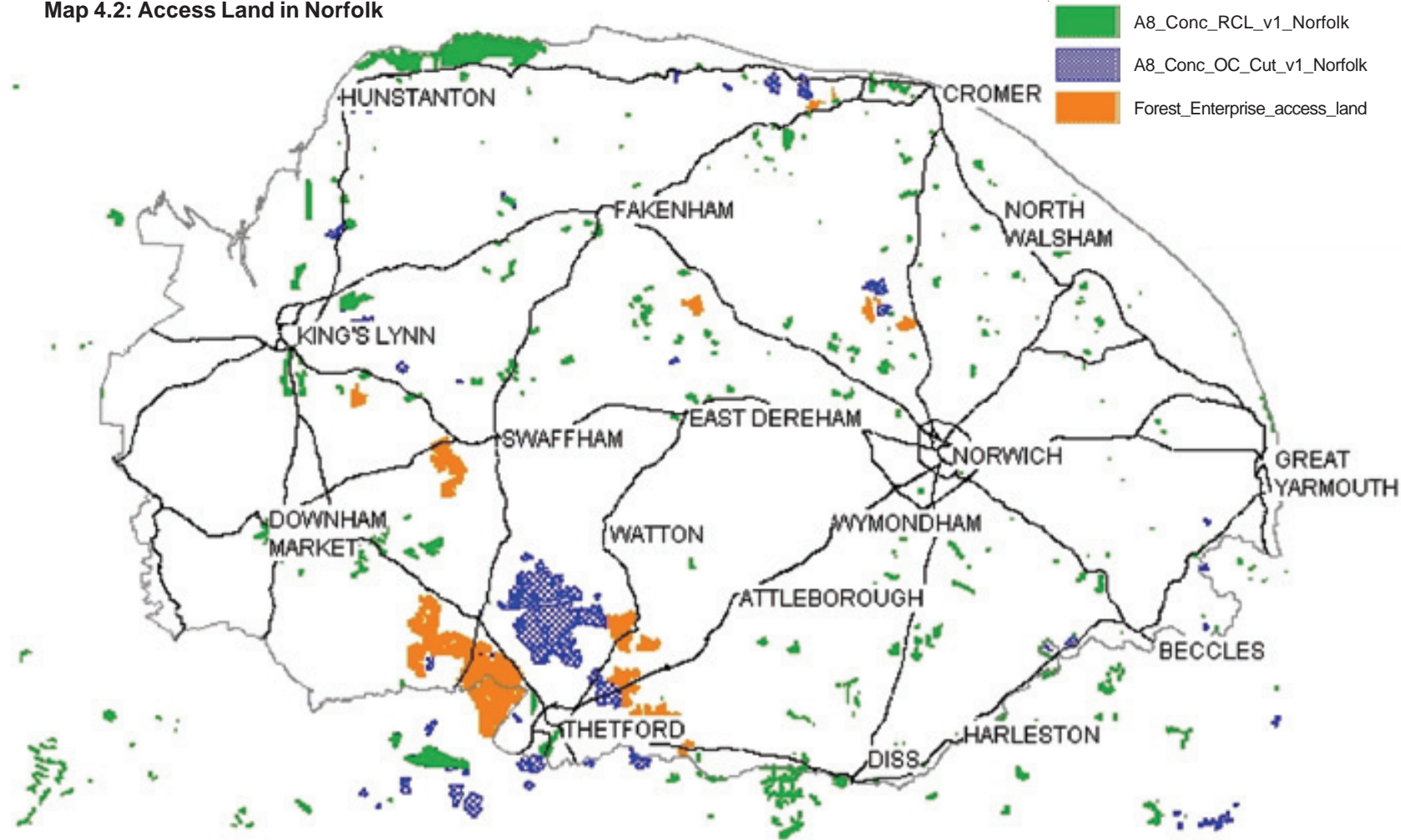


Our duties with respect to access land are limited but we do have powers to assist in the management and promotion of public use of such areas, through:

- agreeing with farmers over provision of access facilities (e.g. gates, signs)
- promotion of access opportunities
- appointment of wardens
- introduction of byelaws

The Commons Act 2006 introduces opportunities to develop modern mechanisms for managing common land with agricultural needs particularly in mind. These are not expected to impact on access.

Map 4.2: Access Land in Norfolk



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4.4.2 Permitted Public Access

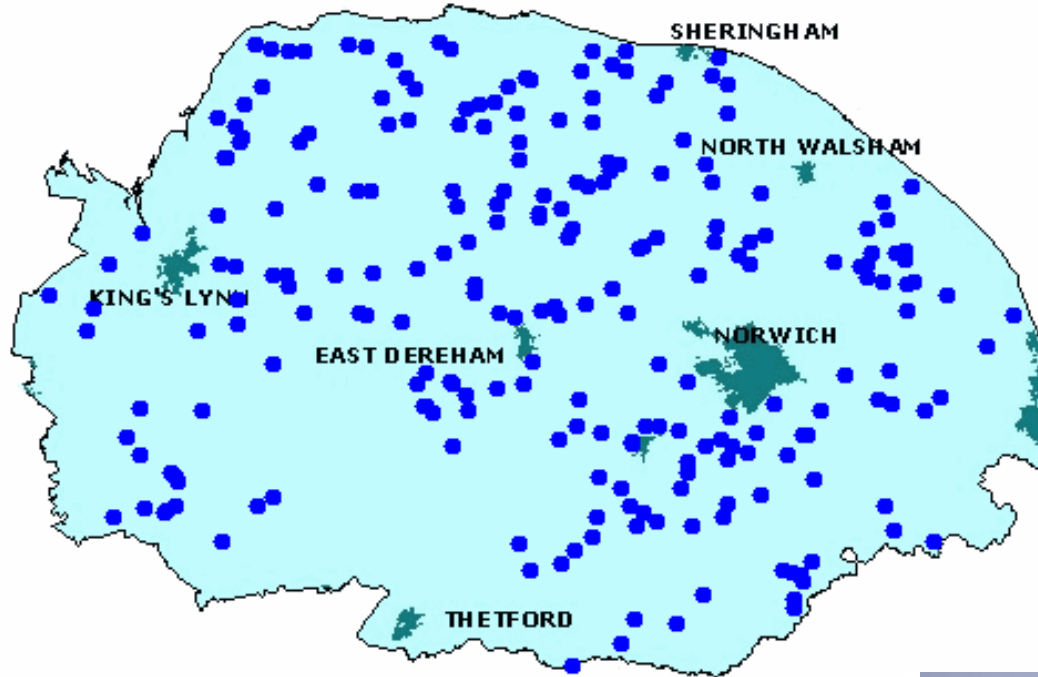
The scattered network of public access resources is complemented by permitted access across nature reserves, Country Parks, and estates like Thetford Forest, Foxely, Surlingham, and West Acre.

Marriott's Way and Weavers' Way are wholly or partly permissive linking routes for non-motorised use provided by Norfolk County Council. At Caister, a cycleway provides a route to Great Yarmouth. Other organisations, like the National

Trust, permit walking along routes and across sites. Similarly, the Forestry Commission has dedicated much of its owned land for public access on foot and made tracks within its woods available for horse riders and cyclists.

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Map 4.3: Country Walks in Norfolk



Source: <http://countrywalks.defra.gov.uk/>

However, it is possible for landowners to grant permission for public access, and erect appropriate notices and/or deposit with this Council a declaration as to the permissive status of the route. These steps may assist in demonstrating no intention to dedicate a permanent right.

The Department for Environment, Food, and Rural Affairs negotiates walker and horse-rider access agreements under agri-environment schemes (formerly the

Countryside Stewardship Scheme and now the Environmental Stewardship Higher Level Scheme). The permissive access secured under these agreements are promoted via the "Countrywalks" website². The distribution in Norfolk is shown in **Map 4.3**.

Access to beaches and coastal land is important in some parts of Norfolk. There is, however, currently no legal right of public access to much of the inter-tidal zone (much of which is owned by the Crown). Defra is currently developing proposals to improve access to the coast, including a possible creation of a new right of public access along and within a coastal access corridor.

There is room to improve co-ordination, negotiation, and advertising of permissive access. However, it is important to recognise that permissive access should complement statutory access, rather than be seen as a substitute for it.



² See: <http://countrywalks.defra.gov.uk/>

4.4.3 Footways, Minor Roads and Public Transport

In preparing the Plan, we have also considered the contribution to the use of the local rights of way network made by footways, minor roads and public transport, even though these are outside the Plan's scope. A brief review of these resources is given in **Appendix 4**.

countryside access opportunities in Norfolk. This exceptional diversity is sufficient to allow most people who want to visit the countryside to do so. A limiting factor may be their access to clear information that enables them to match their requirements with what is available.

4.5 Conclusion

It is readily apparent from the discussion above, that there is a broad range of



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5. Assessment of Adequacy

Key Points

- Whilst there are many opportunities for people in Norfolk to access the countryside, some shortfalls are evident
- The key ones are:
 - Fragmented nature and uneven distribution of the network, especially in the case of Bridleways and Byways
 - Routes that cross busy main roads
 - Limited opportunities for people with disabilities and for those wanting to drive vehicles other than on surfaced roads
- There is also a lack of information available to help people identify the opportunities available, especially amongst sections of society who do not normally visit the countryside
- These shortfalls can be addressed, throughout the life of the Plan, through:
 - Current actions
 - Exploiting opportunities for improvement as they arise

The previous sections of the Plan have considered in some detail what public rights of way users need and what is currently available in Norfolk. Some of the public's comments about the network are reported in detail in **Appendix 3**. In **Table 5.1**, we bring these two strands together to identify current shortfalls.

Table 5.1: Matching Requirements and Provision

User Type	Requirements	Current Provision	Shortfall
All users	Recorded routes	Legal Orders for processing	Time required to process, including work on Norwich and Gt Yarmouth
	Free of obstructions (especially overhanging vegetation, crops)	Regular maintenance activities	Still over a quarter of the network not easy to use.
	Well signposted and waymarked	BVPI (in 2006) = 75%	Electronic data not well-co-ordinated
	Have suitable surfaces	Information on some routes	Limited amount of promotional material and in only two formats
	Safe to use		
	Mechanisms for dealing with complaints and definitive map problems		
	Information tailored to specific user-type requirements		

Assessment of Adequacy

User Type	Requirements	Current Provision	Shortfall
Casual walkers	Safe, clean and interesting environment for people and children	3,719 km of public rights of way	Poor provision in some areas (e.g. West Norfolk, Brecklands)
	Well-maintained and well-connected routes	9,000 ha of statutory area-wide access	Some anomalies
	Free of obstructions (especially overhanging vegetation, crops)	Permissive and de facto access	Routes severed by main roads
	Well signposted and waymarked		
	Have suitable surfaces		
	Safe to use		
Dog walkers	Facilities for dog mess and drinking	3,719 km of public rights of way	Poor provision in some areas (e.g. West Norfolk, Brecklands)
	Areas in which dog can run free		
	Area free of obstructions (esp overhanging vegetation, crops)	9,000 ha of statutory area-wide access (but subject to dog restrictions at some times)	Some anomalies
	Well signposted and waymarked	Permissive and de facto access	Routes severed by main roads
	Have suitable surfaces		
	Safe to use		
	Nos of passing through stiles		
Ramblers	Varied routes	3,719 km of public rights of way	Poor provision in some areas (e.g. West Norfolk, Brecklands)
	Good access furniture	9,000 ha of statutory area-wide access	
	Free of obstructions (esp overhanging vegetation, crops)	Permissive and de facto access	Some anomalies
	Well signposted and waymarked		Routes severed by main roads
	Have suitable surfaces		
	Safe to use		
Cyclists	Variety of route options with good connectivity, including routes free of difficulties (e.g. dangerous road crossings, steep hills)	1,132 km of public rights of way and cycle tracks, plus some permissive routes	Only small percentage of local rights of way available for cyclists
		Fragmented network	Poor connectivity and routes severed by main roads

Assessment of Adequacy

User Type	Requirements	Current Provision	Shortfall
Horse riders	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Routes that are Free of obstructions (esp overhanging vegetation, gates able to be opened from horseback) Well signposted and waymarked Have suitable surfaces Safe to use At least 5 miles long 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1,084 km of public right of way plus some permissive routes Fragmented network Roadside verges offer more possibilities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Only small percentage of local rights of way available for horse riders, and little free permissive Poor connectivity and routes severed by main roads
Carriage drivers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Adequate parking Good length of route 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 537 km of public right of way Private provision 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Small length of route publicly available Poorly connected
Off-road motorists	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Unsurfaced routes that are free from obstruction and have character Challenging natural gradient and surface Reasonable length and interesting topography Routes that are not damaged by light vehicle use 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 51 km of public right of way 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> There is limited provision for off-road driving on local rights of way in Norfolk and few opportunities for creation of new routes
Mobility and visually impaired	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Routes suitable for use Good information about routes Suitable facilities Free of obstructions (esp overhanging vegetation, crops) Well signposted and waymarked Have suitable surfaces Safe to use 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Few sites eg Burlingham/Marriott's Way 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Limited percentage of network available, especially for those with sight problems Insufficient targeted information provided
Non-users	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Support and information to overcome actual and perceived barriers 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Material to promote activity via health agenda 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Insufficient targeted information provided

In our Statement of Actions, starting on page 41, we list those actions we have identified that will help meet these shortfalls.



6. Strategy - Processes and Practices

6.1 Current Maintenance Priorities

Norfolk County Council officers maintain a working knowledge of routes and sites in their areas. Work is also informed by reports from the public. Our current priorities are, in reducing priority:

- health and safety;
- matters affecting promoted routes;
- routes running between parishes;
- other useful routes (85% of footpaths); and
- isolated routes.

Reports can be made on (01603) 223284 or www.countrysideaccess.norfolk.gov.uk.

6.1.1 Vegetation Management

Norfolk County Council is legally responsible for footpath management across the county. Management reflects the fact that footpaths do not legally need to be surfaced. Three planned cuts of surface vegetation are made each year on main routes, and supplemented as necessary. Other significant matters, such as non-reinstatement after ploughing and rutting from heavy vehicles are dealt with in line with current policy, which is set out in the 1993 strategy.

Walkers can find this inappropriate in, or near, built up areas. A number of teams specialise in the various elements of footpath management. The Broads Authority has a policy of additional access development in its Executive Area. Landholders are allowed to maintain recorded gates and stiles for stock control, though Norfolk County Council encourages landholders to remove unnecessary ones.

Further to these immediate concerns, other general trends may force a review of policy during the life of this plan:

- Increasing use of mobility scooters
- Increasing status of assistance dogs
- Increasing oil prices
- Changes to vehicle and road use taxation systems
- Coastal erosion

6.1.2 Bridges and Crossings

Bridges allow walkers and others to cross over or under roads, railways, or watercourses. Norfolk County Council owns 760 bridges and has responsibilities towards 3,400 others. Condition information comes from inspection and incidental reporting. Resolution of issues of safety, likely rapid deterioration, and

offensive graffiti is given high priority. Highways Agency standards are applied. There is no provision for new bridges, but Norfolk County Council provides ground level road crossings that either interrupt traffic or provide refuges for safe passage. These are inspected and maintained with the roads they cross. Requests are added to the works programme as appropriate. In 2003/2004, about 40 road crossings were installed.

Norfolk County Council's Transport Asset Management Plan deals with bridge and crossing construction and maintenance and is reviewed annually.

6.1.3 Trees and Hedges

Trees and hedges add landscape and wildlife value to countryside sites and routes. However, growth and falls of part or whole trees can pose risks to people and property. Norfolk County Council owns and manages thousands of trees, on paths like Marriott's Way, on sites like Burlingham Woods, and on highway land. It also funds planting and advises on management of private trees where they affect highways. In 2004, reports of unsafe trees led to more than 2000 detailed follow-up inspections. Remedial work is mostly health and safety related.

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Norfolk County Council keeps its tree inspection and maintenance procedures under continuous review.

6.2 General Practices (G)

We propose four general practices:

Practice G1: As required under the Local Government Act 1999, we continually strive to improve the economy, efficiency and effectiveness of our activities. One of the main areas where we have made improvements is through the uptake and use of computer technology and this has many useful applications in public rights of way, and we intend to continue to develop and exploit them.

Practice G2: We shall exercise our functions so as to further the conservation and enhancement of the flora, fauna or geological or physiographical features by reason of which Sites of Special Scientific Interest are of interest, as required by Section 28G of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981.

Practice G3: We shall ensure that our practices and procedures comply with the Disability Discrimination Acts 1995 and 2005, which require us to ensure that, as far as is reasonable, the services we provide to, and functions we perform for, members of the public are accessible to disabled people.

Practice G4: We shall ensure that we satisfy our duty, in exercising our functions within the North Norfolk Coast Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty, to have regard to the purpose of conserving and enhancing the natural beauty of the area. Similarly, we will work with the Broads Authority to assist them as far as our duties, powers and resources allow, to meet their general objectives, especially with regard to the promotion of public enjoyment and understanding of the Broads.

6.3 Practices and Procedures Specific to Public Rights of Way

6.3.1 Improvement and enhancement

Practice 1: Path Creation

We will consider entering into path creation agreements, or making path creation orders, where:

- there is insufficient evidence to show that a PRoW already exists for routes/links that are demonstrated by the other policies identified by the Plan as having significant public benefits;
- costs to compensate the landowner are proportionate to the public benefit.

Practice 2: Achieving Maximum Public Benefits

In deciding our improvement priorities, we will take into account the extent to which the improved route would contribute to:

- meeting the needs of users, as identified by research;
- improving community-to-community and community-to-countryside links;
- providing safer routes to school;
- promotion of health walks;
- the development of promoted routes, bridleways and off-road cycling circuits, and 'Access for All' routes;
- other benefits which come to be regarded as significant.

Practice 3: Developing Better Access

We will, where reasonably possible, promote the development of routes that are safe and able to be used by as many people as is feasible:

- in areas of least provision and greatest latent demand for 'community to countryside' and 'community to community' links;
- that provide benefits (such as opportunities for enjoyment) for many groups of users, including reduced mobility and visually impaired users, when reasonable opportunities to do so arise;
- that provide links that create circuits;
- that are well-served by public transport links from urban areas;
- that can be maintained at a standard appropriate for the volume and type of expected use;

- that ensure the public is able to benefit from the access provided by Part I of the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000 through creating, where possible and necessary, new routes and providing means of access (this will include access to and along the coast, as appropriate in response to changes in coastal access);
- which are access proposals made under agri-environment schemes;
- where the need for a new route has been expressed by the local community.

Practice 4: Improving the Bridleway Network

Where possible, cost effective and safe, and without unacceptable environmental effects, we will:

- create new sections of bridleway which can be used to provide the missing links in bridleway circuits or networks, or which can be used to provide access to bridleway networks from towns and villages;
- improve existing bridleways;
- use roadside verges as a means of improving the connectivity where feasible, taking into account costs and health and safety.

Practice 5: Discovering Lost Ways

We welcome re-discovered routes that add to the extent, quality and connectivity of the county's network. So, we will work proactively with Natural England on the Discovering Lost Ways project.

Practice 6: Information

We will provide information that assists in managing public access, giving priority to:

- promoting the Countryside Code and responsible use;
- working in partnership with the land owning community, user groups and Natural England to establish ways of dealing with management of areas of open access;
- ensuring adequate information is available with regard to access area exclusions and restrictions;
- ensuring people understand the rights enjoyed by different types of users on different types of way and different areas of land.

6.3.2 Definitive Map

Practice 1: Definitive Map

The Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 requires Norfolk County Council to make such modifications to the Definitive Map and Statement as appear to them to be required in response to events. These events include:

- applications made to the County Council for changes;
- the discovery of anomalies within the Definitive Map and Statement;
- the discovery of evidence other than by an application.

A case may be prioritised if;

- a route is threatened by development, or

- processing a case will significantly progress a specific target within our RoWIP, or
- where there is an overriding operational need to do so.

Practice 2: Procedure Regarding Public Path Orders Made Under Sections 26, 118 And 119 of the Highways Act 1980

The following applications should be referred to Norfolk County Council's Asset and Network Management Team:

- Applications for diversions of byways open to all traffic must be dealt with under s116 of the Highways Act 1980
- Applications for diversions affected by development under the Town and Country Planning Act 1990.

Introduction

A right of way (other than a Byway Open to All Traffic) which appears on the Definitive Map and Statement can be diverted or extinguished by a legal process whereby a local authority makes a **Public Path Order**. A Public Path Order can also create a new footpath, bridleway or Restricted Byway.

In Norfolk the majority of Public Path Orders, made under the Highways Act 1980, are processed by Norfolk County Council ('NCC'). Public Path Orders made under the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 are generally

Strategy - Processes and Practices

processed by District Councils as part of the planning process. Footpaths, Bridleways, Restricted Byways and Byways Open to all Traffic may also be extinguished and diverted on application to the Magistrates Court. Although this method is seldom used for Footpaths and Bridleways, it has to be used for Byways Open to All Traffic.

Before it decides to make an Order, the local authority must be satisfied that the legal tests relevant to the particular type of Order have been satisfied. A local authority is under no obligation to make an Order and therefore has the right to refuse to make one even though the relevant tests may have been met.

Criteria for considering whether or not an Order should be made (under the Highways Act 1980) (these notes are not a definitive or complete statement of the law)

Public Path Creation Orders - It must appear to the authority there is a need for the new path and it must be satisfied that it is expedient to create it having regard to:

- The extent to which it would add to the convenience or enjoyment of a substantial section of the public or of local residents. The effect that the creation would have on the rights of those with an interest in the

land, taking into account the provisions for compensation

Public Path Extinguishment Orders – It must appear to the authority that it is expedient to stop up (extinguish) the path on the ground that it is not needed for public use.

Public Path Diversion Orders – It must appear to the authority that it is expedient to divert the path in the interests either of the public or of the owner, lessee or occupier of the land crossed by the path. The authority must also be satisfied that the diversion order either:

- does not alter any point of termination of the path where that is not a highway,
- or, where the path terminates on a highway, moves the point of termination to another point on the same highway, or a highway connected to it, which is substantially as convenient to the public.

The authority is also entitled to take into account whether the tests that will apply at confirmation stage would be met.

These tests include consideration of issues such as convenience, public enjoyment and effect on the land.

Although an application may meet the above criteria, NCC will consider each application on its own merits and may still refuse to make an Order e.g. if there is no public gain.

The application is unlikely to be successful if a diversion is proposed onto a route which evidence suggests is already subject to public rights.

Overview of the procedure

For each application, the following procedure will be carried out:

- All time spent on the case will be recorded so that applicants can be invoiced appropriately
- Details of the process and potential financial costs will be provided.
- Officers will carry out a site visit to determine the acceptability of the proposals and compliance with relevant legal tests. The Applicant will be advised to undertake informal consultations with relevant parties.
- The proposals will be considered by the relevant officers. If appropriate, an application form will be issued and a plan requested showing the route and the proposed changes at a scale of not less than 1:10,000.
- Once the application is registered, NCC will carry out formal consultations with relevant parish and district councils, public path user organisations and other interested parties.
- Following receipt and consideration of the consultees' responses and any representations from the Applicant, officers will decide whether to make an Order using their delegated powers.

Written confirmation of their decision will be placed on the file and the applicant and other interested parties will be notified.

- If the matter proceeds, NCC will prepare plans, draft an Order, serve the required documents on all prescribed persons, place an advertisement in a local paper and arrange for the display and checking of the appropriate Notices and plans on site.
- If no objections are received NCC will decide whether to confirm the Order using their delegated powers.
- If representations or objections to the Order are received, and not withdrawn, NCC will decide whether to withdraw the Order or whether to submit the Order to the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs for confirmation. If the officers decide not to submit the contested Order to the Secretary of State written confirmation of their decision will be placed on the file and the relevant parties notified. If the Order is submitted to the Secretary of State this may well lead to a Public Inquiry, Informal Hearing or a Written Representations procedure following which the Secretary of State will decide whether to confirm the Order. A referral to the Secretary of State does not guarantee that the Order will be confirmed.
- If the Order is confirmed the route changes will legally take effect either on a

specified date as outlined in the Order or when any necessary works have been carried out and certified. NCC will send Notice of Confirmation to all prescribed persons and place a further advertisement in a local paper and on site.

Prioritising public path applications

NCC will normally deal with applications in the order they are received. However it may decide to prioritise applications that meet one or more of the following criteria (which are not listed in any priority order):

- Where the result would be a significant positive impact on the rights of way network
- Where an area has been designated by the Secretary of State as an area of high crime
- Where a path runs through school grounds and a special diversion is needed for school security reasons
- When an application is made to NCC in its capacity as Planning Authority
- Where a path runs through a Site of Special Scientific Interest
- Where a path is in danger of being (naturally) eroded
- Where a Public Path Order (or combination of Public Path Orders) will help to fulfil specific targets within the Rights of Way Improvement Plan
- Where processing a Public Path Order could save significant costs incurred in processing other orders.

- Where a Public Path Order is, in the opinion of NCC heritage or ecology professionals, necessary to safeguard an archaeological or ecological feature respectively.

Costs

Costs arise in making and advertising an Order and in dealing with objections. NCC has the power to recover from the owner, occupier or lessee of the land crossed by the path the costs of making up a newly created path and any compensation which may be claimed. This could include compensation claimed where a path is diverted from land owned by the applicant onto that owned by a neighbour.

The Regulations also enable NCC to recover from an Applicant its administration and advertising costs associated with a Diversion Order, Extinguishment Order or for a Creation Order made concurrently with an Extinguishment Order. This also includes costs incurred after making an Order, but in the case of an opposed Order, only up to the point where the Order is submitted to the Secretary of State. Where Orders are subsequently confirmed, the cost of advertising the confirmation may also be charged.

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The policy of NCC is to charge the applicant the costs incurred in processing applications in accordance with the current Regulations since, in the majority of cases the diversion or extinguishment benefits the Applicant. The costs may vary depending on the complexity of the proposal. Please note that Public Path Order charges are also subject to periodic review and any figures quoted are an average cost provided for guidance only.

In certain limited circumstances NCC may consider waiving part or all of its costs. In deciding whether or not to charge or to reduce the costs, NCC may take into account such factors as financial circumstances or any direct benefit to the public of the proposed changes to the path network. Similarly in some circumstances (e.g. where NCC fails to submit an opposed Order to the Secretary of State) NCC will provide a refund of any costs paid to date.

Measures open to an Applicant if NCC refuse to make an Order

Once a decision has been made either not to make or to confirm or not to confirm an Order, the decision can only be challenged through an application to the High Court. However, if a party wishes to complain about the way a particular case has been handled NCC has a complaints

procedure, details of which will be provided to the complainant.

The Local Government Ombudsman can investigate complaints about the way particular cases have been handled. A complaint can be made directly to them at any time, but action will usually only be taken when the County Council's investigations have been completed. The Local Government Ombudsman can be contacted at: The Oaks, Westwood Way, Westwood Business Park, Coventry, CV4 8JB, Telephone: 024 7682 0000, Fax: 024 7682 0001, Website: <http://www.lgo.org.uk>

Practice 3: Extending Coverage of the Definitive Map

We will extend the Definitive Map and Statement of public rights of way for Norwich and Great Yarmouth.

6.3.3 Dealing with Developments that Affect Public Rights of Way

Practice 1: Development and public rights of way

We will seek to ensure that there is no, or minimal, adverse effects on public rights of way arising from developments and, wherever possible, we will seek improvements, both within a development site and in the surrounding area, where the development is likely to lead to an

increase in use of the local path network or where the development impacts on the existing path network. By 'developments' we include works to improve flood defence and reduce coastal erosion, roads and buildings. The network improvements may include:

- practical works on existing paths
- new paths and upgraded paths
- promotional materials

It will not generally be acceptable to divert a footpath or bridleway along a road or immediately beside a road (whether new or existing). NCC will ask for bridleway status where there is existing or potential equestrian demand and where routes for cyclists are proposed. Where a route within a development site is claimed, with adequate supporting evidence, as a public right of way under Section 53 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981, the developer will be asked to treat the route as if it was a public right of way. We will work positively with planning authorities to ensure that footpaths and bridleways will be diverted at the point of planning consent being given; we will ask to be notified of all such applications which would affect rights of way so that we might if necessary advise or object; we may otherwise seek to remove the obstruction.

We will seek to apply the following minimum widths to all new and diverted routes. Ideally additional width up to the following minimums will also be provided on existing paths;- 5m for all shared use footpath/cycleways

- 2m for unenclosed footpaths
- 3m for enclosed footpaths
- 4m for unenclosed bridleways
- 5m for enclosed bridleways.

6.3.4 Creation of Routes for the Disabled

In addition to general practice G3, we will follow the following practices:

Practice 1: Improvements to the Network

We will actively seek to extend and improve the network of routes available to people with reduced mobility and visual impairment where reasonable and safe, giving priority to:

- the creation of specially designed 'Access for All' routes where possible;
- the removal of barriers on existing routes, where feasible;
- routes that can be improved to achieve an appropriately high standard of design and maintenance at reasonable cost;
- routes that have public transport links from communities that are suitable for use by those with reduced mobility and visual impairments;

- those that are provided free to reduced mobility and visually impaired people (and those caring for them);

We will make use of our powers under Highways Act 1980 Section 147 to encourage landowners to replace stiles, steps and bridges with structures that can be used by those with disabilities.

Practice 2: Publicity and Promotion

We will ensure that we provide publicity and promotional materials for people with disabilities that:

- are produced only after consultation with those to whom it is targeted;
- are adequate for people to be aware of the facilities available to them at the start and end of their trip and what they are likely to encounter during their trip, so that they can make an informed judgment of their capacity to undertake the trip;
- is reviewed and updated on a regular basis.

Practice 3: On-Site Information

We will ensure that our on-site interpretation, signposting and waymarking practices do not place reduced mobility and visually impaired people at an unnecessary disadvantage.

Practice 4: Monitoring

We will monitor the achievements of our practices and procedures for, and delivery of services towards, disabled people and

those with reduced mobility and visual impairments.

6.3.5 Health and Safety Matters Prioritisation

In deciding our improvement priorities, we will take into account the extent to which improvements will:

- promote the development of safe routes, able to be used by as many people as is feasible;
- contribute to providing safer routes to school;
- add to public safety (e.g. by seeking to negotiate public use over bridges across roads (especially dual carriageways) where this removes the need for people to use dangerous crossings.

Safe Road Crossings

We will work with local authority departments, user groups and community representatives as partners to:

- extend the criteria for assessing road crossings to include benefits of recreation and links to the wider countryside;
- identify and prioritise the locations for safe crossings in order to support a programme of improvement works.

Information

We will develop information and promotional material that assists in the delivery of other, linked strategies, such as 'safe routes to schools' and sustainable transport initiatives.

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6.3.6 Use of External Resources

Practice 1: Cost Recovery

In assessing the proportion of diversion costs which we seek to recover, we will take into account whether or not the applicant:

- is prepared to alter the proposal to further the other policies identified by the Plan or to add value to the network in some way;
- agrees to divert paths to reduce potential for conflict between public usage and agricultural interests;
- provides adequate benefits to the public.

Practice 2: Accessing External Resources

We will work with local authority departments, user groups and community representatives and others as partners to:

- locate external funding to support priority improvement works;
- establish 'Section 106 agreements' associated with major developments.

Practice 3: Partnership Working

In managing and maintaining the network of local rights of way, we will:

- improve co-ordination with District, Parish and Town Councils, neighbouring authorities and user groups;
- ensure consistency of working with colleagues in other departments.

- work with landowners and Defra to ensure public rights of way are kept open by:
 - meeting our obligations as highway authority;
 - providing information to landowners to help them meet their obligations;
 - agreeing protocols for dealing with obstructions (see Management and Maintenance below)
 - using cross-compliance measures, as appropriate.
- develop working practices that:
 - allow volunteer participation;
 - provide for community involvement, where appropriate.
- work in partnership with sustainable tourism and rural development initiatives:
 - to ensure that information provided will contribute to the well being of the rural economy;
 - that are consistent with the need to safeguard the character of the AONB;
 - to assist the Broads Authority in meeting its objectives
- maximise the benefits achievable through new developments by:
 - giving guidance to Local Planning Authorities on how best to incorporate access provision into their Local Development Documents
 - giving guidance to Local Planning Authorities on how best to seek

- planning gain in respect of improved access as a part of new development.

6.3.7 Management and Maintenance Practice 1: Gaps, gates and stiles on footpaths and bridleways

We will only authorise the least restrictive option for **new boundary crossings** and will always aim for the least restrictive option when landowners replace or install structures in **existing boundary crossings**. "Least restrictive option" means that:

- A gap is the preferred option.
- If a gap is not practicable for reasons of stock control, then a field gate or wicket gate shall be used. Gate latches on bridleways must be usable by a competent rider from horseback.
- If a gate is not practicable and the route is a footpath, then a kissing gate may be used.
- Stiles are not generally acceptable and will not be permitted unless a stile is already in existence and has been there since the date of the first Definitive Map. We will seek by negotiation to replace these stiles with gates.

Wherever possible, **we will seek to replace stiles with gates or gaps**, and to make gates easier to open/close. In order to achieve this, we will normally bear the cost of improvement.

We will normally only authorise one structure per boundary so that, for example, double fenced boundaries will only have one structure. In authorising structures under Highways Act 1980 section 147 **we will seek to restrict the number of structures** in sub divided or strip grazed fields and horse paddocks. **We will allow existing structures of historical or cultural significance** to remain for reasons of local distinctiveness, but will seek where appropriate to increase accessibility by installing a gate or creating an adjacent gap. Electric/automatic gates, will only be acceptable if they are easy to open for all lawful users and clearly waymarked, from both directions.

Practices 2: Signing and waymarking of public rights of way and UCRs

We will use standard waymarking and signing in the NCC House Design across the County unless working in partnership with a local council or another organisation, in the Broads for example, to promote local distinctiveness or named trails.

We will not normally sign routes wholly within built up areas unless, for example, they lead to the wider countryside, are part of a recognized promoted route or we have requests from the local community.

We will aim to maintain advisory signs on site for 5 years after any significant path diversion, creation or extinguishment order has been confirmed.

Practice 3: Path reports and inspections on public rights of way and UCRs

NCC will encourage the public and landowners to report path defects. Personal details of people reporting defects will be kept confidential. Levels of service that we aim to achieve are as follows:

- Reports of situations which are considered by the Countryside Access Team to be a danger to the public on the path network – inspect within one working day of receiving the report.
- Reports of problems which prevent the public using a Recognised Promoted Route – inspect within 10 working days of receiving the report.
- Reports of ploughing problems – inspect within 10 working days of receiving the report.
- Reports of cropping problems – inspect within 15 working days of receiving the report.
- Other reports of problems – inspect within 3 months of receiving the report.

Following inspection, appropriate action will be taken regarding the issues and the person reporting the defect will be notified.

Practice 4: Bridges

NCC will implement a rolling programme of bridge maintenance in partnership with the Department of Planning and Transportation Bridges Section.

NCC will co-operate with landowners where sole or shared responsibility for crossings exist, to achieve the most effective solution in respect of public access.

Practice 5: Complaints Procedures

We will develop, in consultation with others, procedures that:

- help prioritise how we deal with reports and complaints relating to the condition of the public right of way;
- help us decide how we will work with landowners and occupiers to seek co-operation in dealing with obstructions, giving priority to significant and/or long-standing obstructions.

Practice 6: Enforcement and public rights of way

Where rights of way are obstructed NCC will, in the first instance, seek to resolve the issue through goodwill and co-operation. Where enforcement is necessary NCC will follow the DTI Enforcement Concordat.

NCC Enforcement Procedures

This procedure is based on the principles of fairness, proportionality, transparency

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and objectivity and complies with the Government's Enforcement Concordat. The decision to prosecute will always take account of the Code For Crown Prosecutors and the Attorney General's guidelines. The range of formal actions that will be considered include the following:

Written Warnings

These will normally only be used for a first offence. For a subsequent or continuing offence a Legal Notice, Formal Caution or Prosecution may be issued. Full details of the problem are included in the warning, together with the course of action which is required to resolve the problem. Where the enforcement procedure is used against anyone eligible for the Single Payment scheme, we will stress the rules concerning cross-compliance.

Statutory (legal) Notices

Used as appropriate in accordance with relevant legislation and includes the taking of direct action to resolve the problem on the ground (with the landowner being required to reimburse NCC accordingly).

Formal Cautions

Used to deal quickly and simply with less serious offences and to avoid unnecessary criminal court appearances. There must be evidence of guilt sufficient

to give a realistic prospect of conviction, and the party concerned must admit the offence. Declining a formal caution will result in a prosecution. Formal cautions can be referred to in court following convictions for a subsequent offence within a prescribed period.

Prosecution

This will be considered for a subsequent or continuing offence. It will be used as a way to secure, and / or to draw attention to the need for, compliance with the law, or where landowners may be deterred from offending through the conviction of others. The decision to prosecute shall be taken with regard to the evidence and the public interest. In looking at the public interest in taking a prosecution the following will be taken into account:

- The risk to the public and animals.
- Obstruction of an authorised officer.
- Failure to comply with statutory Notice or advice.
- The prevalence and type of offence.
- The need for suitable deterrent.
- A history of similar offences by the same party.
- Persistent breaches of legislation.
- Minor breaches of a number of statutes.
- Inconvenience to the public.

7. Statement of Actions

This Statement of Actions is the focus for the Plan and is the basis of a long-term management strategy for the Rights of Way network.

It is founded on seven objectives which were developed from the findings of the Needs Assessment (see Section 3) and it sets out how Norfolk County Council will work with others to meet these objectives through actions to secure an improved network suitable to meet the needs of the users of today and tomorrow.

The Plan will be supported by detailed work programmes, which will be used in working with others and to bid for resources.



The seven objectives identified for Norfolk based on the findings of the Assessment are:

Objective 1: Develop a well signed, maintained and easily accessible network.

Objective 2: Develop and maintain an integrated network that provides for the requirements of all users.

Objective 3: Improve promotion, understanding and use of the network.

Objective 4: Encourage community involvement in improving and maintaining local rights of way.

Objective 5: Develop a safe network of local rights of way.

Objective 6: Prepare and publish an up to date and publicly available digitised Definitive Map.

Objective 7: Protect and enhance biodiversity associated with the network of public rights of way.

This Statement of Action takes each of the seven objectives in turn and gives:

- An action plan for each objective which includes:
 - Aims and detail of actions.
 - An indication of resources required.
- 1 actions that can be carried out within current staffing and budget resource (base 2006/2007)
- 2 actions which require Norfolk County Council resources to be re-prioritised
- 3 actions requiring planned investment. This funding may be wholly through external sources or require support from Norfolk County Council.
- Key organisations which will work with Norfolk County Council to carry out the actions.
- Performance measures set to a baseline of 2006/2007.

Potential sources of funding include, Local Transport Plan, Local Authorities, East of England Development Agency, Local Strategic Partnerships, AONB Sustainable Development Fund, Central Government, Sustrans, Lottery, Sport England, s106 planning gain. This is not meant to be an exhaustive list and opportunities will be taken where and when appropriate.

Statement of Actions

7

The actions in this section will provide a more usable, better managed network of footpaths, bridleways, byways and cycle tracks encouraging greater public use.

Objective 1: Develop a well signed, maintained and easily accessible network

Aims	Actions	Resource required to complete action	Key Organisations Lead partner in bold	Performance Measure
1a To improve investment in PRow	Identify investment needs through the Traffic Asset Management Plan and agree an appropriate level of service for PRow that balances investment needs with resources.	2	NCC	Amount of increased investment over life of the Plan.
	Bid for funding through appropriate processes such as Local Transport Plan and capital programmes.	2		
1b To effectively allocate maintenance resources	Review the current network priority system for footpaths, bridleways, restricted byways, byways and cycletracks. This should look at criteria such as current use and greatest public benefit.	2	NCC , User groups, Districts, Parishes, Countryside Management Projects, Norfolk Local Access Forum	Introduction of revised maintenance programme in 2007.
1c To improve (off road) waymarking	Increase the level of waymarking.	1	NCC , Volunteers, Districts, Parishes, land managers, user groups, Countryside Management Projects, Broads Authority	% routes adequately waymarked (BVPI 178).
1d To improve roadside signing programme	Consolidate signing contract programme.	1	NCC	100% completed by 2008.

Aims	Actions	Resource required to complete action	Key Organisations Lead partner in bold	Performance Measure
1e To keep paths mown to the appropriate standard	<p>Review the mowing maintenance carried out across the network based on the priority system.</p> <p>Option 1, Continue current level of mowing. Option 2, Increase mowing.</p>	<p>1</p> <p>2</p>	NCC , Land managers, Districts, Parishes, Broads Authority, Countryside Management Projects	<p>Review completed during 2006.</p> <p>Extent and frequency of cuts.</p>
1f Remove unnecessary barriers	Work with land managers to reduce the number of stiles and unnecessary barriers to increase access (see 1g).	1	NCC , Land managers, Districts, Parishes, user groups, Countryside Management Projects, Broads Authority	Number of barriers removed per year.
1g To increase the involvement and understanding of land managers in the management of PRow	<p>Maintain the land manager/user groups in order to help meet aims 1c, 1e, 1f, 1h.</p> <p>Raise awareness with land managers and their contractors of PRow management responsibilities and cross compliance.</p> <p>Develop clear enforcement policy. Work with Natural England and Defra to ensure that those drawing up Farm Plans (e.g. Farm Environment Plans) understand and are encouraged to promote access.</p>	<p>1</p> <p>1</p> <p>1</p>	NCC , Land managers, Countryside Management Projects. FWAG, Natural England, Defra, NFU, CLA, Norfolk Agricultural Association and Norfolk Local Access Forum	<p>Launch awareness campaign by April 2007.</p> <p>Input into training with Natural England and FWAG.</p>
1h To improve the reinstatement of crossfield paths	Work with land managers to raise awareness of PRow responsibilities for crossfield paths and implement agreed enforcement policy. (See 1g.)	1	NCC , Land managers, Parishes, Defra, user groups, Countryside Management Projects, NFU, CLA, Norfolk Agricultural Association and Norfolk Local Access Forum	<p>Reduction in offences as measured by BVPI 178 sample survey.</p> <p>Enforcement policy produced by April 2007 and brought into action by June 2007.</p>

The actions in this section aim to provide an integrated and usable network which will support public needs and provide transport, economic, health and social benefits to local communities.

Objective 2: Develop and maintain an integrated network that provides for the requirements of all users

Aims	Actions	Resource required to complete action	Key Organisations Lead partner in bold	Performance Measure
2a Provide a more user focussed and integrated approach to highways and PRow management	Integrate PRow activity into: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Local Transport Plan ● Norfolk Transport Strategy ● Accessibility Strategy ● Transport Asset Management Plan 	2	NCC, Districts, Go-East	Scheme identified in strategies and plans.
2b Promote the key role that PRow play in maintaining Norfolk's high quality of life within other strategies	Integrate PRow policies and targets into associated strategies such as Community Strategies, Local Area Agreements, Norfolk Rural Action Plan and AONB Management Plans.	2	NCC, Districts, Countryside Management Projects, Local Strategic Partnerships, Norfolk Rural Partnership, Norfolk Strategic Partnership	Policies/Targets included in strategies and acknowledgement of contribution PRow make to broader targets.
2c To improve the development and protection of PRow through the planning process	Embed the Plan into the planning process. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Continue training and development for planners to increase understanding of PRow & planning issues. ● Integrate the Plan and PRow policies into Local Development Frameworks. ● Provide for PRow improvement and protection through the development control process including s106 legal agreements. ● Work with Norfolk Association of Parish Councils to raise Parish awareness of their role in PRow development and protection. 	1	NCC, Districts, Parishes, developers, Norfolk Association of Parish Councils	Number of developments contributing to PRow improvements per year.

Aims	Actions	Resource required to complete action	Key Organisations Lead partner in bold	Performance Measure
2d Provide a more joined up and usable network	<p>Through discussion and negotiation with land managers and user groups provide routes that will enhance the existing network and create local circular and other routes. This will be achieved through:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Public path orders ● Permissive routes ● Creation orders <p>Option 1, Continue current level of network change Option 2, Enhance level of activity</p>	<p>1 2</p>	NCC , Districts, Parishes, user groups, Countryside Management Projects, land managers	Number of changes to the network.
2e Improve access to and from Open Access land, recreation sites, and other public open spaces	<p>Work with Local Authorities to develop green space strategies and ensure that these link with and help to implement the Plan's aims.</p> <p>Work with site managers to improve public access to, within and from sites.</p>	<p>1 3</p>	NCC , Districts, Broads Authority, land managers, Parishes, Countryside Management Projects, nature conservation organisations	<p>Appropriate access to all Natural England Open Access Priority 1 sites by 2007.</p> <p>Number of improved rights of way to countryside sites.</p> <p>% increase in use of improved routes.</p>
2f Improve access to shops and other services	<p>Identify PRoW that could be better managed/ promoted to provide safe routes to services.</p> <p>Improve and create new routes that provide safe routes to services.</p>	<p>2 3</p>	NCC , Districts, Parishes, developers, Countryside Management Projects, ACRE	Number of LTP schemes successfully completed.

Aims	Actions	Resource required to complete action	Key Organisations Lead partner in bold	Performance Measure
2g Increase the number and promotion of easy access routes, including access for wheelchair users	<p>Identify routes already suitable for those with limited mobility (easy access routes). Work with partners to ensure effective promotion.</p> <p>Develop and promote a series of easy access routes across the county.</p>	<p>2</p> <p>3</p>	<p>NCC, Disability Groups, User groups, land managers, Parishes, Districts, Countryside Management Projects, NGOs, Broads Authority, health walks steering group</p>	<p>Number of routes promoted per year.</p> <p>Number of routes created.</p>
2h Improve routes between urban areas and the countryside	<p>Identify and improve urban countryside links through Local Authority green space and other strategies such as Local Development Frameworks, Transport Strategies, green travel plans.</p> <p>Provide a good standard of access (including access for those with limited mobility) for all new building developments through legal agreements such as s106.</p>	<p>3</p> <p>3</p>	<p>NCC, Districts, developers, Parishes, user groups, Countryside Management Projects</p>	<p>Number of improved/created routes.</p> <p>Improvement in LTP cycling to work indicator.</p>
2i Provide access to the surrounding countryside via PRow for settlements where there is a need	<p>Identify settlements with no access to the countryside. Discuss with Parishes and create routes where appropriate.</p>	<p>3</p>	<p>NCC, Districts, Parishes, land managers, user groups, Countryside Management Projects, Norfolk Association of Parish Councils</p>	<p>Councils/number of settlements provided with access to the countryside.</p>



Aims	Actions	Resource required to complete action	Key Organisations Lead partner in bold	Performance Measure
2j Develop off-road bridle and cycle routes with suitable surfacing to link to existing network	Improve, upgrade or create bridleways and cycle tracks where there is a demand.	3	NCC, user groups, Sustrans , Districts, Parishes, land managers, Countryside Management Projects, riding stables and Forestry Commission	Increase in the length of bridleway network. Increase in length of cycling/ riding routes. % increase in use of improved routes.
2k Protect and enhance PRow along the coast and estuaries	<p>Work with appropriate authorities to improve coastal access and mitigate loss of PRow through flooding and erosion or abandonment of erosion control management. This may be achieved through path orders, creation agreements or permissive paths.</p> <p>Improve management of Norfolk Coast Path.</p> <p>Monitor any changes in legislation relating to coastal access.</p> <p>Implement changes in legislation.</p>	<p>3</p> <p>2</p> <p>1</p> <p>3</p>	NCC , Districts, Parishes, Countryside Management Projects , Environment Agency and land managers	No loss of access. Length of paths improved.
2l Increase opportunities to use public transport to access the countryside	Develop innovative pilot projects to improve access to the PRow network via public transport.	3	NCC, Countryside Management Projects , Parishes, Norfolk Tourism Partnership, East of England Tourism Board	Number of projects developed.



Aims	Actions	Resource required to complete action	Key Organisations Lead partner in bold	Performance Measure
2m Improve the provision of areas for horse box parking	Improve safe parking for horse boxes on/near bridleways.	3	Horse riding groups, NCC, Forestry Commission	Number of new/improved parking areas.

Objective 3: Improve promotion, understanding and use of the network

These actions will address the need for better co-ordinated, branded and targeted promotion of the network, increasing public use and economic benefits to rural areas.

Aims	Actions	Resource required to complete action	Key Organisations Lead partner in bold	Performance Measure
3a Better co-ordinated and higher quality promotion of countryside access	Promote countryside access and long distance recreational routes in Norfolk. Develop a “one stop” access website.	2 3	Go-East, Countryside Management Projects , Local Strategic Partnerships, Parishes, Norfolk Tourism Partnership, local businesses, East of England Tourist Board, user groups, land managers, Forestry Commission.	County-wide website developed by 2008
3b Brand Norfolk as a prime destination for walking, cycling and riding	Investigate marketing opportunities and develop campaign with Norfolk Tourism Partnership and others.	3	Norfolk Tourism Partnership, NCC , East of England Tourist Board, Countryside Management Projects, private sector	Establish branding. Develop campaign.
3c Increase the number and promotion of easy access routes, including access for wheelchair users (see 2g)	Identify routes already suitable for those with limited mobility. Work with partners to ensure effective promotion. Develop and promote a series of easy access routes across the county.	2 3	NCC, disability groups , user groups, land managers, Parishes, Districts, Countryside Management Projects, NGOs, Broads Authority , health walks steering group	Number of routes promoted per year. Number of routes created.

Aims	Actions	Resource required to complete action	Key Organisations Lead partner in bold	Performance Measure
3d Better public understanding of their responsibilities when using PRow and Open Access land	Promote the Countryside Code and responsible use of PRow and Access Land.	3	NCC , schools, community groups, Natural England, Parishes, land managers, Districts, Countryside Management Projects	Number of events held.
3e Identify areas of greatest potential to improve health	Work with health sector to increase opportunities for people to participate in regular exercise.	3	NCC, PCTs, Health Walks steering group , NGOs, Districts, Parishes volunteers, Forestry Commission	Health walks created.
3f Publish Definitive Map on the web	Place Definitive Map on the NCC website.	3	NCC	Publication of Definitive Map to web.



Objective 4: Encourage community involvement in improving and maintaining PRow

This objective will increase public involvement in the protection and maintenance of the network.

Aims	Actions	Resource required to complete action	Key Organisations Lead partner in bold	Performance Measure
4a Greater Parish involvement in management of access	Extend the Parish walk scheme to encourage more Parishes to be involved in managing and promoting PRow.	3	NCC , Parishes, Districts, Countryside Management Projects	Number of Parishes involved in Parish walks scheme
	Ensure Parishes consider PRow development in Parish plans.	1		
4b To increase the involvement and understanding of land managers in the management of PRow	Raise awareness with land managers and their contractors of PRow management responsibilities and cross compliance. Develop clear enforcement policy. (See 1g.)	1	NCC, land managers , Countryside Management Projects, FWAG, Defra, NFU, CLA , Norfolk Local Access Forum and Natural England	Launch awareness campaign by June 2006.
	Work with Natural England and Defra to ensure that those drawing up Farm Plans (e.g. Farm Environment Plans) understand and are encouraged to promote access. (see 1g.)	1		Input into training with Natural England
4c Greater user group involvement in management of access	Work with user groups in identifying ways in which they can contribute to the future development of access.	2	User groups, NCC, Countryside Management Projects, Norfolk Local Access Forum	

The actions in this section will improve safety for walking, cycling and riding.

Objective 5: Develop a safe network of PRow

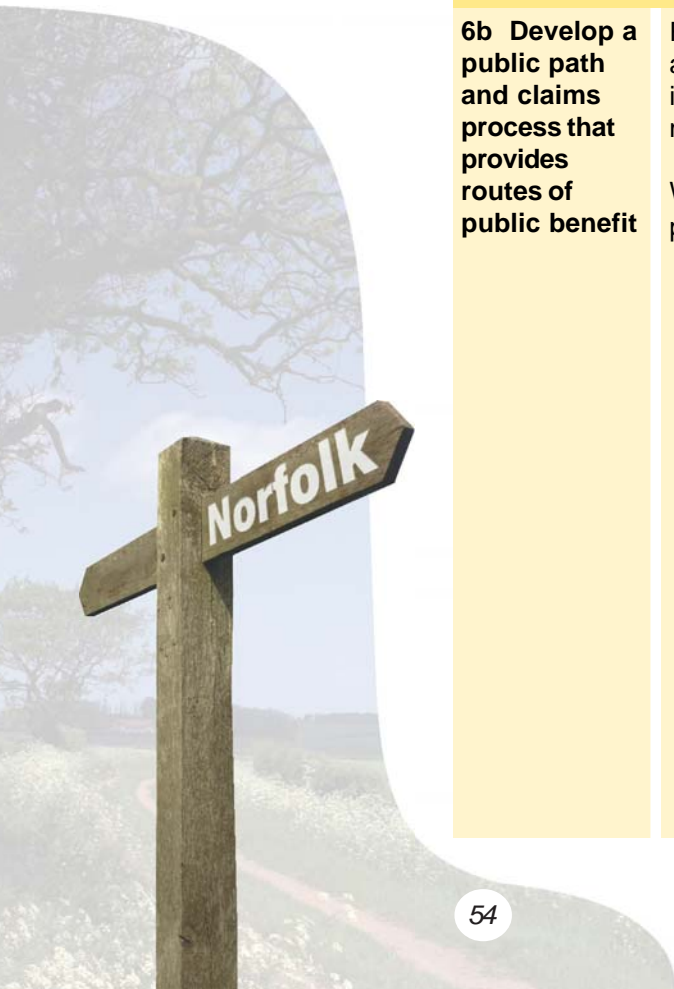
Aims	Actions	Resource required to complete action	Key Organisations Lead partner in bold	Performance Measure
5a Provide safe links between PRow along roads	Identify well used routes along busy roads and develop solutions for improved links between PRow for walking, cycling and riding. This can be achieved by: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Creation orders ● Permissive routes ● Improvement of road verges 	3	NCC , Districts, Parishes, user groups, Highways Agency, Countryside Management Projects	Number of improvements.
5b Improve safety of road and rail crossings	Identify and prioritise poor and unsafe road and rail crossings where well used paths cross and improve where appropriate.	3	NCC, Highways Agency , Districts, Parishes, user groups	Number of PRow improvements of road and rail crossings.
5c Support the development of safe routes to schools using PRow to increase cycling and walking for students and their parents	Highlight opportunities for using school travel plans to promote walking and cycling using PRow. Review schools with travel plans and carry out bi-annual reviews of schools signed up to developing travel plans.	2	NCC , Districts, Parishes, schools , community groups	% increase in use of improved routes.
5d Ensure coastal and estuarine routes are safe to use	Identify routes subject to coastal erosion and flooding. Provide solutions such as re-alignment/boardwalks, etc.	3	NCC, EA, Countryside Management Projects , Parishes, land managers and Districts	Number of improvements.

Aims	Actions	Resource required to complete action	Key Organisations Lead partner in bold	Performance Measure
5e Ensure the safety of all bridges on PRow	Continue current level of bridge replacement and maintenance.	1	NCC, land managers, user groups, Parishes, Districts	Number of bridges refurbished or replaced.
5f Reduce conflict between cyclists, walkers and riders on multi-use routes	Identify specific problem areas and develop improvements such as surfacing and segregation. Identify ways to ensure better understanding between users.	3 3	NCC, user groups, Districts, Parishes, Countryside Management Projects and land managers	Number of improvements.
5g Reduce the illegal use of PRow (eg illegal motorbikes, vehicles, and inappropriate use of byways)	Ensure that the design of routes in new developments limits opportunities for anti-social behaviour. Management of and enforcement against improper use of PRow. Use Traffic Regulation Orders and other legal options where necessary to limit damaging vehicular use.	1 1 2	NCC, Districts, Parishes, Police, Broads Authority, user groups, EA, land managers	Number of conflicts resolved.
5h Reduce the impact of fly tipping on PRow	Ensure a clear means of reporting fly tipping to District Councils.	1	Districts, land managers, NCC	Reduction in impact of fly tipping on PRow.

These actions will be to provide Norfolk with an up to date Definitive Map that will provide a network giving the greatest public benefit.

Objective 6: Prepare and make publicly available an up to date digitised Definitive Map

Aims	Actions	Resource required to complete action	Key Organisations Lead partner in bold	Performance Measure
6a Produce a consolidated Definitive digital map	Consolidate a digital base by end 2007	2	NCC	Number of Parishes consolidated digitally per year.
6b Develop a public path and claims process that provides routes of public benefit	<p>Review and adopt procedures for prioritising claims and Public Path Orders to provide a consistent and integrated approach to anomalies and path order making across the county.</p> <p>Work with land managers and users to promote public path orders which provide routes of public benefit.</p>	2 2	NCC , land managers, user groups, Parishes, Districts	<p>Adoption of a clear prioritised order making work programme by mid 2006.</p> <p>Number of public routes created with public benefit per year.</p>



Objective 7: Protect and enhance biodiversity associated with the network of public rights of way

The actions in this section will help to ensure that the Public Rights of Way management regime recognises, protects and promotes biodiversity.

Aims	Actions	Resource required to complete action	Key Organisations Lead partner in bold	Performance Measure
7a Identify ROW of high biodiversity interest.	Compile priority list of area, and prepare and implement management plan for sites of high biodiversity interest.	1	NCC , District Councils, Broads Authority, Countryside Management Projects; NE Parishes NWT	% of high priority sites with management plans.
7b Identify access land of high biodiversity interest.	Compile list of sites and prepare and implement management plan for sites of high biodiversity interest.	1	NCC , District Councils, Broads Authority, Countryside Management Projects; NE Parishes NWT Local Access Forum	% of high priority sites with management plans.
7c Manage and enhance all PROW/ access land to maximise biodiversity potential.	All contracts to incorporate biodiversity considerations. Enhance biodiversity as appropriate.	2	NCC , District Councils, Broads Authority, Countryside Projects; NE Parishes NWT Local Access Forum	Number/length of enhanced PROW.

Implementation 8. Implementation

8

Key Points

- In implementing the Plan, we need to recognise that resources will be a limiting factor
- Priorities may change over time and so we will produce Annual Action Plans
- Annual Action Plans will refer to our Statement of Actions and will help plan what we do
- We will monitor what we do and achieve
- We will review the Plan in 2012-13

8.1 Annual Action Plans

We are committed to improving the efficient management of our Public Rights of Way duties and access developments. We also understand that there are no extra internal resources to carry out the improvements listed in the Statement of Actions. We consider, therefore, that the most likely way to achieve sustainable benefits beyond our current activities will be through a flexible approach based on annual action plans. The Statement of Actions and other initiatives will be considered when producing the annual plans.

Prices, responsibilities, and funding options will be proposed for selected actions. We will also consider the annual action plan proposals alongside the proposals under the Local Transport Plan and the county's Asset Management Plan.

8.3 Plan Preview

This plan has a ten-year timetable. A review is recommended based on the fourth annual business plan during year

five (2012-2013). This will permit adjustments to be made before the anticipated full integration with the third Local Transport Plan. The plan should be researched afresh and replaced with the fourth Local Transport Plan.



Implementation



The Broads Rights of Way and Open Access Improvement Plan

9

9. The Broads Rights of Way and Open Access Improvement Plan

This section provides a Rights of Way Improvement Plan insofar as it applies to the Broads. It is, in effect, a Plan within a Plan. However, Norfolk County Council and the Broads Authority have combined to agree its contents.

9.1 The Broads

The Norfolk and Suffolk Broads is one of Britain's finest wetlands. The Broads is an expansive landscape of water, grazing marshes, fens and wet woodlands. Between the 11th and 14th Centuries, peat digging was a major industry in the area and the shallow broads are the relicts of these excavations. It is an area of international recreational and nature conservation importance covering 303 square km, largely within Norfolk, but with a small part in Suffolk. The boundary of the executive area closely follows the lower reaches of the Bure, Yare and Waveney valleys, together with the two tributaries of the Bure, the Ant and Thurne, and the Chet Valley, a tributary of the Yare.

The Broads Authority was established in 1978 in recognition of the national importance of the area. In 1988 the Broads was established as a member of the UK national park family with the Norfolk and Suffolk Broads Act 1988.

The three purposes of the Authority, as set out in the Act, are:

- Conserving and enhancing the natural beauty, wildlife and cultural heritage of the Broads;
 - Promoting opportunities for understanding and enjoyment of the special qualities of the Broads by the public;
 - Protecting the interests of navigation.
- The Broads Authority is the local planning authority and the navigation authority for the executive area. The Broads Authority is also responsible for the management and promotion of a range of recreational facilities within the Broads area, such as 24 hour moorings, some public staithes and many countryside recreation sites.

The 20-year aim for access to land and water set out in the Broads Plan 2004 is:

"The Broads will be easily accessible for all to enjoy recreational activity on land and water. Access will be sensitively managed, and of a kind and intensity that respects and preserves the special qualities and ambience of the Broads, its landscape and delicate ecosystems. Opportunities will be provided for land access, via a linked and extensive network of footpaths, cycle ways and bridleways that take advantage of the

natural valley contours. More limited opportunities will be available for visitors to experience the fens and appreciate their fragility without degrading this habitat" (Broads Plan 2004 p.40)

Actions associated with achieving this aim are listed in Table 9.1, below.

9.2 The Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000

Under the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000, approximately 150 ha of the Broads has been designated as Access Land comprising 15 areas of registered common land and 3 areas of heath that are designated as open country. This means that, subject to certain restrictions, the public is allowed recreational access on foot onto these areas of land, throughout the year.

As these 18 areas lie within the Broads executive area, the Broads Authority, in common with other National Park Authorities, has the dual role of Access Authority and Relevant Authority for them. Amongst other duties, this allows the Broads Authority the powers to appoint wardens for areas of land, to place notices indicating boundaries, restrictions and exclusions and determine applications from landowners and others with legal interests to exclude or restrict access.

The Broads Local Access Forum (established in 2003) has a key role in advising the Authority in functions relating to access land, and is a statutory consultee to the Broads Authority and to Norfolk County Council in applications for restriction and exclusion on access land within the area.

The Broads Authority is developing a site-specific approach to mapped areas of access land within the Broads executive area in acknowledgement of their individual nature and management requirements. This is based on the site by site audit that has established the nature of the areas of access land, means of access and signage requirements and has provided the basis for a programmed approach to meeting with landowners to discuss problems and opportunities. (see Table 9.2).

9.3 Public Rights of Way Management in the Broads

Norfolk and Suffolk County Councils are the Highway Authorities for the Broads executive area. The Broads Authority has a close working partnership with both County Councils and has agreements regarding the management of the PRoW network. The aim of these agreements is to ensure that access is provided to a high quality.

The following objectives and action plan seeks to extend and strengthen these partnerships.

The action plan has been guided by the following strategies and plans:

- The Broads Plan 2004
- Best Value Review of Recreation. (BA 2004)
- Tourism Strategy (2006)
- Moorings Strategy (2006)
- Broads Fisheries Action Plan Slipways Strategy (2004).
- The Broads Flood Alleviation Plan

Through the work which the Broads Authority has carried out in these areas, it is evident that it is a priority to further develop the land-based tourism and recreation economy.

9.4 The Strategy Guiding Principle:

(Modified from the Broads Tourism Strategy BA 2006):

To improve the opportunity for all to enjoy land based recreation in the Broads, and to strengthen and promote a range of ways to reach and explore the Broads by land and water.

This will be achieved by successfully delivering the following objectives:

- A. Providing a well signed, maintained and continuous PRoW network which provides for the requirements of all users.

- B. Providing easy to use and well signposted routes which give access to waterside viewpoints, car parks, angling opportunities, staithes, slipways, moorings and open access land.
- C. Increasing partnership working and community involvement in improving and managing the network (landowners and Parish Councils).
- D. Improving promotion, understanding and increasing use of the PRoW network and open access land. (via TICs, signage, leaflets and website).
- E. Working to ensure that access is available and easy to use by minority groups and people with disabilities.
- F. Seeking opportunities to increase the numbers of bridleways and trails for use by horse riders and cyclists.
- G. Developing opportunities to link recreational access with public transport links.
- H. Ensuring that there is no significant impact on protected and BAP species and habitats including areas that have potential for enhancement for wildlife.
- I. Ensuring that the wildness and tranquillity of an area in its own right, or for people's experience, is not compromised by any proposed access developments.

The Broads Rights of Way and Open Access Improvement Plan



9.5 Specific Actions

Objective A. Providing a well signed, maintained and continuous PRoW network which provides for the requirements of all users.

Actions: The Broads Authority will aim to:

1. Establish agreement with Norfolk County Council on the priorities for PRoW maintenance within the Broads executive area.
2. Ensure agreement with Norfolk County Council that footpaths are cut to a specified standard.
3. Establish agreement with Norfolk County Council to develop a grading system that will grade footpaths according the level of accessibility; this will produce a signed network for all users with distance and destination on way markers and fingerposts.
4. Ensure agreement with Norfolk County Council to develop links between villages, if possible away from roads: e.g. Belaugh and Hoveton.
5. Establish agreement with Norfolk County Council to seek opportunities to remove barriers to access. Work with landowners to reduce the number of stiles, and replace with gates or squeeze gaps.

6. Establish agreement with Norfolk County Council and landowners and managers to increase involvement and understanding of PRoW management.
7. Establish agreement with Norfolk County Council and landowners to realign waterside paths which are becoming unsafe or unusable due to erosion.
8. Seek to improve network links through permissive access and paths, perhaps assisted by environmental land management support schemes.
9. Via permissive paths, link areas of Open Access land to the PRoW network. e.g. Clayrack and Irstead Holmes.
10. Establish agreements with Norfolk County Council to develop circular routes from population centres and alongside longer distance routes.
11. Establish agreement with Norfolk County Council to work to improve access to and from open spaces and recreation sites.
12. Establish agreement with Norfolk County Council to work to develop green infrastructure to promote public access from urban centres.

Objective B. To provide easy to use and well signposted routes which give access to waterside view points, car parks, angling opportunities, staithes, slipways, moorings and open access land.

Actions: The Broads Authority will aim to:

1. Identify a set of circular walks for the Broads, well maintained and waymarked, and promoted through a self-guided leaflet series that is made widely available.
2. Establish agreements with Norfolk County Council to improve strategic paths which link moorings to local villages/facilities, and also to afford access down to and along the water's edge from inland. These links may in turn form part of circular walks.
3. Identify opportunities for small and appropriate seating to be installed at suitable locations.

Objective C. Increasing partnership working and community involvement in improving and managing the network (landowners and PCs).

Actions: The Broads Authority will aim to:

1. Establish agreement with Norfolk County Council, and landowners to develop new routes, circular routes and links to extend existing routes.

2. *Seek opportunities within new agri-environmental schemes for permissive routes.*
3. *Establish agreement and approaches with Norfolk County Council to develop footpath improvement schemes alongside the Broads Flood Alleviation Project.*
4. *Consolidate and develop the role of volunteers in the management of access, especially through the Assistant Countryside Ranger Scheme.*

Objective D. Improving promotion, understanding and increasing use of the PRow network (Signage, leaflets and website).

Actions: The Broads Authority will aim to:

1. *Develop the eA website to allow for easy access to information regarding the status of PRow.*
2. *Work to improve the promotion of long distance trails within the executive area.*
3. *Publish information regarding links of PRow network and permissive routes established under agri-environment schemes.*
4. *Brand the Broads as a prime site for walking and cycling.*
5. *Develop a festival of walking for the Broads.*

6. *Work with partner organisations (e.g. Whitlingham Charitable Trust, Primary Care Trusts, Norwich Fringe Project) in providing healthy exercise opportunities.*

Objective E. Working to ensure that access is available and easy to use by minority groups and people with disabilities.

Actions: The Broads Authority will aim to:

1. *Promote the centres in the Broads that cater specifically for people with disabilities.*
2. *Encourage the provision of more fully accessible land based accommodation.*
3. *Establish agreement with Norfolk County Council to extend the network of easy access trails, and increase promotion of such routes.*
4. *Maintain information on the best places for easy access, and for people with other disabilities, e.g. in Broadcaster.*
5. *Encourage provision of inexpensive accommodation, such as hostels and camping.*
6. *Provide information on the Broads to organisations working with minority groups.*

Objective F. Seeking opportunities to increase the numbers of bridleways and trails for use by horse riders and cyclists.

Actions: The Broads Authority will aim to:

1. *Establish agreement with Norfolk County Council to seek opportunities to upgrade footpaths, establish permissive routes and sign existing quiet routes to establish easy and safe horse riding and cycle routes.*
2. *Publish information regarding routes.*

Objective G. Developing opportunities to link recreational access with public transport links.

Actions: The Broads Authority will aim to:

1. *Establish agreement with Norfolk County Council to develop, way-mark and publicise circular trails from bus-stops and railway stations.*
2. *Install cycle racks and locking points at appropriate locations.*

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Objective H. Ensuring that there is no significant impact on protected and BAP species and habitats including areas that have potential for enhancement for wildlife.

Actions: *The Broads Authority will:*

1. *Identify any protected or priority BAP habitats and species which may be impacted by the works and carry out an assessment of each proposal.*
2. *Consult with appropriate bodies.*
3. *Establish and agree mitigation measures where impacts are unavoidable, including alternative routes.*
4. *Establish and agree enhancements for habitats and species which will take place as part of the works.*

Objective I. Ensuring that the wildness and tranquillity of an area in its own right, or for people's experience, is not compromised by any proposed access developments.

Actions: *The Broads Authority will:*

1. *Assess the proposed route against the Broads Landscape Characterisation Assessment.*





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Table 9.1: Action Plan for Specific Access Improvements in the Broads

1. River Waveney						
Ref.	Location/Grid Ref	Proposed Access Enhancement	Objective refs	Notes/links to other plans	Key Organisations	Timescale
W1	Barsham TM 4090-4190	New permissive footpath at Barsham Marshes to link with enhanced angling opportunities and a circular route from the Angles Way. To be developed alongside BFAP	A,B,C.	Angling enhancements.	BA SCC BESL	2007
W2	Shipmeadow/ Barsham TM 3990	New permissive footpath from 24hr moorings to Barsham Hall and back on Angles Way.	A,B,C,(E)	Angles Way	BA Landowners SCC	2007
W3	Geldeston TM 3891	Waymarked circular route on existing PRow in conjunction with the restoration of Geldeston and Ellingham Locks on the Waveney. Furniture upgrades and signage.	A,B,C,E	BFAP Moorings Strategy	BA Landowners	2008
W4	Worlingham TM 4591-4791	Signposted circular walk from 24hr Moorings to North Cove and back along Angles Way. Link with angling enhancements, car park and slipway to be installed at moorings.	A,B,C,E	Moorings Strategy Angling Slipway Strategy Angles Way	BA SCC BESL	2007
W5	Carlton Marshes/ Share Marsh TM 5092-5192	Improve footpath surface from waterfront at Oulton Broad to Whitecast Marsh, and via permissive links to the Angles Way to the Carlton Marshes Visitor Centre to create easy access path. Enhance signage to Share Mill and back to create circular route.	A,B,C,E,G	Easy access BFAP Angles Way	BA SCC BESL SWT Landowners	2007
W6	Oulton Marshes TM 5092-5093	Signage and surfacing upgrades to Fisher Row and permissive paths to 24hr moorings at Oulton Tea Gardens.	A,B,C,E	Angling enhancements BFAP Moorings Strategy	BA SWT Parish Council	2008
W8	Beccles Marshes TM 4291	Completion of circular route and upgrades to existing permissive route connecting Marsh Trail with Angles Way and 24hr moorings. Creation of new PRow.	A,B,C,E,G	Angling enhancements. Safer road crossing.	BA/SCC Beccles Town Council BESL	2007

1. River Waveney

Ref.	Location/Grid Ref	Proposed Access Enhancement	Objective refs	Notes/links to other plans	Key Organisations	Timescale
W9	Herringfleet-Somerleyton TM 4697-4797	Seek permissive link across the marshes to create a circular route from Herringfleet 24hr moorings to Somerleyton. Would require signage and footpath furniture and surfacing enhancements.	A,B,C,D	Subject to landowners agreement.	BA Landowners Parish Council	2009
W10	Herringfleet TM 4698-4697	Formalise link from Herringfleet 24 hr moorings and Herringfleet Mill.	A,B,C	Moorings Strategy	BA/Landowner	2009
W11	Fritton TG 4500-4600	Seek links between existing footpaths and bridleways around Waveney Forest to create circular route. Would require signage and surfacing/furniture enhancements.	A,B,C,D, E, (F)		BA/Landowner	2010
W12	Belton-Fritton TG4500-4703	Seek opportunities for Angles Way to follow riverbank .	A,B,C,D,E	Angles Way.	BA/NCC/ Landowners	2010

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Ref.	Location/Grid Ref	Proposed Access Enhancement	Objective refs	Notes/links to other plans	Key Organisations	Timescale
Y1	Claxton TG 3504-3603	Seek to establish permissive links from Beauchamp Arms to Langley Green via Mill Dyke. Would require footpath enhancement and signage.	A,B,C,D,	Subject to landowners agreement. BFAP	BA/Landowners	2007
Y2	Postwick TG 2906-3007	Seek to establish permissive link across Postwick Marshes from end of existing footpath opposite Woods End to footpath opposite Surlingham Ferry. Would require footpath enhancement and signage. (Harnsers Way)	A,,B,C,D	Subject to landowners agreement. BFAP	BA/Landowners	2009
Y3	Buckenham TG 3405-3505	Establish status of track form Buckenham Station and Buckenham Ferry.	A,B,C	Potential angling enhancement.	BA/Landowner/ NCC	2008
Y4	Halvergate/ Berney Marshes TG 4306-4707	Upgrade signage and furniture to Weavers Way to re-establish good quality bridleway circuit. Requires furniture enhancement and signage.	A,B,C,F		BA/NCC	2008
Y5	Brundall TG 3108	Link Brundall Garden Station to Brundall 24 hr moorings via new footpath across Brundall Gardens.	A,G		BA/Landowners	2008
Y6	Langley/Hardley TG 3602-3801	Replacement of footpath furniture with easier access gates. Link with BFAP works.	A,E	Easier access BFAP	BA/BESL/ Landowners	2007
Y7	Chedgrave TM 3699-3799	Install and sign easy access path from Chedgrave to Chedgrave 24hr moorings.	A,B,C,D,E, G	Easier access Moorings Strategy	BA/BESL	2006/7
Y8	Heckingham TM 3898-3899	Seek opportunities to create a permissive route to Loddon Common (access land), and also to enhance access to a potential viewpoint across Hardley Flood.	A,B,C,D	Ties with CRoW	BA/Landowners	2009
Y9	Whitlingham Country Park TG 2507	Improvement of footpath around Broad to allow full accessibility and segregation of cycling and walking.	A,B,C,E,F, G	WCP Management Plan. Moorings Strategy. Health Walks Initiatives.	Whitlingham Charitable Trust	2007

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3. River Bure

Ref.	Location/Grid Ref	Proposed Access Enhancement	Objective refs	Notes/links to other plans	Key Organisations	Timescale
B1	Stokesby to Gt Yarmouth TG 4310- TG 5110	As opportunities allow, remove stiles along footpaths on both North and South sides of the Bure to enhance accessibility and to allow for more efficient cutting.	A	Easier access.	NCC/ BA Landowners	2007-10
B2	Mautby TG 4710-4810	Re-profiling of river wall to lessen slope at footpath access points.	A, B	Easier access. Angling enhancement. BFAP	BA/BESL	2007 Subject to BFAP
B3	Upton/South Walsham TG 3714-3815	Footpath surfacing improvements resulting from BFAP works. Improve access on circular walk by installing boarded walkway across wet areas. Establish permissive or public path across marshes.	A,B,C,D	Easier access. Angling access enhancements. Links with 24hr moorings. Moorings Strategy BFAP	BA/ BESL/ NCCNWT/ Landowners	2007/8 Subject to BFAP
B4	Woodbastwick TG 3416- 3415	Seek funding to upgrade the boardwalk to Cockshoot Broad, incorporating better interpretation signage and possible further access. Possibly include improvements to the slipway	A,B,C,D,E	Links with 24hr moorings. Easy access. Allows public access to fens.	BA Natural England/NWT Landowners	2010? Subject to funding and landowners.
B5	Belaugh/ Hoveton TG 2918-3018	Seek to establish permissive footpath link between Belaugh and Hoveton.	A,C,D,G	Subject to landowners agreement.	NCC/BA Landowners	2008
B6	Gt Yarmouth/ West Caister TG 5110-5210	Improve access to Bure Park with review of interpretation and furniture. Investigate possibilities of other circular walks from Gt Yarmouth.	A,C,E,G	Social Inclusion.	BA/NCC/ BESL Gt Yarmouth BC	2009
B7	West Caister TG 5009	Seek links to create circular walk on the south side of the Bure. Would require signage.	A,B,C,D,E, G	Social Inclusion	BA/NCC/ Gt Yarmouth BC/ Landowners	2008

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3. River Bure						
Ref.	Location/Grid Ref	Proposed Access Enhancement	Objective refs	Notes/links to other plans	Key Organisations	Timescale
B8	Fleggburgh	Develop and install circular walk with interpretation and leaflet.	A,B,C,D,E G	Fleggburgh Village plan	BA/Fleggburgh Environment Committee/ Landowners	2009
B9	Acle	Investigate possibilities of circular walks	A,B,C,D,E G	Links with 24hr moorings/moorings strategy.	BA/NCC/ Landowners	2009

4. River Ant and Thurne						
Ref.	Location/Grid Ref	Proposed Access Enhancement	Objective refs	Notes/links to other plans	Key Organisations	Timescale
AT1	Horning Marsh TG 3617-3717	Seek access opportunities around access land at Horning Marsh. Link with Ludham Bridge 24hr moorings. Establish permissive links, and sign.	A,B,C,D,G	Links with 24hr moorings. Access land	BA/NCC/ Landowners	2008
AT2	How Hill TG 3619-3621	Seek access opportunities linking How Hill moorings to Irstead Holmes: Signage and footpath construction on river wall. BFAP enhancement.	A,B,C,D, (E)	Links with 24hr moorings. Angling Slipway Strategy	BA/BESL Landowners Catfield PC	2008/9
AT3	Barton TG 3523	Seek access opportunities to link Barton Turf 24hr moorings with Barton Fen access land. Signage required.	A,B,C,D, (E)	Links with 24hr moorings.	BA/ Landowners NCC/ Barton PC	2008
AT4	How Hill TG 3619-3720	Develop easy access route from moorings to existing boardwalk on How Hill NNR and sign.	A,B,E,	Links with 24hr moorings.	BA/Natural England	2007/8
AT5	Ludham/Potter Heigham TG 4017-4117	Link existing RoW from Horsefen to Horsefen Bank. Sign circuit from 24hr moorings at Womack Staithe.	A,B,C,D,E, G	Links with 24hr moorings.	BA/Landowners	2007
AT6	Horsey TG 4521-4522	Establish permissive off road path to allow for safe circuit around Horsey. Will create 2 circular walks. Sign.	A,C,D,G	Links with 24hr moorings.	BA/Landowners	2007

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4. River Ant and Thurne						
Ref.	Location/Grid Ref	Proposed Access Enhancement	Objective refs	Notes/links to other plans	Key Organisations	Timescale
AT7	LudhamTG 3717-3718	Clearly signpost route from Johnson Street (Ludham Bridge 24hr moorings) to Ludham via Hall Road and Ludham Hall to allow for safe off road walking route.	A,B,D,G	Links with 24hr moorings.	BA/ Landowners.	2008
AT8	Clippesby TG 4214- 4313	Upgrade footpath from Sandy Lane to Hall Lane for cycle access.	A,C,D,F	Links with cycle hire routes.	BA/NCC Landowners	2007
AT9	Hickling/Sea Palling TG 4225- 4326	Establish permissive footpath link between Sea Palling Road, Hickling and Sea Palling. Would need to bridge New Cut.	A,B,C,(F), G	Links with AONB	BA/NCC Landowners	2010
AT10	Horsey TG 4622	Consolidate status of Crinkle Hill track.	A,B,D	Links with AONB	BA/NCC Landowners	2007
AT11	Catfield Common TG 4021	Develop a permissive circular route around Catfield Common and sign	A,B,C,D	Links with Weavers Way	BA/ Landowners Catfield PC	2008
AT12	Horsey/West SomertonTG 4621-4722	Establish permissive footpath along Hundred Stream to Bramble Hill and beach	A,B,C,D,E G	Links with AONB	BA/Landowners	2010
AT13	All Parishes	Develop circular walks for all parishes. Develop a network of self-guided trails linking land to water.	A,B,C,D,G	Links with 24hr moorings	BA/NCC/PCs/ Landowners	2009

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Table 9.2: Action Plan for Open Access Land in the Broads

1. Open Access Land

Site	Status	Actions
East Ruston Allotments	Poors Trust Land.	Signage. Furniture provision. Consider appointment of wardens
Herringfleet Hills	Managed by BA as access land under lease	Little additional action required. Signage and wardens in place.
Outney Common	Currently informally accessible.	Signage required. Discussions have taken place with Commoners regarding dedicating and extended area of land to allow for better access points.

2. Registered Common Land

Site	Status	Actions
Coltishall Common	Currently open access.	None required
Gay Staithe	Currently open access/24 hour mooring	None required
Repps Staithe	Car Park	None required
Stokesby	Road verge (2 discrete areas)	None required.
Stokesby	Land to east of PH	None required
Horning Pumping Station	Access route	No action required.
Rollsby Bridge	Car park	Maintenance.
Common land at Coltishall east of Horstead Mill	Grazing marsh/SSSI. Publicly accessible.	Sensitive site; requires signage. Possible wardening in agreement with landowner.
Common land north east of New Road, Stokesby.	Grazed by livestock.	Bridge and new gate installed. Signage required in negotiation with land owner.

2. Registered Common Land

Site	Status	Actions
Common land to north of Horning Marshes	Fen habitat. No easy access. Sensitive site due to wildlife interest	Provide easy, well-signed access points around the site and vantage points across it. Consolidate permissive access routes.
Barton Fen	Managed reed and sedge: Outstanding wildlife interest.	Control access by negotiation, signage and maintaining access tracks.
Irstead Holmes	Managed reed and sedge; Outstanding wildlife value.	Control access by providing good access tracks around and overlooking the site. Install appropriate signage.
Crow Staithe	Fen	Signage. Currently difficult to access, May be linked to Irstead Holmes by permissive access path. (See action AT2)
Honing Common (4 discrete parcels of land)	Inaccessible woodland. High wildlife value.	No action currently necessary due to impenetrability of woodland.

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Appendix 1

Appendix 1 Consultees, Providers, Associations and Interested Parties

Auto Cycle Union	Government Office for the East of England	Norfolk Coalition of Disabled People
Bittern Line	Highways Agency	Norfolk Coast Partnership
British Driving Society	Involving Service Users	Norfolk Constabulary
British Horse Society	Liaison Groups	Norfolk County Council
British Trust for Ornithology	Local [countryside] Access Forums	● Asset & Network Management
Byways and Bridleways Trust	● Norfolk	● Communications
Commission for Rural Communities	● Broads	● Economic Development
Community Rail Partnerships	Local [disability] Access Groups e.g. Access North Norfolk Action	● Education
Country Land and Business Association	Local and other businesses e.g.	● Environment Operations
Cycling Forums – via district councils	● First	● Environment Partnership & Policy
Cyclists' Touring Club	● 'One' Anglia	● Legal Services
District Councils	Local Sure Starts	● Operations (Area)
East of England Development Agency	Market Town Development Partnerships	● Planning & Transport Strategy
English Heritage	Ministry of Defence	● Passenger Transport Unit
English Nature (until 2 nd October 2006 when it combined with the Landscape, Access and Recreation division from Countryside Agency and the Rural Development Service of Defra to form Natural England)	National Cycling Strategy	● Road Safety Team
Environment Agency	National Farmers' Union	Norfolk Deaf Association
Farming and Wildlife Advisory Group	National Trust	Norfolk Disability Information Service
Forestry Commission	Neighbouring County Councils	Norfolk Older Peoples' Forum
	Norfolk Accident Reduction Partnership	Norfolk Physical Action Activity Group
	Norfolk and Norwich Association for the Blind	Norfolk Public Health Network
		Norfolk Tourism
		Norfolk Wildlife Trust

Norwich and Norfolk Racial Equality
Council

Norfolk Association of Parish and Town
Councils

Open Spaces Society

People First

Primary Care Trusts

Public Utilities

Ramblers' Association

Royal Society for the Protection of Birds

Rural Transport Partnerships

- East Norfolk
- West Norfolk

Sustrans

Trail Riders' Fellowship

Wherry Line

Woodland for Life

Woodland Trust

Appendix 2 Appendix 2 Strategic Documents Consulted

Department for Environment, Food, and Rural Affairs

Rural Strategy 2004

The strategy was published to take account of changes recognised or sought since the Rural White Paper of 2000. The main government aim is continuing development that leads to thriving economies and communities in rural England, and a countryside that all may enjoy. Health benefits and use by ethnic groups and people with disabilities are being promoted through their Diversity Review and other measures. Its call for the integration of Rights of Way Improvement Plans into Local Transport Plans is expected to help achieve the broader aims.

See: www.defra.gov.uk/rural/pdfs/strategy/rural_strategy_2004.pdf (PDF 906Kb)

Department for Transport

Walking and Cycling: an Action Plan

Almost all of the 42 actions in the action plan could support, or be supported by the Rights of Way Improvement Plan. One action calls for its integration with the Local Transport Plan. Others speak of improving access to town centres;

supplementing developer contributions; sustainable communities; promoting health; and better routes and crossings.

See: www.dft.gov.uk/stellent/groups/dft_susttravel/documents/downloadable/dft_susttravel_029204.pdf (PDF 1159Kb)

Department of Health

Choosing Health - Making Healthier Choices Easier: The Public Health White Paper

'Increasing exercise' is a priority for action in the white paper. Choosing Health: A Physical Activity Action Plan (March 2005) proposes increased County Council involvement in boosting travel on foot and by bicycle including when travelling to school or work. Information, routes, and training are part of this, guided in part by the Sustainable Travel Towns pilot and Great Yarmouth's Local Exercise Action Pilot, possibly being based on a Local Area Agreement.

See: www.dh.gov.uk/PublicationsAndStatistics/Publications/PublicationsPolicyAndGuidance/PublicationsPolicyAndGuidanceArticle/fs/en?CONTENT_ID=4094559&chk=H29Li6 (PDF 1303Kb)

The East of England Regional Assembly

East of England Plan 2005

The regional plan replaces the old county level Structure Plan and has many references relevant to this work. Walking and cycling are specifically encouraged, provided for, and promoted. The development of trails, bridleways, and cycleways is maximised. Urban links to the countryside are called for, as are sustainable rural communities, and sustainable tourism. Policies on built environment; transport strategy and infrastructure; facilities provision; and land allocation all aim to increase travel choice. Public transport will be supported by the sustainable development policy.

See: www.eera.gov.uk/category.asp?cat=120

Norfolk Ambition

The Community Strategy for Norfolk 2003 - 2023

There are nine themes in this strategy. The Improvement Plan will contribute to these six:- in twenty years the people of Norfolk want their county to be healthy and well; economically thriving; inclusive

and diverse; environmentally responsible; and accessible and well housed.

See: www.eastspace.net/norfolkambition/

Partnership of Local Interests

Kelling to Lowestoft Ness Shoreline Management Plan 2004

This management plan is a non-statutory policy produced by a group of local interests. It forms an important, though unfunded, part of the Department for Environment, Food, and Rural Affairs strategy for flood and coastal defence 2001. It defines the risks posed by coastal erosion to people, property, and the environment in general terms. Policies are identified to manage them by 2025, 2055, and 2105. This Rights of Way Improvement Plan and its successors will contribute to its implementation.

See: www.northnorfolk.org/acag/downloads/SMP.pdf

Norfolk County Council

Norfolk's Second Local Transport Plan 2006 - 2011

The Transport Plan priorities addressed by the Rights of Way Improvement Plan are:- boosting accessibility and safety whilst cutting congestion and pollution. Norfolk County Council will integrate the

Rights of Way Improvement Plan with the Transport Plan over the next few years.

See: www.norfolk.gov.uk/transport/transportplanning/ltp/default.htm

Public Rights of Way Strategy

The current 1993 document set out the case for the way limited resources should be allocated for best effect. It has achieved electronic record keeping and scheduled vegetation cutting. This improvement plan adequately picks up the strategic elements but the need for a procedural manual remains.

Transport Asset Management Plan

There is a new requirement for the Local Transport Plan to consider the best way to look after transport related County Council property. This Asset Plan provides such an assessment by considering the whole life of the item, and comparing the benefits of short and long-term fixes. Major road crossings; minor roads; Public Rights of Way; and permissive access are all included.

Broads Authority

The Broads Authority began operating in 1989, under The Norfolk and Suffolk Broads Act 1988 (as amended), with a duty to manage the Broads for the purposes of:-

- Conserving and enhancing the natural beauty, wildlife and cultural heritage of the Broads
- Promoting opportunities for the understanding and enjoyment of the special qualities of the Broads by the public and
- Protecting the interests of navigation

The Broads Act also requires the Broads Authority to have regard to the needs of agriculture and forestry, and the economic and social interests of those who live or work in the Broads. The authority is represented at officer level on the steering group alongside the Broads Local Access Forum.

See: www.broads-authority.gov.uk

Broads Plan 2004-2009

The Broads Plan is the guiding document for the Broads Authority. It has 14 Guiding Principles, those related to countryside access include:- sustainability; social progress; environmental protection; wise use of resources; maintenance of communities; and collaborative working. The Broads Plan will contribute to a policy of sensitively managed, easy land access to the Broads for all. The Broads Plan anticipates a linked and extensive network of routes that will provide for walkers, cyclists, and horse-riders.

Appendix 2

See the Broads Authority's website for details: <http://www.broads-authority.gov.uk/authority/publications/general-publications.html>

Countryside Access in the Broads Executive Area

Norfolk County Council has final responsibility for Public Rights of Way in the Broads as across the rest of the county. The Broads Authority does additional promotion and contributes to a maintenance regime that recognises the requirements of the designation. The Broads Authority has particular responsibilities for the management of the new public right of area access in their jurisdiction and the appointment of, and secretarial support for, the Broads Local Access Forum.

The Broads Authority will publish a Recreational Access Development Plan to discuss issues of particular significance to it such as:- access alongside, across, and to water, and its effect on landscape for local residents and boat owners. This non-statutory work is a separate annex to the improvement plan but its outcomes will contribute related enhancement in and adjacent to the Broads. The Rights of Way Improvement Plan steering group annual business plans will have regard to projects noted in this Broads Authority publication.

Norfolk Coast Partnership Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty Management Plan 2004 - 2009

The Norfolk Coast Partnership was set up in 1991 to address the negative effects of people visiting the area designated for its natural beauty in 1968. It currently has a staff of about four. Access and recreation are one of the management plan's six themes. The 20-year vision speaks of opportunities for all supported by readily available information. The Rights of Way Improvement Plan will contribute to the three five-year objectives that seek to manage visiting on susceptible sites, improve understanding, and improve facilities for people with disabilities. Triennial plans propose actions to achieve these objectives.

Peddars Way and Norfolk Coast Path National Trail

This National Trail opened in 1986 and is managed in partnership with Natural England. The National Trail currently has 3.2 staff. National Trail Quality Standards and the Development Strategy aims to promote and encourage people using the route to contribute sustainably to the social, economic and environmental well being of the Norfolk and Suffolk countryside.

The ROWIP will assist the National Trail Management Group in promoting and developing the route.

Countryside Management Project Plans

There are four land management partnership projects in the county operating in:-

- the Wensum Valley;
- Norwich Fringe;
- Breckland; and
- the Waveney Valley.

Typically, each employs two people to do wildlife and access work in their areas above and beyond that done by other authorities. The Wash Estuary Strategy Group and The Wash and North Norfolk Coast European Site Management Project are two marine partnerships interested in public use of the coast. This Improvement Plan will support their work.

Appendix 3

Results of Research into Users' Comments

The questionnaire asked respondents a series of questions about routes in general or routes that respondents are familiar with. As well as asking a simple question "Are the routes good enough?", which elicits a "Yes", "No" or "Don't know" answer, respondents can also provide a qualitative comment alongside their Yes/

No response. These qualitative comments give a useful insight into people's views and so results are presented below.

Q7* Tell us about an attractive area that you either like to visit now, or would like to visit in the future.

163 (62%) respondents named an 'attractive area'. The respondents were then asked 'Are the routes to and within this area good enough?' 30% of respondents ticked 'Yes', 28% ticked 'No', and 42% did not answer the question. Sample responses were:

District	Area	Are the routes good enough?	Please tell us why
Breckland	Stanford Battle Area	No	No public access
Breckland	Pingo trail	No	Some parts are good and some parts aren't - overgrown
Broadland	Hemblington	No	High up, great views, good nature all round. Very little traffic. However as above there is more potential if utilising the S Walsham nature reserve which no one seems to use anyway.
Great Yarmouth	Filby Broad and Fleggburgh Common	No	It is a typical country footpath (grassy track) but this year it has not been cut enough and is below the usual standard.
Great Yarmouth	Great Yarmouth	No	The National Cycle Network between Norwich & Great Yarmouth needs completion or at least between Reedham & Great Yarmouth.
King's Lynn and West Norfolk	The Walks and St James Park	No	Too many busy roads/They are too dangerous
Norwich	Whitingham Lane 'Park'	No	Should have bridleway routes for all non-motorised users. Fringe area important for access.

Appendix 3

District	Area	Are the routes good enough?	Please tell us why
North Norfolk	North Norfolk Coast and hinterland	No	Some areas within themselves are quite well served by internal footpaths, but bridleway links between one area and another are desirable to avoid hazardous road walking and to create an extensive connected up region of safe unmotorised travel. E.g. to connect Roman Camp area (GR 185415) with Felbrigg Estate (GR 195395). To connect Roman Camp area with Sheringham Park (GR 135415) via woods and hills in east-west directions. Connections such as these would increase possibilities for circular walks incorporating the Norfolk Coast Path and Weavers' Way.
South Norfolk	Hardley Flood, Hardley Norfolk	No	Not wheelchair friendly. Parking for visitors inadequate. Private and public land not clearly distinguished.
Breckland	Attleborough Skate Park	Yes	It is very good and beautiful
Broadland	Horsford Woods	Yes	These routes are RUPPs that will be lost to vehicle use, which would be a great shame.
King's Lynn and West Norfolk	Sandringham Woods	Yes	They are good because they are safe and cars are not allowed
North Norfolk	Dilham Canal, North Walsham East Ruston to Waxford Bridge Area	Yes	Quiet Area - very interesting history & different along every path. very interested in water walks
Norwich	Earlham Park	Yes	Nice easy access, good paths through the woods and round the Broad.
South Norfolk	The Yare Valley, Mainly between Harford and Bawburgh	Yes	In parts of the Valley access is reasonably good, in other parts much or even little more can be done for good access by the public.

Q8* Tell us about an area where you think attractive routes could boost business.

99 respondents (37%) named an area within which they thought attractive routes could boost business. Sample responses were:

District	Area	Are the routes good enough?	Please tell us why
Breckland	Lynford lakes	No	Gravelled pathways are good, but lots of erosion around width restricted entrances.
Breckland	Nun's Bridges, Thetford	No	No cycleway or footpath.
Broadland	Little Plumstead	No	Dangerous roads for walkers need more information on which tracks are permissible rights of way.
King's Lynn and West Norfolk	Around Heacham and Hunstanton	No	There are no cycle tracks.
North Norfolk	Plumstead	No	It would be great not only to have paths cleared but to link up an off road circuit (Alongside farm entrance to footpath entrance off Cherry Tree Road). It would be a good circuit both for villagers and tourists
North Norfolk	Melton Constable/Hindolveston/Briston	No	Dismantled railway line could be used as off-road route.
Norwich	Whitlingham	No	Not well advertised. Need signs and good access
Norwich	Throughout Norwich	No	Proper continental style cycleways needed to provide safe cycling routes throughout Norwich and to neighbouring towns/villages.
South Norfolk	Wymondham	No	Access to the countryside in or near Wymondham is very limited, or poorly advertised.
South Norfolk	Beccles Area Waveney River	No	Not know as a tourism walking area as much as it should be.

Appendix 3

District	Area	Are the routes good enough?	Please tell us why
Broadland	Marsham Great Wood	Yes	Forestry Commission Wood, No Vehicle Access
Great Yarmouth	Acle Straight, surrounding area	Yes	No major hold ups, feel close eating establishments will help town centre etc
King's Lynn and West Norfolk	Coastal Path Kings Lynn - Hunstanton & Beyond	Yes	Well marked with convenient resting or stopping points

Q9* Tell us about an off-road route, or a link that would make a good off-road route, that you either use now, or would like to use in the future.

104 (39%) respondents named an off-road route or a link that would make a good off-road route. Sample responses were:

District	Area	Are the routes good enough?	Please tell us why
Breckland	Bylaugh estate	No	Footpaths only - no bridleways.
Broadland	Acle Norwich Road to South Walsham Road	No	I campaigned for a footpath from Norwich Road to school and achieved this. But it doesn't carry on to the South Walsham Road.
Great Yarmouth	Church footpath between main road and Rollesby Road in Fleggburgh.	No	It is uneven and gets muddy and should be tarmaced.
Great Yarmouth	Lowestoft to Knettishall Heath - Angles Way	No	Signposting could be greatly improved.
King's Lynn and West Norfolk	Thornham Harbour to Coast	No	Badly in need of maintenance

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District	Area	Are the routes good enough?	Please tell us why
North Norfolk	Mundesley to Cromer High	No	Old railway could be developed like Marriott's Way and promoted as Poppyland Way.
Norwich	Along river through city	No	Not continuous
South Norfolk	Parker Lane, Morningthorpe to Wacton Common	No	No safe access over A140 and footpath on opposite side of road.
Breckland	Thetford Forest	Yes	Well publicised and know people who go there to cycle - well sign posted
Broadland	Dawsons Lane, Blofield Heath	Yes	The lane has been used for years without restriction of the landowners and is a safe route for walkers and riders.
King's Lynn and West Norfolk	Burcham Windmill to Ling House, Anmer	Yes	Farm tracks, traffic free, reasonable surface
North Norfolk	Fakenham circular parish walks	Yes	Wheelchair friendly, good for children, clearly signposted
Norwich	Marriott's Way	Yes	Muddy in places, but otherwise a very pleasant walk.
South Norfolk	Hardley Hall	Yes	Mr xxx has unlocked the gates, but it is still not a permissive foot path

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Q10* Tell us about a route that links, or could link, countryside to a market-town, or to Norwich. (The link could involve public transport.)

82 respondents (31%) named a route for this question. Sample responses were:

District	Area	Are you satisfied with this route?	Please tell us why
Norwich	Whittlingham Lane		Once a lovely bridleway route to Bramerton, now road and footpath access.
Broadland	Aylsham to Wroxham via Coltishall	No	Runs alongside Bure valley railway and needs widening to accommodate both pedestrians and cyclists
Great Yarmouth	Norwich - Yarmouth / Lowestoft	No	I like the idea but there is a lot of work still to be done.
King's Lynn and West Norfolk	North Elmham to King's Lynn	No	This used to be a Pilgrim's Path. It would be great to open it up again.
North Norfolk	Wells to Fakenham dry road.	No	Because there are no places to stop.
Norwich	South Norfolk/ Norwich	No	No off-road route; - disjointed bus service.
South Norfolk	Bawburgh	No	Needs cycling routes
South Norfolk	Route to Beccles from Burgh St Peter	No	Blocked by barbed wire past Burgh St Peter Church. No river crossing.
Breckland	Rocklands - Gt Ellingham Attleborough, Lanes and By roads for cycle track	Yes	5 miles two and half miles of Country Lane (No Vehicle) nice distance & area to travel
Breckland	Shropham	Yes	Really safe

District	Area	Are you satisfied with this route?	Please tell us why
Broadland	Cycle path from Acle to Hemsby or Sea Palling	Yes	It covers a lot of lovely countryside and takes you to wonderful beaches.
King's Lynn and West Norfolk	Grimston to King's Lynn Cycle Route	Yes	From Castle Rising the Sustrans route 1 takes you into King's Lynn Centre.
North Norfolk	Weavers Way to North Walsham	Yes	Clear footpaths, no cars.

Q11* Tell us about a link that could create a circular route, or connect to shops, toilets or other facilities.

62 (23%) respondents supplied a named link for this question. 22 respondents stated that their named route was good enough, 33 stated that it was not good enough. Sample responses were:

District	Area	Is this link good enough?	Please tell us why
Breckland	Concrete road leading to Blind Lane, Lyng	No	Closure continues
Breckland	Between Westfield Rd and Yaxham Rd	No	Links to Tesco? Section between Westfield Road/ Rash's Green Industrial Estate is only passable when dry in summer or frozen in winter.
Broadland	Blickling Park	No	Additional toilets at far side of the park would be helpful.
Great Yarmouth	Church footpath - Fleggburgh	No	This footpath links majority of village to village hall and the post office and school.
Great Yarmouth	Burgh Castle	No	A gate is padlocked and cuts off the walk from the river to the road

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District	Area	Is this link good enough?	Please tell us why
King's Lynn and West Norfolk	Dersingham to Heacham	No	You can only get there safely by going via Sedgeford.
Norwich	Harford Bridge to Tesco Norwich	No	Cyclepath from Norwich stops at Harford Bridge. Ipswich Road very hazardous at this point and discourages further progress to Tesco. A route for cyclists free of traffic from Harford Bridge to Tesco would be of great value.
Norwich	Riverside walk	No	Found the riverside path blocked up near Toys R Us last week, apparently deliberately and presumably officially, with no note to explain this. Having to retrace your steps tends to make you less enthusiastic about a route.
South Norfolk	Morningthorpe to Saxlingham	No	No crossing of B1135 and disjointed rights of way.
Broadland	Horstead / Coltishall Mill	Yes	Well maintained peaceful area
King's Lynn and West Norfolk	Wisbech	Yes	It looks nice
North Norfolk	Swanton Abbot Church	Yes	Can do a circular walk from church into Swanton Abbot then out towards Westwich arch but go up Leathercote Lane, then up to Swanton Hill across either back to church or extend even further. Would be handy to have a link even further across.
North Norfolk	Sheringham to West Runton via cliffs/road	Yes	Good walk along cliffs and return by road. Cafe at West Runton beach is a good place to have a break - toilets there as well.
South Norfolk	Heywood Diss	Yes	Join up Shelfanger to Burston Via Heywood Road

Q12* Tell us about a route near water across land that is wearing away.

79 (30%) respondents named a route near water across land that is wearing away. Sample responses were:

District	Area	Is this route good enough?	Please tell us why
Breckland	The Bridge near Guist.	No	It cannot with stand heavy weights.
King's Lynn and West Norfolk	Sutton Broad	No	Not really. Very muddy, no views, extremely overgrown.
Broadland	Acle Dyke south side	No	Overgrown and dangerous. Who would be liable if a walker was injured on this footpath?
Great Yarmouth	Burgh castle	No	Path along river bank gets muddy in winter
King's Lynn and West Norfolk	Burnham Overy Staithe to Coast	No	Requires Maintenance
North Norfolk	Between Cromer and Sheringham	No	The cliff top footpath is blocked by a fence topped with barbed wire running alongside a caravan site and the end of the Cromer cliff top car park. There is also a notice at the edge of the cliff stating "private no public right of way".
Broadland	South Walsham Near River	No	Very uneven and difficult to walk
North Norfolk	On the cliffs near Happisburgh	No	Cliff erosion means the path could be potentially dangerous
Norwich	Marriott's way at Hellesdon	No	The section of path is incomplete and needs further developing and attention to road crossing safety and surfacing.
South Norfolk	Bridle path behind Suttons Farm, Aldeby	No	Often a gate with barbed wire across and very boggy - at marsh level.

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District	Area	Is this route good enough?	Please tell us why
South Norfolk	North Bank of Waveney River between Geldeston and Beccles	No	River eroding footpath
Breckland	Little Ouse Bank, Santon	Yes	Could get worse
Great Yarmouth	Caister sea wall	Yes	Good road network
Norwich	The broadland by the main road in Thorpe (bottom of Thunder Lane)	Yes	Will never be much use if you want to go anywhere, but is a pleasant walk nonetheless

Q13* Is there a route that you think would help people enjoy the countryside despite recent, or likely, road building or other construction work?

52 (20%) respondents named a route for this question. Sample responses were:

District	Area	Is this route good enough?	Please tell us why
Breckland	Thetford Forest		Links between Thetford and Thetford Forest need to be included in any A11 plans.
Breckland	Dualling of A11 Attleborough bypass	No	Must make adequate provision for crossing the road safely.
Broadland	Little Plumstead	No	No footpath exists on Water Lane to Hospital Lane. There is a footpath that goes across the fields as part of the circular route but if going towards Blofield Corner or back into Little Plumstead it is quite dangerous.

District	Area	Is this route good enough?	Please tell us why
King's Lynn and West Norfolk	Beside A47 from East Winch to Lynn	No	No route parallel to cycle or walk.
North Norfolk	Holt	No	Because of transport
North Norfolk	Wells to Fakenham (Railway Line. Could be a cycle Way)	No	It is overgrown and needs the odd foot / cycle bridge
Norwich	Any new housing adjustment to the A11/A4 interchange (Colney side) will need safe pedestrian access to both Hethersett and Cringleford	No	The present A47 crossing (without bridge) is wrongly planned. The existing Colney/Cringleford slip-road will not be appropriate to the proposed development.
Norwich	Norwich Park and Rides	No	Some Park and Rides might be suitable for designing as access points to the country at weekends. Thought would need to be given as to how they connect in with local footpath cycleway network.
South Norfolk	Long Stratton bypass	No	More could be done to give people greater access by creating bridleways and bridges.
South Norfolk	Broome Bypass	No	Needs better links to other routes.
King's Lynn and West Norfolk	Stow Bridge	Yes	It will bring more people in to the village

Appendix 3

Q14* Describe a rail, road, river or canal crossing you use, or would like to use.

84 (32%) respondents named a rail, road, river or canal crossing. Sample responses were:

District	Area	Is this crossing convenient?	Is this crossing safe?	Please tell us why
Breckland	Bridgeham bridleways	No	No	A section of footpath crosses the railway but BOAT status paths either side.
Great Yarmouth	Berney Arms	No	No	You have to rely on lifts on boats
North Norfolk	North Walsham & Dilham	No	No	Overgrown canal, but ideal for creating a full length walk using un-employed local volunteers.
Norwich	Colney GR 179079	No	No	No bridge or stepping stones across River Yare. Bridge would link Bowthorpe to paths/cycleways in UEA and hospital area for leisure users and employees at hospital science park and UEA.
South Norfolk	Somerleyton Swing Bridge	No	No	Currently only a railway bridge but footpath either side. No other safe route across river and road very dangerous (St Olaves - Beccles) A143.
Broadland	Bears Grove Crossing Wroxham	Yes	No	Now closed to motor vehicles
Great Yarmouth	Crossing the Acle Strait	Yes	No	Heavy traffic both ways near Acle roundabout
Norwich	Southern by-pass, Thorpe St Andrew to Whitlingham Lane	Yes	No	In spite of road humps, drivers won't give way to cyclists/ walkers trying to cross
Breckland	Thetford Rail Station	Yes	Yes	Well maintained & open 24 hours

District	Area	Is this crossing convenient?	Is this crossing safe?	Please tell us why
Broadland	Reedham Ferry	Yes	Yes	It's cheap for cyclists and pedestrians - queuing is minimal.
King's Lynn and West Norfolk	Stowbridge	Yes	Yes	Excellent system of gates etc. Recent renovation of bridges over river & cut excellent.
King's Lynn and West Norfolk	Freedom Bridge	Yes	Yes	Quicker way to other side of town, safe, has railing across it
North Norfolk	Attlebridge	Yes	Yes	Lovely Bridge over the Wensum at Orams Farm
South Norfolk	Cringleford Bridge	Yes	Yes	A footbridge has been built alongside the very hump-backed road bridge

Q16* Is there a route you use now, or would like to use, to get to work, or the shops, to school, the doctors or a bus stop etc?

69 (26%) respondents named a route for getting to work, the shops, school etc. Sample responses were:

District	Area	Are you satisfied with this route?	Please tell us why
South Norfolk	Shelfanger / Winfarthing	No	Access could be provided to Winfarthing primary school from Shelfanger by providing access from the bridlepath (between High London Lane and the main road) to the main road close to the school.
South Norfolk	Kirby Cane to Loddon	No	Difficult crossing main A146 to reach cycle track into Loddon.

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District	Area	Are you satisfied with this route?	Please tell us why
North Norfolk	Main Road Felmingham - North Walsham	No	High speed car drivers and narrow road
Breckland	From Griston to Watton between prison and airfield	No	It is not opened yet. I would like to use this route travelling from Stow Bedon to Watton on my bicycle.
Breckland	Pingo trail	No	Overgrown weeds and trees
Broadland	Frettenham to Spixworth Woodland View School	No	Road dangerous and too busy. Parallel bridleway only some of the way, very dangerous corner by Spixworth church.
Broadland	Little Plumstead	No	Sandhole Lane to the school is not fit for parents to walk. I believe a walkway may be in the offing but have heard nothing official.
King's Lynn and West Norfolk	Along Edward Kennedy way King's Lynn	No	The bicycle path stops just before you get into King's Lynn.
Norwich	Heartsease roundabout Norwich	No	Very difficult for walkers crossing arms of roundabout, pedestrian crossings needed
North Norfolk	Upper Sheringham Park	Yes	It has marked routes for different length walks, and it is near the sea.
King's Lynn and West Norfolk	Saltors Lode	Yes	Just across road
Norwich	Numerous alley routes around Hellesdon	Yes	They are all good short cuts and the Parish Council keep them relatively clean and tidy.

Appendix 4 Footways, Minor Roads and Public Transport

Footways

In built up areas, there are about 3,840 km (2,400 miles) of footway in Norfolk, usually running alongside roads. Norfolk County Council looks after the majority of these. Routes get a safety check every three months and an annual condition survey. Routine maintenance and structural maintenance run on a five-year programme subject to need, level of use, and funding. In 2003, the Council put in about 20 requested footways from the top of the waiting list of about 500, having been sorted through preliminary and detail design stages. Footways are also constructed by developers and maintained by the Council if of an adequate standard.

Norfolk County Council's footway policy is under constant review.

Unsurfaced Roads

Norfolk County Council is responsible for about 460 km (288 miles) of unsurfaced roads that can be used by all users, including road legal drivers in legitimate vehicles. They tend not to be signposted, or mapped, and are often underused. Overhanging vegetation, rutting, or flooding can prevent all or some legitimate usage. Inspections occur every five

years. However, priorities can divert the work programme, and investment in training and equipment elsewhere. Illegal and irresponsible off-road driving is generally not a problem in Norfolk, though Norfolk County Council can legally close roads to the public, either temporarily or permanently using Traffic Regulation Orders if this is considered necessary.

Norfolk County Council's Transport Asset Management Plan deals with road construction and maintenance and is reviewed annually.

Minor Surfaced Roads

Minor surfaced roads make up about 4,686 km (2,929 miles), or a third, of the roads that Norfolk County Council maintains. Walkers, cyclists, and horse-riders of all ages share these routes with high-performance cars, motorcycles, and 40 tonne lorries. Such roads get a one, two, or four yearly condition survey and a monthly, or three monthly, detailed safety check depending on status. In 2002/2003 nearly 60% needed structural treatment. Public reports are formally ranked as needing attention immediately, or in two or four weeks, or three months. Routine

and structural maintenance is based on need, use, and availability of funds. Car parks, essential for most countryside visitors, are usually privately owned. We also recognise the contribution that roadside verges can make to the network, enabling walkers and horse riders to pass safely along these minor roads. To this end, we will endeavour to protect the verges from being eroded by encroachment.

Norfolk County Council's Transport Asset Management Plan deals with road construction and maintenance and is reviewed annually.

Public Transport

Bus services, which are mostly run by private companies, are used to extend walking or cycling trips. Norfolk County Council subsidises rural, off-peak, and school routes. Bicycle trailers, the 'Interchange Strategy', and low-floor vehicles will make services more useful for walkers, cyclists, and people with disabilities.

Community transport is a cheaper more structured option than taking a taxi for

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reaching countryside away from home. Mini-buses are run by various projects on set routes, as flexible feeders, or as “Dial-a-Ride” with set destinations and collection points.

The railways are used by walkers, cyclists, and people with disabilities to get to promoted routes like the National Trail and the Norfolk Coast Cycleway. In 2004, all stations had cycle parking and six had bus-stop facilities. Norfolk County Council supports the Bittern Line and Wherry Line partnerships that market leisure opportunities available from the services.

Norfolk County Council’s contribution to public transport is supported by the Local Transport Plan and is achieved in part through:

- The Interchange Strategy
- Key Bus Routes Analysis
- Supporting Bittern and Wherry Line Partnerships
- Developing service connections between community transport and the main network
- Identifying places and journeys where “Dial-a-Ride” schemes would be useful
- Promoting bus bicycle trailers
- The Safer and Healthier Routes to Schools Programme

	Young/single Person Families	Older People, Ethnic Groups and those with ill-health	Young People	Mental Illness	Deaf	Learning Difficulties
Interchange					✓	✓
Key Bus Routes	✓					
Connections		✓		✓		✓
Dial-a-Ride		✓				✓
Safer and Healthier	✓		✓			



Appendix 5

Examples of Green Infrastructure Functions and Benefits

Green Infrastructure Functions¹

Active recreation - greenspaces and links have a role in the provision of outdoor sports facilities – both formal sports provision (sports pitches and facilities) and informal recreation activities (angling, cycling, rough play areas and provision for children and young adults).

Passive recreation and quiet enjoyment – well-designed, interesting and safe greenspace networks can provide for passive enjoyment of greenspaces (e.g. walking, sitting, bird watching) and meet the demands of urban communities for tranquil spaces for relaxation and stress relief.

Sustainable transport and public rights of way - a permeable and logical network of greenspaces, connected by green, attractive, sheltered and safe footpaths and cycleways can encourage increased levels of walking and cycling. Public transport routes can be incorporated into the wider movement network, and the use of rivers and canals as sustainable transport corridors can provide attractive linkages between rural and urban places.

Network, links and gateways – greenspace networks can provide the framework for the built environment and the rural-urban fringe by facilitating continuous and attractive walking and cycling routes from and out to the surrounding countryside, thereby acting as a ‘bridge to the country’ and provide an attractive ‘gateway to the town’.

Social venue/meeting place - greenspaces can provide excellent foci for establishing a sense of place and community ownership, and spaces associated with town centres or local neighbourhoods are ideally placed to function as social venues.

Cultural/event venue – some greenspaces are ideally suited to holding events or providing space for cultural expression (e.g. arts/education programmes).

Education and training - greenspaces can provide outdoor classrooms for school education and life-long learning, as well as more formal educational and training facilities where appropriate. This can include meeting training needs for people

with greenspace management and horticultural skills.

Heritage preservation - the provision of new green infrastructure and the enhancement of existing spaces offer opportunities for the conservation or restoration of historic assets, and extending green networks can provide increased access to (and awareness of) heritage sites.

Landscape and townscape structure - the design and characteristics of green infrastructure assets can enhance the structure of the local landscape and townscape context, providing a distinctive setting for development.

Wildlife habitat and biodiversity - greenspace networks can provide the framework for protecting existing designated sites, as well as enhancing the biodiversity value of sites outside these areas, through creation or enhancement of wildlife corridors that offer opportunities to decrease fragmentation of wildlife habitats. These corridors can also provide opportunities for greater access to nature for local people.

¹ Based on the guidance provided by the Thames Gateway Green Infrastructure Guidance (Greening the Gateway Partnership), which reflects the approach promoted in The Countryside in and Around Towns: a vision for connecting town and country in pursuit of sustainable development (Countryside Agency/Groundwork).

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Sustainable water and flood risk management – greenspaces can provide water storage capacity and can help to reduce flood risk, and carefully designed spaces can minimise the need for additional water through measures such as:

- Water storage and infiltration
- Ground water recharge
- Sustainable urban drainage systems
- Water efficient design and maintenance
- Natural flood defence
- Permanent or occasional functional wetlands alongside rivers
- Network of containment bunds and dry access routes

Sustainable energy use and production – buildings can be designed to be energy efficient and have minimal energy requirements, and wood products and green waste can provide energy sources for renewable energy projects. In addition, green infrastructure can contribute to low-carbon energy production (e.g. ‘green’ development schemes incorporating solar roofs, biomass and wood heat schemes, farm waste schemes and wind turbines).

Sustainable waste management - green waste produced as a result of management and use of greenspaces can be composted and reused within the space, or can provide a renewable energy source.

Green produce and food production - allotments or community gardens, urban farms, etc can be regarded as form of green infrastructure.

Integration of new and existing communities – green infrastructure can provide a sustainable setting for development and attractive surroundings for new and existing residents.

Shared experience of green space creation - the creation and management of greenspaces and links offer opportunities for building community capacity and sense of ownership through involvement of local people, both in their planning and design and in the practical on-going management and maintenance of green infrastructure elements.

Potential Benefits of Green Infrastructure²

Economic contribution/encouragement and employment benefits – providing attractive places to live, work and visit; promoting inward investment, regeneration and tourism through a high quality environment; providing employment opportunities linked to outdoor environmental education and leisure enterprises, commercial crops (e.g. timber, wood fuel and other wood products and energy crops), nurseries/garden products retailing, green waste recycling, renewable energy generation, local food production/crafts, countryside management, and greenspace landscape contracting and grounds maintenance;

Environmental benefits – strengthening of image and visual amenity through high quality design; recognition of historic character/sense of place and enhanced management of heritage assets; enhancing biodiversity through habitat restoration and creation; increased community awareness of environmental issues; contributing to local air quality through pollution filtering by vegetation, reducing impact of traffic and reducing ozone levels); opportunities to adapt to and mitigate the effects of climate change (e.g. micro-climate adjustment/shelter to

² Based on the guidance provided by the Thames Gateway Green Infrastructure Guidance (Greening the Gateway Partnership), which reflects the approach promoted in The Countryside in and Around Towns: a vision for connecting town and country in pursuit of sustainable development (Countryside Agency/Groundwork).

reduce demand for heating/cooling and reducing the heat island effect of urban areas and incorporating areas designed for temporary flooding);

Physical and psychological health

benefits – facilitating physically active lifestyles (e.g. cycling and walking, green gyms, water-based activities); promoting mental well-being/stress reduction through provision of quiet green refuges;

Social inclusion benefits – green infrastructure can provide accessible, safe and welcoming open spaces and links that promote community safety; providing opportunities for people to get closer to and learn about nature; a foci for community activities (including education and learning) that promotes community capacity building and a shared sense of cohesion/civic pride; incorporating access provision for less mobile users; providing stimulating natural environments for the sensory impaired; greater integration between existing and new communities via integration of movement routes.

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