

Rights of Way Improvement Plan 2 Consultation Update

Introduction and Summary

A 12-week consultation on Buckinghamshire's draft Rights of Way Improvement Plan (ROWIP) took place between 1st October and 24th December 2019. This report summarises the consultation responses and sets out any amendments made from these responses.

Responses were gathered through an online survey. 257 responses were received. A further 13 responses were received by email.

Online Respondents

The demographic profile of respondents is shown in Table 1. Not all respondents answered these questions.

Table 1: Demographic Profile of Respondents

Demographic Information	Number	% (of those answering question)
Male	30	43%
Female	40	57%
Age: 25-34	6	8%
Age: 35-44	6	8%
Age: 45-54	16	22%
Age: 55-64	20	28%
Age: 65+	24	33%
Has a disability or health impairment	9	12%

The type of respondent is shown in Table 2. Respondents could choose more than one category.

Table 2: Type of Respondent

Respondent Type	Number	%
A resident of Buckinghamshire	198	77%
A parish, town, district or county councillor	37	14%
A regular visitor to Buckinghamshire	26	10%
An employee working in Buckinghamshire	23	9%
A Buckinghamshire business owner	16	6%
A public rights of way volunteer	15	6%
An official representative of a community group or charity, providing an agreed response for the organisation	14	5%
An official representative of a district, town or parish council, providing an agreed response for the organisation	13	5%

The following organisations responded to the online survey:

- Winslow and District Ramblers Group
- The British Horse Society
- Colne Valley Regional Park
- Padbury Parish Council

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- Chiltern Society ROWG Secretary
- West Wycombe Parish Council
- Buckinghamshire Disability Service (BuDS)
- Chearsley Parish Council
- Padbury Parish Council
- The Marlow Society
- Wing Parish Council
- Chesham Grammar Equestrian Club
- CPRE
- Aylesbury & District Ramblers - Footpath & Countryside Secretary
- The Ramblers - Aylesbury & District Ramblers Group
- Bierton with Broughton Parish Council
- Slapton Parish Council
- Naphill Riding Club
- Hambleden Parish Council
- British Driving Society - Beds, Bucks & Herts
- Beaconsfield Town Council
- Mentmore Parish Council
- Visit Buckinghamshire & The Chilterns
- The BEACONSFIELD Society
- Chepping Wycombe Parish Council
- Gerrards Cross Town Council

The following organisations or individuals submitted email or letter responses:

- Alan Cooper (individual)
- Alan Gladwin (individual)
- Buckinghamshire County Council Strategic Planning and Infrastructure Team
- British Driving Society Bedfordshire, Buckinghamshire & Hertfordshire Area
- British Horse Society
- Buckingham Town Council
- Chiltern Society
- Denham Parish Council
- Historic England
- Iver and District Countryside Association
- Natalie White (individual)
- Richard Jennings (Local Access Forum Cycling Representative)
- The Ivers Parish Council

Respondents were asked how easy or difficult they found the ROWIP to understand. Half found the ROWIP easy or very easy to understand. 14% found the ROWIP difficult or very difficult to understand.

Table 3: Ease of Understanding

Ease of Understanding	Number	%
Very easy	13	9%
Easy	62	41%
Neither easy nor difficult	55	36%
Difficult	15	10%
Very difficult	6	4%

There were 39 additional comments which could be summarised into the following broad categories:

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- 19 (53%) – too long / could be shorter / needs a summary;
- 9 (25%) - detail on actions / specific areas of county / actions for specific interest groups / maps of projects;
- 5 (14%) - more simple language / easier to read;
- 3 (8%) - nothing /OK;
- 3 (8%) – other (responsibilities of parish council vs. Bucks County Council, summarise strengths and weaknesses of network and needs delivery of the action plan).

Respondents were asked if the correct information had been included in each of the sections. Most respondents thought the correct information had been included, or were not sure, see Table 3.

	Yes		No		Not sure	
Introduction	71	73%	6	6%	20	21%
Mapping the network	65	67%	8	8%	24	25%
Looking after the network	64	67%	11	11%	21	22%
An evolving network	58	60%	12	12%	27	28%
Knowing where to go	60	63%	11	11%	25	26%
Access for everyone	63	66%	8	8%	24	25%
Effective delivery	62	64%	9	9%	26	27%

Respondents could provide free text comments in response to “What do you think we should add, or change, to improve the Plan?” or “If you have any further comments about the Plan, please provide them.” The responses are collated in the following section with a record made of any changes made in response to these comments. Also included are the responses received by email or letter.

Next steps

The RoWIP2 steering group had a conference call with our consultant Sharon Bayne on Friday 17th January to review the responses to the consultation and agree what changes should be made to the final published RoWIP2. We will make some adjustments to the text based on the headline user responses

- Horse Riders and Carriage Drivers wanted more clarity on widths, surfaces, multiuser routes and the health and well-being benefits for this class of user.
- Parish Councils and some user groups wanted more clarity on “devolved” services.
- User groups and individual respondents had views on prioritisation in the “Management Matrix”.
- User groups and individual respondents had some issues with the use of “Permissive Paths” consensus was always to legally dedicate routes as PRowS.
- Users had concerns about “promoted” routes and how these would be managed and reviewed in the future.
- Users wanted us to say more about walking and cycling initiatives
- Users wanted us to say more about Health and Well-being benefits of Rights of Way
- Colne Valley Regional Park raised some very specific issues related to access and development in their project area and felt more needed to be said about it.

It was felt that most responses had been already captured in the draft document and there were no significant changes to be made. The final version of ROWIP2 will be edited accordingly and presented to the GMT/SIG in February for sign off.

Phill Fox
22nd January 2020