



## Buckinghamshire Local Access Forum agenda

Date: Wednesday 1<sup>st</sup> November 2023

Time: 10:00 am

Venue: The Paralympic Room, Buckinghamshire Council, Gatehouse Road, Aylesbury  
HP19 8FF

### Membership:

Mr D Briggs (NFU, CLA, farming, Chairman of the Bucks CLA, Chairman of the Chilterns LEADER) (Vice-Chairman), Cllr S Broadbent, Mr G Casperz (Disabled Ramblers), Mr A Clark (Chiltern Society), Mr N Harris (National Trust) (Chairman), Ms A Heath (British Horse Society), Mr C Hurworth (Trail Riders' Fellowship and MPV users), Mr R Jennings (Cycling UK), R Johnson (Ramblers Association), Ms M Rose (Parish Councils), Mr G Thomas (Independent), Cllr A Turner and Mr B Worrell (British Driving Society Beds, Bucks and Herts)

- *There will be a 10-minute break at 11am*
- *Officers may attend remotely*

Agenda Item	Page No
<b>1 Apologies for Absence</b>	
<b>2 Declarations of Interest</b>	
<b>3 Minutes / Matters Arising</b>	<b>3 - 10</b>
<b>4 Definitive Map Modification Order Priorities</b> <i>Helen Francis (Senior Definitive Map Officer) &amp; Claire Hudson (Definitive Map and Highway Searches Team Leader), Buckinghamshire Council.</i>	<b>11 - 14</b>
<b>5 ROWIP Year 1 Review</b> <i>Jonathan Clark (Senior Strategic Access Officer) &amp; James Spratley (Strategic Access Officer), Buckinghamshire Council.</i>	<b>15 - 36</b>
<b>6 Rights of Way Group Update</b> <i>Claire Hudson (Definitive Map and Highways Searches Team Leader); Jonathan Clark, James Spratley (Strategic Access Officers); and Joanne</i>	<b>37 - 48</b>

*Taylor (Rights of Way Operations Team Leader).*

**7 LAF Members' Report 49 - 52**

**8 Dates & Venue of the Next Meetings**

- 10am 6<sup>th</sup> March 2024 (Jubilee Room, The Gateway)
- 10am 10<sup>th</sup> July 2024 (Paralympic Room, The Gateway)
- 10am 6<sup>th</sup> November 2024 (Paralympic Room, The Gateway)

If you would like to attend a meeting, but need extra help to do so, for example because of a disability, please contact us as early as possible, so that we can try to put the right support in place.

For further information please contact: Harry Thomas via [democracy@buckinghamshire.gov.uk](mailto:democracy@buckinghamshire.gov.uk).



## Buckinghamshire Local Access Forum minutes

Minutes of the meeting of the Buckinghamshire Local Access Forum held on Wednesday 19 July 2023 in The Paralympic Room, Buckinghamshire Council, Gatehouse Road, Aylesbury HP19 8FF, commencing at 10am and concluding at 11:57am.

### Members present

Mr D Briggs, S Broadbent, Mr G Casperz, Mr A Clark, Mr N Harris, Ms A Heath, R Johnson, Mr G Thomas, A Turner and Mr B Worrell

### Others in attendance

Cllr D Barnes

### Agenda Item

#### 1 Apologies for Absence

Members heard apologies from Richard Jennings (Cycling UK), Chris Hurworth (Trail Riders' Fellowship and MPV users) and Melanie Rose (Parish Councils).

#### 2 Declarations of Interest

There were none.

#### 3 Matters Arising / Minutes

A typo was noted in the Chairman's comments on the back page of the report pack. Should read, 'I would like to *thank* the outgoing Chairman...'.  
  
The Minutes of the meeting held on 1<sup>st</sup> March 2023 were agreed as a correct record.

#### 4 Local Transport Plan 5

Hannah Joyce (Head of Transport Strategy & Funding, Planning, Growth and Sustainability), gave a presentation to the LAF giving an overview of the Local Transport Plan (LTP), which was a statutory requirement of the Transport Act (2000), setting out the long-term priorities for transport across Buckinghamshire. The slides from her presentation would be appended to the Minutes of the meeting.

The LTP was being developed in tandem with the Buckinghamshire Local Plan, which outlined where future housing, retail and commercial units would be located in Buckinghamshire. It was hoped that this approach would create a better LTP, with future developments in mind.

The LTP would be supported by both a 5-10 year implementation plan, outlining what would be delivered through the LTP, with estimated finish dates, and an evidence base informed by feedback from engagement with relevant highways, public transport, planning teams and members.

The Department for Transport (DfT) would provide guidance for the development of the new LTP, facilitating a move away from the 'predict and provide' approach in the current LTP (last updated in 2009) which necessitated forecasting of future traffic and transport requirements based on current usage, and towards a vision led approach, which enabled the LTP to outline what Buckinghamshire Council want Buckinghamshire's transport to look like in the future and how this could be achieved. DfT had made clear that future government funding would be dependent on having an LTP in place, and it remained a key goal to quantifiably reduce carbon emissions as part of the new plan.

It was recognised that the rural nature of large parts of Buckinghamshire meant that car dependency remained high, and this would be accounted for in the LTP. Efforts would be made to mitigate the negative impacts of car travel on communities through targeted investment on congestion hotspots and key corridors, ensuring through-traffic was routed away from residential areas. It was also recognised that social isolation was worsening in rural areas, where those dependent on public transport were affected by underdeveloped links between key social spaces and towns. A lot of time had been spent lobbying to address this issue, and responsive transport systems were being trialled in the High Wycombe and Aylesbury areas, which could be adopted and expanded if they were shown to be effective.

A consultation had been launched to take feedback on the three key objectives for the new LTP, which were as follows:

#### **Connecting Our Economy**

- Minimising congestion
- Delivering faster connections into London/Midlands/Southeast
- Sustainable travel options into town centres and high streets, visitor attractions and leisure facilities, Enterprise Zones and key employment centres.
- Ensure developers forward fund and deliver transport infrastructure.

#### **Decarbonising our Transport System**

- Ensuring that new developments are walkable and cyclable.
- Reducing the need to travel through improved digital connections.
- Improve buses, demand responsive services, taxis, e-scooters and e-bikes services.
- Improve safety for walkers and cyclists over shorter journeys.
- Promote alternative fuels.
- Prepare highway network for climate change impacts.
- Increase biodiversity within the highway network.

### **Building Places for People**

- Keeping traffic away from residential/community areas and high streets.
- Improving traffic flow with optimised traffic signals.
- Exploring policies such as emissions-based parking management.
- Build walking and cycling-friendly neighbourhoods.

The LTP would be supplemented by 'modal specific' documents that would contain more information regarding specific aspects of the plan, such as the Buckinghamshire local cycling/walking plan and the Greenway scheme.

Councillor S Broadbent explained that the LTP had an earlier deadline than the Buckinghamshire Local Plan. Therefore, whilst there was intention to develop the two in tandem, there was forecast to be a point of departure depending on the progress made in finalising the Buckinghamshire Local Plan by the time the LTP was submitted to Government.

Hannah expressed hope that by-passes and link roads would be effective as part of the plan to reduce traffic congestion in town centres.

In response to a question about maintenance costs of footpaths, Councillor S Broadbent confirmed that the cost burden remained high, but was ultimately the responsibility of the highway authority in the case of built footways. £2 million had been budgeted for footpath repairs and an extra £5 million had been used for road resurfacing following last winter. Parish Councils would be able to help where footpaths had become overgrown, and further conversations would be held regarding the maintenance costs of footpaths when the new highway arrangement structure came into effect later in the summer.

Hannah confirmed that the response to the consultation had been good, though 75% of respondents were aged over 55, with the younger generation particularly difficult to reach. The respondents identified decarbonisation as the most important of the key priorities moving forward.

Members thanked Hannah for her time and presentation.

## **5 Chilterns Conservation Board Access Update**

Annette Weiss (Head of Engagements & Partnerships, Chilterns Conservation Board) gave a presentation to the LAF outlining the investment that had been made to improve accessibility in the Chilterns through the Department for Environment Food & Rural Affairs (DEFRA) access funding scheme. The slides would be appended to the minutes of the meeting.

The following key points were raised in her presentation:

Following the allocation of £14 million by DEFRA for countryside accessibility investment in the wake of the 2019 Glover Landscapes Review, £227,000 had been

received by the Chilterns Conservation Board (CCB) in 2022/23, which was to be used to make, *'...protected landscapes more accessible to people of all ages and abilities and from all backgrounds'*.

Due to time constraints, there had not been the wide-reaching consultation with the public and other bodies as to how the funding could be allocated which the CCB would have hoped to undertake. Therefore, the board worked closely with partners on several accessibility projects which would be detailed to the LAF in her presentation.

It was anticipated that a further £261,480 would be made available to the CCB in 2024/25 for access improvements, which afforded the opportunity to spend time consulting with external groups, invite applications for funding, and explore opportunities to develop a wider strategic approach with collaborative projects across the Chilterns. A 'Widening the Welcome' workshop was scheduled to take place on 25th September to gather ideas with stakeholders and discuss opportunities to this end.

The projects funded with the 2022/23 funding included:

- New mobility vehicles at the Centre for Outdoor Accessibility Training, Aston Rowant National Nature Reserve.
- A seven-seater electric vehicle for the Chiltern Rangers to transport conservation volunteers with dementia, limited mobility, and other restrictions.
- Funding for the Bucks disability service to do accessibility and inclusivity surveys, at popular countryside sites including Brush Hill Nature Reserve, White Hill Nature Reserve, Captain's Wood, and Ashton Rowan Nature Reserve.
- Contribution to resurfacing and accessibility improvements on the Wendover Canal towpath.
- The development of an augmented reality app at three hillfort sites in the Chilterns.
- The installation of a new Disabled toilet in the Chiltern Open Air Museum.

Some initial improvements had also been made to the Chess Valley Walk, and a survey had been conducted to identify areas for further improvement over the next three to five years.

Annette invited feedback on the presentation, and for anyone to submit ideas for future projects that may improve accessibility following the meeting.

David Briggs explained that he had felt it necessary to fence off the footpath for the part of the Chess Valley Walk that crossed his land, due to uncontrolled dog attacks on his livestock, and ramblers straying from the footpath. He was also concerned that the increase in footfall he had noticed along the route post-covid posed a risk to the surface quality of the footpath, which threatened to become muddier and

require increased maintenance.

Annette confirmed that she was aware of the issues raised, and that funding was available through the Chess Valley Smarter Water Catchment initiative to mitigate the problem. A survey had been conducted by Sustrans to identify long term solutions, including the possibility of a more robust hardstanding surface for the footpath in the future. Efforts were also being made to reduce pressure on the Chess Valley route by promoting alternative circular walks going up and around the Chiltern hills.

Members thanked Annette for her time and presentation, and would be in touch to submit suggestions for future accessibility projects in due course.

## **6 Disabled Ramblers Access Surveys**

James Spratley (Strategic Access Officer) gave a presentation to the LAF outlining the recent work of the Ridgeway Google Street View Project. The slides from the presentation would be appended to the minutes of the meeting.

The following key points were raised in his presentation:

Disabled Ramblers had received National Lottery funding to purchase two GoPro Max 360° cameras, which would be used to photograph the entire Ridgeway National Trail from Avebury to Ivinghoe Beacon for its 50th Anniversary. These photographs would then be uploaded to Google Street View, and could be used by those with disabilities to make an informed assessment as to the viability of the route based on their needs and abilities. This formed part of a wider effort to improve accessibility into the countryside.

Some priority areas had been identified, including:

- Whiteleaf Car Park to top of Whiteleaf Hill
- Trail from top of Coombe Hill down through Goodmerhill Wood to Buckmoorend farm shop
- Coombe Hill to Low scrubs National Trust Car Park
- Wendover to Coombe Hill
- Pitstone to Ivinghoe Beacon

Once submitted, Google would automatically blur any faces and vehicle registration plates to ensure compliance with GDPR. It was anticipated that there could be up to a week's delay before the submitted photos appeared on Google Maps.

James showed photographs of a trial run that he undertook with Gavin Casperz. The trial went well, and some minor problems had been identified as a result, which would be addressed before the full project got underway.

It was hoped that the images would be made available for download and use in tandem with other navigational apps such as 'Go Outdoors', or the step free routes, which were discussed at the previous meeting of the LAF.

Following questions, these points were made:

James clarified that he hoped to conduct a complete survey of the Ridgeway using the technology at different times of the year, which could then be viewed on Google Maps to reflect the different challenges that may occur along the route in different seasons.

People could request that images including their property or themselves be removed from the sequence of photographs displayed on Google Maps. However, the quality of the photographs produced by the cameras was good enough that the previous or subsequent image in the sequence would likely be sufficient to display the landscape in those instances.

The ease with which people can independently survey a route and upload to Google Maps would make it unnecessary to hire Google or their equipment to do it on behalf of anyone.

Members thanked James for his presentation.

## **7 Rights of Way Group Update**

Jon Clark (Senior Strategic Access Officer) and James Spratley (Strategic Access Officer) gave an overview of the attached report, which was circulated with the agenda reports pack and made the following comments:

Future public rights of way closures due to ongoing HS2 construction would be advertised with the help of QR code technology that would accompany the traditional signs currently in use. This would enable those using the right of way to access the latest information on the HS2 website and reduce the need to so frequently replace all the physical signage along the affected route. In addition to the QR code, the new signs would feature a larger area map showing the current closure in relation to the sign, as well as information on the next closure both north and south of the primary one detailed on the sign.

The Donate-a-Gate scheme was now back up and running with a new volunteer from the Chiltern Society.

The Rights of Way Operations team was short staffed due to two resignations and one Rights of Way Officer taking time off work for their honeymoon. Joanne Taylor requested patience from the LAF in progressing through their work until new staff could be recruited.

Claire Hudson (Definitive Map and Highway Searches Team Leader) confirmed that the backlog of 48 Applications for Definitive Map modification Orders was caused in part due to the nature of the work and the time taken to assess each application, as well as the lack of staff that would be required to process that many applications within 'reasonable' time. It was suggested that to help the LAF visualise the progress



being made on the backlog, a rough timetable could be included in future updates and reports, though with the caveat that those estimated times remained variable. This was agreeable to members.

## **8 LAF Members' Report**

Jon Clark confirmed that a card was posted to former LAF Chairman, Richard Pushman in April 2023 to thank him for his work with the LAF.

Brian Worrell had attended the last Ridgeway Board meeting at Bury Down, West Ilsley, Oxfordshire.

Natural England had contacted the LAF announcing a proposed online support and information sharing system between LAFs via Sharepoint, with further information to follow.

The Buckinghamshire LAF Annual Report was ready for publication to the website. Members agreed to its publication.

## **9 Any Other Business**

It was agreed to consider including a standing item on East-West Rail at all subsequent LAF meetings.

## **10 Date of the Next Meeting**

It was noted that the next meeting date was 1<sup>st</sup> November 2023.

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BUCKINGHAMSHIRE  
LOCAL ACCESS FORUM

# Report

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## AGENDA ITEM 1

**Date:** 1<sup>st</sup> November 2023

**Title:** Definitive Map Activities and Priorities

**Author:** Helen Francis, Senior Definitive Map Officer & Claire Hudson, Definitive Map & Highway Searches Team Leader.

**Contact Officer:** Harry Thomas [01296 585234]

The activities undertaken by the Definitive Map and Highway Searches Team can typically be split into three areas:

- 1] Definitive Map
- 2] Planning
- 3] Highway Searches

The Definitive Map Officers within the team pick up all the Definitive Map activities which vary from applications for Definitive Map Modification Orders (DMMOs), Public Path Orders (PPOs), Village Greens, as well as other types of application and enquiries.

Looking more specifically at DMMOs, there are three types of applications:

- 1] those containing documentary evidence only;
- 2] those containing user evidence only; and
- 3] those containing a combination of documentary and user evidence.

Applications impacted by planning applications are brought towards the top of the list.

The council's priorities when determining DMMOs are detailed in a statement of priorities attached to this report, which is also sent out to applicants at the time of their application. This is based on whether the application fits in categories 1, 2 or 3. Generally, user evidence comes before documentary evidence, but both sit behind applications impacted by development.

DMMOs cannot be investigated immediately on receipt due to available staff resources, so a backlog develops. This is typical across councils in England and Wales. The current

Buckinghamshire backlog is between 2 - 10 years, depending on the circumstances of the application.

The basis for the 'Statement of Priorities' [Appendix 1] is to give applicants information regarding the reasons why their application is in a queue.

LAF members have recently raised concerns the DMMO list, both on the website and presented at Local Access Forum meetings, doesn't give applicants or LAF members an approximate timescale when their claim is likely to be addressed.

The DM Team will outline the existing workload of the team and the statement of priorities and how this can be balanced against members' wishes to see a priority order in which an expected timetable can be included.

The Team are also looking at updating the 'Statement of Priorities' and would be interested in hearing any recommendations from members.

**Definitive Map Application - Statement of Priorities 2020*****“Keeping Buckinghamshire Thriving and Attractive –  
Continue to protect our high quality environment”***

*Maintain records & registers as set out in legislation & safeguard the  
Public Rights of Way network*

The Definitive Map and Highway Searches Team process applications to both modify the Definitive Map and Statement upon the discovery of evidence that it requires modification (these are called Definitive Map Modification Orders – “DMMOs”), and also to change the Public Rights of Way network upon an external event or application made by a landowner (these are called Public Path Orders – “PPOs”). The team also processes Creation Agreements to create new public rights of way and also Town or Village Green Applications and Common Land Deregistration Applications.

The Council, in achieving its strategic outcome, seeks to prioritise these applications to achieve the best possible outcome for the people of Buckinghamshire.

**DMMOs**

Applications of this nature are seeking to amend the Definitive Map and Statement upon discovery that the records may require amendment i.e. additional routes have been used and should be added, routes should be removed or diverted, or the status of the route needs changing. This is a statutory function of the Council. These applications are based upon either documentary evidence or user evidence from witnesses or a combination of both. Applications will be investigated in date of chronological Order of receipt subject to a suitably experienced Officer being available. The Council will however prioritise certain applications under the following circumstances:

1. The evidence in support (either fully or in part) of the application is that of User Evidence
2. There is a threat of development affecting the claimed route
3. If the evidence in support of the application is shared with another application within the chronological list and it would be efficient to investigate the applications concurrently

**PPOs**

Applications of this nature are seeking to amend the Public Rights of Way Network by diverting, extinguishing or creating public rights by Order. These applications are made by landowners in the interests of land use, privacy and security; or may be made by Developers to realign routes or supersede routes through development sites by adopted roads / footways; or through the Council exercising its compulsory Creation Order powers. Processing these applications is a power of the Council and not a duty and as such will be accepted at Officer discretion; applications can be refused if they are not expedient or if they fail to meet the criteria outlined below. Applications will be investigated in date of chronological order of receipt subject to a suitably experienced Officer being available. The Council will however prioritise certain applications under the following circumstances:

1. Changes to the network are needed to facilitate development

Buckinghamshire Council  
**Definitive Map Application - Statement of Priorities 2020**

2. Where the change to the network would save costs in the wider Rights of Way service provision i.e. by avoiding enforcement action
3. Where an application is made for a School's Special Order
4. Where an application seeks a betterment to the network
5. Where an application improves or enhances public safety

**Creation Agreements**

Creation Agreements are a discretionary power of the Council which will only be exercised in certain circumstances:

1. Where little or no maintenance work is required to bring the route up to an acceptable standard for public use
2. If the Council is satisfied it is prepared to take on the ongoing future maintenance liability of the route to be created; all surface works must be to the Council's required standard before an agreement is entered
3. Where a route has been dedicated by the landowner, subject to points 1 and 2 above, and/or where it would make efficiency savings by avoiding a DMMO
4. Where a route forms part of a s106 agreement

**Town or Village Green and Common Land Deregistration Applications**

Applications of this nature are processed as a statutory function of the Council. Applications to register new Town or Village Greens will be dealt with in chronological order of receipt unless the land is affected by development, in which case that application would be prioritised.

Applications to deregister Common Land pursuant to the implemented sections of Part 1 Commons Act 2006 in Buckinghamshire will also be processed in chronological order of receipt unless an application land is affected by development, in which case that application would be prioritised.



BUCKINGHAMSHIRE  
LOCAL ACCESS FORUM

## Report

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### AGENDA ITEM 1

**Date:** 1<sup>st</sup> November 2023

**Title:** Buckinghamshire Rights of Way Improvement Plan 2020 - 2030: Year 1 Draft Report

**Authors:** Jonathan Clark, Senior Strategic Access Officer & James Spratley, Strategic Access Officer

**Contact Officer:** Harry Thomas [01296 585234]

The draft Year 1 ROWIP Action Plan report [Appendix 2] aims to demonstrate the council's progress delivering the outcomes of the Buckinghamshire Rights of Way Improvement Plan 2020 – 2030 between 1st April 2020 and 31st March 2021 (Year 1).

The report is structured around the six ROWIP themes, headed by an itemised summary of the stated aims in the ROWIP and Delivery Plan report, followed by a summary of performance. Members feedback is requested before the report is finalised and published.

Does the paper accurately reflect the ambitions and priorities set out in the original ROWIP plan?

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## Buckinghamshire Rights of Way Improvement Plan 2020 - 2030 YEAR-1 REVIEW


### Introduction

This report aims to demonstrate progress to deliver the outcomes of the Buckinghamshire Rights of Way Improvement Plan 2020 – 2030 in Year 1, between 1<sup>st</sup> April 2020 to 31<sup>st</sup> March 2021. There are six ROWIP themes reflected in this report, with respective sections headed by the stated aims in the ROWIP and Delivery Plan report. To begin, a retrospective interpretation of the estimated cost symbols in the Action Plan are provided.

### Estimated costs

The Local Access Forum requested provision of a key of the ‘crystal ball’ and ‘walker’ symbols (financial estimates) in the Action Plan to aid public interpretation. How much money does one walker symbol represent? An estimation is provided below.

 < £8,000

 £8,000 to £30,000

  *Unknown cost or needing additional staff time above existing staff resources.*



This information now needs updating on the document itself.

### **Theme 1 Mapping the network**

#### **The ROWIP states...**

Ref	Objectives	Ref	Actions
MN1	To uphold our duties to provide an up-to-date Definitive Map and Statement.	MN1.1	Consolidate the Definitive Map and Statement by 2025.
		MN1.2	Reduce the number of map anomalies.
		MN1.3	Improve our online, publicly viewable, registers for DMMOs, PPOs and Landowner Deposits.
		MN1.4	Consider all applications for Public Path Orders, Definitive Map Modification Orders and Cycle Track Orders and determine these in line with any statutory timescales.
MN2	Keep an up-to-date register for Common Land and Town and Village Greens.	MN2.1	Consider all applications for Common Land and Village Green registrations in line with any statutory timescales.

## The Year 1 Action Plan states...

Ref	Objectives	Ref	Actions	Actions 2020 – 2021	Estimated Cost	Funded	PROW Team	Partner Organisations
MN1	To uphold our duties to provide an up-to-date Definitive Map and Statement.	MN1.3	Improve our online, publicly viewable mapping, registers for DMMOs, PPOs, TTROs, HS2 and EW Rail updates and Landowner Deposits.	Build upon Unitary “frontline” service provision and review public information provision.  More time investment on making better use of CAMS web for Definitive Map matters.		Existing budgets	DM	Parish Councils LAF
		MN1.4	Consider all applications for Public Path Orders, Definitive Map Modification Orders and Cycle Track Orders and determine these in line with any statutory timescales.	Time track and programme process work.  Keep under regular review and set targets. Upskill both junior Definitive Map Officers to increase capability.		Existing budgets	DM	Parish Councils Archives Ramblers BHS Chiltern Society

### MN 1.1

The stated aim is to consolidate the definitive map by 2025 following the previous update in 2006. With staff resource returning to relative normal levels in 2022 this target should still be realistic.

### MN 1.2

The aim is to reduce the number of map anomalies. A map anomaly is an incorrect recording on the definitive map based on historical evidence and/or information on the ground. The normal procedure is to undertake a quick, initial investigation of the anomalies as they arise. If it is clear the map is correct these are not logged. If any initial evidence suggests further work is required, for example, in the record centre/archives, the case is logged on a spreadsheet. None of these cases were resolved in Year-1, so this will need to be reviewed in Years 2-5 (2022-2025).

### MN 1.3

CAMS (Countryside Access Management System) is the Geographical Information System [GIS] mapping and database software used daily by rights of way officers to receive and manage reports and raise job sheets. The system translates information almost immediately [within 20 minutes] to the council’s website from which the public gain access to information on their reports or the spatial extent of structures.

The CAMS database is updated daily. The system was brought on-stream in March 2019 prior to publication of the ROWIP. Reference MN 1.3 aims to build on the existing information available to the public with the additional tools provided by the software, but which are not currently in use on the website. Staff resource needed is to input, ‘cleanse’ and check the data is correct before appearing on the public-facing area of the website.

There was no staff time to invest in CAMS in Year-1, mainly as time was lost through staff redeployment on Covid-19-related work and managing existing PPO workloads. With an easing of staff pressures in 2022 this aim is predicted to be addressed in years 2-5.

Website information on: 1. landowner deposits; 2. modification orders; 3. public path orders (diversions); 4. temporary traffic regulation orders; and 5. traffic

prohibition orders; are updated on a weekly basis, with accompanying maps and provided via this web link:  
<https://www.buckscc.gov.uk/services/environment/public-rights-of-way/changes-to-public-rights-of-way/>

Extra data additional to 1-5 above could include access to historical PPO's and historical landowner deposits. The ambition for years 2-5 is to make these publicly available with maps.

Existing legislative obligations require the council to provide 1-5 above and it is considered this is being provided successfully. However, East West Rail (EWR) and High Speed 2 (HS2) will have widespread and significant negative impact on the ROW users in Years 1-6 of the ROWIP with long-term closures. Therefore, we've allocated an area of the website providing information on EWR and HS2 temporary closures as these are not always easily available on either EWR or HS2 websites in a clear and concise manner. Two additional items are therefore listed: 6. East West Rail closures; and 7. HS2 closures.

Existing landowner statements deposited under s31(6) are provided and updated on the website.

#### MN 1.4

Public Path Orders (PPO's) were delayed with staff re-deployed on Covid-19-related work, but the backlog is now up to date, meaning any application received is considered without undue delay. During the first Covid-19 lockdown, between 24<sup>th</sup> March and 31<sup>st</sup> July 2020, all PPOs were put on hold. There are currently 53 PPO's being progressed.

There is currently a backlog of Definitive Map Modification Orders (DMMO's). On 31<sup>st</sup> March 2021 there were 6 ongoing determined cases with 34 to be investigated. Work is taking place to reduce delay between receiving the application and either rejecting or determining applications. Covid-19 reduced access to the Records Office and restricted opportunities for wider public consultation on applications.

It's difficult to predict how many DMMOs can be determined per year as they vary significantly in complexity, but if fully staffed in 2022, it is hoped to increase the rate at which applications are brought forward for determination to perhaps around 8-10 per year.

With the above in mind, staff training has been targeted to considering and researching DMMO's. In Year-1 the LAF requested more condensed DMMO information to be presented at their meetings, providing more useful information to judge progress on dealing with DMMOs. This will be provided on 14<sup>th</sup> July 2021.

### **MN.2 Common land and Village Greens**

#### MN 2.1



This area of work has low caseload numbers, but applications are complex, costly and time consuming. With all existing cases having undergone some investigation work in Year-1, there is no backlog between receiving the application and starting investigations. In March 2021 there were 4 live cases with one having been rejected in Year-1.

## **THEME 2 – Looking after the network - maintenance & enforcement**

### **The ROWIP states...**

Ref	Objectives	Ref	Actions
LN1	To protect the network and maintain it in the best condition possible, prioritising safety and areas of greatest need and seeking improvements where possible.	LN1.1	Review the management matrix so that it aligns more closely with Buckinghamshire's priorities, helps target resources more effectively and provides the public with realistic timescales to resolve issues.
		LN1.2	Adhere to and monitor performance against the timescales set out in the management matrix, reviewing outstanding issues on an annual basis. Periodically publish performance figures to the Local Access Forum.
		LN1.3	Publish the council Enforcement Policy, take enforcement action against illegal actions, work with enforcement partners and recover costs.
		LN1.4	Ensure effective and efficient working through delegating powers to officers to deliver functions, including serving enforcement notices.
		LN1.5	Support landowners through providing advice and information, waymarking materials and assistance for materials for removing structures.
		LN1.6	Work with National Trail Partnerships to ensure high quality maintenance.
		LN1.7	Ensure high standards of environmental protection in carrying out maintenance work.
LN2	To improve understanding of the network, its assets and its condition.	LN2.1	Carry out an annual survey of the condition of 5% the public rights of way network.
		LN2.2	Improve understanding of the condition and value of the assets on the network, update the record of assets in the CAMS database and work towards implementing an asset management system to forward plan budget requirements.
		LN2.3	Work with partners and volunteers to survey the condition of promoted routes.

### **The Year-1 Action Plan states...**

Ref	Objectives	Ref	Actions	Actions 2021 – 2024	Estimated Cost	Funded	PROW Team	Partner Organisations
LN1	To protect the network and maintain it in the best condition possible, prioritising safety and areas of greatest need and seeking improvements where possible.	LN1.1	Consult LAF, ROW Liaison Group BHS and Management team annually to take advice on the effectiveness of the management matrix and annual capital programme so that it aligns more closely with Buckinghamshire's priorities, helps target resources more effectively and provides the public with realistic timescales to resolve issues.	Review effectiveness of current management matrix. ( Project move to orange next phase)		Existing budgets	ROW OPS	Parish Councils Ramblers Chiltern Society BHS LAF TRF
LN2	To improve understanding of the network, its assets and its condition.	LN2.2	Improve understanding of the condition and value of the assets on the network, update the record of assets in the CAMS database and work towards implementing an asset management system to forward plan budget requirements.	Continue to carry out 6 year programme of inspections on known bridge structures and update details on CAMS.  Move forward inspection programme and design new report outputs which reflect what is needed for any ROW Asset Management Plans (inc costs, replacement, life span/cycle etc)		Existing budgets	ROW OPS DM	Parish Councils Ramblers Chiltern Society BHS LAF TRF NFU CLBA

### LN 1.1

This aim seeks to consult widely with partners on the effectiveness of the Management Matrix. <https://www.buckscc.gov.uk/services/environment/public-rights-of-way/maintaining-public-rights-of-way/>

The Matrix table allows officers to prioritise reported issues between routes with high, medium or low use, against promoted route and the type of issues reported: from missing signposts in remote locations (low priority), to enforcement issues or problems that are risks to the public near urban populations (high priority). These set timescales which the team are expected to meet, and the matrix therefore allows performance to be measured. For example, '75% of Priority 1 issues were met in the required timescale' and so on. The matrix originated in the 2008 ROWIP and was reviewed by the Local Access Forum in 2016. At the time. LAF members requested that nothing was changed to ensure consistency of long-term performance trends, particularly, for example, not wishing to reduce target times so the performance remained consistent if resources happened to reduce.

A review of the Matrix's effectiveness and opportunities for improvement were due for review in Year-1, but this wasn't achieved, in part because the LAF didn't meet in July 2020 and the Rights of Way Liaison Group hasn't met since January 2020. Also, the greatest need in 2020 was to maintain and keep the network open, with an increased number of enforcement issues, when use of the network was unusually high, so other consultation work had to be pushed back. However, a review is proposed to be undertaken in the latter part of 2021 for consultation with the Local Access Forum and Rights of Way Liaison Group in 2022.

The annual capital programme is added to every liaison group and LAF agendas, outlining intended expenditure, accompanied by a summary of works completed. This was presented at September 2020 and March 2021 LAF meetings, but both ROWLG meetings were cancelled in Year-1.

### LN 1.2.

The figures will be available to be presented to the LAF for Year-1 on 3<sup>rd</sup> November 2021. Performance for enforcement and maintenance are based around the Matrix, with two elements normally reported to LAF and ROWLG: Category C (maintenance) and how the council is meeting enforcement targets across categories A, B and C. This provides a snapshot to reflect the general picture. The Year-1 figures will be available at the 3<sup>rd</sup> November 2021 LAF.

It is likely that the figures would have been poor in Year-1 compared to previous years, as the works team were stood down in April/May 2020, then on returning, were restricted to reduced hours for some weeks. Officer site inspections were suspended, and team members were redeployed to the Covid-19 response. Volunteer teams also stood down based on their own decisions. Anecdotally, response rates to reported issues were much slower than in previous years.

### LN.1.3

A new enforcement policy has been completed, to be available shortly on the website, and presented to the Local Access Forum on 14<sup>th</sup> July 2021.

The majority of enforcement in 2020/21 revolved around unlawful obstructions in the first Covid-19 lockdown. The government decided all rights of way should remain open, but some landowners chose to lock gates or erect barriers. For example, a request to close a footpath in Chalfont St Peter through the grounds of a care home for reasons relating to Covid-19 was refused.

Five enforcement notices were served in Year-1, including one case requiring Police attendance. Examples include two panels of Heras fencing removed in Hazlemere; boards removed against a kissing gate in Great Missenden; removal of several "Covid-19 KEEP OUT" signs, taking issue with landowners threatening people; and removing wooden pallets blocking two stiles in Stoke Mandeville on a railway crossing. Most obstructions are removed pre-enforcement through negotiation.

Officers worked with Chiltern Area planning enforcement partners in Year-1, for example, a bridleway along Dibden Hill, Chalfont St Giles needed reinstating after construction traffic damage. A 'construction traffic management plan' ensured the condition was returned to the original, pre-construction state, and the planning condition secured traffic routes to avoid vulnerable sections of bridleway.

### LN1.4

Following the council becoming unitary on 1<sup>st</sup> April 2020, delegated powers were granted to senior officers to serve notice on owners that obstruct rights of way. The updated Rights of Way Enforcement policy explains the delegated powers, which includes a typical work-flow process. The policy was presented to the LAF in July 2021 and will be available on the website in Year-2.

### LN 1.5

Advice to landowners from Area Officers continues daily through phone conversations, meetings and letters. The main route for distributing waymark discs is through volunteers, such as the Chiltern Society Area Secretaries and Path Checkers, but the council continues to support landowners with other signs to help manage access, for example, waymark discs, 'no cycling' signs and 'no dog mess' signs. An area of the website is devoted to advise for landowners.

The council continues to provide gates to the Ramblers volunteers to install at the rate of 1 per week; mainly in Aylesbury Vale, to replace stiles. In the south the council supports the Donate-a-Gate scheme and (also in the north) offers gates free to landowners willing to use their own labour to install. While the RIIPPLE team normally installs around 52 gates per year, this was reduced in Year-1 to 32 due to Covid-19 working restrictions.

#### LN 1.6

The team maintain good relations with and support from the Ridgeway and Thames Path National Trails teams and are guided by published national trail standards. In Year-1 no staff attended the Ridgeway Board or any Thames Path meetings. However, the Ridgeway officer benefited from attendance by the south Area Officer and LAF member for the British Driving Society at Delivery Group meetings. The council and LAF commented on the Wendover cycling audit, related to the Ridgeway Riding Route.

Larger works by the Ridgeway team in Year-1 have generally been in the planning stages, including surfacing at Bacombe Hill and Coombe Hill SSSI's. New pedestrian gates were completed by the council to support the Ridgeway team at Chequers (Ellesborough), Lodge Hill (Bledlow) and Whiteleaf (Princes Risborough). The Ridgeway and Thames Path volunteers undertake annual summer strimming and mowing to keep paths clear.

On the Thames Path one bridge structure was re-decked along Marlow Footpath 1 (MAW/1/1) compliant with disabled and Environment Agency standards. An additional surface repair in Little Marlow will be joint funded by Thames Path and council in Year-2.

#### LN 1.7

Ensuring high standards of environmental protection remains integral to daily work. Officers benefit from electronic mapping (GIS) layers to indicate sensitive wildlife and archaeology sites. Permission was obtained from Natural England in Year-1 to work on two Ridgeway sites: at Bacombe Hill (Wendover) and Lodge Hill (Bledlow). Two officers received training on ROW works requiring Environment Agency consent, which is sought for bridges across main rivers.

#### LN 2.1

In a normal year and with the help of volunteers from the Chiltern Society, the team would survey 5% of the network twice a year in May and November. Covid-19

restricted the May 2020 survey, but the November 2020 was completed and the results reported to the March 2021 LAF meeting.

### LN 2.2

This aims to gather information onto a database of structures for which the council are responsible, which is called an asset management system. Armed with this information, and the predicted lifespan of each structure, the team can forward-plan costs more accurately to future demands, then bid for funding.

Bridge inspections were undertaken in Year-1, recording the type of bridge and condition. This bridge inspection system has continued for a number of years, similar to inspecting vehicular highway structures for insurance purposes and started early within the Ringway Jacobs maintenance contract.

To survey the whole network of bridge structures takes around 7 years. We don't currently have the technical engineering expertise to assess and price it up larger bridge structures but can estimate.

The council's online mapping software (CAMS) provides a full inventory of every bridge structure and intelligence is gathered and edited daily by officers. To this extent, the team are meeting the LN 2.2 Action Plan target.

The council should be able to price each bridge, signpost and waymark according to the CAMS inventory, together with contractor costs for replacement. Surfaces could also be included to evaluate depreciation, but much private work happens on the network to which the council is unaware. Stiles and gates should be included as the council sometimes repairs these structures on a *de facto* basis and funds replacement of stiles with gates to improve access.

At present there is no staff resource to compile an asset management system or make active decisions on prices.

Maintaining up-to-date information on CAMS that accurately reflects the situation on the ground is an issue. Surveys indicate out-of-date content including furniture, path issues and signage. While there will inevitably be changes on the ground to which the council are not always made aware, advice will be sought from the LAF in Year-2 seeking solutions to remedy the problem.

### LN.2.3

The LAF member for the Chiltern Society has offered to start surveying 'The Chiltern Link' promoted route in Year-2. The ROWIP suggests reviewing which routes should continue to be formally promoted and this will inform future survey programmes.




## **THEME 3 – Theme 3 - An Evolving Network**

**The ROWIP states...**



Ref	Objectives	Ref	Actions	
EN1	To ensure that access improvements are strategically planned to meet Buckinghamshire's needs.	EN1.1	Work with partners to ensure that local and neighbourhood plans and green infrastructure strategies include a comprehensive assessment of access needs and contain robust policies to improve access for all users, ensuring that development has no detrimental impact and that access provision is improved.	
		EN1.2	Progress strategic projects with partners where these address Buckinghamshire's needs.	
EN2	To ensure that housing growth brings access improvements to communities.	EN2.1	Work with partners to ensure that high-quality, multi-user access improvements are sought and included in new development proposals.	
		EN2.2	Develop and adopt access standards and specifications for routes in and arising from new developments through pre-application comments, requesting amended drawings, planning conditions and developer contributions through s.106. Officers will work alongside highways colleagues to secure on and off site works through s.38 and s278 Highways Act 1980.	
EN3	To ensure that the network evolves to meet current and future needs and that connectivity is improved.	EN3.1	Develop projects with partners to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Improve links from urban areas to the countryside;</li> <li>• Provide new and improved routes from urban areas to the countryside;</li> <li>• Connect missing links in the public rights of way network, reduce fragmentation and address areas where there is low provision and high need;</li> <li>• Create the highest status routes possible to provide resources for the widest range of users.</li> </ul>	
			EN3.2	Seek to resolve 'dead-end' and cross-boundary issues as opportunities arise.
			EN3.3	Improve and increase the network available to equestrians, carriage-drivers and motorised vehicle users, addressing fragmentation and improving safety.
			EN3.4	Support projects to increase walking and cycling for short journeys to reduce congestion, support health and wellbeing, reduce air pollution and support economic growth.
EN4	To ensure that negative impacts from major infrastructure are fully mitigated.	EN4.1	Work with partners and delivery agencies to ensure the effects of major infrastructure are fully mitigated, disruption to access is minimised and improvements secured.	

**The Year-1 Action Plan states...**

Ref	Objectives	Ref	Actions	Actions 2020 – 2021	Estimated Cost	Funded	PROW Team	Partner Organisations
EN1	To ensure that access improvements are strategically planned to meet Buckinghamshire's needs.	EN1.1	Work with partners and continue to build relationships with new Unitary Council staff to ensure that Local Plans neighbourhood plans and Green infrastructure strategies include a comprehensive assessment of access needs and contain robust policies to improve access for all users, ensuring that development has no detrimental impact and that access provision is improved.	Raise profile of Public Rights of Way and Definitive Map Teams with new colleagues.		Existing budgets, Developers, Partnerships	DM Area Planning Teams Highways DM Team	Community Boards Parish Councils Neighbouring Authorities LEP NEP Developers Chiltern Society
				Keep under review and cross reference existing and emerging plans and strategies to ensure the "ROW/Access thread" is always incorporated.				
		EN1.2	Progress strategic projects with partners where these address Buckinghamshire's needs.	Provide occasional training sessions for colleagues and other organisations so they understand PROW and Countryside Access.	Year 1-3 monitor emerging Local Plans in each of the old district authority areas and contribute to an emerging Buckinghamshire 'county-wide' Local Plan	 	Existing budgets, Developers, Partnerships	ROW OPS DM
				Year 1-3 – maintain communication with Highways Projects Delivery Team to seek sustainable transport improvements on the rights of way network				Arc Highways England Neighbouring Authorities LEP NEP Developers

### EN 1.1.

This item seeks to ensure access improvements are strategically planned, so development has no detrimental impact and access is improved. The 'Actions' mention local, neighbourhood and green infrastructure plans, but on reflection, should also have included the local transport plan and minerals & waste plan. The rights of way team, through the council's wider policy teams, could also influence central government policy, such as the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF). Each will be addressed in turn.

The start date for the ROWIP [1/4/20] and this Action Plan coincided with the council becoming a unitary authority, whereby all the text for respective local plans was already largely set within three local plans: 1) Aylesbury Vale, 2) Chiltern & South Bucks; and 3) Wycombe.

The 'Vale of Aylesbury Plan (VALP 2013-2033)' was eventually adopted on 15<sup>th</sup> September 2021, but even before this Action Plan came into force, rights of way had influenced the plan within Policy C4 which seeks enhancement and protection of public rights of way within new developments. This is considered a strong policy for rights of way, within which public transport, recreation, green infrastructure and links with the existing wider networks are mentioned.

In early 2021 consultation commenced on Aylesbury Garden Town's allocated housing areas AGT1 and AFT2. Right of way were closely involved in shaping both these housing designs. AGT-1 refers to 'South Aylesbury' on land either side of the Princes Risborough Railway line; while AGT2 refers to South-West Aylesbury, on land

between Ellen Road and HS2. Rights of Way were also closely engaged with sustainable transport elements of the South-East Aylesbury Link Road which runs north of AGT1, resulting in a new cycleway on both sides of the road, when initially only on side was proposed.

The draft Chiltern & South Bucks Local Plan was abandoned in favour of being replaced by an emerging county wide Buckinghamshire plan. The ROWIP Action Plan period 2021/22 will be a good time within which to start engaging with the council's strategic planning team to seek consultation on emerging plan policy, to improve upon existing Chiltern & South Bucks Policy...

Rights of way planning responses for Chiltern refer to Policy CS20, aiming to *“achieve developments well-connected to walking facilities, with good access to community recreational space and easily accessible for all”*; which is less specific to rights of way and could be improved upon.

Rights of way planning responses for South Bucks refer to Policy CP7, aiming to *“ensure the development complies with South Bucks District Council Policy, seeking to favour more sustainable modes of transport; and encouraging safe and attractive improvements to pedestrian and cycling routes and facilities”*; which is less specific to rights of way and could be improved upon.

Requests for specific inclusion within the general Wycombe Local Plan policy were not included, which was disappointing, so rights of way responses have to refer to Policy DM33 - managing climate change [sustainable modes of transport] - and Policy DM34 Delivering Green Infrastructure (GI), though the thrust this policy is biodiversity, rather than the access element of GI networks. Nevertheless, useful rights of way and access policy was included into site-specific statements, such as the housing development at Hollands Farm, Bourne End, seeking wider connections to the existing network, and surface and status upgrades to on-site rights of way.

While the rights of way team were not consulted during the 2019 Minerals & Waste Local Plan 2016-2036 [adopted July 2019] review, the policy includes a strong protection for rights of way in Policy 24 – Environmental Enhancement. This may, in part, have been carried forward from the previous strategy. The 2016-2036 plan extends to 2036, so it's unlikely any further opportunities [or need] will arise to shape policy in this area during the lifetime of this ROWIP [2020 – 2030].

National Policy NPPF 2021 provides a reasonable hook at paragraph 100: *Planning policies and decisions should protect and enhance public rights of way and access, including taking opportunities to provide better facilities for users, for example by adding links to existing rights of way networks; and highways policy is also helpful in NPPF for enhancing walking and cycling.*

During Year-1 the NPPF was not updated, though rights of way team were not invited to comment prior to the February 2019 or July 2021 updates, both outside the Year-1 period. As a result of this review the Strategic Planning Team to ensure

rights of way are consulted to ensure rights of way are consulted with any future NRRF or any other strategy review by Buckinghamshire council or central government.

There is a county-wide Green Infrastructure Strategy (2009) and Aylesbury Vale Green Infrastructure Strategy 2011 – 2026. There were no opportunities to engage in shaping policy in this area in Year-1.

Many neighbourhood plans emerged in Year-1. However, there was limited resource to engage specifically on every plan, so only 5 specific responses were provided. However, generic advice was provided for the strategic planning team to include in some form into every neighbourhood plan. Rights of way occur in every neighbourhood and every community would wish to protect and improve upon the resource.

No training sessions were provided to colleagues in Year-1, but the rights of way team maintain good contacts and 'visibility' across the council to ensure the team are consulted on all planning applications and strategy reviews and updates.

Good relations have been established with Highways Development Management Delivery. This team oversees developer works secured through s.38 and s278 Highways Act 1980 Agreements for new developments. These include new surfaced footpaths and new highway junctions, for example. The rights of way team are made aware of and can influence these works to ensure good outcomes for walkers and cyclists in particular.

Overall, there were no opportunities in the Year-1 period to shape general local plan policy, but site-specific consultations were influenced, such as Aylesbury Garden Town housing sites and a number of neighbourhood plans. Opportunities now lie with the evolving county-wide Buckinghamshire Local Plan and with the larger housing developments in Years 2-5.

## The ROWIP states...

Ref	Objectives	Ref	Actions
KG1	Support the objectives of the National Trails Partnerships	KG1.2	Continue to support the Ridgeway and Thames Path National Trails partnership boards and working groups. Provide pro-rata financial support alongside other neighbouring authorities towards the Trails' core funding and promotion. Work in partnership with the Trails teams to meet national guidance objectives on Trail standards.
KG2	To provide promotional material that is easy to access.	KG2.1	Identify those existing promoted routes which meet the priorities identified and update the promotional material.
		KG2.2	Improve how the public can access promotional material – improve the online platform for downloadable information and work with partners to improve the reach and co-ordination of promotion.
KG3	To provide new promotional resources which support the identified needs for the county.	KG3.1	Work with partners and representative organisations to understand more fully the needs of those with mobility and visual impairments and develop promotional material which gives enough information for these users to explore public rights of way, including different formats such as audio resources.
		KG3.2	Develop new promotional material close to urban areas which links the town with the countryside, including areas of housing growth, working with partners and seeking funding as necessary.
		KG3.3	Provide information and promotional material to support equestrians, cyclists and motor vehicle users.
		KG3.4	Work with partners and representative organisations to understand more fully the needs of minority ethnic communities and develop promotional material to support greater use of the countryside.
KG4	To support the visitor economy through promotion.	KG4.1	Work with partners and support measures which limit or mitigate negative impacts from visitors on sensitive sites.
		KG4.2	Work with partners to fully capitalise on Buckinghamshire's public rights of way asset to support the visitor economy – targeting new markets, attracting spend to rural business, increasing lengths of stay and strengthening Buckinghamshire's brand.

## The Year-1 Action Plan states...

Ref	Objectives	Ref	Actions	Actions 2020 – 2021	Estimated Cost	Funded	PROW Team	Partner Organisations
KG1	Support the objectives of the National Trails Partnerships	KG1.2	Continue to support the Ridgeway and Thames Path National Trails partnership boards and working groups. Provide pro-rata financial support alongside other neighbouring authorities towards the Trails' core funding and promotion. Work in partnership with the Trails teams to meet national guidance objectives on Trail standards.	<p>Maintain financial support for joint project work and annual management costs which provides access benefits and generation of tourist income in Buckinghamshire.</p> <p>Maintain close links at officer level on maintenance matters. Consider input to promotional work and audience development.</p> <p>Have close links; attend management meetings and regular contact with all Local Authorities and Partners along these National Trails.</p> <p>Year 1-3 work alongside Chilterns Conservation Board and Ridgeway Officer to deliver additional mitigation spending from HS2 in the Chilterns</p>		Existing budgets, Grants, Partnerships, Volunteers	ROW OPS DM	National Trails Chiltern Society Chilterns Conservation Board Parish Councils LAF

### KG1.2

The Ridgeway and Thames Path national Trail Teams are financially supported *pro rata* by length from authorities along the route. Buckinghamshire maintained its financial support to both national trails teams in 2020/21.

Officers from the council attended meetings of the Ridgeway Board and Working Group but were not able to similarly support Thames Path due to limited staff capacity. Conversely, officers organised for the Ridgeway Officer to seek Local Access Forum advice on: 1) their emerging Ridgeway bridleway; 2) the strategic links project from towns to the trail; and 3) the circular walks policy.

Priority for maintenance issues on the national trails remains in the 'Priority 1'.





In terms of improvements, the council supported the Ridgeway Officer by funding six disabled access gates on the national trail; and contributed towards their HS2 additional mitigation bid for works at Coombe Hill.

## THEME 5 – Access for Everyone

### The ROWIP states...

Ref	Objectives	Ref	Actions
AE1	To support more people with disabilities in using the public rights of way network.	AE1.1	Seek to create routes with high levels of accessibility, working with partners to deliver and seek funding, and provide promotional material.
		AE1.2	Adhere where possible to BS5709: 2018 standards for new infrastructure and develop path maintenance schedules through the management matrix (see Theme 2) to ensure least restrictive access. Apply BS5709: 2018 to new or diverted routes.
		AE1.3	Continue to remove stiles and replace with gaps, gates or kissing gates and support communities and user groups to achieve this aim. Explore ways to seek removal of structures where livestock is no longer present. Actions AE2.1 and AE2.2 also help to deliver the objective AE1.
AE2	To support improved health and wellbeing.	AE2.1	Work with the council's Public Health Team to support Simply Walk, providing easily accessible routes and prioritising maintenance requests relating to health walk routes.
		AE2.2	Remove barriers and restrictive infrastructure, including retro-fitting existing structures to ensure maximum accessibility, for example widening bridges to 1.2m and ramping steps. Prioritise these improvements along busy routes and those close to urban areas. Actions AE1.1 to AE1.3 also help to deliver the objective AE2.
AE3	To support more people from under-represented groups to use public rights of way and visit the countryside.	AE3.1	Support partners working with minority ethnic groups to understand barriers to accessing public rights of way and develop projects to increase use.  All other actions in this section will also help to deliver objective AE3.

### The Year-1 Action Plan states...

Ref	Objectives	Ref	Actions	Actions 2020 – 2021	Estimated Cost	Funded	PROW Team	Partner Organisations
AE1	To support more people with disabilities in using the public rights of way network.	AE1.2	Adhere where possible to BS5709: 2018 standards for new infrastructure and develop path maintenance schedules through the management matrix (see Theme 2) to ensure least restrictive access. Apply BS5709: 2018 to new or diverted routes.	Review and update structures processes and work practices to include latest BS5709:2018 standards.  Always apply least restrictive access standards to PROW decision making, applications and maintenance matters.  Advice and guidance on website for landowners/farmers and applicants		Existing budgets, Development, Donations	ROW OPS DM	Disabled Access Groups LAF Chiltern Society Simply Walks Parish Councils Town Councils Ramblers BHS TRF
		AE1.3	Continue to remove stiles and replace with gaps, gates or kissing gates and support communities and user groups to achieve this aim. Explore ways to seek removal of structures where livestock is no longer present.	Review of PROW infrastructure assets. Map and identify those accessibility structures and those no longer required or could be improved.	  	Existing budgets, Development, , Volunteers IT improvement /modernisation budgets	ROW OPS	Disabled Access Groups LAF Simply Walks Parish Councils Town Councils Ramblers Chiltern Society BHS TRF IT Exegesis (CAMS) Other authorities best

Ref	Objectives	Ref	Actions	Actions 2020 – 2021	Estimated Cost	Funded	PROW Team	Partner Organisations
								practice
			Actions AE2.1 and AE2.2 also help to deliver the objective AE1.					
			Actions AE1.1 to AE1.3 also help to deliver the objective AE2.					
AE3	To support more people from under-represented groups to use public rights of way and visit the countryside.	AE3.1	Support partners working with minority ethnic groups to understand barriers to accessing public rights of way and develop projects to increase use.	<p>Look to user needs analysis produced for this RoWIP. Identify knowledge gaps and under representation.</p> <p>Involve LAF and Simply Walks Team in outreach programme for hard to reach groups to understand their access needs.</p> <p>Implement pilot projects to produce new promotional materials and actively get people on the PROW network</p>		Existing budgets, Partnerships	ROW OPS DM	Inclusion and equalities team Community Forum LAF Parish Councils Town Councils
			All other actions in this section will also help to deliver objective AE3.					

### AE 1.2

BS 5708 2018 has been included in all public path diversions and permissions for new gates under s147 Highways Act 1980. Guidance for both applications has been updated and is available on the website. The council applies the least restrictive hierarchy to new structures, for example, no permission is granted for gates on arable fields or on land where stock control is not required. The council does allow non-standard kissing gates [for example, the 'Woodstock pedestrian gate' from the Centrewire range] where the structure being replaced is a stile as access has been improved. The council requires landowners to repair damaged stiles and gates, though some repairs to gates as part of the Chilterns and North Bucks Donate-a-gate schemes have been repaired by the council.

While the ROWIP does set a specific target in this chapter, 123 stiles were removed April 2020 to March 2021 to facilitate easy access: replaced with gaps [22], kissing gates [39] and pedestrian gates [62]. There were 118 stiles replaced in 2018/19, so the achievement is consistent, and officers will continue to reduce the number of structures, whether gates or stiles.

### AE 1.3

A review of infrastructure assets was not undertaken in this year. This could be a reasonably simple process by 'running a report' in the CAMS spreadsheet to identify the numbers of each infrastructure assets. As this chapter covers accessibility, the likely structures to review are pedestrian gates, kissing gates, stiles and bridges [width and steps or ramps].

CAMS provides the public and council with an ability to identify precise locations of structures on the network via the interactive map, namely gaps, gates, kissing gates and stiles. However, it's not possible for disabled users to identify between a BS 5709 2018 compliant kissing gate and a non-compliant kissing gate, for example, between a RADAR operated Large Mobility Woodstock and a Woodstock Kissing gate. This may be possible to pick up in Years 1-3 depending on CAMS being adapted



or addressed in other ways, such as expanding Google Streeview. A much larger piece of work is to identify those structures no longer required or could be removed and this would seem unachievable in one year. It seems likely this will need to be a program through the 10-year lifetime of the plan.

### AE 3.1

Recruitment of under-represented groups onto the Local Access Forum has been an ambition for many years. Some attempts were made this year, though young people remain hard to reach. This will need to be carried-over into future programmes in partnership with the Simply Walks team, Chilterns Conservation Board and National Trails.

## THEME 6 – Effective Delivery




### The ROWIP states...



Ref	Objectives	Ref	Actions
KG1	Support the objectives of the National Trails Partnerships	KG1.2	Continue to support the Ridgeway and Thames Path National Trails partnership boards and working groups. Provide pro-rata financial support alongside other neighbouring authorities towards the Trails' core funding and promotion. Work in partnership with the Trails teams to meet national guidance objectives on Trail standards.
KG2	To provide promotional material that is easy to access.	KG2.1	Identify those existing promoted routes which meet the priorities identified and update the promotional material.
		KG2.2	Improve how the public can access promotional material – improve the online platform for downloadable information and work with partners to improve the reach and co-ordination of promotion.
KG3	To provide new promotional resources which support the identified needs for the county.	KG3.1	Work with partners and representative organisations to understand more fully the needs of those with mobility and visual impairments and develop promotional material which gives enough information for these users to explore public rights of way, including different formats such as audio resources.
		KG3.2	Develop new promotional material close to urban areas which links the town with the countryside, including areas of housing growth, working with partners and seeking funding as necessary.
		KG3.3	Provide information and promotional material to support equestrians, cyclists and motor vehicle users.
		KG3.4	Work with partners and representative organisations to understand more fully the needs of minority ethnic communities and develop promotional material to support greater use of the countryside.
KG4	To support the visitor economy through promotion.	KG4.1	Work with partners and support measures which limit or mitigate negative impacts from visitors on sensitive sites.
		KG4.2	Work with partners to fully capitalise on Buckinghamshire's public rights of way asset to support the visitor economy – targeting new markets, attracting spend to rural business, increasing lengths of stay and strengthening Buckinghamshire's brand.


### The Year-1 Action Plan states...

Ref	Objectives	Ref	Actions	Actions 2020 – 2021	Estimated Cost	Funded	PROW Team	Partner Organisations
ED1	Develop better partnerships with new and existing partners to improve service delivery.	ED1.1	Work with new partners to deliver shared priorities in green infrastructure, health and wellbeing, the economy and visitor economy and active travel.	<p>Seek out new and existing Partners and take advantage of new opportunities as they arise of new links and dynamics arising from the new Unitary Authority (Political and Operational) and the Devolution Project.</p> <p>Carry out a stakeholder analysis of who the players/officers are for each theme and forge relationships.</p>		Existing budgets, Parish and Town Council, Local businesses, Development, Partnerships, Volunteers	DM	Planning Highways Transport Walking and Cycling LAF Public Health Simply Walks Local Business National Infrastructure Developers Colne Valley Regional Park Developers Community Forum National Trails Chilterns Society



Ref	Objectives	Ref	Actions	Actions 2020 – 2021	Estimated Cost	Funded	PROW Team	Partner Organisations
		ED1.5	Work with Parish and Town Councils to understand their concerns and support those with devolved responsibilities as necessary.	<p>Review and keep accurate records on Parishes with devolved responsibilities.</p> <p>Have clear memoranda of understanding on devolved responsibilities in respect of ROW with any devolved parishes.</p>		Existing budgets, Parish and Town Councils	ROW OPS	Parish Councils Town Council Community Forum LAF
		ED1.7	Support the Local Access Forum and ensure membership continues to be from a wide range of organisations.	<p>Provide secretariat and facilitate the Local Access Forum.</p> <p>Ensure recruitment to LAF maintains a balance of interests and involves new or under represented user.</p> <p>Maintain relevance of the Local Access Forum as a consultee and group monitoring the ROWIP, ensuring 3 meetings per year. Produce an annual report for Natural England each year of the ROWIP.</p>		Existing budgets, Partnerships	DM & ROW OPS	LAF Community Form Disabled Access Forum NFU CLBA Ramblers BHS TRF Chiltern Society
ED2	Maximise the efficiency of the service.	ED2.1	Work with partners to secure grant funding for projects which improve access.	Network with Transport Strategy Team and other partners to have regular		Existing budgets, Partnerships,	DM	Strategic partners Community

Ref	Objectives	Ref	Actions	Actions 2020 – 2021	Estimated Cost	Funded	PROW Team	Partner Organisations
				<p>horizon scanning for funds to improve access particularly from Government funded Transport projects such as Local Walking and Cycling Infrastructure Plans..</p> <p>Look to new partners who might arise through Strategic Programmes or Economic Partnerships.</p>		Grants		Forum LAF Natural England National Lottery Parish Councils Town Councils LEP
		ED2.2	Work with developers and local planning authorities to seek contributions to deliver the access needs arising from new development (see also Theme 3: An Evolving Network, objective EN2)	<p>Maintain an Access opportunities funding list using intelligence gained from working with partners and developers.</p> <p>Raise awareness of PROW and Access with developers and planning colleagues.</p>		Existing budgets, Development	DM	Strategic partners Community Forum LAF Natural England National Lottery Parish Councils Town Councils LEP Developers Local business
		ED2.3	Annual review of schedule of fees and charges and publicise on the council's website.	<p>Annual review of fees and charges.</p> <p>Update website as required.</p> <p>Monitor impact of Unitary</p>		Existing budgets	DM	Internal Partners Community Forum Local business LAF

Ref	Objectives	Ref	Actions	Actions 2020 – 2021	Estimated Cost	Funded	PROW Team	Partner Organisations
				changes				
ED3	Deliver a customer focused service.	ED3.1	Provide an online and accessible rights of way reporting system, ensuring the customer receives feedback and monitoring our responses.	<p>Make full use of CAMS web and develop more customised reports to present data.</p> <p>Share reports on a regular basis with LAF and Council.</p>		Existing budgets	ROW OPS & DM	Internal Partners Community Forum Local business LAF

### ED 1.1

Working with new partners to deliver shared priorities has been a main focus in Year 1. Some of the key successes in this regard have been as follows:

[a] Meeting with the developer at Oakley Airfield for an autonomous car test track resulted in proposals which improve the bridleway network for Worminghall residents by creating a new link.

[b] Liaising with Projects Team colleagues to shape the planning application diversions and access improvements around the South-East Aylesbury Link Roads. Following rights of way input, the scheme was improved to include segregated cycleways on both carriageways; short-cut, stepped access for the able bodied including wheeling ramps for bikes; and disabled access ramps from the adjoining AGT-1 developments.

[c] Co-ordination of diversion applications with Greenways and Cycleways Ltd to align rights of way with the Waddesdon Greenway, in consultation with Ramblers and Open Spaces Society.

[d] Meeting and advising the Little Marlow Gravel Pits volunteers to create a new permissive path.

[e] Taking a robust stance on applications that threaten negative impacts on the rights of way network, but always suggesting to workable alternatives to developers. These include the allocated housing site at Marlow (alternative diversion), the model aircraft strip at Lane End (removing flying areas above the footpath), and storage unit complex at High Heavens, Great Marlow (widening the footpath width from 2m to 6m).

### ED1.5

We regularly field enquiries and concerns from Parish Council representatives and work to resolve local disputes relating to public rights of way. One of example of this is through co-ordination with Colne Valley Regional Park and Iver Parish Council where we have gained support for improved access around Pinewood, seeking the best outcome for residents.

### ED 1.7

Due to the disruption to public meetings caused by COVID-19 restrictions in 2020, the Local Access Forum was only able to meet on two occasions in this first year of

the ROWIP. These meetings took place on 23<sup>rd</sup> September 2020 and 3<sup>rd</sup> March 2021, utilising Microsoft Teams to allow participants to meet virtually. As an independent body the LAF was unchanged the new unitary authority of Buckinghamshire Council coming into being on 1<sup>st</sup> April 2020.

The LAF was consulted on The Aylesbury Garden Town Project, with the headline project being the Gardenway, Greenways, and the Buckinghamshire Gemstone Cycling Routes. The Rights of Way Improvement Plan 2020-2030 was presented to the LAF in September 2020 and warmly received, followed by the Action Plan in the March 2021 meeting. High Speed Rail 2 (HS2) and East-West Rail (EWR) have commenced construction and the LAF will be an important forum through which to discuss access issues. The LAF heard how COVID-19 had affected the ability of volunteers and work crews to maintain the public rights of way network in Buckinghamshire and shared useful advice and learning from member organisations on how they have managed the restrictions.

The LAF challenged the council on the progress tackling the backlog of Definitive Map Modification Orders (DMMOs). Additional staff have been recruited. However, the high number of applications caused by the Ramblers' *'Don't Lose Your Way'* Campaign and similar initiatives by the British Horse Society has caused the backlog to increase.

The LAF membership numbers remain stable, and we were happy to welcome two additional members this year [Cllr N Naylor and Cllr A Turner]. We continue to benefit from a broad range of expertise and organisations represented through our membership. We will endeavour to recruit members from more diverse backgrounds and perspectives as candidates become available. With the significantly increased usage and interest in the countryside a silver lining to the global pandemic, we hope that more people will be inspired to join the LAF.

#### ED 2.1

We continue to encourage internal consultation on strategic development planning and collaborate and share opportunities to secure funding for projects to improve access. Examples of this in the first year of the ROWIP are as follows.

[a] Attending Aylesbury Garden Town Masterplan workshops in order to raise the profile of rights of way and access projects; contributed to shaping the evolving Garden Way project;

[b] Advising on the Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan for Aylesbury.

#### ED 2.2

Section 106 funding has been secured for key developments that will improve access to the countryside across Buckinghamshire. This remains a key focus of the Strategic Access Officer when responding to planning applications. These range from relatively small improvements to ensure the public right of way remains convenient to large

residential developments that dramatically alter the PROW network. A selection is included below:

[a] 2km of new public bridleway secured in perpetuity by negotiation in the s.106 Agreement as part of the M25 Service Station, Chalfont St Peter, initially proposed as permissive;

[b] Inclusion of a Buckingham Park to Berryfields Cycleway as part of Section 106 contributions.

[c] £421,000 of on-site and off-site surfacing works to footpaths and bridleways around the Ashwells development, Chepping Wycombe;

[d] £398,000 worth of Breedon gravel bridleway surfacing and cycleway rubber crumb surfacing works secured as part of the M25 Service Station, Chalfont St Peter

[e] £12,750 of tarmac footpath at the 12-dwelling site, Clifton Road Worminghall

[f] £16,500 of tarmac footpath at the 8-dwelling site, Duke's Close, Shabbington

[h] £294,500 of footpath and bridleway improvements on Land at Ashwell Field, Cock Lane, Tyler's Green

### UD 2.3

We have published the updated fees and charges for 2021/2022 on our website on our homepage <https://www.buckinghamshire.gov.uk/environment/countryside-and-public-rights-of-way/public-rights-of-way/changes-to-the-rights-of-way-network/>

### ED 3.1

We continue to maintain CAMS Web and the public are able to access this free of charge at <https://www.buckinghamshire.gov.uk/environment/countryside-and-public-rights-of-way/public-rights-of-way/view-the-online-rights-of-way-map/>

There is a reporting function on CAMS Web which alerts us to various issues that need addressing on the public rights of way network, most commonly issues with overgrowth and broken gates and stiles, but often other enforcement issues such as encroachment or obstruction. This allows us to categorise and prioritise our resources effectively and reduces the necessity for inspections in some cases.



**BUCKINGHAMSHIRE  
LOCAL ACCESS FORUM**

# Report

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**AGENDA ITEM 5**

**Date:** 1<sup>st</sup> November 2023

**Title:** Rights of Way Group update

**1. DEFINITIVE MAP**

All Definitive Map Modification applications are dealt with in chronological order of receipt. However, we will prioritise certain applications as per the ‘Statement of Priority’ under the following circumstances:

- I. The evidence in support (either fully or in part) of the application is that of user evidence;
- II. There is a threat of development affecting the claimed route;
- III. If the evidence in support of the application is shared with another application within the chronological list and it would be efficient to investigate the applications concurrently

**A. DMMO MATTERS PREVIOUSLY DETERMINED AND UNDER INVESTIGATION**

*Note: Planning Inspectorate [PINS].*

- 1. **High Wycombe** – Application to add a Public Footpath to the Definitive Map between Pinewood Road and Public Footpath No. 93. **Order made; objections received; to be submitted to PINS.**
- 2. **Marlow** – application to record a public footpath from Cromwell Gardens to New Court. **Order made; objections received; to be submitted to PINS.**
- 3. **Bledlow-cum-Saunderton (North Mill Road)** - investigation clarifying the status of the disputed route – **Order made, objections received; to be submitted to PINS.**
- 4. **Chepping Wycombe** – application to record route between public footpath No. 14 and No. 15 Parish of Chepping Wycombe. **Footpath has been created by a Deed of Dedication; application to be rejected.**

5. **Wooburn** – application to upgrade Public Footpath No. 3 between Princes Road Groves Close to byway open to all traffic. **Application received 26 February 2016 and investigated by external consultant; decision report to be prepared.**
6. **Hazlemere** - application to record various routes in the field adjacent to Public Footpath No. 8 and Public Bridleway No. 6, Parish of Hazlemere as Public Footpaths. **Application received 23 April 2016 and investigated by external consultant; decision report with Legal.**
7. **Leckhampstead** - Application to upgrade Public Footpath No. 5 (part) to Public Bridleway and add a route which connects with No.5 as Public Bridleway. **Application received 21 June 2016 and investigated by external consultant; decision report to be prepared.**
8. **Stokenchurch** - Application to add routes to the Definitive Map at East Wood, Stokenchurch. **Application received 12 December 2017; decision report to be prepared.**
9. **Penn** – Application to add a route to the Definitive Map between Public Footpath No. 36 and No. 44. **Application received 19 December 2017; under investigation.**
10. **Little Missenden** – application to register circular footpath off Stoney Lane. **Application received 25 March 2022; threat of development therefore under investigation.**

#### **B. DEFINITIVE MAP APPLICATIONS TO BE INVESTIGATED WITHIN NEXT 12 MONTHS.**

11. **Little Marlow and Marlow** – application to add public footpath along A404. **Application received on 2 December 2021; threat of development therefore investigation to start.**
12. **Dinton with Ford and Upton.** Claimed Restricted Byway and Upgrading to a Restricted Byway, Moreton Road to Moreton Lane. **Application received 1 August 2021; threat of development therefore investigation to start.**
13. **Whitchurch** – 3 new applications received to add footpaths to the Definitive Map and Statement –**Applications received 9 July 2018.**
14. **Whaddon** – application to add a Public Footpath to the Definitive Map between Whaddon Hall and Public Footpath No.6. **Application received 21 December 2018.**
15. **Buckingham** – application to add a Public Bridleway to the Definitive Map following the dismantled railway walk from the A421 to Tingewick Road. **Application received 14 May 2019.**

### **C. DEFINITIVE MAP APPLICATIONS WAITING TO BE INVESTIGATED AS PER STATEMENT OF PRIORITY - USER EVIDENCE**

16. **Chalfont St Peter** – application to add a Public Footpath to the Definitive Map at Windmill Farm connecting Public Footpath No 19 with Footpath no 55. **Application received 17 July 2019.**
17. **Chesham** – application to add various routes south of Nashleigh Hill to the Definitive Map connecting with Public Footpath nos. 117, 37 and 67. **Application received 27 August 2019.**
18. **Chesham** – application to add two routes to the Definitive Map from Lye Green Road connecting with footpath 37. **Application received 27 August 2019.**
19. **Chesham** – application to add a footpath between Hill Farm Road and Pump Lane to the Definitive Map and Statement. **Application received 27 January 2020.**
20. **Denham** – application to add public footpath from Priory Close to Alderbourne Field. **Application received 23 October 2019.**
21. **Waddesdon** – application to upgrade a footpath and claim public bridleway through Eythrope Park. **Application received 7 December 2020.**
22. **Dinton with Ford and Upton** – application to add public footpath between Burgess Lane and footpath No. 53. **Application received 21 December 2020.**
23. **Dinton with Ford and Upton** – application to add footpath between Watery Lane and Moreton. **Application received 21 December 2020.**
24. **Great Marlow** – application to add public footpath around perimeter of Wycombe Air Park. **Application received 21 December 2020.**
25. **Marlow** – application to add public footpath off Liston Road. **Application received 20 December 2020. Investigated alongside Marlow application referred to under Section A (2). This application has been rejected. CASE CLOSED.**
26. **Little Missenden** – application to add public footpath from Parish Piece to Watchet Late. **Application received 3 March 2021.**
27. **Radnage** – Application to add Public Bridleway from Bottle Square Lane to Bowers Lane. **Application received 17 May 2021.**
28. **Chesham** – Claimed Footpath off Pednor Road. **Application received 21 June 2021.**
29. **Little Marlow** – application to add public footpath around Roach Lane. **Application received on 2 December 2021.**

30. **Little Marlow/Marlow** – application to add public footpath along Crowne Plaza. **Application received on 2 December 2021.**
31. **Little Marlow/Marlow** – application to add public footpaths, west of Westhope. **Application received on 2 December 2021.**
32. **Little Marlow** – application to upgrade footpath no. 20 to public bridleway. **Application received on 2 December 2021.**
33. **Weedon** – application to add public footpath along Northcroft. **Application received on 9 March 2022.**
34. **Latimer** – application to add Restricted Byway from Kiln Lane to Tylers Hill Road. **Application received 22 March 2022.**
35. **North Marston**- application to add public footpath off Quanton Road. **Application received on 19 July 2022.**
36. **Wooburn** – application to add public footpath along River Wye. **Application received on 23 August 2022.**
37. **Penn** – application to add Public Footpaths off Footpaths Nos. 36 and 40 . **Application received 28 March 2023.**
38. **Dinton with Ford and Upton** – application to add Public Bridleway between Lower Road and Footpath No. 10 and upgrade part of Footpath no. 10 to bridleway status. **Application received 18 April 2023.**

**DEFINITIVE MAP APPLICATIONS WAITING TO BE INVESTIGATED AS PER STATEMENT OF PRIORITY - HISTORIC EVIDENCE**

39. **Quanton** – application to upgrade public footpath No. 4 to public bridleway status. **Application received 21 October 2014.**
40. **Bledlow** – application to investigate the alignment of public footpath No. 52. **Application received 19 December 2013.**
41. **Hedgerley** – application to upgrade public footpath No. 11 and No. 12 to public bridleway status. **Application received 25 June 2015.**
42. **Whaddon** – application to modify the alignment of Public Footpath No. 6. **Application received 4 February 2016.**
43. **Lillingstone Dayrell** – application to upgrade Public Footpath No.1 to restricted byway status. **Application received 15 February 2016.**
44. **Lillingstone Dayrell** – application to upgrade Public Footpath No. 2 to public bridleway status. **Application received 15 February 2016.**



45. **Chenies** application to add Hollaway Road to the Definitive Map and Statement as a byway open to all traffic. **Application received 29 February 2016.**
46. **Leckhampstead** – application to upgrade Public Footpath No. 13 and 18 to Public Bridleway and add a route as Public Bridleway. **Application received 26 May 2016.**
47. **Water Stratford** – application to add a claimed bridleway to the Definitive Map and Statement, Parish of Water Stratford **Application received 27 March 2017.**
48. **Little Missenden** - application to upgrade bridleway No. 42 and bridleway No. 29 to restricted byway. **Application received 17 January 2020.**
49. **Little Missenden** - application to upgrade bridleway No. 26 to restricted byway. **Application received 19 February 2020.**
50. **Little Missenden** - application to upgrade bridleway No. 24 to restricted byway. **Application received 7 March 2020.**
51. **Little Missenden** – application to upgrade bridleway No. 25 to restricted byway. **Application received 15 March 2020.**
52. **Water Stratford** – application to add a claimed bridleway to the Definitive Map and Statement. **Application received 1 May 2020.**
53. **Dinton with Ford and Upton.** Upgrading to a restricted Byway, Water Lane to Marsh Hill Lane. **Application received 1 August 2021.**
54. **Stone with Bishopstone and Hartwell and Great and Little Kimble** – application to add public bridleway from Moreton Lane, Bishopstone to Marsh Hill Lane, Great Kimble. **Application received 14 September 2021.**
55. **Stone with Bishopstone and Hartwell** – application to upgrade part of footpath no. 28 to public bridleway – **Application received 14 September 2021.**
56. **Longwick-cum-Ilmer** – application to add Public Bridleway from Stockwell Lane to Bridleway No. 14 – **Application received on 21 September 2021.**
57. **Longwick-cum-Ilmer** – application to upgrade Public Bridleway No. 14 to restricted byway. **Application received on 21 September 2021.**

**D. PUBLIC PATH ORDERS (PPO)** – decisions made by officers through their delegated powers:

Summary:

Applications for Public Path Orders	41
Apps. waiting to be investigated	2
Apps. progressing/Orders made	15
Orders waiting to be determined by PINS	2
Cases closed	10
Awaiting works by applicant	12

1. **Dorney** – Creation of footpath. **CASE CLOSED.**
2. **Weston Turville** – Application to divert Footpath No. 33 – **cycle track order Made; awaiting works.**
3. **High Wycombe** – Application to extinguish Footpath No. 27. Wycombe District Council planning matter. Order made and confirmed by WDC. **Awaiting developer works before bringing Order into effect.**
4. **Quarrendon** – Application to divert Footpath No. 3 and 4 – **CASE CLOSED.**
5. **Stoke Mandeville** – Application to divert Footpaths Nos. 3 and 14 – **Order confirmed; awaiting works.**
6. **Stewkley** – Application to divert Footpath No. 19. **CASE CLOSED.**
7. **Hambleden** – Application to divert Footpath No. 44. **Order made; awaiting works.**
8. **Buckingham** – Application to divert Footpath No. 36. **Order to be confirmed; awaiting works.**
9. **Waddesdon** - Application to divert Footpath No. 18. **Order confirmed; awaiting works.**
10. **Cuddington** – Application to divert footpath no 13 – **Order made’ objections received; referred to PINS; awaiting PINS decision.**
11. **Great Missenden** – Application to divert footpath No. 70 – **Confirmed by Secretary of State; awaiting works.**
12. **Chalfont St Giles/Chenies** – application to divert bridleway No.43 and 5 – **Order made; awaiting works.**
13. **Chalfont St Peter** – diversion of footpath No. 14 – **Order made; objections received; referred to PINS; awaiting PINS decision.**

14. **Steeple Claydon** – diversion of footpath No. 6 – **Order confirmed; awaiting works.**
15. **Stoke Mandeville** – Extinguishment of Footpath No.8 & 10 – **Order confirmed; Order to be brought into effect once works completed.**
16. **Kingsbrook** – Diversion of Footpath No.1 – **Order to be revoked; new alignment agreed; process to start again.**
17. **Worminghall** – Diversion of Footpath No.2 – **Order made; objections received; to be submitted to PINs.**
18. **Maids Moreton** – Diversion of Footpath No.3 – **CASE CLOSED.**
19. **High Wycombe** – footpath creation off Abbey Barn Lane with Berkeley homes – **Creation agreement signed; awaiting works.**
20. **Biddlesden** – Diversion of Public Bridleway no. 5 – **CASE CLOSED.**
21. **Great Missenden** – Diversion of Public Footpath no. FP1(F) – **CASE CLOSED.**
22. **Marsh Gibbon** – East West Rail creation of Footpath No. 5 – **CASE CLOSED.**
23. **Stoke Mandeville** – Diversion of Public Footpath No. 16 – **Order confirmed but to be abandoned.**
24. **Wexham** – Diversion of Public Footpath No. 7 – **Order to be confirmed; Legal team instructed.**
25. **Worminghall** – Diversion of Public Bridleways 6 and 7 and Bridleway 38 and 39, Oakley – **Under investigation.**
26. **Swanbourne** – East West Rail creation of public footpath No. 17 – **Under investigation.**
27. **Wendover** – Diversion of Public Footpath No. 18 – **CASE CLOSED.**
28. **Great Missenden** – Diversion of Public Footpath no. 35 – **CASE CLOSED.**
29. **Radnage** – Diversion of Public Footpath no. 5 – **Order made; objections received; to be referred to PINs.**
30. **Whitchurch** – Diversion of Footpath no. 47 – **Order made; objections received; to be referred to PINs.**
31. **Westbury** – Diversion of Footpath no. 11 – **Order made; awaiting works.**
32. **Broughton Hamlet** – Diversion of Footpath no. 5 – **CASE CLOSED.**

33. **Waddesdon** – Diversion of Footpath no. 7 – **Order to be made.**
34. **Waddesdon** - Diversion of Footpath no. 7A – **Order to be made.**
35. **Berryfields** – Diversion of Footpath no. 2 – **Order to be made.**
36. **Akeley** – Diversion of Footpath no. 6 – **Order made, in objection period.**
37. **Chesham** – Extinguishment of part of the width of Footpath no. 114 – **Order to be abandoned.**
38. **Winslow** – Diversion of Footpath No. 1 – **Investigation not started.**
39. **Denham** – Footpath to be created over Denham Quarry land - **Footpath to be created over Council land via a Deed of Dedication.**
40. **Wexham** - Diversion of Footpath No. 6 – **Under investigation.**
41. **Buckingham** – Diversion of Footpath No. 36 – **Investigation not started.**

#### **E. VILLAGE GREEN APPLICATIONS**

1. **Wooburn** – land off Cherwell Road, Bourne End. **Investigation not started; awaiting voluntary registration from landowner.**
2. **High Wycombe** – land off Warren Wood Drive. **Objection withdrawn; awaiting outcome of Shootacre Lane before proceeding.**
3. **Princes Risborough** – land at corner of Shootacre Lane and Picts Lane. **Public Inquiry to be arranged for early 2024.**
4. **Chesham** – land in Lye Green. **Application rejected following Public Inquiry; CASE CLOSED.**
5. **Stoke Hammond** – land at Layton Road. **Final report expected following Public Inquiry.**

#### **2. STRATEGIC ACCESS**

##### **HS2**

1. Almost the whole network across HS2 remains temporarily closed. The Waddesdon Greenway was also closed with no diversion for 1 week during half term to surface a new temporary route. Detailed design of the area south-west of Aylesbury is beginning to come forward, with uncertainties remaining over the South-West Aylesbury link road and housing layout designs. The temporary works to the Little Missenden sink hole resulted in works traffic accessing a long stretch of public footpath where the council secured surface mitigation repairs.

### **Donate-a-Gate**

Following the relaunch of the scheme in the summer of 2023, new donors have come forward to sponsor 15 gates.

### **Local Transport Plan 5**

Strategic Transport officers continue to undertake internal consultation rounds. The role played by PROWs contributing to sustainable transport solutions and road safety solutions for horse riders has been re-emphasized, a point strongly made by members when consulted earlier this year. These are included in the latest draft.

### **Ridgeway Google Streetview Survey**

4. The Strategic Access Officer and LAF member Gavin Caspersz have been collaborating on a Disabled Ramblers initiative to scan the Ridgeway into Google Streetview. The Ridgeway at Ivinghoe and Coombe Hill are complete, and it is hoped to have Ivinghoe to Tring surveyed before winter 2023/24.

### **Defra Access for All funding**

5. The council proposes to submit an expression of interest to this fund: [DEFRA Access for All funding | Chilterns AONB](#) for a new 360-camera for recording sustainable transport routes and the wider rights of way network, for uploading onto Google Streetview. The Conservation Board will be reviewing submissions in January 2024 before grants become available from 1<sup>st</sup> April 2024. This follows a successful trial of the technology with Disabled Ramblers on the Ridgeway National Trail.

## **3. OPERATIONS**

### **1. The current staff structure**

The structure allows for 8.5 FTE staff: 1 Rights of Way Team Leader, 3 Area ROW Officers, 3 Assistant ROW Officers and 1.5 Bridge Structure Inspectors. At the time of the July meeting the forum were advised that recruitment was on going but proving difficult as few suitable applicants were coming forward. Over the last few months, it has been possible to recruit 2 Assistant Rights of Way Officers, Oliver Dawes and Harry Leach. There are still 1.5 vacant posts, but there are plans for further recruitment.

### **2. BVPI Rights of Way Condition Survey 2022/23**

The BVPI Rights of Way Condition Survey covering 5% of the network, took place over the winter 2022 / early spring 2023, with the results as follows:

- *Percentage of paths rated 'Easy to Use'* 73.1%
- *Percentage of structures rated 'Easy to Use'* 89.8%
- *Percentage of paths signed from the road* 91.6%

### **3. Capital projects update**

The Rights of Way Team are currently reviewing 16 projects for capital funding for financial year [2023/24]. This includes delivery of new bridges for Bridleway 52 Denham and Footpath 12 Taplow (Berryhill Footbridge); and 6 further bridge projects - including 2 larger equestrian structures and 10 surface improvement projects. Eleven of the projects have been assessed for delivery in the next few weeks, and the remaining will be assessed as soon as possible – pending staff availability. The two larger bridge

projects are in Taplow - which is currently awaiting appointment of a contractor, and Denham will be subject to external tender shortly.

#### **4. Rights of Way revenue works 2023/24 under review**

Revenue projects include three replacement bridge structures [these are currently under review for feasibility for delivery before March 2024] and winter clearance projects across several parishes.

#### **5. Rights of Way Summer Clearance Schedule 2023**

It has been possible this year to fund four clearance crews, that is two extra crews through the summer clearance across the network is estimated at approximately 114 km, with a further 100km cleared under parish devolvement agreements.

#### **1. Summary of Maintenance**

Please see APPENDIX 3

**Buckinghamshire Council - Rights of Way  
Summary of Maintenance Carried Out  
Between 1/04/21 and 23/10/23**

TYPE	DESCRIPTION	Aprl 21- Mar22	Aprl22-Mar23	1 Aprl23-23/10/23
Alignment	Path Off Line - resolved issue	33	21	9
Clearance	Clearance - carried out-jobs/km	120km/450	100km/360	114k/(233int)
Bridge	Installed or repaired	65	74	42
Finger/post	Installed or repaired	187	176	79
Fly Tipping	Fly Tipping - removed	47	37	24
Gate	Gate repaired or installed	163	95	54
Intimidation+animal/per	Intimidation - resolved	25	26	12
Intimidating sign	Misleading Sign - removed	26	10	2
Obstruction - resolved	Barbed wire	36	17	14
Obstruction - resolved	Barrier - Fencing, wall or other	154	116	56
Obstruction - resolved	Electric fence	26	16	20
Obstruction - removed	Fallen Tree	316	345	152
Obstruction - resolved	Locked Gate	4		2
Obstruction - resolved	Ploughing and Cropping	77	79	24
Other	Delivery of materials	29	27	3
Other	Miscellaneous issues resolved	155	119	69
Gap	structure removed To Gap	13	26	5
Stile	Installed or repaired	216	162	71
Stile	Stile To KG	48	25	15
Stile	Stile To PG	55	15	7
Terrain	Bank Steps	6	2	6
Terrain	Path Surface problem resolved	88	71	58
Waymark Post	Installed/Repaired	230	186	56
Issues Signed off		2451	2008	1013
Improvements	To aid mobility access	279	161	81
5% Survey Results	Paths Rated easy to use	<b>74%</b>	<b>74%</b>	<b>73%</b>
5% Survey Results	Structures rated easy to use	<b>93%</b>	<b>93%</b>	<b>92%</b>
5% Survey Results	Routes with Roadside Signs	<b>93%</b>	<b>93%</b>	<b>90%</b>
Number on Database	No. of issues os 31/03/12	799		
Number on Database	No. of Issues os 31/03/19	1740		
Number on Database	No. of Issues os 31/03/2020	2450		
Number on Database	No. of Issues os 31/03/2021	3100		
Number on Database	No. of Issues os 31/03/2022	3199		
Number on Database	No. of Issues os 31/03/2023		3350	
Number on Database	No. of Issues os 23/10/23			3717
Priority A issues	No of Issues recd/dealt with	<b>187/184</b>	<b>174/188</b>	<b>118/95</b>
Priority B/C issues	No of Issues recd/dealt with	<b>2104/2076</b>	<b>1760/1638</b>	<b>1223/831</b>
Priority D (low)	No of Issues recd/dealt with	<b>168/110</b>	<b>187/127</b>	<b>102/66</b>

**Above includes**

**Volunteer Jobs Completed**

<b>Clearance direct from BCC</b>	<b>137/10.3km</b>	<b>93/12.1km</b>	<b>24/1.3km</b>
<b>Miscellaneous Jobs</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>Waymarking and signs</b>	<b>222</b>	<b>181</b>	<b>40</b>
<b>Bank Steps Installed/Repaired</b>		<b>1</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>Gates Repaired and installed</b>	<b>77</b>	<b>43</b>	<b>18</b>
<b>Bridge replaced</b>		<b>1</b>	
<b>Stiles replaced and repaired</b>	<b>21</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>Trees removed</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>7</b>
<b>Total Jobs</b>	<b>486</b>	<b>364</b>	<b>97</b>

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## BUCKINGHAMSHIRE LOCAL ACCESS FORUM

# Report

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### AGENDA ITEM 6

**Date:** 1<sup>st</sup> November 2023

**Title:** LAF members' report

**Author:** Jonathan Clark and James Spratley, Strategic Access Officers

**Contact Officer:** Harry Thomas [01296 585234]

#### 1. Buckinghamshire Local Cycling & Walking Infrastructure Plan

The Strategic Transport Team are leading on the production of a county-wide plan for future walking and cycling provision. A high-level briefing session was held for external stakeholders on 17<sup>th</sup> October 2023 at which some members attend. It is hoped to bring further details of the LCWIP to the LAF next in 2024 as the draft and consultation plans emerge.

#### 2. Ridgeway 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary celebration

The National Trust hosted a celebration at Coombe Hill on Friday 29<sup>th</sup> October 2023 marking the national trails anniversary at the same location 50-years ago. The event attracted good media coverage and was attended by invited LAF members Brian Worrell, Gavin Caspersz and Chairman Neil Harris; and invited council members Martin Tett [Leader] and Patricia Birchley [Chairman]. The National Trust kindly loaned the event a Tramper Mobility Scooter for demonstration. Speeches drawing attention to the positive and enduring impact the Ridgeway has on people and suggestions were made for visions of the trail in 50 years' time.



### **3. Natural England**

Natural England have announced the Local Access Forums (England) SharePoint site is available via the following link:

[Local Access Forums \(England\) - Home \(sharepoint.com\)](https://www.sharepoint.com/Local-Access-Forums-England)

The aim is to provide support and guidance; to facilitate sharing information and ideas between the Local access Forums and Natural England; and draw members' attention to consultations. Can members let the secretary know if they do not wish their email to be put forward for registration in the site's directory to gain access?

### **4. Centre for Outdoor Accessibility Training (COAT).**

<https://www.gov.uk/government/news/opening-access-to-the-countryside>

It has been proposed that members attend a morning's training course at COAT, Aston Rowant, in Spring 2024. Members views are sought to register interest in the council organising such an event. A visit would be free of charge where it involves roaming the gate installations and barriers and possibly the use of Trampler Mobility Scooters. There are additional classroom training courses available to organisations for a fee.

### **5. Chiltern Society Annual meeting**

The annual meeting between Society's rights of way group members, area secretaries, path maintenance volunteers and Donate-a-Gate organiser took place at the White Hill Centre, Chesham on 13<sup>th</sup> October 2023 with 14 in attending. The main outcomes of the meeting were: 1] a plea for more work; 2] for the council to balance work that's technically a landowner's responsibility with giving it to the PMVs to get the job done quicker; 3] requesting the PMVs report issues that are no longer a problem to help clear the backlog; and 4] the volunteers were content to continue with BVPI surveys, providing they were thanked.

### **6. Widening the Welcome Workshop – Chilterns Conservation Board**

The Buckinghamshire LAF was represented at the ‘Widening the Welcome’ access workshop by Gavin Caspresz, Andrew Clark and Neil Harris, at Missenden Abbey on 25<sup>th</sup> September 2023. Presentations on accessibility were made by Visit England, COAT (See item 4), The National Trust [Neil Harris] and Visit Bucks. DEFRA Access for All Funding was discussed, and expressions of interest encouraged by early January 2024. Professor Church Randhawa from University of Bedfordshire advocated the need to include diverse communities in green spaces as England will be the most diverse country in the world by 2050.

## **7. East West Rail – passenger link to Aylesbury station [standing item].**

Prior to the July 2023 LAF meeting, representations were made by the council to the rail minister and the Department for Transport for the Aylesbury links to be included, especially as this forms part of the Transport & Works Act and considering Aylesbury’s housing growth and the new station at Winslow. This has been supported by Aylesbury MP, Rob Butler, who has asked questions in the House of Commons and Greg Smith through his role on the Transport Select Committee.



Alongside the East West Mainline Partnership, the council are joint funding work, outlined below in italics. The full output report for this work is due by end November 2023 and will be reported to the March 2024 LAF.

### *Outline of scope of work*

*2.1. The Board agreed in March that further work by the Partnership should be focussed on a strategic economic narrative which highlights the opportunities of better rail connectivity to Aylesbury would add the most value at this stage. Up to £30,000 of funding towards work on the Aylesbury link had already been supported by the Partnership in 2022/2023. The scope of work was agreed by the Board in June 2023.*

*2.2. Following the Board, consultants Cambridge Econometrics were engaged to review how the link (and associated wider rail connectivity benefits) could support development of new and improved innovation clusters, and enhanced linkages between and within business sectors and labour markets. This work builds on previous technical work that these consultants have undertaken for central government and others.*

*2.3. Buckinghamshire Council is co-funding the project. Page 2 of 5 2.4. The agreed scope of Cambridge Econometrics work includes a literature review, analysis of relevant economic data, and looks at the synergies associated and between different innovation clusters, business sectors and labour markets. It commenced in July 2023, and is due for completion in November 2023.*

#### **8. Venue and dates of next meetings**

Venue: Paralympic Room, The Gateway, Gatehouse Rd, AYLESBURY HP19 8FF.

Dates: Early March 2024 [TBC], 10<sup>th</sup> July 2024 & 6<sup>th</sup> November 2024.