

## Peak District Local Access Forum

**Date:** Thursday 14 June 2007

**Item:** 9 - for information

**Title:** Consultation on Derbyshire's Draft Rights of Way Improvement Plan

**Author:** Gill Millward/ Claire O'Reilly, Countryside Access Improvement Officer, Derbyshire County Council

### Purpose of Report

To provide forum members with feedback from the consultation on Derbyshire's Draft Rights of Way Improvement Plan (RoWIP).

### Background

At the last meeting in March the Forum formalised its response to Derbyshire County Council's Draft RoWIP. The draft Plan was subject to a statutory 12 week public consultation which ended on 31 March 2007.

The County Council has consulted widely on the draft Plan under the banner "Are we on the right track?" Around 850 copies of the Plan and 10,000 consultation leaflets, complete with questionnaire, were sent out inviting comments from key countywide stakeholders and members of the public. The draft Plan was also available to view on the web site and further paper copies could be requested through Call Derbyshire.

### Summary of Consultation on the draft RoWIP

A total of 1,040 responses to the consultation were received, 95 of which were quite detailed letters or emails from groups and individuals. Of the 945 returned questionnaires, 127 were completed on line.

### Analysis of questionnaire

The key elements of the results can be summarised as follows:

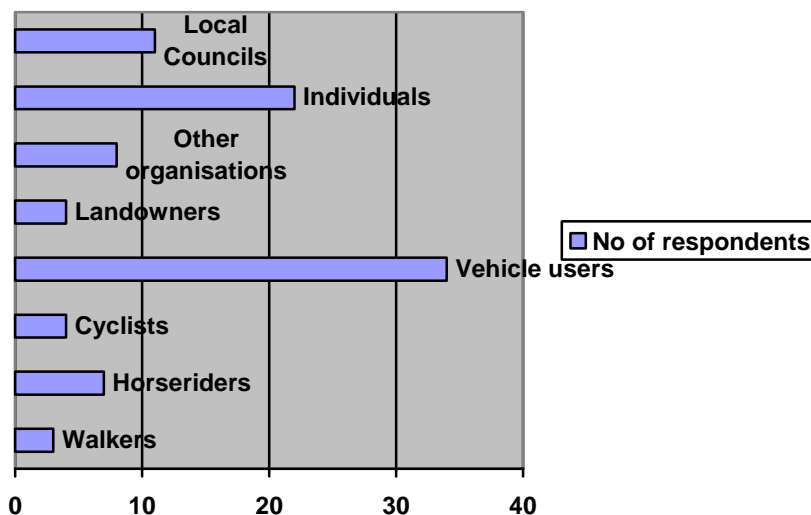
- 94% of people supported the principles behind the RoWIP
- The highest priority was accorded to Theme B - "Preserving Derbyshire's heritage, landscape and wildlife" with 88% of people placing a high priority on this theme
- Theme C - "Promoting rights of way as a healthier, more environmentally friendly alternative to the car", attracted the second highest number of people, with 77% according it the highest priority
- Only 35% of respondents placed a high priority on Theme A - "Helping to boost local business and tourism by attracting people to the area"
- The top 5 "we will" statements that attracted the most 'votes' were:
  1. Review our policy for managing vehicles in the countryside and work with the police to reduce illegal use
  2. Focus on making our existing rights of way network easier to use

3. Provide practical routes that link people's homes, local facilities etc as well as creating circular routes for leisure
  4. Look at ways to extend and link our bridleways and Greenways network
  5. Improve the Definitive Map and statement, making it more up to date and more widely available
- The "we will" statements with the lowest priority related to working with parish councils, providing better information/education, working with user groups and volunteers, promoting more routes and providing safer road crossings

More detailed results from the questionnaire can be found in Appendix 1.

### Summary of written responses

The people making the effort to provide more detailed written submissions can be subdivided as follows:



Copies of the table setting out the detailed comments received and our response to them will be available at the meeting.

Natural England is a statutory consultee and is responsible for appraising all draft RoWIPs as they are published on behalf of Defra. A copy of the letter received from Natural England as a result of the draft consultation is attached in Appendix 2 for information.

### Next steps

- The comments made in the consultation will be worked into the final Plan over the summer months
- The final Plan will be submitted to Cabinet in September or October 2007 for approval and to be adopted by Derbyshire County Council
- We are currently already working with the LTP team over the allocation that has already been made to start to deliver the RoWIP

### Recommendation

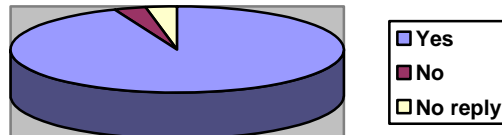
That members of the Forum note this report

## Appendix 1 - Results from Draft RoWIP Questionnaire (945 responses) for Derbyshire

### Question 1: Do you support the principles of our Plan?

94% supported principles of the RoWIP

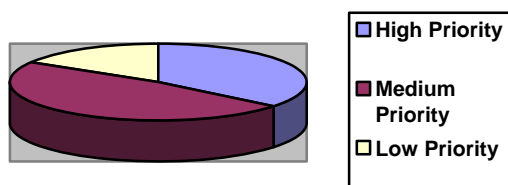
Do you support the principles of  
the Draft RoWIP?



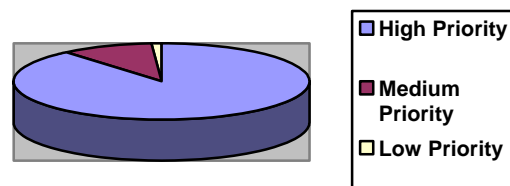
### Question 2: What importance do you attach to the three key themes?

Theme	High	Medium	Low	Gave incorrect or no response
A Local Economy and Tourism	35%	47%	16%	2%
B Heritage and wildlife	88%	10%	0.8%	1.5%
C Health and sustainable travel	77%	16%	6%	1.5%

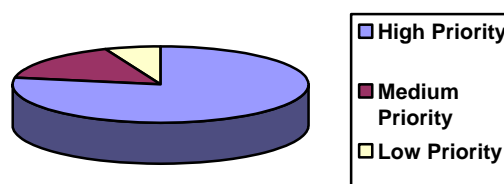
**Theme A - Local Economy and Tourism**



**Theme B - Heritage and Wildlife**



**Theme C - Health and sustainable travel**



**Questions 3 & 4: Of the 15 “we will” statements to which five would you give the greatest and least priority?**

<b>Greatest Priority</b>		
<b>Action</b>		<b>Ranked</b>
8	Illegal or inappropriate vehicle use	1
1	Focus on existing network	2
5	Develop circular routes	3
4	Develop bridleway/greenways network	4
2	Update Definitive Map	5
11	Better signage and way marking	6
7	Road crossings	7
6	Easy access routes	8
14	Promote trails network	9
15	Promote routes for walkers, cyclists and horse riders	10
3	Resolve legal status of routes	11
13	Better information and education	12
9	Working with parish councils	13
10	Working with user groups and volunteers	14
12	Information for disabled people	15
<b>Least Priority</b>		
1	Focus on existing network	15
5	Develop circular routes	14
8	Illegal or inappropriate vehicle use	13
11	Better signage and way marking	12
6	Easy access routes	11
2	Update Definitive Map	10
12	Information for disabled people	9
14	Promote trails network	8
4	Develop bridleway/greenways network	7
3	Resolve legal status of routes	6
7	Road crossings	5
15	Promote routes for walkers, cyclists and horse riders	4
10	Working with user groups and volunteers	3
13	Better information/education	2
9	Working with parish councils	1

## Appendix 2 - Response from Natural England

Date: Wednesday, 07 March 2007  
Our ref: EM/P/331/5  
Your ref:



Claire O'Reilly/Gill Millward  
Countryside Access Officer (job share)  
Derbyshire County Council  
Environmental Services Directorate  
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ENVIRONMENTAL SERVICES DEPARTMENT RECEIVED 08 MAR 2007			
PASS TO	ACTION	INIT	DATE
GOL/AM			

Dear Claire & Gill

### Draft Rights of Way Improvement Plan for Derbyshire 2006-2011

Thank you for sending me the Draft Derbyshire RoWIP. Natural England's response is in two parts:

- general and specific comments on the draft in this letter; and
- the enclosed RoWIP checklist.

The checklist is a national proforma set up originally by the Countryside Agency to ensure that all statutory elements required in a RoWIP are covered, together with additional elements that contribute to good practice. The checklist is divided into sections: the first part of each being the statutory requirement and the second good practice. A tick shows where we are happy that the RoWIP has met or exceeded requirements; sections where we have concerns or queries are marked by a dash (-), question (?) or cross (x). You will be pleased to hear there are not any crosses on the Derbyshire RoWIP checklist! We are aware of the very thorough job that has been done in researching and preparing the RoWIP and our experience is that many of the questions in the checklist have been covered but are either not obvious or I have missed them.

Natural England's general comments (covered below) on the draft RoWIP are focused on the process undertaken rather than on a critique of the resulting actions and priorities that are matters for the County Council's judgement. For this reason Natural England has not completed the Questionnaire.

The draft RoWIP is an attractively presented document, easy to read and with a clear layout. The writing style is accessible with a good use of pictures; however, I would have expected to see more use of maps and plans. Incorporating the Key Themes that emerged from the Consultation into the RoWIP is commendable but it is unclear how each table in the Statements of Action reflects or are action under the Themes.

The Appendices work very well but, at the risk of over lengthening the Plan, a background introduction on rights of way procedure for the layperson might also be considered (or perhaps a page giving useful other weblinks; for instance, to the countryside access website).

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Head Office  
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Sheffield S1 2ET

[www.naturalengland.org.uk](http://www.naturalengland.org.uk)

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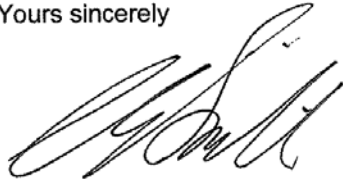
Natural England would like to congratulate you on the wide extent of the consultation exercise reflected in Appendix B.

Specific other points raised in the checklist under “?”

- There isn't a reference in the document to actual budgets and there might be benefit in providing more detail on the estimated costs. I think that a reference to current budgets for rights of way and then the Council “aspirations” for future budgets in the lifetime of the Plan would be very useful.
- Was any in-house or contract work needed?
- No reference to which senior officer responsible for overseeing the Plan
- Was there an in-house steering group for the Plan?
- 2.1.11 of Defra's statutory guidance “HA must have regard to material provision of ROWIP in determining outcome of Orders made under the Highway Act 1980”. There are references to Orders in the statement of actions tables, but I couldn't see in the Plan how that particular statutory requirement is incorporated. There did not appear to be a specific section in the Plan detailing the Authority's existing rights of way duties and powers and how it will exercise them with reference to the RoWIP.
- Reference perhaps could be made on how other plans will be adapted
- The RoWIP should include how Derbyshire's countryside projects will incorporate the RoWIP recommendations.

In conclusion, congratulations on the production of the draft RoWIP and I look forward to seeing the final version.

Yours sincerely



Chris Smith

Communities & Government (Peak to Trent Area Team)