

Peak District Local Access Forum

Date: Thursday 21st March 2013

Item: 7

Title: Consultation Analysis and Report
Derbyshire RoWIP Statement of Action 2013-17

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Section 1 – Introductory text and overview

The consultation did not set out to assess whether the original RoWIP aims and identified needs were right, but whether consultees agreed with the way they had been prioritised or if any proposed actions were missing.

The Rights of Way Improvement Plan (RoWIP) consultation was carried out during the late Summer/Autumn of 2012. The questionnaire was made available on-line and a paper based version was also provided for those without on-line access. The closing date for the consultation was the 29th October 2012.

The following results represent a summary of all the responses received. The total number of responses was 200, of which 160 were made on-line and 40 were paper based responses. The responses were mainly from individuals, but 45 responses were on behalf of an organisation. Of the organisations which responded, half were local authority/public bodies and the remainder split between local community groups and user groups. A detailed report on our responses to all the specific comments which were received during the consultation will be published on the County Council's website in due course.

Section 2 – Questionnaire analysis

Q1 Do you support the RoWIP and what we are trying to achieve?

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94% Yes 6% No

Overwhelmingly, the vast majority of respondents (94%) support the RoWIP.

The responses to this question can be summarised as follows:

- Several respondents were against the prioritisation of the aims and identified needs.
- Several comments expressed concern that the proposed actions could increase the ‘managed’ feel of the network resulting in a reduction in the wilder countryside/natural experience. They wanted the network open and available at a basic level but did not want to see too much signage, intrusive surfacing or too many gates that that would spoil what people visited the countryside for.
- Seeking reassurance that adequate resources would be made available to deliver the proposed actions.
- The need to liaise with local communities and those directly affected was stressed.

Officer/joint LAF sub group comment:

- The agreement was to state that although the aims will still be regarded as being in priority order, as in the first RoWIP, the Authority will make a comment to say that those identified needs which are not assigned a high priority will not be ignored and that the Authority will try to deliver them all.
- There is already a lot in the report about the need to preserve Derbyshire’s heritage, landscape and wildlife (RoWIP Theme A) and in the Environmental Statement so this needs to be stressed to provide reassurance that this will not be the case.

Q2 Do we have the five aims in the right order of priority?

Statement of Action

The statement of action forms the main focus of the RoWIP and is organised around five aims for managing local rights of way and securing an improved, well publicised network of routes:-

Aim 1 - Ensure that the public rights of way network is open and available for use

Aim 2 - Provide an up-to-date and widely available Definitive Map and Statement

Aim 3 - Provide a more connected, safe and accessible network suitable for all users

Aim 4 - Improve the promotion, understanding and use of the network

Aim 5 - Encourage greater community involvement in managing local rights of way

The five aims are listed in what we think is the priority order. Our statutory duties are covered in Aims 1 and 2 and the main actions that relate to how we can make improvements to the network and involve as many local groups, organisations and individuals as possible are covered in Aims 3 and 5. Aim 4 relates to the provision of information which is vital if the benefits of the actions within the other aims are to be realised.

Q2 Do we have the 5 Aims in the right order of priority?

57% Yes

43% No

Q2a If no, please indicate the order in which you think the Aims should be prioritised: (1 = highest and 5 = lowest)

Aim 1

Aim 2

Aim 3

Aim 4

Aim 5

Note: Based on the highest number of responses against each aim

Q2 The majority of respondents (57%) indicated that the five aims were in the right order of priority.

Officer/Joint LAF sub group comment:

Since only just over 50% of responses supported the suggested order, we did discuss whether to leave the aims as they are or swap Aims 2 and 3 around. However, it was agreed to keep the aims in the order presented in the draft Statement of Action document because Aims 1 and 2 are statutory duties.

Q3 Aim 1 - Do we have the four identified needs in the right order of priority?

Aim 1: Ensure the public rights of way network is open and available for use

The proposed actions in this section should ensure that the existing network is well signed, free from unlawful obstruction and well maintained, thereby encouraging greater public use and confidence in a network which is welcoming to its users.

The identified needs have been prioritised as follows:-

- 1a) The efficient management and maintenance of the existing network
- 1b) Ensure that the Public Rights of Way network is well signposted
- 1c) Improve the quality and accessibility of path furniture
- 1d) Improve the surface condition and drainage of routes

Q3 Do we have the 4 identified needs in the right order of priority?:

71% Yes 29% No

Q3a If no, please indicate the order in which you think they should be prioritised: (1 = highest and 4 = lowest)

Need 1a)

1

Need 1b)

2

Need 1c)

4

Need 1d)

3

Q3b Do you think any additional actions should be included to support the identified needs for Aim 1?

38% Yes 36% No 26% Don't know

Q3 The majority of respondents (71%) indicated that the four identified needs were in the right order of priority.

The responses relating to this aim can be summarised as follows:

- Several respondents thought that the ease of use % target was not ambitious enough.

- To ensure that there were adequate resources to keep the existing network open in terms of regular inspections, provision for legal proceedings, enough manpower to resolve problems.
- To revise the section on signposting to include a new action about waymarking along a route.
- The need to consider the accessibility of path furniture – especially gates and squeezers rather than stiles.
- To ensure that any surfacing is sympathetic to the environment and does not disadvantage any users.
- Concern expressed about damage done to the surface of PRow by motorised vehicle users.
- There were several specific problems reported.

Officer/Joint LAF sub group comment:

- With respect to the ease of use target, although the Authority has been reporting year on year improvements over the past 6-7 years, there has been a reduction in the overall performance for 2012/13 (recently announced as 68.8%). Members of the joint LAF sub group accepted that in the current economic climate they could see why the Authority would not want to increase the current ease of use target which would remain at 72.5%. However, it was agreed that the Authority would include a statement to undertake to review and analyse the ease of use results and to strive for year on year improvements.
- It was agreed to keep the identified needs in the same priority order, but to make some changes to the signposting action 1b) to include the waymarking of routes.
- In terms of comments made about the path surfacing, it was agreed that the Council would undertake to keep up to date with any new techniques to ensure that the most suitable methods and materials are used.

- The specific problems will be fed into the system to be dealt with in line with the Rights of Way Charter. There were no other responses that seemed to warrant changing any of this section of the document.

Q4 Aim 2 - Do we have the three identified needs in the right order of priority?

Aim 2: Provide an up to date and widely available Definitive Map & Statement
 The proposed actions in this section will continue to address the need for an accurate, up to date and widely available Definitive Map and Statement (our legal record of routes) for the whole of Derbyshire. They will also ensure that there is greater clarity over the legal status of routes so people know who can use them.

The identified needs have been prioritised as follows:-

- 2a) Speed up the process for clarifying the legal status of routes
- 2b) Improve the availability of information relating to the Definitive Map and Statement
- 2c) Produce and maintain an up to date digital Definitive Map and Statement

Q4 Do we have the 3 identified needs in the right order of priority?

85% Yes 15% No

Q4a If no, please indicate the order in which you think they should be prioritised: (1 = highest and 3 = lowest)

Need 2a)	Need 2b)	Need 2c)
<input type="text" value="3"/>	<input type="text" value="3"/>	<input type="text" value="1"/>

Q4b Do you think any additional actions should be included to support the identified needs for Aim 2?

25% Yes 54% No 21% Don't know

Q4 The majority of respondents (85%) indicated that the three identified needs were in the right order of priority.

The responses relating to this aim can be summarised as follows:

- The majority of the comments related to the availability of the map and the need to improve its promotion, how to make it available in a variety of formats, to improve how it is viewed on the website and how copies can be downloaded or printed off.

- There was general support expressed for some form of prioritisation for dealing with legal orders (whether it was to speed up the resolution of routes involving motorised vehicle users or to prioritise routes for horse riders and cyclists) and requests for the backlog to be quantified in the report.
- The need to commit necessary resources to deliver this work.
- There were some well-informed questions regarding targets for making Legal Event orders and the need for an up to date Definitive Statement.
- Chesterfield Borough Council responded with a request that the production of a Definitive Map for Chesterfield be given a higher priority.

Officer/Joint LAF sub group comment:

- It was agreed to provide more information about the backlog of orders in the commentary attached to the action table.
- At the sub group meeting there were no discussions about changing any of the proposed actions in Aim 2 as the comment from Chesterfield Borough Council had not been recorded at that point. Further consideration of the work required to produce a Definitive Map for the formerly excluded central area of Chesterfield has identified that the process would involve adding routes to the definitive map and statement by means of individual modification orders. It therefore seemed logical to move the proposed action to develop a programme of work for recording paths in the centre of Chesterfield into the identified need which deals with clarifying the legal status of routes, thereby according it a higher priority.

Q5 Aim 3 - Do we have the seven identified needs in the right priority order?

Aim 3: Provide a more connected, safe and accessible network suitable for all users

The proposed actions in this section are to ensure that the needs of individual user groups are considered and that safety is given a high priority. Of particular importance is the need to improve the fragmented bridleway network to benefit cyclists and horse riders and to provide more easy access routes. The emphasis is on providing a network that makes sense and connects to homes, facilities, public transport, places of interest as well as providing circular links for recreational use. Our existing programme of creating a network of Greenway routes (multi user trails) is one of the main ways that we deliver these targets.

The identified needs have been prioritised as follows:-

- 3a) Improve the provision of routes for bridleway users
- 3b) Improve the provision of circular or connected routes
- 3c) Continue with the development of the Greenway (multi user trails) programme
- 3d) Provide more easy access routes
- 3e) Provide a safer network for all users
- 3f) Improve the management of recreational motorised vehicles in the countryside
- 3g) Improve the investment in the access network

Q5 Do we have the 7 identified needs in the right order of priority?

57% Yes 43% No

Q5a If no, please indicate the order in which you think they should be prioritised: (1 = highest and 7 = lowest)

Need 3a)	Need 3b)	Need 3c)	Need 3d)	Need 3e)	Need 3f)	Need 3g)
<input type="checkbox"/> 1	<input type="checkbox"/> 2	<input type="checkbox"/> 3	<input type="checkbox"/> 6	<input type="checkbox"/> 5	<input type="checkbox"/> 7	<input type="checkbox"/> 7

Q5b Do you think any additional actions should be included to support the identified needs for Aim 3?

32% Yes 45% No 23% Don't know

Q5 The majority of respondents (57%) indicated that the seven identified needs were in the right order of priority.

The responses relating to this aim can be summarised as follows:

- The most number of comments (61) received throughout the whole consultation were in connection with the issue of motorised vehicles in the countryside. The views were polarised with motor vehicle users wanting to see improved (not reduced), provision, clarification of the routes that they can use and better signage and information.

Objectors wanted to ban motorised vehicle users from many of the routes. All wanted to tackle illegal use.

- The next highest number of comments related to the safety issues caused by the lack of connectivity of the network resulting in the need for users (particularly horse riders and cyclists) to be on the road network. These users wanted improved links on the Greenway/trails network and better connections to avoid the need to use the roads.
- There was support for creating a network to improve links for everyday use as well as for recreational use.
- It was suggested that more could be done to use Public Path Orders, including through the planning process, to improve network links.
- The need for partnership working with neighbouring authorities and other organisations was stressed by several respondents.
- It was suggested that the identified need about reporting external funding should be strengthened to say 'secure' additional funding.
- Chesterfield Borough Council suggested an extra aim to be included in relation to developing much better connectivity of the network.

Officer/Joint LAF sub group comment:

- This was the lowest expression of support for the priority order being right. This was discussed by the sub group but again the decision was taken to leave the order unchanged.
- There were no plans to make any significant alterations to the proposed actions and identified needs apart from to make reference to safety in Aim 3a), include a bit more about the role of public path orders in achieving benefits to the network in Aim 3b) and changing the wording with respect to the funding in Aim 3g).
- Rather than include an additional aim as suggested by Chesterfield Borough Council the wording in Aim 3b) ii has been strengthened.

- The 'Key Partners' column has been checked to make sure that organisations that have offered support are included.
- The other comments will serve to reinforce the importance of some of the proposed actions identified.

Q6 Aim 4 - Do we have the four identified needs in the right priority order?

Aim 4: Improve the promotion, understanding and use of the network

The proposed actions in this section will address the need for better co-ordinated and targeted information to be made available to as many people as possible, to encourage a more diverse, responsible and sustainable use of the access network. It is also important that any signage or key messages are consistent and as welcoming as possible.

The identified needs have been prioritised as follows:-

- 4a) Ensure that path/route signage on the ground is as informative as possible
- 4b) Promote the benefits of the access network for healthy lifestyles, sustainable living, tourism and the local economy
- 4c) Improve the availability and quality of information about the access network.
- 4d) Encourage responsible use and develop people's confidence in the use of the access network

Q6 Do we have the 4 identified needs in the right order of priority?

75% Yes

25% No

Q6a If no, please indicate the order in which you think they should be prioritised: (1 = highest and 4 = lowest)

Need 4a)

1

Need 4b)

4

Need 4c)

2

Need 4d)

3

Q6b Do you think any additional actions should be included to support the identified needs for Aim 4?

19% Yes

61% No

20% Don't know

Q6 The majority of respondents (75%) indicated that the four identified needs were in the right order of priority.

The responses relating to this aim can be summarised as follows:

- The majority of the comments stressed the need to improve information about access opportunities and the need for responsible use.

- Respondents wanted information in a variety of formats (web-based, on-site, electronic, map/paper based) and wanted information about associated facilities or for it to be targeted at specific users.
- There were comments about signage with some wanting more and some less. The importance of making sure users knew who could/could not use different routes was also highlighted.
- The education of users about responsible use and being aware of the needs of other users was encouraged.
- An important comment was the importance that should be placed on the need to respect those who live and work in the countryside.
- There was not much support for Aim 4b) promoting the benefits of the network for healthy lifestyles and the local economy.

Officer/Joint LAF sub group comment:

- It was agreed not to make any significant alterations to the proposed actions under this aim based on the responses, apart from to alter Aim 4a) for signage, in line with suggested changes linked to Aim 1b) and to augment Aim 4d) about responsible use, to stress the importance of considering those who live and work in the countryside.
- The issue of Ordnance Survey copyright was discussed in relation to providing paper copies of maps. It was agreed to include a comment about strong links with the OS.
- Surprise and disappointment was expressed about the lack of support for promoting the wider benefits of using the access network. The opportunity to develop links with the two Local Nature Partnerships which have recently been established in Derbyshire will be included.
- Once again, the other comments will serve to reinforce the importance of some of the proposed actions identified.

Q7 Aim 5 - Do we have the three identified needs in the right priority order?

Aim 5: Encourage greater community involvement in managing local rights of way

The actions in this section will ensure that there is appropriate support and ample opportunities for communities to be actively involved in monitoring, maintaining and improving their local rights of way network. The key conclusions from the original assessment carried out for the RoWIP identified the need to develop closer partnership working with local people and make better use of volunteers. This has since been emphasised further with the national introduction of the Localism Act 2011.

The identified needs have been prioritised as follows:-

- 5a) Increase the involvement of user groups and other local community/ volunteer groups in managing local rights of way
- 5b) Increase the involvement of local councils in managing local rights of way
- 5c) Increase the involvement of land managers in managing and improving local rights of way

Q7 Do we have the 3 identified needs in the right order of priority?

80% Yes

20% No

Q7a If no, please indicate the order in which you think they should be prioritised: (1 = highest and 3 = lowest)

Need 5a)

3

Need 5b)

1

Need 5c)

1

Q7b Do you think any additional actions should be included to support the identified needs for Aim 5?

20% Yes

57% No

23% Don't know

Q7 The majority of respondents (80%) indicated that the three identified needs were in the right order of priority.

The responses to this aim can be summarised as follows:

- Most of the comments relating to this aim emphasised the need to empower local councils, communities and groups and encourage greater involvement.
- There were specific offers of help put forward.
- There were specific issues raised in connection with providing insurance.
- There were a few comments in relation to the Minor Maintenance Agreement scheme operating with local councils.

Officer/Joint LAF sub group comment:

It was agreed that there was no need to make any significant alterations to the proposed actions under this aim based on the responses, apart from to make sure that the offers of help/assistance are reflected in the 'Key Partners' column. The other comments will serve to reinforce the importance of the actions identified.

Q8 Do you have any further comments or suggestions?

These are summarised as follows:

- There was a lot of general support expressed for the document.
- More information was requested about the Non-Classified Highway (NCH) network and its relation to the PRow network.
- An Executive (plain English) Summary was requested.
- The need to make monitoring and review of the document more widely available to the public.

Officer/Joint LAF sub group comment:

The information about NCHs will be incorporated into the document and a public facing Executive Summary will be produced with the Public Relations team to explain what the document and actions mean to the general public.

Q9 Who are you answering this questionnaire as

Q9 Are you answering this questionnaire as (Please select one option only):

78% An individual

18% On behalf of an organisation (please specify)

38 responses received

4% Other

9 responses received

Q9 Answering on behalf of an organisation	Number of Responses
Parish Councils	12
Other Local Authorities/Organisations	10
Local Community Groups	8
User Groups	15
Responses	45

Thirty eight organisations responded to the on-line questionnaire and a further seven responded by other means.

The fifteen user groups represented nine walking groups, three horse riding groups, two cycling organisations and one group against motorised vehicle use.

The ten other Local Authorities/Organisations included two adjacent local authorities, two borough councils, Peak District National Park Authority, National Forest Company, National Farmers Union, the two LAFs and Natural England.

Q10 to Q13 are questions related to respondent demographics

Q10 Are you male or female? 62% Male 38% Female

Q11 What was your age on your last birthday? (Please specify age in years) years

Q12 To which of these groups do you consider you belong (Please select one option only)

<input type="checkbox"/> 91% White - British	<input type="checkbox"/> <1% Black/Black British	10 responses received
<input type="checkbox"/> 2% White - Other	<input type="checkbox"/> 0% Asian/Asian British	
<input type="checkbox"/> 2% Mixed	<input type="checkbox"/> 5% Other (please specify)	

Q13 Do you consider yourself disabled? (Please select one option only)

<input type="checkbox"/> 90% No	<input type="checkbox"/> <1% Yes, affecting vision	<input type="checkbox"/> 3% Other (please specify)	4 responses received
<input type="checkbox"/> 5% Yes, affecting mobility	<input type="checkbox"/> 0% Yes, a learning disability		
<input type="checkbox"/> 2% Yes, affecting hearing	<input type="checkbox"/> 0% Yes, mental health needs		