

A428 Black Cat to Caxton Gibbet improvements

TR010044

Volume 9

9.96 Applicants comments on the Joint Authorities' Brief Feasibility
Study for a new NMU link between St Neots and Cambourne

Planning Act 2008

Rule 8(1)(k)

Infrastructure Planning (Examination Procedure) Rules
2010

January 2022

Infrastructure Planning

Planning Act 2008

**The Infrastructure Planning (Examination Procedure)
Rules 2010**

**A428 Black Cat to Caxton Gibbet
improvements
Development Consent Order 202[]**

**9.96 Applicant's comments on the Joint Authorities' Brief
Feasibility Study for a new NMU link between St Neots and
Cambourne**

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Author	A428 Black Cat to Caxton Gibbet improvements Project Team, National Highways

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1 Introduction

- 1.1.1 The Development Consent Order (DCO) application for the A428 Black Cat to Caxton Gibbet improvements scheme (the Scheme) was submitted by National Highways (the Applicant) to the Secretary of State for Transport via the Planning Inspectorate on 26 February 2021 and accepted for Examination on 23 March 2021.
- 1.1.2 During Issue Specific Hearing 5, Cambridgeshire County Council, Huntingdonshire District Council and South Cambridgeshire District Council (referred to henceforth as the Joint Authorities) were asked by the Examining Authority to prepare an A428 Non-Motorised User (NMU) linear route (pre) feasibility report to include the level of land take required and comment on deliverability within the existing built highway (see item no. 20 of **[EV-092]**).
- 1.1.3 This document sets out the Applicant's comments on the Joint Authorities' Brief Feasibility Study for a new NMU link between St Neots and Cambourne **[REP6-065]**.

2 General Comments

2.1 Introduction

- 2.1.1 A feasibility study is a preliminary study undertaken very early on following a project's emergence when there is doubt or controversy regarding the proposed development or when the project is large or complex.
- 2.1.2 Typically, a feasibility study would consider all of a project's relevant factors including technical, legal and economic aspects as well as programming considerations. Only through consideration of these points can the necessary analysis of any proposal be sufficient to determine its viability.
- 2.1.3 The Joint Authorities aspiration for an NMU route along the existing A428, as stated in the Joint Authorities' Written Summaries of Oral Representations made at Issue Specific Hearing 5 [REP6-067] was identified as early as 2006 with the first Rights of Way Improvement Plan (ROWIP) – see Appendix A. As early as 2016, it has been documented within the Joint Authorities' Transport Investment Plan. It is clear therefore that this has been a consideration of the Joint Authorities for many years.
- 2.1.4 This section outlines the Applicant's general comments on [REP6-065] and explains why [REP6-065] does not demonstrate the viability of an NMU route alongside the existing A428 from Cambridge Road junction to Caxton Gibbet junction.
- 2.1.5 For the purpose of this document, the Applicant has defined an NMU route as allowing for walkers, cyclists and horse-riders with the necessary separation from the carriageway and highway boundary/top of embankment in line with the Joint Authorities' aspirations. The Applicant, in accordance with DMRB CD143, has derived the overall width of the provision to be 5.3m as set out in the **Figure 2-1**.

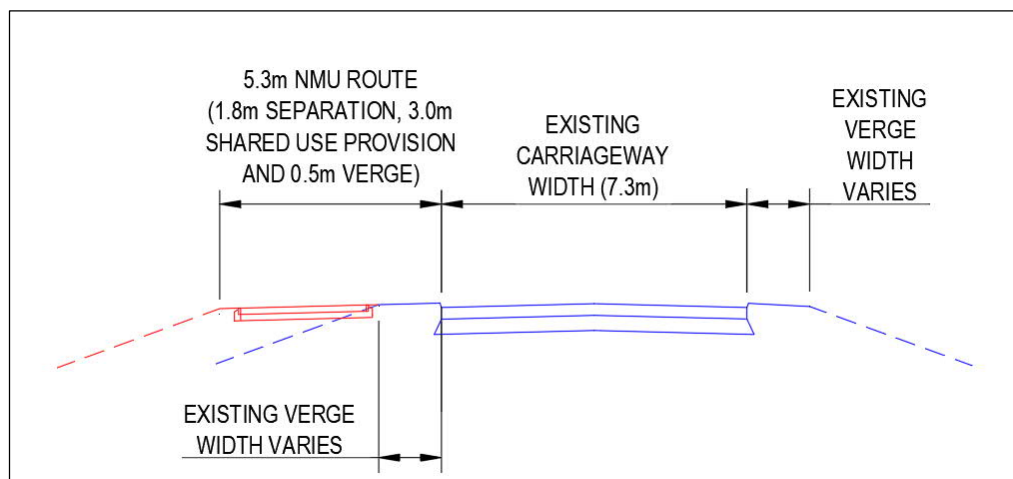


Figure 2-1: NMU route in accordance with DMRB CD143

- 2.1.6 The Applicant acknowledges and concurs with the Joint Authorities' conclusion that land acquisition is necessary in order to achieve an NMU route alongside the existing A428 and for any alternative away from the existing highway. However, the Applicant believes that extent of land acquisition required would be greater than stated as the Joint Authorities have not considered the impact of earthworks required or drainage ditch realignments as presented in an example scenario below. In this scenario the NMU route itself fits within the boundary, however the relocation of the ditch asset and boundary would require land acquisition to accommodate.

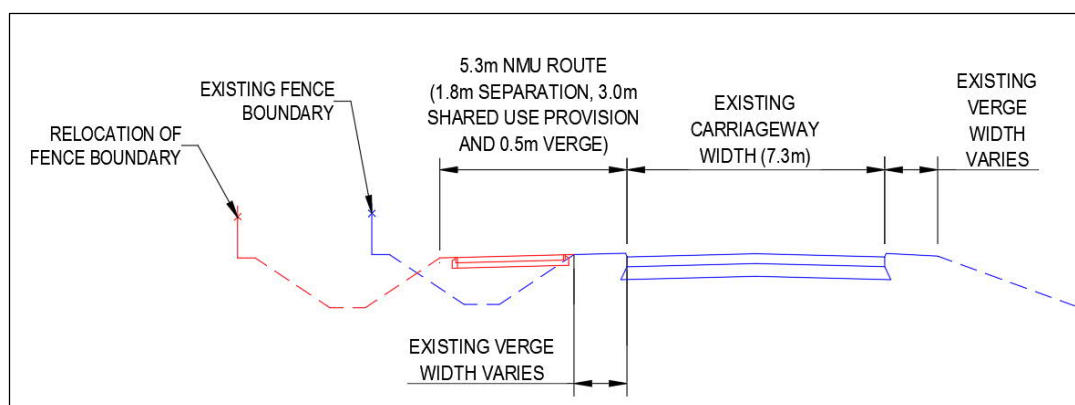


Figure 2-2: NMU route impact on boundary

- 2.1.7 Furthermore, as the Examining Authority will be aware from their unaccompanied and accompanied site visits, the existing A428 corridor is heavily vegetated and in most cases an impact to the verge widths and hence boundary will most likely result in loss of mature vegetation and potentially loss of agricultural land. Through the DCO Examination, the National Farmers' Union and Interested Parties have made representations that the Applicant should minimise loss of agricultural land. To provide an NMU route without need or justification is contrary to these representations.

2.2 Need

- 2.2.1 The Applicant has developed proposals for the Scheme according to the scope provided by the Department for Transport. To do this, the Applicant uses an established delivery process (Project Control Framework) that National Highways applies to all major projects which assesses the usage and projected future use of its development to determine the appropriate level of provision for road users and non-motorised users alike.
- 2.2.2 This established delivery process ensures the Applicant adheres to the requirements of the Planning Act 2008 when determining the extent of land over which powers of compulsory acquisition are sought when applying for an order granting development consent.

- 2.2.3 The Applicant must demonstrate that the land over which powers of compulsory acquisition are sought is necessary for the Scheme to proceed and also that there is a compelling case in the public interest for the land to be acquired compulsorily. To support the application for the Scheme, a Transport Assessment [**APP-241 and APP-242**] and an Economic Case [**APP-240**] have been provided that warrant the use of public money for the stated benefits.
- 2.2.4 To prepare the Transport Assessment and Economic Case, the Applicant has undertaken Optioneering, Consultation, Preliminary Design and an Environmental Assessment through the established delivery process to determine the best and most practical solution. In producing [**REP6-065**] the Joint Authorities have not given detailed consideration to matters of design, cost nor impacts on the environment. Therefore, the conclusions of [**REP6-065**] are not considered to be robust.
- 2.2.5 For the Non-Motorised Users, the Applicant conducts a Walkers, Cyclists and Horse Riders Review and Assessment which surveys the usage of a route. In the case of the Scheme, this has been supplemented with further NMU surveys. This level of assessment gives the Applicant the confidence that any land take required is justified in accordance with the requirements for compulsory acquisition under the Planning Act 2008.
- 2.2.6 Within [**REP6-065**] prepared by the Joint Authorities, paragraph 1.1.2 expresses a need for a new NMU facility, stating 'experience from the Cambridge Guided Busway and A14 schemes both indicate that a new link would release significant suppressed demand for both leisure and commuter activities.' However, no documentary evidence of need is provided to substantiate this anecdotal statement.
- 2.2.7 Throughout the Preliminary Design and Statutory Procedures and Powers stages of the Scheme, the Joint Authorities have made many requests of the Applicant quoting the benefits these would provide. In accordance with the Applicant's duties, all feedback that has been received from stakeholders and Interested Parties has been carefully examined to determine its viability within the design proposals. The Applicant cannot accept design changes where the need or benefits have not been justified, especially where land acquisition or substantial additional cost is required. The Applicant has followed a detailed and prescribed process to reach its conclusions on the Scheme, including the appropriate NMU provision, to be taken forward, balancing many different considerations. [**REP6-065**] fails to provide evidence of the need or cost benefit of providing the NMU facility along the existing A428 which would alter the Applicant's original assessment and conclusions on NMU provision.

2.3 Costings

- 2.3.1 The Joint Authorities Transport Investment Plan (TIP) sets out the transport infrastructure, services and initiatives that are required to support the growth of Cambridgeshire.

- 2.3.2 The TIP is used to prioritise projects for more detailed scheme development and for allocation of available funds to prioritised schemes. The TIP is also used to identify funding gaps in order to inform future funding bids as opportunities arise.
- 2.3.3 As the A428 NMU route has been included within the TIP by the County Council since 2016, it would be expected that indicative estimations of the likely investment required would have been known to the County Council and presented within **[REP6-065]**. However, there has been no details provided of any high-level cost estimation required or attempts to seek funding to deliver this provision to date. If the Joint Authorities viewed this provision as essential, more detailed information would have been available to present as part of **[REP6-065]**.
- 2.3.4 The Applicant further notes that any improvements to the highway network within the Joint Authorities' administrative areas is not the sole responsibility of the Applicant to deliver. This is acknowledged within the Joint Authorities Statement of Action in the ROWIP 2006:
- 'These priorities are not within the County Council's capacity to deliver alone. Partnership working will be at the heart of any significant improvement to countryside access in Cambridgeshire. It is also true that some actions will be more easily achieved while others will require substantial funding and co-operation between other parties over an extended period of time.'*
- 2.3.5 Within responses to the various submissions made by the Joint Authorities over the examination, the Applicant has been clear that when improvements sought by the Joint Authorities are outside the proper scope of the Scheme, this does not prevent the Joint Authority from pursuing their objectives. Funding of countryside access should not be solely reliant on delivering improvements to the Strategic Road Network whether through optioneering, design and/or construction.
- ## 2.4 Environmental Impact
- 2.4.1 The Applicant would expect as part of a feasibility study that the Joint Authorities would have greater consideration for the environment, in particular the significant mature vegetation along the route, especially in close proximity to Croxton Park, a Schedule Monument.
- 2.4.2 The Applicant has provided within the application documents Tree Constraints **[APP-184 and APP-185]** and Tree Protection Plans **[APP-186 and APP-187]** which details the extent of the vegetation and the root protection area.
- 2.4.3 The Applicant estimates that in order to construct a 5.3m wide provision (excluding any earthworks and drainage works) as per Figure 2-1 on the northern side of the existing A428 there would be a loss of approximately 33% of the mature vegetation and associated habitats.
- 2.4.4 Furthermore, the increase of additional material required would result in other impacts, for example an increase in the Scheme's carbon budget, and the requirement for additional or deeper borrow pits. In addition, there would also be construction effects associated with noise, dust and ecological receptors, which have not been assessed as part of the Scheme.

2.5 Design Constraints

- 2.5.1 The Applicant would expect as part of a feasibility study that the Joint Authorities would have greater consideration for design constraints other than general width. For example, consideration has not been given to utilities, drainage, earthworks and/or structures.
- 2.5.2 With regards to utilities, the Applicant notes that the route is used predominately by power, telecommunications, and water undertakers – these all may require diversion giving rise to additional impacts on local communities during construction.
- 2.5.3 With regards to drainage, the Applicant notes that the provision would add a significant additional impermeable area over the length of the route (of the 9km between Cambridge Road and Caxton Gibbet junction approximately 6.4km does not have an NMU link) that would require a significant increase to the capacity of the drainage network and the potential for additional attenuation and outfalls. In addition, the Applicant envisages that due to the widening of the verge to accommodate the NMU route, earthworks and drainage ditch realignment would be required, which would in most cases have subsequent impacts on the mature vegetation and highway boundary/land acquisition.
- 2.5.4 With regards to structures, the Applicant notes that there are cross carriageway culverts that would need to be extended to accommodate the NMU route.
- 2.5.5 The Joint Authorities have acknowledged numerous locations where existing highway furniture would need to be removed/relocated but does not detail the subsequent impacts. If the verge is to be widened for such provision, then this will have additional impacts on mature vegetation and highway boundary/land acquisition.

2.6 Wider Developments

- 2.6.1 The Applicant notes that there are two significant developments within the Joint Authorities administrative boundary, Wintringham Park and Cambourne West, which sees over 5000 new homes, schools, retail facilities and commercial properties.
- 2.6.2 It is reasonable to be expected that the Joint Authorities, as part of their approach to strategic planning, seek improvement to the public right of way network (inclusive of roadside facilities) to provide facilities for and mitigate the impacts created by these developments. The Applicant's network, the SRN, is not a source of trip generation (i.e. housing) nor is it a destination (places of work, education, retail) – these come solely from development sites. It is the Joint Authorities' responsibility to ensure that the impacts from these developments on the highway network (both the road and NMU network) is sufficiently mitigated and enhanced in line with their aspirations and local policy requirements. From a review of the Wintringham Park and Cambourne West development planning applications, these contribute little to the wider NMU network. If contributions for wider NMU improvements have been made to the Joint Authorities via Section 106 payments, the Joint Authorities are then responsible to fund this provision.

2.6.3 **[REP6-065]** presents scenarios where the Joint Authorities expect the Applicant to enhance the local network, but, in fact, this should be the responsibility of the Joint Authorities and developers in providing facilities and mitigating impacts from consented local developments. It is not the sole responsibility of the Applicant to enhance the public right of way network (inclusive of roadside facilities) based on impacts from others.

2.7 Designated Funds

2.7.1 The Applicant has made the Joint Authorities aware of the National Highways Designated Funds process as a mechanism to seek funding for enhancements to NMU provision.

2.7.2 This mechanism has delivered the preliminary design of the footway/cycleway along St Neots Road (Gap 1a) in consultation with the Joint Authorities. In addition, Designated Funds has enabled the delivery of the Papworth Everard to Caxton Gibbet roundabout NMU provision, currently being constructed.

2.7.3 The Applicant has recently secured feasibility funding (Jan 2022) to assess, price and develop proposals for the following proposals:

- a. Cambourne to Madingley Mulch WCH route (8km).
- b. St Neots to Cambourne WCH route (12km).
- c. Eltisley to Caxton Gibbet junction WCH route (0.65km).
- d. A new crossing of the existing A428 at Wintringham (0.2km).

2.7.4 Whilst National Highways will fund and deliver the feasibility study, the Joint Authorities will be required to input into the feasibility study, particularly in relation to whether the County's standards for NMU provision can be met. If the enhancements for the provisions can be feasibly delivered, the Applicant will work with the Joint Authorities to submit further applications for Designated Funds to deliver the proposals.

3 Specific Comments

3.1 Section 1 and 1a – Caxton Gibbet/A1198 Junction to Cambourne Junction

Section 1

- 3.1.2 This section of NMU provision the Joint Authorities seek is an enhancement to the local highway network following the introduction of 2350 new residential dwellings on the Cambourne West development (Planning Reference - S/2903/14/OL). As such, and to the extent that a need for this enhancement had been identified, provision for this should have been sought as part of the Cambourne West development.
- 3.1.3 In addition, the planning application for the Cambourne West development includes modification to Cambridge Road, Cambourne (USRN 35307629) as shown in Appendix B – Cambourne West Development Planning Application Improvements. Furthermore, if works were constructed as part of this Scheme, they would likely require future amendment to facilitate the Cambourne West development.
- 3.1.4 The Joint Authorities indicate that there 'should be' sufficient space available and therefore the feasibility of this route is still not determined.
- 3.1.5 The Applicant notes the presence of an underground utility in this verge, the close proximity of a drainage ditch (including culvert under Cambridge Road (USRN 35307629), lighting and vegetation (including potential habitats) which has not been assessed in the feasibility of this route.

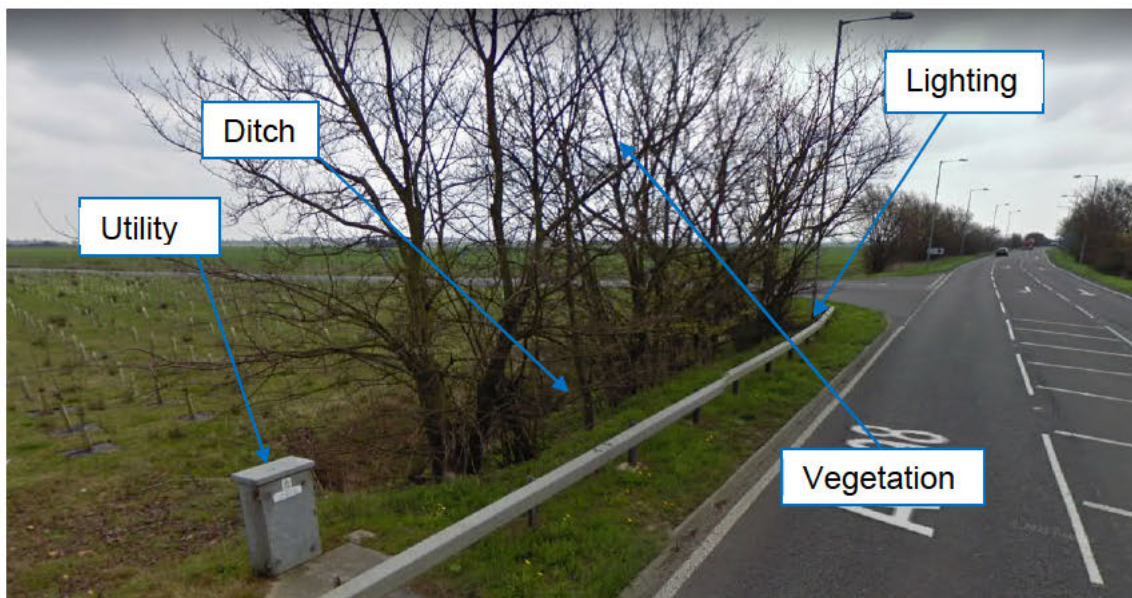


Figure 3-1: Section 1 Constraints Example

Section 1a

3.1.6 As mentioned above in paragraph 2.6.3, the Applicant is not solely responsible for the delivery of enhancements to the local network. However, through Designated Funds, the Applicant has commissioned the preliminary design of this route. Notwithstanding this, the Applicant considers that the Joint Authorities should commit to secure funding for the detailed design and construction of the NMU provision in this location.

3.2 Section 2 – Caxton Gibbet to Eltisley

3.2.1 The Applicant has addressed matters raised concerning an NMU link between Eltisley and Caxton Gibbet in the following representations:

- a. REP1-021 in response to RR-013, RR-048 and RR-100, sub-reference bh.
- b. REP3-008 in response to REP1-048, sub-references az and bc.
- c. REP3-009 in response to REP2-003, sub-reference aq.
- d. REP4-037 in response to WQ2.11.6.1 part d).
- e. REP5-014 in response to REP4-058, sub-reference w and REP4-060, sub-reference ax.
- f. REP6-034 in response to REP5-022, sub-reference k

3.2.2 As stated in paragraph 2.7.3, a Designated Funds application has been recently secured for the feasibility study to assess, price and develop proposals for this link.

3.3 Section 3 and 4 – West of Eltisley

Section 3

3.3.2 The Applicant notes that there is no existing provision along Section 3 and that the existing footway that crosses the A428 at the B1040 junction, diverts users through Eltisley village, where those NMU users who wish to travel to Cambourne can use bridleway 74/1. This route is more direct and away from the carriageway, creating a better environment for the users.

3.3.3 The Joint Authorities have not given any consideration to these options/alternatives within the feasibility study to ensure or define the best solution.

Section 4

3.3.4 The Applicant notes the existing width of NMU provision and reiterates that in this location along the A428 an NMU provision in accordance with Figure 2-1 cannot be achieved without significant impacts to the mature vegetation itself or the root zones, or in certain locations the need for additional land acquisition.

3.3.5 The Joint Authorities acknowledge the need for local 'pinch points' along the route, but the Applicant believes that this applies to the majority of the route and is not localised to pinch points. The Applicant refers the Examining Authority and the Joint Authorities to the Tree Constraints Plans within [APP-184] and [APP-185] which demonstrates the close proximity of trees and the associated root zones within the area.

3.4 Section 5 – Croxton

3.4.1 The Applicant acknowledges the Joint Authorities confirmation that the existing width at the western end of the section is not sufficient to deliver the enhancements proposed. However, the Applicant considers that this will be the case for a much larger area and that an NMU provision in accordance with Figure 2-2, will require not only embankment modification but drainage ditch realignment which would impact on mature vegetation and potentially require additional land acquisition. Furthermore, residential properties and frontages may be impacted by the NMU provision.

3.4.2 The Applicant acknowledges the Joint Authorities confirmation that the existing verge width at the eastern end of the section (approximately 300m in length) has sufficient width on the southern side of the A428 for an NMU provision.

3.5 Section 6 and 7 – Croxton to Eltisley Manor

3.5.1 The Applicant acknowledges the Joint Authorities confirmation that the existing corridor at the eastern end of the section is not of sufficient width and therefore is not feasible. The Applicant notes the alternative outside of the Order Limits, or that proposed in paragraph 2.7, would require additional land acquisition for which the Joint Authorities have not provided sufficient justification.

3.5.2 In addition, the Applicant considers that there are other alternatives that the Joint Authorities have not considered. For example, the Joint Authorities through their own powers could consider upgrading footpath 1/13, part of 1/17, 1/8, 59/4 and 59/2 (PRoWs south of the existing A428 between byway 1/7 and Croxton High Street) to bridleways to facilitate an alternative.

3.5.3 The Applicant acknowledges the Joint Authorities confirmation that the verges are generally wider at the western end of the section and notes that there is still a high likelihood that mature vegetation would need to be removed to facilitate this section. Furthermore, the Joint Authorities have not considered the need for utilities diversion and culverts extension with associated ditch realignments that would be required to facilitate this route.

3.6 Section 8 and 9 – Wintringham and Cambridge Road Junction

3.6.1 The Applicant considers that the existing verges are insufficient to accommodate a 5.3m wide NMU provision and that this would require the removal of mature vegetation.

3.6.2 The Applicant acknowledges the Joint Authorities confirmation that the area is constrained and additional land acquisition would be required.

3.7 Section 10 – Cambridge Road Roundabout

3.7.1 The Applicant notes the gap in NMU provision from the Wintringham Park development to the local highway network and reiterates the Applicant is not the sole authority for delivering improvements to the local highway network. No evidence has been provided by the Joint Authorities that adequate provision for NMUs has not been secured as part of the Wintringham Park development and, if it has not been secured, why this is the case. The Applicant maintains their position that the NMU provision proposed for the Scheme is both proportionate, reasonable and does not sever communities.

3.8 Alternative Route Option

3.8.1 The Applicant acknowledges the Joint Authorities confirmation that the section of the existing A428 between Toseland Road and Cambridge Road junction is heavily constrained and that an NMU route is not feasible in this location without additional land acquisition.

3.8.2 Furthermore, **[REP6-065]** does not contain wider alternatives to find the best and most appropriate solution. There are likely to be other alternatives that will likely achieve the desired outcomes that should be considered. For example, reduction in carriageway width to minimise the land, drainage, earthworks, and vegetation impacts, whilst providing the added benefit of reducing driver speeds.

4 Conclusion

- 4.1.1 The Applicant considers that the Joint Authorities have not submitted evidence to substantiate the anecdotal need for the enhancement and whether this NMU route justifies the significant increase in cost, the increase in land acquisition (potentially through compulsory powers) and the impacts to the environment.
- 4.1.2 The Applicant considers that a shared NMU route along the existing A428 is not feasible without additional land acquisition and potentially significant impacts on the environment.
- 4.1.3 The Applicant further considers that such a facility is a significant piece of infrastructure which requires appropriate consideration through optioneering, consultation and an environmental assessment. An NMU link between Cambridge Road and Caxton Gibbet junction will require land acquisition, whether by agreement or compulsory purchase, and therefore any proposed option should present a robust case and have taken feedback from the landowners and general public.
- 4.1.4 The Applicant is willing to work with the Joint Authorities to consider options for NMU enhancement outside of the DCO process, but is of the firm view that the NMU enhancement sought is not necessary to mitigate the impacts of the Scheme and nor do they present reasonable opportunities to be delivered as part of the Scheme. The Applicant maintains the position that the proposed NMU routes of the Scheme are both proportionate and reasonable and will lead to enhancements of the NMU provision in the local area.
- 4.1.5 The Applicant has secured feasibility funding to assess, price and develop proposals for the NMU link between St Neots and Cambourne and will assist the Joint Authorities to submit further applications for Designated Funds to deliver the proposals, but this is separate to and outside of the DCO process.

Appendix A – Rights of Way Improvement Plan 2006

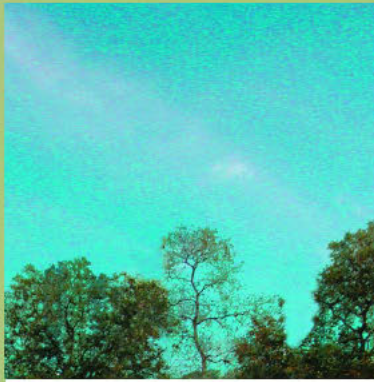


RIGHTS OF WAY

The Way Ahead

"To manage, improve and promote a Public Rights of Way network as an integral part of a wider transport system which meets the needs of the whole community for safe sustainable local transport, which improves public health, enhances biodiversity, increases recreational opportunities and contributes to the rural economy"

ROWIP Objective



A resource for
recreation,
healthy living
and sustainable
transport in
Cambridgeshire



Cambridgeshire
Rights of Way
Improvement Plan
(ROWIP)



Old River Nene from March Footpath 6

Executive summary

"[Would like to see] a network rationalised so routes are where people want to be rather than where history dictates"

"The council should be more proactive and less reactive to rights of ways opportunities"

"Fen Drayton nature reserve is on my doorstep and I use it daily for dog-walking, running and horse-riding. It is tranquil area with an abundance of wildlife which allows me to unwind after a busy day working in Cambridge."

*Public Consultation responses*¹

The Cambridgeshire Rights of Way Improvement Plan (ROWIP) has been produced to meet the requirements of the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000 (CROW). The ROWIP is required to contain an assessment of the extent to which local rights of way meet the present and likely future needs of the public, the opportunities provided by local rights of way for exercise and other forms of open-air recreation and enjoyment and the accessibility of local rights of way to blind or partially sighted persons and others with mobility problems.

The background to the Improvement Plan activity at Cambridgeshire County Council is considered, including both previous improvement initiatives such as the Milestones programme, and how the County has undertaken work on the ROWIP. Work within the ROWIP guidance provided by DEFRA and the Countryside Agency is described, together with work to integrate the ROWIP with the Local Transport Plan.

Existing improvement activities are reviewed. These include new rights of way and cycle routes, opening up access to a wider user base and using improvements to historic rights of way to help improve green corridors, which help biodiversity as well as access.

Rights of Way improvement is but one thread in the activities of the highway authority and its partners. The policy context for the ROWIP is reviewed, and relevant documents and policies are described. Although the Cambridgeshire Structure Plan fully recognises the importance of Rights of Way, the rapidly increasing development agenda in Cambridgeshire, given the central government M11 growth area initiative, makes this a vital time to establish countryside access in new policies. Liaison with the Districts is ensuring their inclusion in the new local planning documents.

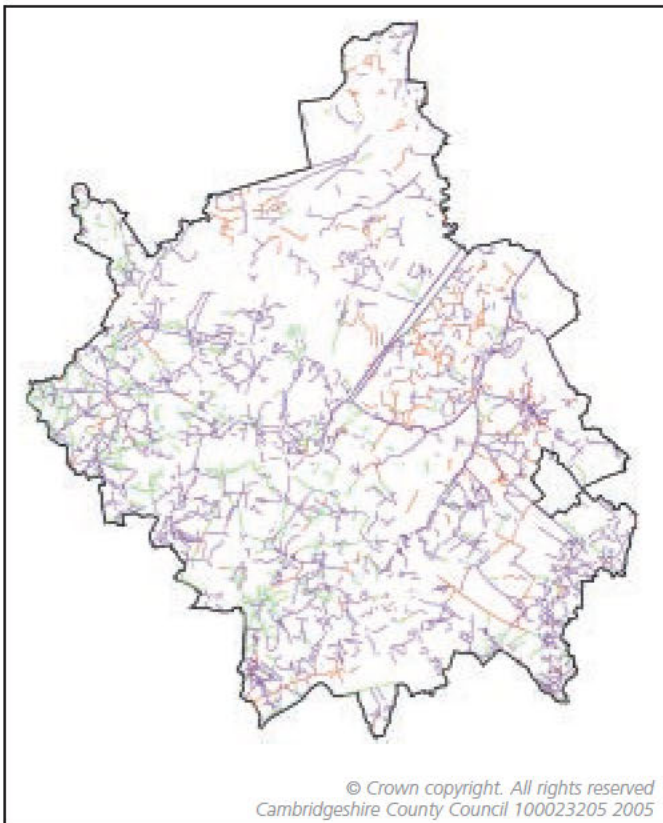
Delivery of significant improvements to countryside access in Cambridgeshire, together with improvements needed for better land management, will also be critically dependant on working in partnership. The contributions required from both internal and external partners are considered in detail.

Cambridgeshire is a distinctive county, with much of the northern and eastern part being at or below sea level. The particularities of the Fenland landscape are considered, together with other aspects of Cambridgeshire landscapes and history which make countryside access different from other counties, and which potentially mean that generic countryside access solutions are inappropriate.

An evaluation of the full range of countryside access within Cambridgeshire has been undertaken, at both strategic and local level. The effective absence of improved public access in Cambridgeshire through current 'open access' legislation puts a heavier burden on improvements to the rights of way network to meet user expectations. The following map shows the current county Rights of Way network. Even at this scale, it is apparent how disconnected the network now is without including roads.

¹ Quotes used throughout the ROWIP were taken from the public consultation carried out during 2004

Map 1 Rights of Way in Cambridgeshire



Map Key: Footpaths purple - Bridleways green - Byways red

Consultation with able bodied users and users with disabilities, landowners, rural businesses, neighbouring authorities and other interested parties has used questionnaires (paper and internet), focus groups, 1:1 interviews and questions in a regular corporate survey to determine views on current future countryside access provision. Together with an associated consultation on Strategic Open Space, nearly 3000 responses have thereby contributed to the preparation of the Plan.

The core of the plan is a Statement of Action, which prioritises the work the authority proposes to undertake to secure an improved network of local rights of way and access opportunities. Possible activities are presented under 8 general themes (below), with an indication of costs, timescales and who needs to be involved. A wider range of activities were presented in the draft ROWIP document and subsequently underwent a statutory consultation with stakeholders to create the thirty-two priority actions.

SOA1 Making the Countryside More Accessible

SOA2 A Safer Activity

SOA3 57,000 new homes

SOA4 Knowing what's out there

SOA5 Filling in the Gaps

SOA6 Better Land Management

SOA7 Develop Definitive Map and other Records

SOA8 A Better Countryside Environment

The possible activities were refined in response to the consultation feedback to reflect the issues that most concern people in terms of access to rights of way. The following guiding principles were provided to aid in the understanding of

the aims behind each section of the Statement of Action. These are as follows:

GP1 "Countryside access provision should be physically accessible to the widest possible range of people. Management and improvement of the existing Cambridgeshire rights of way network should aim to increase that accessibility, while new countryside access provision should generally be planned to avoid imposing restrictions. Where an existing path may not be fully accessible to those with limited mobility due to limits imposed by external constraints, such route limitations should be effectively communicated to users."

GP2 "Countryside access provision should be safe for users. Where significant potential conflict with motor traffic or railways can be demonstrated, then measures to reduce risk will be considered. Where rights of way are subsumed within urban development, then planners will be encouraged to ensure that path design is open and unthreatening. Safety-critical path infrastructure will be regularly inspected."

GP3 "New development should not damage countryside access provision, either directly or indirectly. New settlements should be integrated into the rights of way network, and improved provision made for the increased population. Where appropriate, development should contribute to the provision of new links and/or improvement of the existing rights of way network".

GP4 "Up to date, accurate, comprehensive and integrated access information should be made available to all users of countryside access provision."

GP5 "Countryside access provision should build on the platform of the historical network to meet the needs of today's users and land managers."

GP6 "Management and improvement of countryside access should consider the needs of land management, conservation, heritage and concern about rural crime."

GP7 "The Definitive Map and Statement should be an accurate, comprehensive, up-to-date and accessible record of the public rights of way network in Cambridgeshire. Proposals for legal changes to the network should be promptly resolved and cost-effective."

GP8 "The countryside access experience in Cambridgeshire should be straightforward, enjoyable and inspiring."

The ROWIP concludes with a consideration of what will need to be done to turn actions with wide support into improvements on the ground.

The ROWIP represents a significant opportunity to improve countryside access in Cambridgeshire through partnership working, reflecting the changes which development will bring to the county.

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Chinese Bridge at Godmanchester, linking town and country

What is this Plan about?

Cambridgeshire County Council has produced this Rights of Way Improvement Plan (ROWIP) after detailed auditing, assessment and consultation with stakeholders. Under the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000 (CROW), highway authorities must produce a ROWIP that contains an assessment of:

- The extent to which local rights of way meet the present and likely future needs of the public
- The opportunities provided by local rights of way for exercise and other forms of open-air recreation and enjoyment
- The accessibility of local rights of way to blind or partially sighted persons and others with mobility problems

The ROWIP should contain a statement of the action the authority proposes to take for the management of local rights of way, and for securing an improved network of local rights of way. Background information is available at

[REDACTED] or from DEFRA. The deadline for completion of the ROWIP is November 2007, but Cambridgeshire's Plan has been completed in 2005 as part of the County's Local Transport Plan (LTP). This schedule, faster than many other authorities, has been accelerated to reflect the pace at which Cambridgeshire faces development. This Improvement Plan will be evaluated by different criteria by both the Department for Transport (DfT) and the Department for the Environment and Rural Affairs (DEFRA), while it will also serve the Cambridgeshire expansion agenda being driven by the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister (ODPM).

The ROWIP builds on previous work, specific research and on new, detailed consultation with many interested people including the Local Access Forum, statutory advisors to the County Council on access issues. The Plan is intended as a strategy document; more detailed proposals at local level should build upon the principles agreed in this work. Despite the acknowledged length and complexity of this document, we hope that you will be able to contribute to a shared vision of improved countryside access in Cambridgeshire.

*There once were lanes in nature's freedom dropt,
There once were paths that every valley wound, -
Inclosure came, and every path was stopt;
Each tyrant fix'd his sign where paths were found,
To hint a trespass now who cross'd the ground:
Justice is made to speak as they command;*

*The high road now must be each stinted bound:
- Inclosure, thou'rt a curse upon the land,*

And tasteless was the wretch who thy existence plann'd.

John Clare's poetry is celebrated for insights into the countryside where the Northamptonshire limestone, Huntingdonshire clay and Fen peat meet. The then controversial 44th stanza from the *Village Minstrel* published in 1821 gives one view of changes to the accessibility of the Cambridgeshire Countryside. We hope that if Clare were once again to walk south from Helpston into modern-day Cambridgeshire he might look favourably upon this work.

1 Introduction



Sunset on the Washes

"I come from a very wild hilly area and when I first came here I thought I would hate it , but it grows on you and now I love the sense of space and the fens. There is a surprising diversity of wildlife in what looks at first glance like very intensively farmed land."

"Too much traffic. Many rights of way end up on very busy roads."

"More action against landowners who plough, crop, and otherwise obstruct paths. More waymarking."

Public Consultation responses

The rights of way network is a legally protected survival from an age before motor transport dominated. For many years regarded as a peripheral (and arguably under-funded) resource for recreation by a small number of users, the well-documented history of the 2001 Foot and Mouth epidemic established the value of countryside access to the rural economy.

The new vision of improved countryside access in Cambridgeshire builds on the rights of way network to bring benefits addressing transport, tourism, the rural economy, social integration, health, and the environment. In this project, we have considered current provision, contemporary user needs and aspirations and how to encourage non-users to take more exercise.

The work has dovetailed with a study on 'Strategic Open Space', undertaken in collaboration with the Districts under the auspices of PPG17, to better understand the opportunities for countryside access within Cambridgeshire. A wide range of issues has been analysed, and potential solutions identified.

The County values the grass-roots input, which has long informed the delivery of countryside access, and anticipates working with parishes and District Councils to ensure that future provision meets local needs as well as wider agendas. Delivery will be beyond the control or the capability and capacity of the highway authority alone, and will require a range of functions and organisations to work in partnership.

Quotations from the initial consultation carried out in 2004 have been used to introduce each section to point up the importance of the widest possible involvement in the future of countryside access in Cambridgeshire.

The range of issues which ROWIP guidelines, plan assessment criteria and established best practice expect to see considered is very wide. When coupled with the accelerating pace of change in Cambridgeshire, this makes for a significant body of work and a large document. It is hoped that the arrangement of data in this report will enable you to quickly find the material most relevant to your interests.

2 Background to this work



Footpath junction on edge of March

"The Fen Rivers Way provides superb safe walking whilst allowing a sense of wildness and peace"

"inevitably the more remote the decision making process the more bureaucratic it becomes"

"The council work [should] work with the Police to catch and prosecute the minority of 4x4 idiots who break existing laws and drive where they are not allowed and who give the rest of us responsible users a bad name"

Public Consultation responses

Cambridgeshire County Council is responsible for managing the Rights of Way network in Cambridgeshire. Most urban rights of way have previously been subject to agency management agreements with the City of Cambridge and the market towns, while surfaced paths have been managed on the ground by the County Council's Highway Divisions in tandem with road maintenance. Rural path management seeks to follow a joint countryside agenda with landscape, biodiversity and open spaces to provide a joined-up countryside policy. A variety of functions and organisations manage complementary provision which joins to provide a wider access network, albeit not yet as unified as might be desired.

Previous improvement initiatives have emphasised the documentation and ease-of-use of individual rights of way recorded on the Definitive Map and Statement. Improvements made under the Countryside Commission supported 'Milestones' programme concentrated on increasing the percentage of the network open for use by opening up blocked paths, installing bridges and providing finger posts to meet the highway authority's legal responsibility. Only a small percentage of the total registered path mileage remains to be re-opened, generally those paths that have suffered from uncontrolled development whereby diversion is a more realistic option than building demolition.

The intention of the CROW Act is that the ROWIP should look at improvements at the network level, with less emphasis on individual paths. The rights of way network should form a linear network, a subset of a wider countryside access linear network, itself a subset of accessible countryside.

The Cambridgeshire ROWIP project has followed the guidelines prepared by DEFRA. A Senior Access Officer was appointed with responsibility for the ROWIP, supported by CROW funding. An internal steering group was established, including representatives from the LTP (Local Transport Plan), tourism, walking, cycling and research. Support from elected council members and the Local Access Forum was also secured for the approach taken, and regular progress reports are made to these groups, raising the profile of ROWIP within the county and districts.

The Local Access Forum (LAF) was established under the terms of the CROW Act that required every local authority to set up a forum to guide and challenge the Council's work. The forum represents the interests of people who live and work in the countryside, and is trying to strike a balance between conserving it, working it and helping people to enjoy it. The role of the LAF is to advise the County Council and its partners on recreation and access strategies and comment on the ROWIP and other issues.

An early decision was made to aim to complete the work in time to be integrated with the 2005 Local Transport Plan. The lead officer attended a ROWIP training course at Lose Hill, and has liaised regularly with neighbouring authorities both individually and in an Eastern Counties ROWIP Forum. Notice has been taken where possible of the output from the Countryside Agency.

Research has included both internal work and externally contracted suppliers. Guidance suggests that the requirements of European Directive 2001/42/EC of 27 June 2001 on the assessment of the effects of certain plans and programmes on the environment (known as the "Strategic Environment Assessment") should be considered. This is seen as inappropriate for the Cambridgeshire ROWIP due to the limited environmental impact compared to the major development schemes (separately evaluated) to which it is tied.

3 What have we been doing before ROWIP?



The popular image of Cambridge

"The main points I would make are that the countryside in Cambridgeshire is very varied. Also that rights of way are well and correctly sign posted. This supported by an extremely helpful Rights of Way team allowing me to check what vehicular exist make Cambridgeshire and excellent place to live and visit."

"The river meadow footpaths, bridleways and byways in the Fen Drayton-Swavesey-Over Fen area afford serenity, solitude and huge vistas of blue sky, the silence broken only by woodpeckers or skylarks. Wonderful. At peace with yourself and nature."

"Many (if not all, to an extent) users of the countryside have a very selfish view of it, that they own it and somehow believe that anyone who crosses their path is an enemy."

Public Consultation responses

The popular image of Cambridge is often of college quadrangles, science parks and general prosperity. The reality is that Cambridgeshire as a whole is an especially diverse county, with areas of significant deprivation in the agricultural Fens to balance those who have benefited from technology start ups around the City. Landscapes vary from chalk to clay and from the tip of the Jussaric limestone to one-time islands on the peat.

Even before the enactment of the Countryside and Rights of Way Act, past projects have sought to improve countryside access in Cambridgeshire in a wide range of communities.

In the north, the County has worked with the Environment Agency, the British Horse Society, Riding for the Disabled and Fenland District to open up a new bridleway with permissive access for carriages along the manmade cut of the modern River Nene through the shrunken peat fields near Guyhirn.

In the east, the Devil's Dyke restoration project is improving the quality of chalk grassland biodiversity, heritage and access of the largest Dark Age earthwork in England in partnership with English Nature and English Heritage.

In the west, the old Bullock Road drove way running on the clay ridge above the busy modern A1M is being restored to its original width, providing a healthy green corridor between ancient woodlands managed by the Woodland Trust.

In the south, the Ashwell Street forms part of the prehistoric Ickniel Way into Hertfordshire. Another potentially valuable green corridor with an area comparable with a country park, where improvements depend on resolving local community concerns about fly tipping and unauthorised encampments.

In the City, new cycleways funded by the Local Transport Plan and developer contributions and a new Highway Agency bridge across the busy A14 provide safe and sustainable transport to school and work.

The common thread through these schemes is partnership working, which will be crucial to the delivery of this Plan.

4 Policy context



Competitor in a Frostbite League race near Swavesey

"I am 21 and since I have owned a 4x4 I have seen much more of the country side in the last year than I have in the previous 20 ... if I did not have this vehicle I would be at home watching TV rather than enjoying what the public have a right to see and use."

"... given the increase in crime and the need for personal safety I doubt in this day I would feel comfortable as a woman walking in these isolated spots."

"My main concern is as a horse rider. New bridleways are always welcome, especially when they link other routes. I have had a horse killed in a road accident ... so I am very aware of the lack of respect given to riders by drivers."

Public Consultation responses

The ROWIP builds on and seeks to develop existing policies agreed by elected members. Corporate Plan and Policy Framework Plans are expressed in 'Prospects 2005-2009', available on the CCC website.²

████████████████████ with the ROWIP addressing all three top level themes:

- 'A robust local economy' - countryside access makes a significant contribution to the rural economy
- 'Communities that are safe, healthy and free from social exclusion' - encouraging exercise is a crucial enabler
- 'A sustainable environment' - encouraging walking and cycling is key to sustainable transport.

Existing Countryside Services Team objectives and priorities are summarised in the team service plan, and achievements are reported annually. Past reports are published on the team web page and paper copies are available.

This work is driven by the policies enumerated in the 2003 County Structure Plan, which is available on the internet at <http://www.cambridgeshire.gov.uk/environment/planning/policies/structure+plan.htm>

Policies relevant to countryside access include:

- P2/6 Rural economy
- P4/1 Tourism, recreation and leisure strategy
- P4/2 Informal recreation in the countryside
- P4/3 Protection of open space and recreation facilities
- P7/2 Biodiversity
- P7/3 Countryside enhancement areas
- P7/4 Landscape
- P8/8 Encouraging walking and cycling
- P8/9 Provision of Public Rights of Way

Current team policies agreed by elected members relate to:

- Definitive Map charges
- Enforcement procedures
- Waymarking

Where there are no local policies, the Public Rights of Way Good Practice Guide published jointly by the Countryside Agency, the CSS (formerly the County Surveyors Society), the Institute of Public Rights of Way officers and the Local Government Association at ██████████ is generally followed.

The County works closely with District Councils. The current County Structure Plan policies remain in operation (i.e. they are 'saved') for a period of 3 years from commencement of the new planning legislation (September 2003), during which time they will either be replaced in the new regional spatial strategy or in the Districts' Local Development Framework/Documents. On a more local basis, many parishes have produced Parish Plans, while the Market Town Initiatives have done much to join up services in important rural centres.

As Highways, Rights of Way form a central part of the transport network, with a length comparable to that of the county road network. Local Transport Plan (LTP) priorities are Congestion, Accessibility, Safer roads, Air quality and Other Quality of Life Issues. Rights of Way can address all of these, especially those relating to sustainable travel, inclusive access, safety and improving public health, though it is recognised that some recreational use contributing to the rural economy is distinct. Two key LTP constituent strategies integrate with the ROWIP to embrace so-called 'soft transport modes' (i.e. non-motorised travel):

- Cambridgeshire Pedestrian Strategy
- Cambridgeshire Cycling Strategy

The ROWIP serves several aspects of the Department of Health 'Choosing Health - making healthy choices easier' White Paper, released in November 2004. It specifically addresses the major theme of 'increasing exercise' through active recreation, walking and cycling to school travel and active travel to work.

Other relevant plans and policies include:

- Health Improvement Plans
- Biodiversity Action Plan
- Neighbouring authority ROWIPs.

A fuller list of relevant policies, including those relating to LSPs and LDFs, can be found in Appendix 6.

² Documents available on the County Council website can also be made available in hard copy on request.

The ROWIP is both driven by and constrained by the legislative context. Particularly important primary legislation relates to the following topics:

- Highways
- Nature conservation including new duties under the CROW Act
- Flooding and pollution
- Disability discrimination

This ROWIP recognises that countryside access has to compete for resources with many other public services, but seeks to demonstrate that improved countryside access is a cost-effective means of providing better health, sustainable travel and a better quality of life for all the people of Cambridgeshire.

5 Rowing together - partnership working



Hemingford Inter-Village Regatta

"Footpaths need to be properly reinstated after ploughing, especially after they have been reported several times."

"Please don't urbanise the country with pretty signs, hard surfaces etc."

"The network of bridleways in the Witcham area, linking with the open access area in Ely along the road to March is more extensive than anywhere else I know."

"Negotiated permissive paths make an enormous difference to the accessibility of the countryside in south Cambridgeshire, for example in the Addenbrookes/Seven Wells area."

Public Consultation responses

A successful ROWIP will need to be delivered by many people working in partnership - it must not just be the responsibility of the Highway Authority. The table below seeks to give some flavour of the wide range of people, organisations and funding mechanisms, which may contribute to the effective delivery of the full range of ROWIP objectives.

People	Funding & Support	Outputs
CCC Rights of Way team	CCC Revenue	Healthier population
Local Access Forum	District Revenue	Sustainable journeys
CCC Highways	PCT revenue	Stronger rural economy
CCC County Farms	Local Transport Plan	Net gains in biodiversity quantity and quality
Other CCC functions	Growth Area Delivery Grants	Safer access networks
Parishes	Specific Agency grants	
Districts	Lottery funding	
ODPM	Landowner support	More inclusive access
DEFRA	Individuals and companies	Fewer mobility restrictions
Countryside Agency		Easier land management
Environment Agency		More information on opportunities
Developers		Less abuse of countryside provision
Primary Care Trusts		Better designed new settlement
Neighbouring Authorities		Better legal record to defend network
		Appreciation of rural concerns
Users & user groups	Volunteer labour	Real people, real opportunities

6 Spirit of Cambridgeshire



Wet Fen at Fowlmere

"Cambridgeshire's unique flatland scenery and low population density makes country walking a unique experience. The landscape permits wide and extensive views of wildlife and scenery in conjunction with farmland and village life."

"There are not enough traffic-free cycle routes outside of Cambridge City. Many bridleways are too rutted and muddy for most of the year."

"My parents are now in their seventies and are not very mobile, I take them into the countryside in a Land Rover when I can. I think that access to all is important."

Public Consultation responses

6.1 Introduction

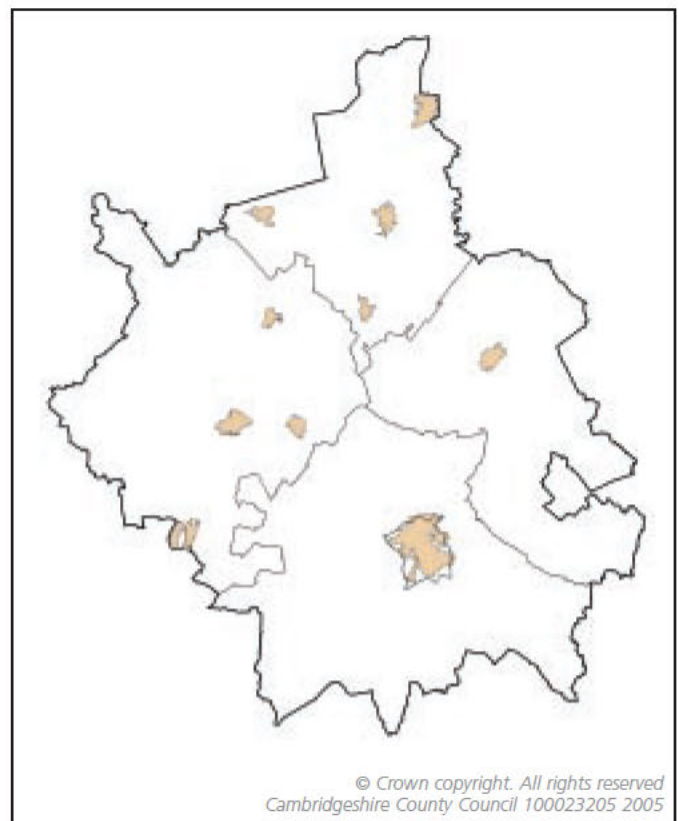
With no National Parks, no Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty, no National Trails, no Mountain/Moor/Heath or Down in the sense of 'Open Country', no Forest Parks and no coastline, Cambridgeshire is often accused of being flat and boring. In this section we try to bring out what is distinctive about our county, and why in the absence of other access provision, improving the rights of way network is uniquely important to the people of Cambridgeshire as the county moves into the 21st century.

With a population of 552,655 (2001 census) and an area of 3054km², current day Cambridgeshire is one of the less densely populated counties in England, albeit one of the most rapidly expanding (21.3% population increase 1991-2001). With 278 parishes, a similar number of villages, several market towns, an emerging new town, one small city (population 108,879) and another growing from a very small base, most of the county's population nevertheless lives in the more substantial settlements. Only a minority of the population lives in the rural and mostly arable countryside. The demand for countryside access is increased by the presence of the Peterborough Unitary Authority immediately to the North and by nearby towns in neighbouring authorities (see Map 2).

The county has a wide range of age groups with different service needs, but has low ethnic diversity by national standards. The county is prosperous with high levels of employment; unemployment was 1.7% in March 2001. The county is also a major transport corridor with a number of key road and rail links, while Stansted airport is close to the county boundary.

Map 2

Cambridgeshire's five districts and nine market towns



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6.2 Blue on the Map

A distinctive feature of the low-lying Cambridgeshire landscape is the extensive river and drainage network, often providing ribbons of natural land in an otherwise arable landscape. A problem peculiar to the otherwise valuable riverside path network is the 'missing link' due to the original towpath users boating horses over water barriers. A related problem is the discontinuance of historic river ferries. New and replacement bridges are necessarily expensive, given the need to preserve the navigation headroom and avoid impeding the floodplains.

6.3 Bricks and Tarmac

The workings of the Town and Country Planning Act have often been unkind to the network, with many post-war developments still blocking the line of definitive routes. Communication between planning and highway authorities is improving, but more still needs to be done to retain and improve key links in the path network. Central government requires significant development in Cambridgeshire, with the London-Stansted-Cambridge growth corridor recently having been extended to cover the whole county plus Peterborough. A total of 57,000 new houses are required, and while small on a national scale, this number will have a significant effect on a generally rural county. The new villages at Cambourne provide an example of generally constructive partnership between developers and the RoW team, including a perimeter bridleway and a managed relationship between haul roads and rights of way during construction. These principles are currently being further developed in the planning of the proposed new town at Northstowe. Alternative methods of funding will need to be identified in order to ensure adequate access provision for the increasing population.

Past County and Highways Agency (HA) road construction has significantly compromised RoW network connectivity, as have railway level crossing closures justified by safety but not replaced by bridges. Recent County road improvement plans such as the Papworth bypass have given better consideration to RoW and soft user requirements. Although the HA consulted during the planning of the A1M, the road as built unfortunately represents a missed opportunity. The proposed A14 improvements therefore represent a significant opportunity for users of the RoW network. The planning of the Cambridge to Huntingdon Guided Busway supported in the 2003 Local Transport Plan settlement has made a positive contribution to the RoW network with most of the maintenance track being made available as a dedicated bridleway.

6.4 Digging and filling holes

As a lowland county, Cambridgeshire has nationally significant reserves of sand and gravel. Unfortunately, these often lie in attractive areas of water meadows and riverside walks. While quarries have in the past significantly compromised Rights of Way while extraction is being undertaken and sometimes after, more recent schemes have accommodated improved public access and conservation interest in the restored landscape plans while minimising impact during extraction. For instance, 10km of new paths have been created at Needingworth. While exhausted quarries can be attractive for disposing of waste in landfill, land restored after landfill can be unavailable for countryside access for safety reasons. Careful attention needs to be paid to future aggregate extraction planning proposals and associated landfill to minimise landscape damage and maximise the opportunities presented when schemes are presented to meet national quotas.

6.5 Land management

Despite the protected status of RoWs, conflicts over land use cause continuing problems. The 1980 Highways Act allows barriers to be sanctioned by the Highway Authority for stock control and in the interest of public safety, but problems caused by fly-tipping, illegal access by motor vehicles and unauthorised travellers encampments are creating an increased demand for additional barriers in the countryside. Where unauthorised barriers are erected and legitimate users obstructed, conflict can arise. Power and communications utilities have powers to erect poles and stay wires on public highways, including rights of way, without consultation. Most poles are sensitively located, but some can present a significant blockage on narrower footpaths and bridleways. Stay wires can present a particular hazard to horse riders. Managing RoWs which cross SSSIs (Sites of Special Scientific Interest) and County Wildlife Sites requires additional planning and management effort, in order to protect fragile habitats and sensitive species, while IDB (Internal Drainage Board) and Environment Agency river maintenance, a quintessentially Cambridgeshire problem, can restrict new path routing and require temporary path closures. Generally, a range of public bodies may need to be consulted for even minor works, and the consequent delays can complicate work and add costs.

6.6 Drovers and Droveways

A feature of the Cambridgeshire Fen landscape is the drove, typically laid out in the Parliamentary Inclosures to give access from villages on higher ground to fields on the newly drained fenland. In the summer these are often attractive wide grassy corridors in an arable landscape, but in winter they can degenerate into a morass with heavy agricultural use. This is often not helped by lack of maintenance of drainage ditches. Landowners are increasingly seeking to surface droves, but often with inappropriate material, such as bricks, which can cause problems to horses. Agricultural encroachment in places reduces the drove width available to users. Future management needs to consider all uses of the droves, noting that some are rights of way, some are commons and some currently have no public access rights. Away from the Fen, additional wide droveways once provided alternatives to the turnpikes for cattle being driven to Smithfield. Of these, the best survival is probably the Bullock Road in Hunts, currently the subject of a modest improvement programme.

6.7 The Sport of Kings

A distinctive feature of the Cambridgeshire/Suffolk border associated with Newmarket is the increasing amount of land managed for the horse racing industry. There are concerns about the effect of public access when dogs are not kept under control, and horse gallops with soft surfaces have provoked complaints due to the difficulty of crossing them with wheelchairs. Managing access through areas fenced as horse paddocks without endangering valuable bloodstock can prove a difficult compromise to strike. Stiles are seen as a potential injury risk for the horses, but kissing gates are often not favoured either. Confining paths between fences is unattractive, and can cause problems with managing resultant surface vegetation growth.

6.8 Dark Age Earthworks

At one time four defensive dykes crossed the line of the A11 to separate the Midlands from East Anglia. Two of these substantially survive today - Devils Dyke and Fleam Dyke. Though shorter and less well known than Offas Dyke, Devil's Dyke in particular represents an impressive survival from the Dark Ages on a scale larger than that to be found even in the Welsh Marches, and is currently the subject of a five-year restoration project. The management of both dykes has to balance access, heritage and conservation, each being triply designated as right of way, ancient monument and SSSI. The time needed for consulting on the heritage and conservation issues involved in multiple interest sites has an impact on access management, requiring more forward planning, and in some cases, additional resources for surveys and technical solutions to protect all interests. Resolution of management conflicts should provide a model for elsewhere in the county.

6.9 Our own land

Cambridgeshire has the largest County Farm Estate in England, much dating from the aftermath of the First World War. The estate has more than 300 tenant farmers working over 13,500 hectares of land. Most of the farms are currently arable, but the Estate has a policy to encourage tenants to diversify their business and the estate is home to farm shops, horse liverys, sheep dairying and a children's nursery. The Estate encourages tenants to provide public access, often through the DEFRA support schemes. The land is managed to maximise commercial value, and a balance has to be struck between improving access and the effect on working or disposing of the land. However, the Estate does provide a significant opportunity both to support local agriculture and to provide environmental and access enhancements. Sites of public archaeological interest such as Stonea Camp are managed in partnership with the County Archaeological Service, with extensive interpretation and publicity.

6.10 Flying Fortresses and Tin Hats

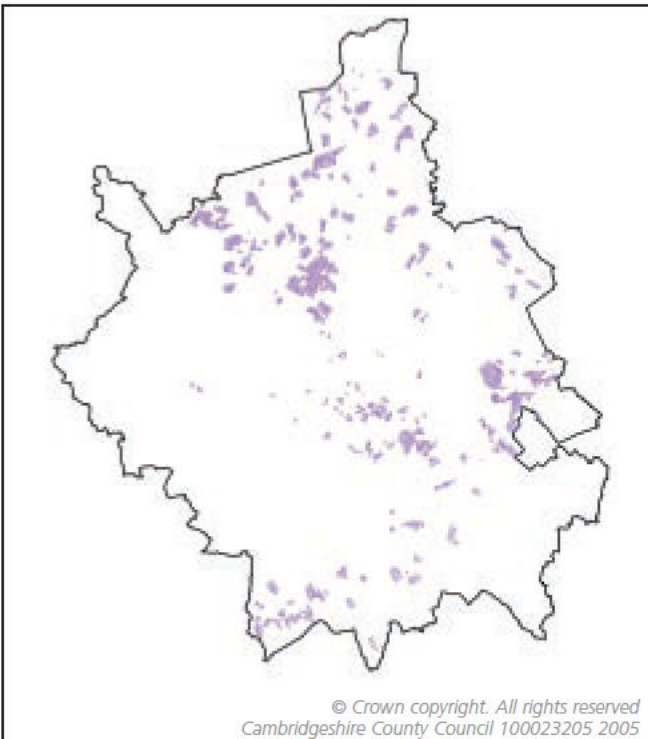
During the Second World War, many new airfields were constructed in Cambridgeshire as with much of Eastern England. Rights of Way that were extinguished when bases were operational have often not been restored when the land was returned to agriculture in time of peace. At the same time, the extension of runways and the building of weapons storage facilities to accommodate Cold War RAF and USAF deployments caused further network fragmentation. The continuing operation of some military facilities, e.g. RAF Wyton, Bassingbourne Barracks and Barton Road Rifle Range, still presents obstructions to users of the Rights of Way network due to security and safety considerations. Recent consultation by the Army Training Estate may lead to improvements in access in these areas.

6.11 Analysis by Parish

An analysis of parish countryside access provision has been undertaken. This considers many parameters including population, area, existing rights of way, woodland and rivers, and seeks to score parishes according to facilities. Scoring criteria are currently being developed. Communities that are especially badly served may thereby be identified. This information is too large for inclusion in this document and may be seen on request. This work should help inform more detailed decisions about competing candidates for improvements at parish level, once more strategic priorities have been established.

Map 3

Cambridgeshire County Farms Estate



7 Countryside Access Provision in Cambridgeshire



Bridleway road crossing at Cambourne

“Every village should have a rights of way notice board dedicated to rights of way matters in the parish including large maps of routes / a map of these routes on sale in local shops, pubs and restaurants.”

“The countryside in Cambridgeshire is varied and ever changing. The population of the county should have the chance to use all existing public rights of way with particular consideration to conservation and ecology, without a small vocal minority ruining the access for everyone else.”

Public Consultation responses

7.1 Public Transport and River Navigation

The major regional airport is over the border into Essex, at Stansted, with budget airlines bringing many tourists to the region. Stansted is connected by both bus and rail to Cambridge. More limited airline services operate from Cambridge - currently only to Jersey. There are 16 railway stations in Cambridgeshire. An electric outer suburban service operates on the East Coast Main Line, feeding into long distance services at Peterborough. Further electric suburban services operate though Cambridge to Kings Lynn, from both Kings Cross and Liverpool Street, with commuter stations in the south of the county. Less frequent diesel services connect Cambridge with Norfolk and Suffolk, with some minor stations served by relatively few services. The Nene Valley Railway tourist steam railway links into Peterborough; there are proposals to extend this further into Cambridgeshire and link with a riverboat service.

Access to the countryside is available by public transport from many towns in the county and there are two bus companies competing on the Cambridge to Huntingdon route, a corridor that will also be served by the proposed guided bus. A range of services operates through the remainder of the county, with County Council support for non-commercial social services. Sunday services tend to be sparse; there is currently no specific service targeted at countryside attractions, though the Imperial War Museum at Duxford does operate a shuttle from Cambridge. A range of community buses and voluntary transport schemes also operate. Further information from the county council public transport section is available on the internet at:

and timetable information can be obtained for selected bus-stops as a pilot by mobile text messaging, or more generally by telephone from Traveline on 0870 608 2608.

The large Cambridgeshire waterways network supports a substantial boating industry, with a range of boat charter businesses. The Nene provides a link into the British Waterways network at Northampton, though this is currently circuitous. There are proposals for new waterway links both west into the canal network at Milton Keynes via Bedford and north into Lincolnshire.

7.2 The Highway Network

The Highways Agency (HA) which looks after motorways and trunk roads espouses sustainable travel within limited resources (see for example). Motorways have public access rights, but only for motor vehicles (there are no toll motorways or toll bridges in Cambridgeshire).

Crossing motorways is therefore an issue for other users if bridges or underpasses are not provided. The M11 runs through the south of the county while the A1M runs through the north, totalling 34km. Maintenance is undertaken by contractors on behalf of the HA. Trunk roads, including the A14, A428, A11 and A47 are often so busy as to be impractical to cross, especially by horse. High traffic densities also make it dangerous to use these roads as linear links, even though many rights of way terminate on trunk roads, effectively ‘dead-ending’ the routes. Some trunk roads have local provision for soft users on verges or footways, but this information is not apparently made easily available to the public. Trunk roads total 246km. Maintenance is undertaken by contractors on behalf of the HA.

The County Council looks after the remainder of the public road network in Cambridgeshire. Historically roads were classified as follows:

A roads (not trunk)	405km
B roads	555km
C Roads	1060km
U roads (unclassified)	2320km
Total	4340km

The National Street Gazetteer, available to officers in graphical form through the county GIS system, identifies individual road classifications, though there is not a 100% correlation between different record sets. While Ordnance Survey maps identify Rights of Way and A,B and C roads, unclassified roads can be difficult for the user to distinguish from private roads, as both

are simply represented as 'white roads'. More recent OS maps have sought to identify 'other access', but the basis of this classification in Cambridgeshire is based on a subjective selection [letter from Ordnance Survey, November 2004]. By comparison with some other counties, Cambridgeshire does not have a significant network of unsurfaced public roads - most have either once been surfaced (whatsoever their current condition) or are now classified as byways.

The 'maintenance hierarchy' for roads better reflects the current usage and the role of the highway.

Category	Length	Inspections
Strategic route	173km	1 month
Main distributor road	300km	1 month
Secondary distributor road	320km	1 month
Link roads	849km	3 months
Local access roads	2699km	annual
Total	4342km	

Footways or pavements are part of the Public Highway, but are legally defined as being distinct from public footpaths even though they both have a public right of way on foot only. An earlier estimate of 3869km for the total footway length was simply based on road classification. A road survey currently in progress (**) should better identify where footways are located. Footways also have a maintenance hierarchy:

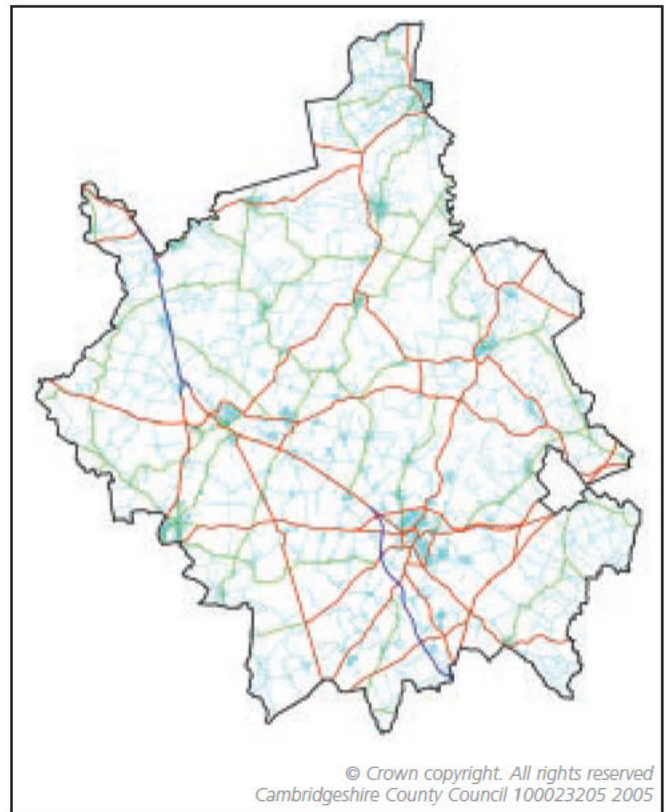
Category	Length	Inspections
Prestige walking zone	17km	1 month
Primary walking routes	31km	1 month
Secondary walking routes	65km	3 months
Link footways	**	6 months
Local access footways	**	annual
Total	**	

(** data to be collected by 2007, as above).

Cycleways are routes specifically designated for cyclists. It is normally permitted to walk along cycle ways except when they are in or by the side of a made-up carriageway. Cycle Tracks have specific legal status, and are not shown on the Definitive Map & Statement. There are 100km of cycle ways, which are part of the highway, and 160km, which are surfaced but remote from the highway (inspected at 6 month intervals). Of these, approximately 38km are cycle tracks. Cycle trails (such as the Sustrans network) generally have gravel surfaces and are inspected annually. There is as yet no single source available to the public describing all cycleways in the county.

Verges at the side of the roads are maintained by the highway authority, who have a duty to maintain them so that they are suitable for the use of horse riders. In practice, road verges are not specifically recorded, other than the 90 protected verges, maintained principally for biodiversity. Urban verges are cut 5 times between April and September, rural verges have a swathe cut in April/May and June/July with a full cut in September/October (with an additional visibility cut for exceptional growth); protected verges are cut only once, late in the year. Verges are frequently obstructed by signage, road calming measures and drainage gullies. While some verges are managed for biodiversity, there is currently no specific access related management regime.

Map 4 Roads in Cambridgeshire from GIS

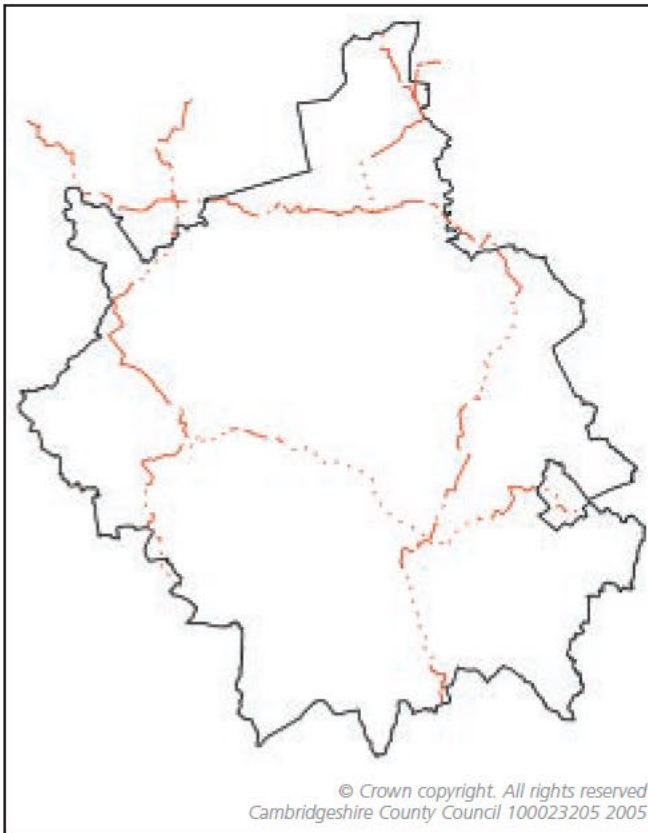


Map 5 Cycle routes in Cambridgeshire



Fuller details of management policies for Cambridgeshire Highways are published on the internet at [redacted] an internal document, the 'Network Service Plan 2004' provides details of the delivery plan to achieve these objectives.

Map 6

National Cycle Network in Cambridgeshire (dotted sections are yet to be completed)


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7.3 Public Rights of Way (ROW)

Public Rights of Way are highways that allow the public a right of passage over land, which is usually privately owned and managed. Common Law states that users can pass and re-pass along highways at all times. Footpaths, bridleways and byways are all highways, differing from roads only in the type of traffic entitled to use them and the variety of surface types. Like roads, RoW maintenance is the duty of the Highway Authority, except where the landowner is responsible for barriers, crops or (some) bridges. Once a RoW has been established it will remain until there is a legal event to either close, divert or extinguish it as a RoW. Contrary to what some believe, lack of use has no effect on the legal existence of a Right of Way.

- **BOATs** (Byways Open to All Traffic) provide rights to walk, ride a horse, cycle and drive any vehicle (motorised or horse drawn). While legal rights are similar to those of unclassified roads, byways are maintained principally for the use of riders and pedestrians. Management seeks to follow the principles enunciated in 'Making the Best of Byways' published by DEFRA in 1997.
- **RUPPs** (Road Used as a Public Path) are 'highways that are used by the public mainly for the purpose for which footpaths or bridleways are used'. Former Cambridgeshire RUPPs have now been reclassified as footpaths, bridleways or byways and none remain on the definitive map.
- **Restricted Byways** are a new category of Right of Way that can replace RUPPs. Restricted Byways will have rights for pedestrians, cyclists, horse riders and horse drawn carriage vehicles but not mechanically propelled vehicles, but with the previous reclassification of Cambridgeshire

RUPPs, they await new legal powers before they are possible in this county.

- **Public Bridleways** allow you the right to walk, ride or lead a horse. Cyclists may use bridleways, though technically 'not as of right', and must give way to other users. You do not have the right to take a horse drawn vehicle along a bridleway.
- **Public Footpaths** have the most restrictive rights, and provide users with the right to walk with any 'normal accompaniment' (e.g. dog, pram or a wheelchair). However, there is no right to ride or wheel a bicycle, nor to ride or lead a horse.
- Notwithstanding the Definitive Map, **unregistered public rights** may exist over any route, either through historic status or through the accrual of rights through use.
- **Private Rights** may coexist over a route, which has public access rights, but these are not subject to RoW Law.

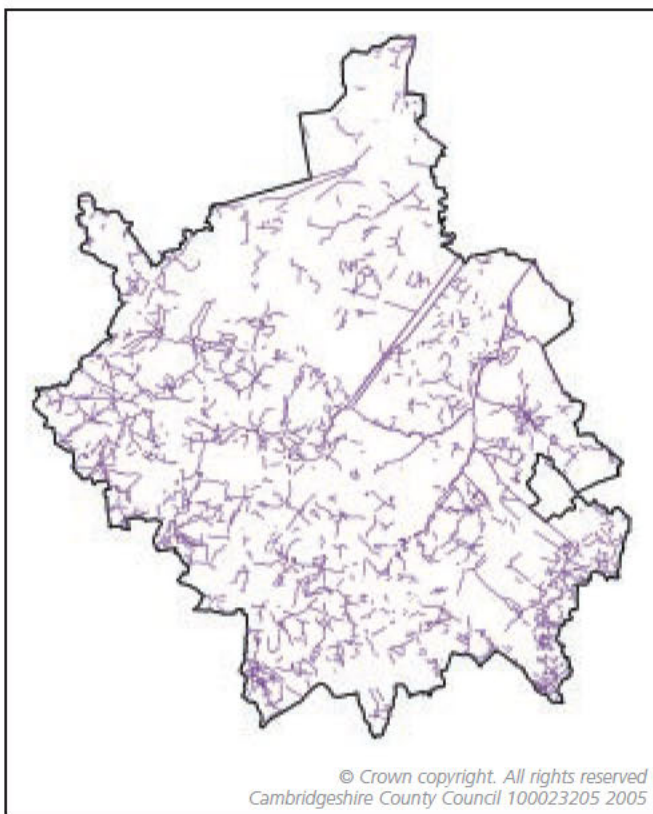
Cambridgeshire has an extensive network of RoW, mostly usable on the ground, mapped and managed by the County's Countryside Services Team, a service delivery arm of the County Council. Additional management is provided by the Highway Divisions (surfaced routes and cycle trails) and by partner organisations including districts and parishes. A good fraction of the network is well used by local people; with visitors increasingly walking promoted long distance paths and experiencing the managed natural areas in the fens. In September 2004, the Cambridgeshire Rights of Way database included 4009 registered paths, with length by status as follows:

Category	Length
Public Byways	402km
Public Bridleways	541km
Public Footpaths	2267km
Total	3210km

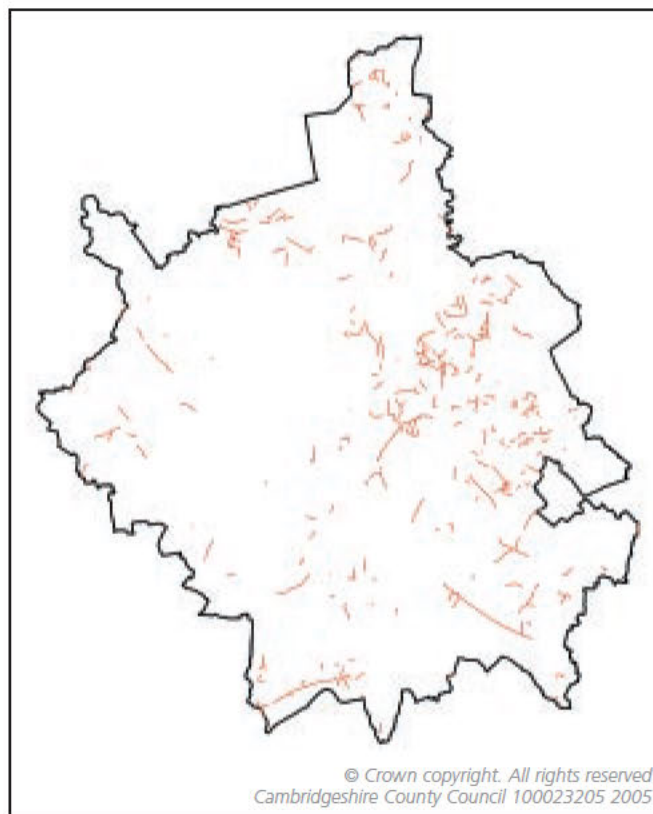
The database also includes 4490 structures and 4594 signs, though this is known to be incomplete.

The following maps illustrate the path distributions across the county.

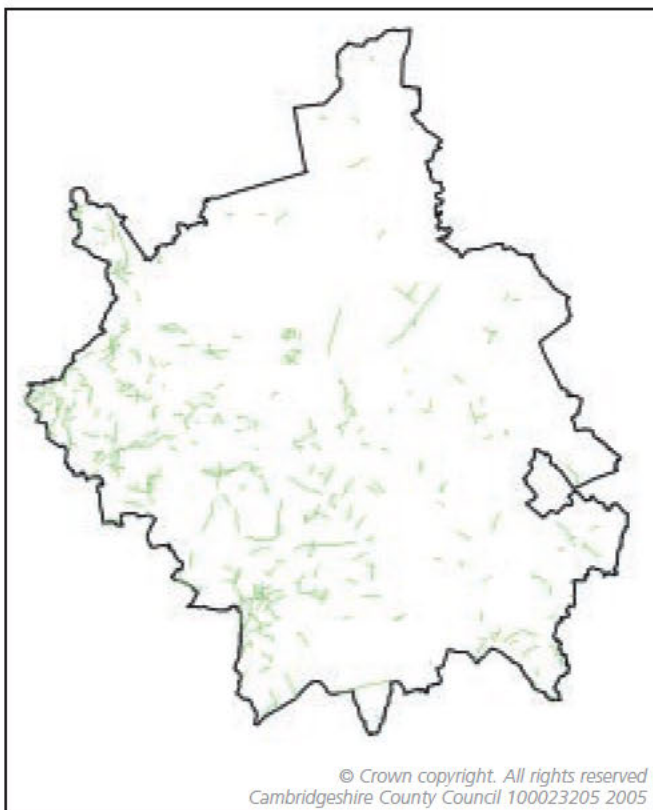
Map 7 Footpaths in Cambridgeshire from GIS



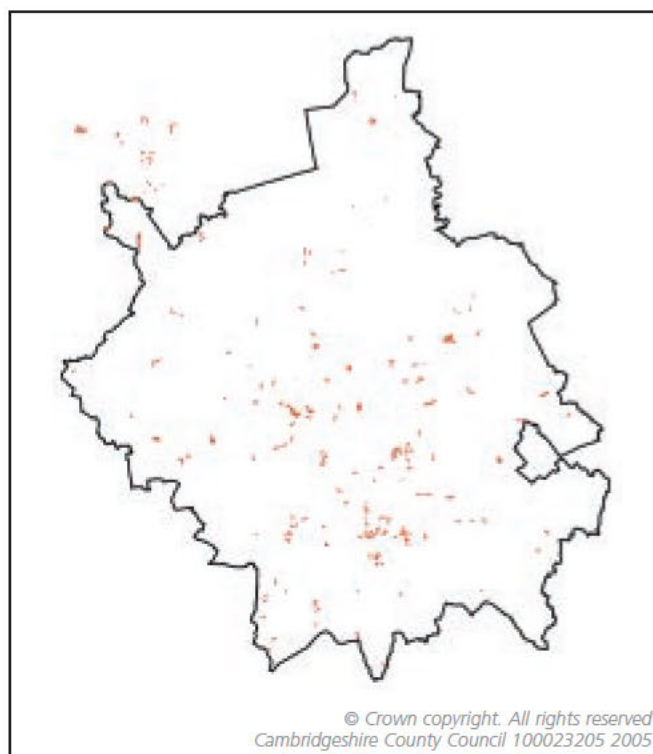
Map 9 Byways in Cambridgeshire from GIS

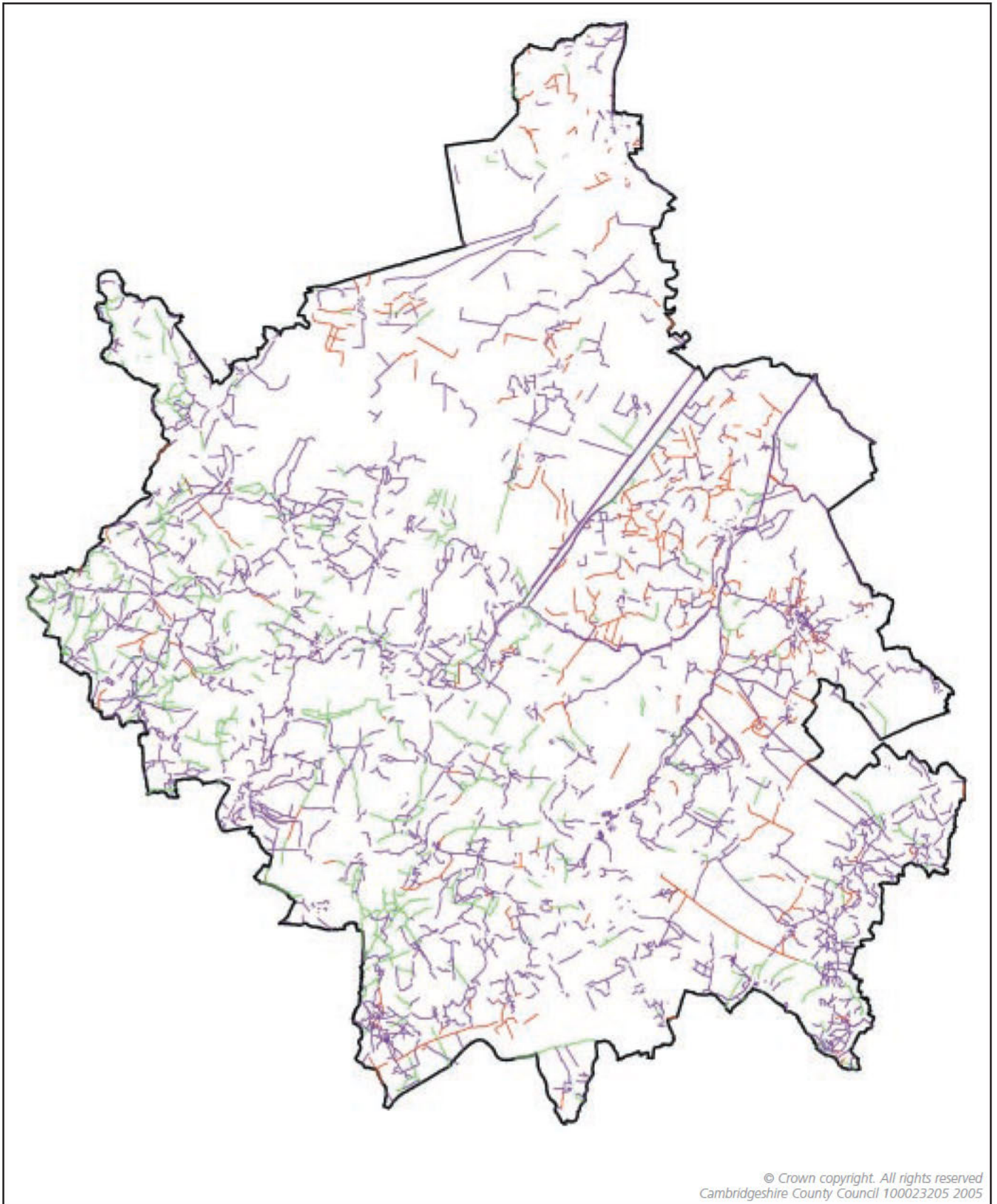


Map 8 Bridleways in Cambridgeshire from GIS



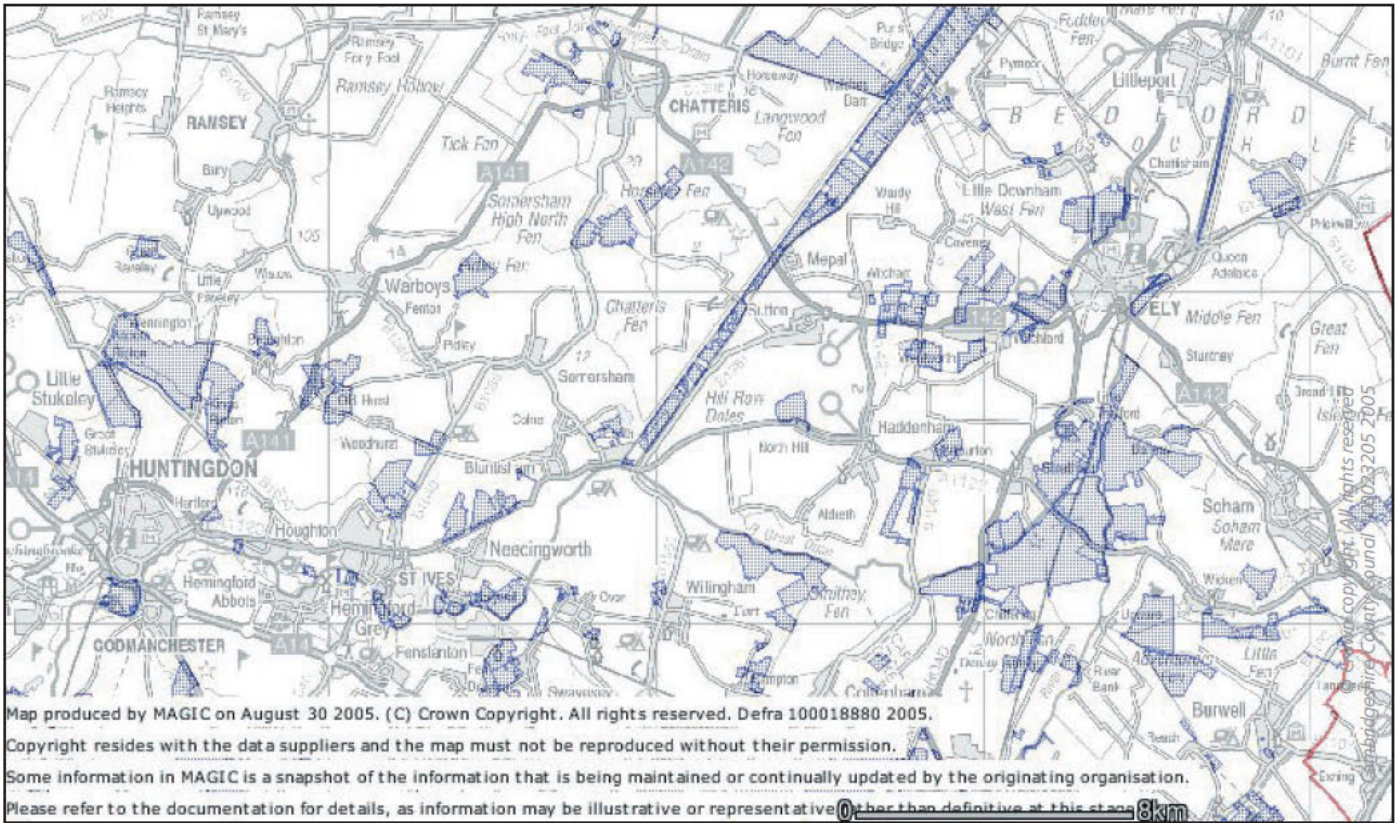
Map 10 Registered permissive paths in Cambridgeshire (with some now in Peterborough) from GIS



Map 11 Rights of Way in Cambridgeshire

Map Key: Footpaths purple - Bridleways green - Byways red

Map 12 Extract from www.magic.gov.uk showing range of Cambridgeshire Countryside Stewardship schemes

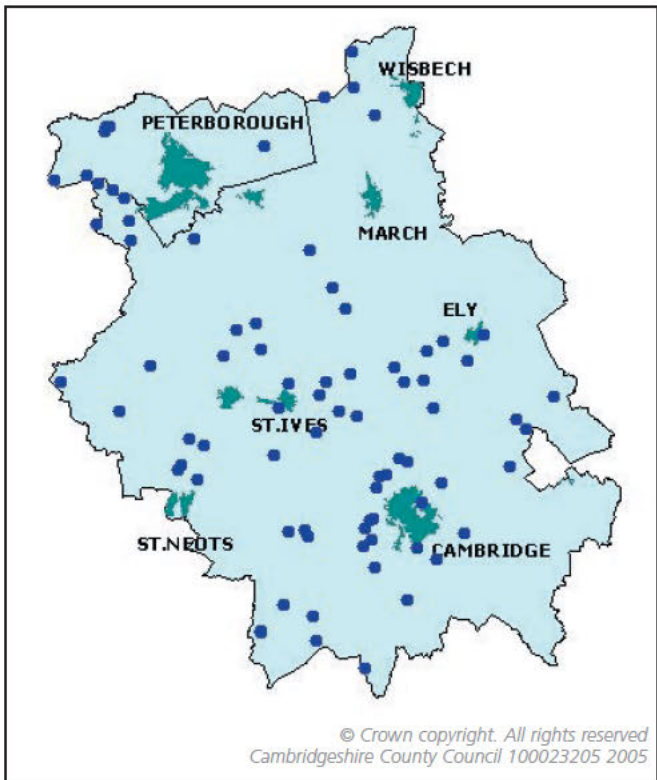


The Definitive Map and Statement for Cambridgeshire is currently composed of multiple maps and statements inherited from three former smaller authorities, of varying scales, ages and quality. These are described in more detail below.

Permissive Routes are paths accessible by permission of the owner. Public access is usually for a limited period of time (often 10 years), and can be revoked. It is the responsibility of the landowner to maintain these paths. The Cambridgeshire register records around 100 permissive routes, though this is known to be incomplete. Anglian Water permissive routes complete a loop around Grafham Water. The Countryside Stewardship Scheme provides extensive permissive footpath and bridleway access. It is administered by the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (DEFRA) and offers financial incentives to landowners who set aside land for environmental improvement and public access on a permissive basis, typically for a 10-year period. The scheme is a significant provider of access; at the time of writing there were 62 such agreements within Cambridgeshire.

‘Green Lane’ is a term with no specific legal meaning, despite its inclusion in some government measures. It is a physical description of a usually unsurfaced track, normally hedged, and often, but not always, of some antiquity. It may be a footpath, bridleway or carriageway or may carry no public rights at all. Many droves can be described as green lanes.

Map 13 Key to CSS schemes, which involve public access - from <http://countrywalks.defra.gov.uk/>



Cambridgeshire is in the Countryside Agency's Area 8 (the last area), and Open Access Land was made available in November 2005. There is essentially no mountain, moor, heath and down, but there is a moderate area of common land. The omission of access to river banks from the definition of open access has disappointed many users; if this were to change in future then this could have a significant effect on this county. As an inland county, shoreline access is not an issue. CCC as Access Authority is planning arrangements for access on foot to the areas mapped in partnership with the Districts at the time of writing, with support from the Countryside Agency. Although some (generally dead-end) drives are included, no substantial increase in effective public access is anticipated, as most areas are already well used. There may, however, be land management issues where open access may conflict with conservation management of hay meadows. The effective absence of improved public access in Cambridgeshire through current open access legislation puts a heavier burden on improvements to the rights of way network to meet user expectations.

7.4 How do we compare?

By comparison with national figures, Cambridgeshire has a typical percentage of bridleways, but a rather larger proportion of byways. The opportunities presented to horse riders and cyclists by the byways can be limited by damage done, especially in the winter months, by motor vehicles, both recreational and agricultural. Permanent and seasonal Traffic Regulation Orders have been used to manage this issue on a selective basis. The table below makes a comparison with two neighbouring counties.

Category	Cambs	Bedfordshire	Hertfordshire
Footpaths	71%	68%	71%
Bridleways	17%	27%	20%
BOATs	12%	5%	5%
RUPPS	0%	0%	4%

7.5 Management of Rights of Way in Cambridgeshire

The management and maintenance of RoW is delivered through the Countryside Services Team, currently based within the Office of Environment and Community Services (OECS) at Shire Hall, Cambridge. It is currently staffed by 20 officers divided into two units.

- The **Definitive Map and Records Unit** progresses legal changes to the Definitive Map.
- The **Countryside Access Unit** deals with improvement, maintenance and enforcement issues.

The two units work together to promote countryside access opportunities within other council activities, such as planning. Other council functions contributing to Rights of Way include Highways (unclassified roads (UCRs or 'white roads') surfaced paths and Traffic Regulation Orders), Structures (larger bridges) and Streetworks (utility licenses, temporary closures and diversions). GIS computer mapping and database tools are used to automate record keeping. The team's work is guided by a number of policies that set out detailed operational standards and procedures.

Since April 2005, Rights of Way have been partnered with Highways and Passenger Transport in a newly organised directorate, entitled Highways and Access. This should enable more effective cross-functional working with the divisional highways engineers. Countryside functions (landscape, biodiversity) that were once part of the team's work are now within a separate directorate. The positive links between the two areas will be maintained along with the current good working relationships to ensure that access and conservation management are complementary.

The well-established Parish Paths Partnership (P3) scheme manages over one third of Cambridgeshire parishes on behalf of the County. The Local Access Forum established under the terms of CROW has been established to guide and challenge the Council's work.

The team has no direct labour force; works on the ground are generally delivered through contractors, volunteers and partnership. The surface vegetation cutting is tendered on a five-year contract. Farmers cut a significant length on their own land, which is a sustainable arrangement that maximises local involvement. Otherwise there are currently no framework management arrangements; works are commissioned on a job-by-job basis. From 2004/5, longer-term capital works are supported by Local Transport Plan funding (£135k for 2004/5), with day-to-day works undertaken with revenue funding (Base Budget of £124k for 2004/5, reduced from £134k in 2003/4 in response to budget pressures).

Path waymarking in Cambridgeshire has historically been limited to specific routes, to diverted and to newly created paths. This reflects waymarking being a power but not a duty. Limited resources have prevented general waymarking being prioritised, despite the recognised advantages of way marking providing information for an easy to follow network. The waymarking of individual parishes by voluntary groups such as the Ramblers Association and through the Parish Paths Partnership Scheme has helped to some extent, but does not substitute for more general waymarking provision, especially as available waymarks tend to fade in bright sunlight after about ten years.

The lack of way marking on the network may be seen as a disadvantage in terms of information allowing paths to be easy to use. However, yearly BVPI (Best Value Performance Indicator) surveys have shown that way marking is not a significant factor compared to other issues, in the reasons that render paths not easy to use.

7.6 Fund raising

Given increasing pressure on County budgets, larger projects may be eligible for external funding. The Countryside Agency (previously Countryside Commission) has previously funded work under the Milestone programme, but this support has now ended. The Environment Agency can sometimes provide help in kind. Waste Recycling Environmental Ltd (WREN) bids have historically been successful, but are now more difficult to obtain. Other funding such as the Lottery often depends on another body leading the project. Central government grant aid (from the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister) has recently been won for the development of Wicken Fen and the establishment of Coton Countryside Reserve. Access forms a key element of these projects, which are being funded to provide green infrastructure associated with the development of the London-Stansted-Cambridge Growth Corridor. S106 planning offset funds have been successfully obtained for access improvements associated with the new settlement at

Cambourne. In the future, planning offset support may be provided on a sub-regional basis rather than for individual developments.

7.7 The Legal Record - the Definitive Map and Statement

The Definitive Map records the position and status of RoW whilst the Definitive Statement lists all RoW shown on the Definitive Map and gives a description for each entry. The recording of a route on the Definitive Map and Statement is conclusive evidence, in law, of position and existence of minimum RoW and together form a legal document that is maintained by Cambridgeshire County Council as the Surveying Authority.

The first Definitive Maps and Statements for the constituent counties which became modern Cambridgeshire (Huntingdonshire, Isle of Ely and old Cambridgeshire) were drawn up in the early 1950s using information collected through a series of surveys carried out within individual parishes. Since then, the maps have been re-published in order to incorporate legal changes that have occurred. Boundary changes have led to other anomalies, whereby paths now in Cambridgeshire still appear on the Definitive Map of a neighbouring county, and vice versa.

The three current maps are originally dated as follows:

- Huntingdonshire: 1961.
- Cambridgeshire: 1962 for most, 1972 for some.
- Isle of Ely: 1953 for most, 1972 for some.

The 1972 dates relate to an abandoned map revision. Where maps are at 1:25000 scale, the definitive line can be ambiguous. Definitive data have been transcribed to a GIS system, a version of which can be publicly accessed through the internet to complement OS paper maps via www.cambridgeshire.gov.uk. This has yet to be fully verified, and the older paper maps remain as the definitive legal documents. In the longer term, the definitive paper maps, which are available for public inspection at the Council offices, will be derived from a computer master. The Huntingdonshire map is known to be especially deficient, and causes significant problems for network management.

Although the definitive statement should record the widths of RoWs, in many cases this information is missing. For wide routes such as droves, the absence of this important information can allow landowners to encroach onto the routes, reducing what were once broad green corridors to narrow tracks. Establishing the boundaries of rights of way is therefore crucial to conserving these important biodiversity corridors. Where resource permits, and where development threatens, then widths are being recorded. A more systematic activity is required to protect and improve the network. Widths are important in spreading the load and preventing erosion over a narrow strip of land, and for maintaining the biodiversity value of this grassland habitat. This can be visualised by considering that the total drove area is equivalent to the size of a Country Park.

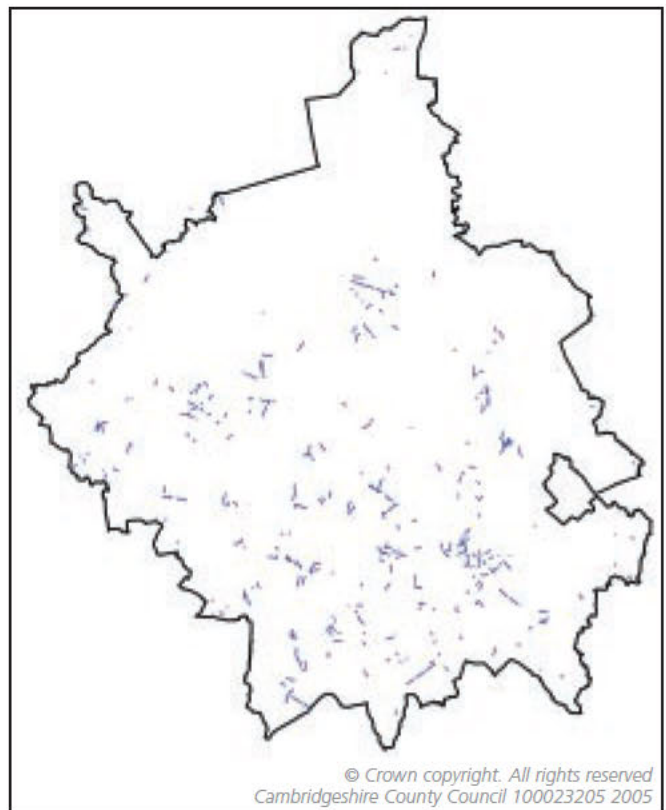
Lost Highways recorded in 223 local Enclosure Acts covering 80% of parishes have been collated with a view to the CROW 2026 deadline for historic RoW claims. Earlier 16th and 17th century enclosure documents did not have maps, and have often been lost. A database of 339 possible routes has been identified; a prioritisation exercise has identified 151 paths of key significance that should be recorded on the map as a matter of priority, due to issues such as threat of development. A

typical route is a 200m byway. It is likely that some of these may not successfully complete the creation process if challenged.

With a CROW-funded officer available 2 days per week, a creation rate of 10 per year is likely. Though increased resources or help from the proposed Lost Highways Trust might reduce this time, it is likely that additional routes will be identified before the 2026 deadline.

Map 14

Lost Highways from Enclosure Records in Cambridgeshire



It is planned to consolidate the three Cambridgeshire definitive maps and associated legal event orders into a single new map, incorporating legal changes to date. This is a substantial body of work, and given available resources, it is not anticipated that this will be available significantly before 2010.

Coupling the original parish-based RoW survey with the historic counties, Cambridgeshire has its share of definitive map anomalies. Anomalies include dead-end and even island paths, changes in RoW status at parish, district and county boundaries, and routes severed by roads, railways, aerodromes, army bases and reservoirs, and blocked by development.

There are other paths where the route is continuous, but where the status changes along the route e.g. there are routes that change from footpaths into bridleways where they meet a boundary. This is an inconvenience for people who want to use the bridleway network and often makes no sense on the ground. In addition to these, there are 'legitimate' dead ends due to historical usage, such as access to a wash pit on the river Cam generating a 37 metre footpath. It is recognised that a path being dead-ended is not in itself a reason for network rationalisation. Some dead-end paths provide a valuable facility for parishioners. However, others are frequently ploughed out without restoration, and present a maintenance challenge without a commensurate benefit. Input from local communities will be crucial to improving the overall rights of way network.

Changes to the Definitive Map and Statement can be made where there is sufficient evidence to show it as being incorrect. Anyone can apply for a Modification Order through the County Council. If an order is made and confirmed, the Definitive Map and Statement will be changed to show the rights that exist.

Applications can also be made to change the route of a footpath or bridleway, by applying for a Public Path Order. These are currently mainly landowner applications for diversions. Again, if an order is made and confirmed, then the route on the ground can be altered, and the change will be reflected in the Definitive Map and Statement when it is next updated. Changes to byways are handled through the magistrates' court. If there are objections, which cannot be resolved, then the outcome will normally be decided by written representations or a Public Inquiry. This process can be expensive and time consuming, and makes it difficult to consider the merits of a number of changes which combine to improve the network. It is hoped that one output of the ROWIP may be to establish a framework combining ROWIP policies and the Local Access Forum to obtain consensus for improvements. This process will, however, always be vulnerable to the effect of individual objections. The Town and Country Planning Act can also be used by planning authorities to make changes to the network.

7.8 What is Out There? - Surveying Network Condition

A complete survey has been undertaken of the Cambridgeshire RoW network using volunteers, for which the authority is most grateful. The network was surveyed over 5 years, completing in 2003. A detailed report on the full data set is currently being prepared to help inform future work. Example data from the final 20% surveyed in 2003 are shown as follows.

	OK	Needs repair	Missing
Signs	79.3%	5.8%	14.8%
Bridges	90.7%	6.9%	2.3%
Stiles	82.4%	17.6%	0.0%
Gates	85.9%	11.0%	3.2%

Issue	Proportion
Overhanging vegetation	10.7%
Surface vegetation	35.7%
Cropping / ploughing	36.9%
Other	16.7%
Total	100%

The National Audit Office has established a Best Value Performance Indicator (BVPI) for the total number of paths, which are 'easy to use'. The BVPI methodology, standardised across most Highway Authorities to enable comparisons to be made, entails sampling 5% of paths each year. Using officers for the survey generally provides more consistent data than using volunteers. However, interpretation is still somewhat subjective, e.g. deciding when waymarks are necessary 'when unclear reading a 1:25000 map'.

% of paths 'easy to use' (passes given in terms of length)	Spring	Autumn	Overall
2004	58.1	62.8	60.4
2003	50.5	64.8	58.0

Breakdown for 2004 was as follows:

Category (number)	Total
Signposts	83.7%
Other waymarking	74.1%
Bridges	92.8%
Stile, gates & barriers	87.5%
Obstructions	41.4%
Ploughing & cropping	45.2%
Surface condition	89.3%
Overall passes (length)	60.4%

These data put Cambridgeshire in the middle range of Highway Authorities in England, despite the negative effect of a high proportion of cross-field arable fields by national standards.

Overall, data from the volunteer and BVPI surveys indicates that the Cambridgeshire RoW network is in a reasonable condition when benchmarked nationally.

7.9 Getting Boots Muddy - Dealing with Issues on the Ground

There are many issues on the ground, but currently RoW officer time is mostly spent responding to user complaints rather than being as proactive as would be preferred. This can lead to a disproportionate amount of time being spent on particular issues and areas. Generally longstanding blockages relate to planning and the Definitive Map issues described above. Prompt action is generally taken if landowners block paths with barriers - though once again officers largely rely on reports from the public. A computer database is used to manage and prioritise resolution of user complaints.

By national standards, a large proportion of the Cambridgeshire RoW network runs over arable farmland. Landowners generally have a right to cultivate cross-field paths. Ploughing can make the surface hard to walk across and crops make it hard to see where to go which is why users like them to be reinstated quickly. Legally the landowner has a duty to reinstate the path 14 days after the first cultivation and 24 hours thereafter. Increasing use of agricultural contractors without local knowledge is tending to increase non-reinstatement. Field edge paths should not be ploughed, but sadly insufficient headland is often left for path users. Significant effort is being put into landowner liaison to reduce this problem, but notices continue to be served on landowners when necessary.

The Highway Authority is responsible for the clearing of surface vegetation other than crops growing from the surface of a RoW. Grass cutting is undertaken by a combination of contractor cutting twice per year, farmers paid to look after their own land and P3 parishes cutting their own paths. A special cut is now undertaken on the popular Fen Rivers way after previous problems. Scrub is cut in the winter months to avoid disturbance to nesting birds. The landowner has a duty to clear any vegetation that is growing on their land but overhangs the path; this includes the cutting of trees and hedges that obstruct a RoW. It can be difficult to establish the ownership of fallen trees. Garden hedges can be an especially time consuming issue where paths enter urban areas.

Many bridges on RoW networks have been there since the paths were first dedicated, but Cambridgeshire has invested

significant effort in bridge improvement, building up to 50 per year for ten years. This has brought much of the bridge stock up to modern standards with access for those with disabilities, investing significant funds. Investment in bridges also reduces grass-cutting costs by allowing access for machinery rather than cutting paths by hand. However, these bridges were generally of soft wood construction, and many are approaching their life expectancy. Longer (>8m) and more complex structures, once erected, are looked after by the Bridges Section of the County Council.

Permission can be granted for new gates or stiles:

- When the Definitive Map and Statement records the previous presence of a structure.
- If the obstruction is used to contain livestock.
- When there is a public safety issue.

The cost of installing and maintaining structures is generally the responsibility of the landowner. It is the County Council's duty to enforce this. There are however, many gates and stiles that have been put up without being properly authorised. The County Council does encourage the removal of stiles and gates where they are no longer needed for controlling livestock.

Recent years have seen Cambridgeshire CC replace many stiles with kissing gates to improve path accessibility by people with limited mobility, often with the support of the P3 scheme. Huntingdonshire District Council has provided further gates in the Ouse Valley. With few stonewalls, installing gates in fences and hedges presents less of a landscape issue than for other counties. With the increasing concerns about wheelchair accessibility and the full implementation of the Disability Discrimination Act, rather wider gates are now being used to admit wheelchairs, sometimes using 'RADAR' keys to limit inappropriate access, which would otherwise concern landowners. The increasing size of powered mobility vehicles presents a potential issue for the future.

The path surface can cause issues for a number of users. Though pedestrian usage in Cambridgeshire is seldom so heavy as to cause the erosion which upland areas suffer, horse and vehicle use can cause poaching and ruts. When farmers use old building materials to fill in holes on paths, this is unsuitable, especially for equestrian users. The surface type of a path has to strike a balance between all legitimate users including those exercising private rights. Restricting winter use of selected byways through seasonal Traffic Regulation Orders can reduce damage, but agricultural use can still cause significant damage and responsibility can be difficult to ascribe. Remedial measures include power harrowing to remove ruts, drainage and application of road planings. Such works require a significant fraction of the RoW budget each year.

Fly tipping is having an increasing effect on the countryside as the cost of landfill rises. Rights of Way, particularly byways, are vulnerable due to their relative ease of access. In extreme cases tipping can block paths, but more often it presents a safety hazard or deters use of paths. The County liaises with the Districts and Environment Agency to remove waste, but is responsible for paying the associated landfill tax. While substantial rubbish is removed through this joint approach, residual waste is often unsightly and can damage grass-cutting equipment. A secondary issue is the understandable pressure from landowners to erect barriers to prevent future land access by the fly-tippers. Such barriers restrict access to legitimate path users. The Environment Agency is developing an internet based system to record information on fly-tipping incidents across England and Wales. The Flycapture database, launched in April 2004, will allow for the identification of hotspots, comparisons between different authorities provide information on the

severity of fly-tipping incidents and help improve the manner in which the Environment Agency and Local Authorities work together to catch and prosecute fly-tippers.

Cambridgeshire is traditionally popular with travellers due to past fruit and vegetable picking opportunities. Unfortunately, there is often significant conflict between travellers and local people. The County has a Travellers Liaison Officer and an official policy of limited tolerance where unauthorised camps abide by the Council's Code of Conduct for such camps. In order to prevent access to land by travellers, an increasing amount of private land is now blocked off. This increases pressure on RoW, especially byways, for use by travellers. This has led to an increasing demand for barriers and Traffic Regulation Orders (TROs) to keep travellers off. This cannot be accommodated within existing legislation.

Gas guns and windmills used as bird-scarers can cause problems for horse riders when horses are alarmed. Liaison with farmers usually resolves such issues.

Where utilities undertake work on Rights of Way, permits will be required from 2005 under new Streetworks legislation. Fines will be payable if works are unauthorised or unsatisfactory. This may provide some leverage to correct past and future problems with 'poles and holes'.

Signs are legally required where paths leave roads and should show the path status and direction. New or replacement RoW statutory signposting is generally provided by vandal-resistant short metal fingers. A small number of older finger posts advise the path destination and distance. Destination signs cost little more than standard signs to produce but take more time to plan, order and administer. Destination signs will be funded if local groups, usually through the P3 Scheme, can pull together the details required for manufacture and siting. Signposting is usually undertaken as an annual round to reduce costs.

Way marking has historically been limited to specific routes, and to areas supported by voluntary groups and parishes, with materials provided by the County. New and diverted paths are generally waymarked when confirmed.

- Signs and waymarks with a yellow arrow mark public footpaths.
- Signs and waymarks with a blue arrow public mark public bridleways
- Signs and waymarks with a red arrow mark BOATs
- Signs and waymarks with a black (or sometimes green) arrow mark permissive paths.

7.10 The Land is my Living - Land Management Concerns

Landowners and tenants can have problems with the historical routes of RoW as farming practices change. The time and cost of processing diversions can be problematic, especially if they are contested, as described earlier.

Horses and cycles use some footpaths where no public rights are recorded. This can then be exacerbated by inappropriate motorcycle and 4x4 access, which can prejudice land occupiers against legitimate users. Other concerns relating to public access include crime, illegal hare coursing, traveller encampments, dog mess and stock worrying. Such concerns can lead to perceived and real reduction of land value due to new RoW creation, an issue to be addressed by the ROWIP.

There can also be conflict between access and conservation interests, though these can usually be handled by appropriate liaison and management.

7.11 Where can we go? Publicising Countryside Access

Many people do not have the confidence or knowledge to use the network on their own. Leaflets, guidebooks or guided walks can help to engage and encourage people to use local RoW for a range of purposes including walking, cycling, visiting places or to address health issues. Local RoW are promoted by and with the support of a number of agencies, national, regional and local. Currently, the process of preparing and publishing promoted material is not co-ordinated and there are no policies to guide which routes are promoted and to whom.

The Cambridgeshire RoW network is available in interactive form on the internet. Permissive path information can be more difficult for the user to locate. Although DEFRA publishes their supported schemes on the internet, these are not as yet all in GIS form. Other published information includes walks information temporary diversions and closures (through the County streetworks website) and some Traffic Regulation Orders. Overall, however, information is rather disjointed and could be made more accessible.

Organisations involved in promoting the local RoW include national agencies such as the Countryside Agency, British Horse Society (BHS) and the Ramblers Association (RA). In Cambridgeshire, public authorities including the various levels of local government: parish, district and County Council, carry out the majority of promotion. Much of this promotion is carried out through jointly funded projects. Other groups promoting the use of the network include P3 parishes, SUSTRANS, cycling groups and bridleway associations.

7.12 Backpacking and Blisters - Recognised Long Distance Routes

The trans European E2 [redacted] follows the line of the Hereward Way, Fen Rivers Way and the Roman Road Link through Cambridgeshire. For now, this seems a rather nominal assemblage, but it may gain more significance in time. There are no National Trails in Cambridgeshire. Although bodies looking after e.g. The Icknield Way (below) might aspire to National Trail status, the indications from the Countryside Agency are that budget is not currently available for new designations. A longer-term 'corridor development' initiative is being pursued by the Icknield Way Forum. Long Distance and recreational routes are recognised by the Long Distance Walkers Association [redacted] and (with a more detailed website) the Ramblers Association [redacted]

Major routes at least partly in Cambridgeshire include:

- Icknield Way [redacted]
- Fen Rivers Way [redacted]
- Nene Way
- Hereward Way
- The Ouse Valley Way from Syresham to Kings Lynn (Source to Sea) [redacted]
- The Three Shires Way is part of National Bridleroute Network [redacted]
- The 46 mile circular RAF-promoted Pathfinder Walk is mostly waymarked [redacted]

- The Ramblers Association is currently developing a new 'West Anglian Way' based around a former railway operating company region.

There is also a wide range of more locally promoted paths and the above list is necessarily selective. Promoted routes are identified on the County Council's Right of Way database and the information is used to help set maintenance priorities.

7.13 Complementary Provision - Cycle Trails, Waterways, and Toll rides

A recreational cycle trail orbits Grafham Water, echoing the longer trail around Rutland Water further north, but for forest cycle trails, the user has to travel to Thetford Forest on the Norfolk Suffolk border. The County Council Cycling Development Officer is responsible for improving and extending cycle routes, and liaises closely with the Rights of Way team. The Sustrans national cycle network traverses Cambridgeshire; their interactive website usefully maps this and other local cycling provision [redacted].

[redacted]. This network is complemented by the National Byway, which provides a signposted leisure cycling route round Britain on lightly-trafficked existing country lanes [redacted].

[redacted] This passes through the county after linking with Rutland Water.

There are no British Waterways canals in Cambridgeshire. Access to Environment Agency and IDB waterway banks and one-time towpaths is by RoW and permissive agreements. River and drain maintenance can disrupt path access, and routing of new paths and fences needs to consider this.

Toll rides on farmland [redacted] are established in the South-East and in Essex [redacted]

[redacted] but are not formally established in Cambridgeshire. Some estates have issued permits, sometimes for payment, for riding the farm tracks on estate land.

Many footpaths, especially in South Cambridgeshire, end at churchyard boundaries, due to a convention that there cannot be rights of way over consecrated ground. In practice, there is public access, though what happens if land is deconsecrated is not altogether clear.

7.14 What else is out there? - Other Countryside Access Opportunities

In addition to linear access routes, there are many more Countryside access opportunities in Cambridgeshire. There was no significant land mapped in the county by the CROW initiative to map open land, however the initiative will formalise and publicise access to common land, which includes many rural droves. Some examples are cited here; a Strategic Open Space Study commissioned jointly by Cambridgeshire Horizons, the County and District Councils is making a more systematic survey.

Map 15

CoAg mapped 'Open Land' in Cambridgeshire - essentially none!



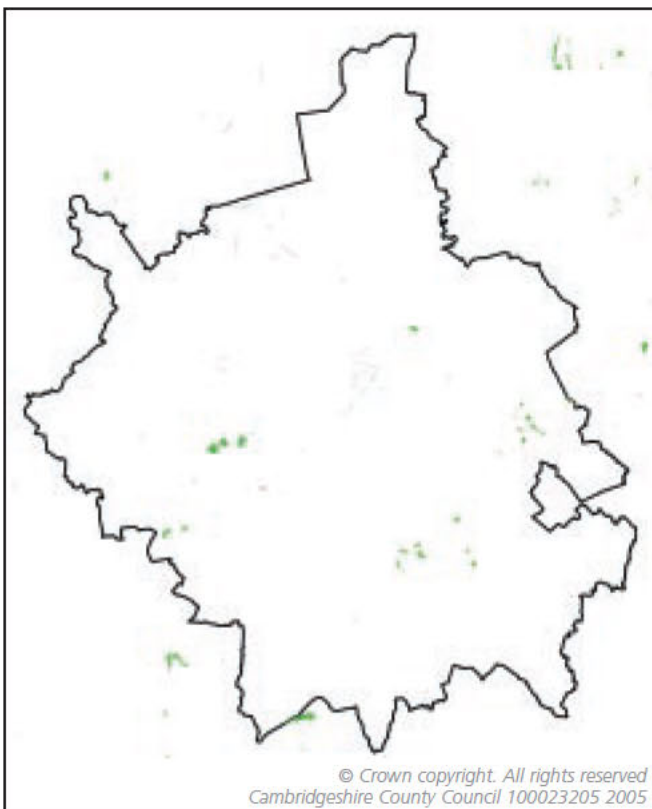
The Districts operate Country Parks at Milton, Hinchingsbrooke and Paxton Pits. The National Trust owns land at Wimpole, Anglesey Abbey, and Wicken Fen. Anglian Water offers Grafham Water and The Cambridge Preservation Trust operates a reserve at Wandlebury. The Magogs Trust is developing Magog Down, while the RSPB runs reserves at Fowlmere and the Ouse Washes, where the Wildfowl Trust also operates. The Devil's Dyke is managed by a partnership including the County Council.

There are 22 Woodland Trust reserves in Cambridgeshire ranging from Archers Wood to Whitethorn Wood, though most are relatively small. Although there are no Forestry Commission woods, good use is made of nearby woodland in Northants, Peterborough, Norfolk and Suffolk, especially by mountain bikers. Overall, Cambridgeshire has the lowest proportion of woodland of any English County, 3.6% of area is woodland and 0.7% is ancient woodland.

There are eight National Nature Reserves in Cambridgeshire. Although some have restricted access, the major Great Fen and Wicken Fen projects should significantly increase accessible land in the long run. The Wet Fens Partnership brings together eight Fen restoration projects across four counties. Cambridgeshire (including Peterborough) has twelve. By their very nature, these projects are long term and public access may not be available until the project is more established. The local Wildlife Trust has over fifty reserves in Cambridgeshire (including Peterborough), which are mostly open to the public, an example being Fen Drayton. Neighbouring County Trusts have reserves adjacent to Cambridgeshire, which serve communities near to the County boundary. The County manages sites at Ring's End (Elm) and Kingston Railway Cutting, while other organisations such as parishes have a range of other reserves, which may be open to the public. There are in addition a range of County Farms access sites.

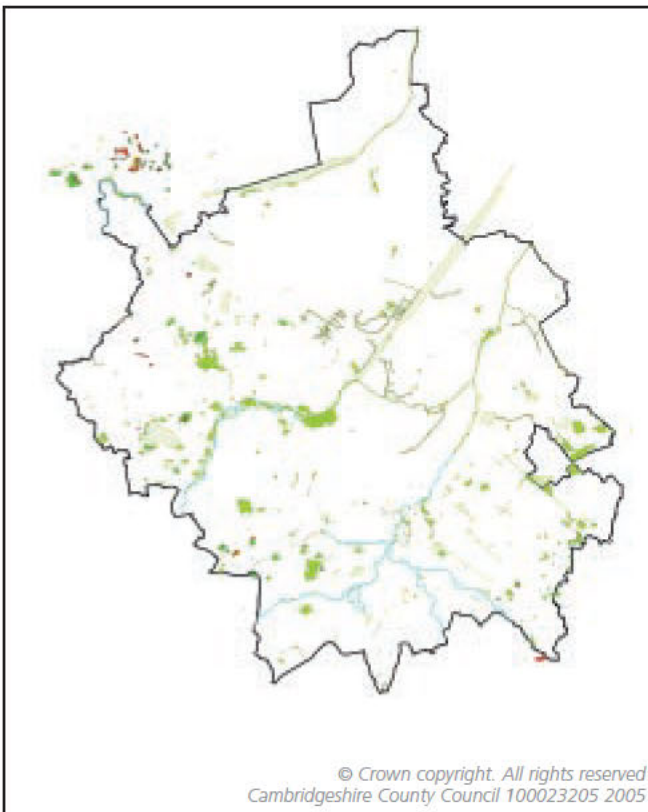
Map 16

Commons that will have additional public access due to CROW (mostly have existing public access)



Map 17

Ancient Woodland, SSSIs and County Wildlife Sites in Cambridgeshire (not all have public access)



The Countryside Stewardship Scheme currently provides 62 agreements for permissive footpath and bridleway access. Under the agreements landowners set aside land for environmental improvement and public access and receive financial support from Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (DEFRA).

Further permissive open access areas include land at St Ives, Witchford, Ely, Witcham, Earith, Pidley, Willingham, Holywell, Great Eversden, Toft, Guilden Morden, Steeple Morden, Swaffham Prior, Benwick and Southoe. These are shown on the County's internal GIS system, but not yet on the public website.

7.15 Making Money - Rural Businesses and Rights of Way

The economic value of Rights of Way became clear nationally during closures caused by the Foot & Mouth epidemic in 2001. No recent systematic appraisal of the economic value of the Cambridgeshire RoW network has been conducted.

The Icknield Way Corridor Study conducted for the Icknield Way Association attempts to assess the value of a local long distance path, but rather neglects the effect of diverting interest between paths when viewed at a county or regional level.

Extrapolating from Countryside Agency and Ramblers Association national data on the basis of mileage would suggest a value of around £40m per annum. Given the relative (un)popularity of Cambridgeshire as a tourist destination for countryside activities compared to National Parks and AONBs, this is probably an over-estimate. Equally, the existing low base shows scope for significant increase in value without adverse environmental impact.

EETB figures show that the value of all tourism in Hunts rose 10% to £175m in 2002, an indication of what may be possible by promoting countryside access based activity. As well as riding centres and town centre gear shops, local pubs and shops can benefit. There is also a growing trend in equestrian tourism, which offers opportunities for farm diversification in providing riders with bed and breakfast and additional accommodation, either a stable or field for their horses.

7.16 Taking Healthy Exercise

Walking or running can be shown to be very cost effective compared to other publicly supported activities. For instance, swimming pools require a public subsidy of £2 per visit, while the cost of a walk or run can be shown to be less than a penny. Primary Care Trusts are establishing a programme of Health Walks across the county. So far, these are mainly based in the market towns, and are mostly urban in character.

User groups and clubs including walkers, runners, riders and cyclists all organise programmes of outings using the public rights of way network which contribute to healthy exercise at many levels. Individual outings multiply the benefit beyond the number of hours of exercise taken in more costly organised facilities to provide a significant public health benefit.

Clearly, the rights of way network represents a central asset in encouraging both organised and informal public exercise programmes. The availability of circular routes is important at an everyday level for promoting regular exercise and healthier lifestyles.

8 What do People Tell us they Want?



Bringing in the harvest, viewed from Haddenham Byway 30

"It would be really good if it were possible to cycle distances with children without having to travel along busy roads. A network of routes so that travel from Cambridge to the surrounding cities and towns (Peterborough, Ely, St. Ives, Huntingdon, Royston etc.) would be great."

"[make] more funds available through Parish Paths Partnership (P3) scheme"

"Please try and get dog owners to take responsibility and clear up after their pets - more bins?"

Public Consultation responses

A significant part of the Improvement Plan process has involved finding out what people want from countryside access. This has involved the Local Access Forum, a series of questionnaires, three focus groups, a range of 1:1 structured interviews and questions in the Cambridgeshire 2004 Corporate Consultation Survey. Close collaboration has also been maintained with neighbouring Highway Authorities. Complementary consultation has been undertaken for the Strategic Open Space study. Feedback from these sources has informed the proposals which follow. With around a thousand responses to each of the questionnaire, corporate survey and SOS interview phases, the responses can be used with good statistical significance.

8.1 Local Access Forum

The Cambridgeshire Local Access Forum (LAF) first met in September 2003, and meet every two months. The LAF has been involved throughout the production of the ROWIP, approving the process, helping prepare questions for questionnaires, commenting on interpretation of feedback and providing contacts. It is hoped that the LAF will be a central body in the delivery of the ROWIP, especially in helping facilitate consensus in network improvements to reduce the problems associated with taking individual path changes to inquiry after objections. LAF information is posted on the internet at <http://www.cambridgeshire.gov.uk/environment/countryside/forum/>

8.2 Questionnaires

Four separate questionnaires were prepared, building on consultation done in other authorities, and with input from officers and the Local Access Forum. Questionnaires for organisations, land managers and countryside businesses were distributed as paper forms, mainly to existing contact lists. A paper user questionnaire was distributed by a variety of means, including public libraries, country parks and outdoor shops. Further forms were completed on the Countryside Services Team stand at the Cambridgeshire County Show in June 2004. The user questionnaire was also made available on the council's website. A press release, newspaper and magazine articles and a radio interview kindled interest. An encouraging number of responses was received:

Organisations	Land managers	Countryside businesses	Users	Total
82	154	39	448	723

The data returned were entered into a Microsoft Access database. The council Research Department then analysed the responses for each question. Data is held subject to the confidentiality conditions of the Data Protection Act 1998. To comply with the conditions of the surveys, information presented herein must not be used for any other purpose. Many thanks to all who made the time to complete these questionnaires.

Top Themes and Commentary

Users - Top Themes

1. Much positive feedback from users - clearly facilities, landscape values and efforts of CST are well appreciated.
2. No clear single priority is evident - user aspirations spread over a range of topics, and depend upon interests.
3. Positive comparisons made with other regions - though signs and waymarks seen as a weakness by some (though others see signs as urbanisation). Better integration between urban and rural signing is desired.
4. Bridleway users seem most frustrated by a fragmentary RoW network and resulting risks on (and crossing) roads.
5. Permissive paths, including those supported by DEFRA Countryside Stewardship, recognised and used by some at least.
6. Access areas, particularly the topical Fen Drayton lakes area come in for praise.
7. Promoted routes and leaflets are recognised. More leaflets and map-boards sought. Riverside walks seem particularly appreciated.
8. Significant conflict was evident between different user activities (horses vs. 4x4s, cyclists vs. walkers etc) - this was recognised as an issue by many respondents.

9. Concern about lack of enforcement of flytipping and intimidating traveller encampments; also about lack of (police) enforcement of motor vehicle offences on RoW.
10. More action wanted against farmers failing to reinstate paths and leaving RoW surfaces damaged.
11. Development control not seen as sufficiently protecting rights of way and countryside access.
12. Concern expressed about dog owners seen as irresponsible - especially where excessive dog fouling results.
13. Cyclists look for better connected provision beyond RoWs - not necessarily reflected in organisation of current public provision.
14. Maintenance limitations raise concern - especially vegetation and mud/ruts.
15. Fenland seen as having poor provision compared to the rest of the county.
16. Costs of RoW changes recognised as an obstacle to improvements.
17. Need better publicity for where byways are accessible and where they have Restriction Orders.
18. Call for better disabled provision, such as replacing stiles with gates, though some older existing kissing gates were identified as an obstacle for wheelchairs and pushchairs.
19. Carriage driving seen as inappropriately restricted compared to Norfolk and Suffolk.
20. 4x4 users identify a difference between responsible majority and a less responsible minority - liaison with user groups and training for drivers suggested.
21. Better rural transport, information about transport and integration of access and transport wanted.
22. Some see network as over-used (with overtones of user conflict), while others see it as lightly used (by comparison with other areas).
3. Most want to see motor vehicle use on byways restricted (either seasonal TROs or permanent restriction), though there are opposite opinions.
4. Demand presented for better signs/waymarks (and sign maintenance) and desire expressed for better maps locally, OS, internet, and/or leaflets.
5. Particular concerns expressed about poor bridleway / verge network by comparison to footpath network.
6. Want better maintenance and enforcement, reflecting topography and needs of population.
7. More provision wanted for people with disabilities - replace stiles.
8. More time and money should be spent on improving existing rights of way.
9. Crossing major roads, rivers and railways is a growing issue.
10. Concern is expressed about ploughing and cropping issues.
11. Landowners seek a flexible approach to change with compensation for change while still protecting land from rural crime.
12. Parishes are keen to make local input to access improvements.
13. Successful footpath and village history trail map cited as good practice.
14. Appetite for restoration of routes lost during wartime or aerodrome expansions.
15. Suggest events to encourage local people to get to know paths in their area.
16. More paths should link schools / shops / houses and pedestrian/cycle provision should be improved alongside major roads.
17. Routes should be managed sympathetically for wildlife / biodiversity.
18. More help sought for less appealing areas like the fens.
19. Need additional access as Cambridge grows.
20. Council seen as needing to be more proactive towards opportunities rather than reactive to problems, need for inspection and to monitor changing Rights of Way needs.
21. Overall, a strong demand is evident for more resources to be applied to Rights of Way and countryside access.

Users - Commentary

- Users understandably do not appreciate legal constraints within which councils operate to manage access.
- Some responses seem more generic than Cambs-specific - e.g. references to RUPPs when Cambs has none.
- Guided Busway proposals seem to have galvanised support for Fen Drayton lakes.
- Some users are evidently exceeding their access rights, often upsetting others in the process.
- Many specific issues raised echo complaints registered on CST database.
- Comments on (lack of) grass cutting may reflect current 'two cuts' per year provision (May and July).
- While gates are more accessible than stiles, recent court cases leave liability concerns for landowners (livestock causing road accidents).
- That some desires are already met (e.g. electronic definitive map and internet problem reporting) seems not to be recognised - better communication evidently needed.

Organisations - Top Themes

1. Again there is a spread of aspirations from organisations, though not as widely spread as users.
2. There is strong demand for better circular routes.

Organisations - Commentary

- Legislation does not currently allow the flexibility desired, e.g. with Definitive Map issues.
- Some aspirations already in place, e.g. maps on web. Evidently we need to communicate better.
- Many issues already reflected in existing County RoW objectives. That improvements are still seen as needed reflects on resources currently available and priorities set within those resources.
- Many issues reflect onto draft ROWIP objectives.
- Some issues are the responsibility of partner organisations.

Land Management - Top Themes

1. Land managers are clearer about priorities - generally accept access rights but want abuses controlled.
2. Users seen as abusing their rights and the countryside.

3. Public need to be educated to understand countryside.
4. Much concern about recreational motor vehicles.
5. Barriers wanted to stop horses and cycles using public footpaths.
6. Dogs should be better controlled and not allowed to foul.
7. Concern about illegal hare coursing, flytipping, illegal encampments and theft.
8. Seek more flexibility in diverting cross field paths to field edge.
9. H&S concerns about RoWs in farmyards.
10. Want more rural policing.
11. Paths should be better signed.
12. Some paths are seen as seldom used - some would like network rationalisation.
13. Frustration with legal procedures and costs to divert paths.

Land Management - Commentary

- Most landowners recognise user rights, but seem to feel that this is not reciprocated by user responsibility. Recent publicity for new County Code might help address this.
- CST also recognise issue with path diversion procedures, but this is controlled by central government.
- More input needed from other agencies, especially the police, if landowner concerns are to be effectively addressed.
- CST do seek to work in partnership with land managers, with many miles of footpath being cut by farmers on their own land under contract to the highway authority.

Businesses - Top Themes

1. Business sample perhaps too small to see meaningful trends.
2. Most of the issues raised echo those concerning other stakeholders.
3. Recognition by some that users are customers.
4. Concern about encouraging more people who do not respect countryside.
5. Better signage particularly wanted by this group.
6. Equestrian businesses look for more bridleway provision.

Businesses - Commentary

- Foot and Mouth data illustrated value of countryside access - good to have more recent, local recognition, though sample possibly not very representative in this study.
- Economic value generated in county by good countryside access helps justify investment in improvements.

Further Information

More detailed questionnaire response data is included in Appendix 3. The full analysis is available on the ROWIP section of the Council's website
<http://www.cambridgeshire.gov.uk/environment/countryside/access/rowip.htm>

8.3 Focus Groups

This section is adapted from the full focus group analysis prepared by MRUK (Market Research UK) also available on the ROWIP section of the Council's website. The detailed output from each of the three focus groups is included in Appendix 4.

Three focus groups were conducted in September 2004 with the following groups:

- Unaffiliated users of the Cambridgeshire countryside.
- Members of user groups who are active in the Cambridgeshire countryside.
- Land managers.

The meetings were part of a wider consultation with stakeholders and members of the public about the Cambridgeshire Rights of Way Improvement Plan. The full consultation activity has also included paper and on-line surveys, and one to one depth interviews. The focus groups were set up specifically to find out about current levels of public knowledge of Rights of Way, satisfaction with the RoW network, relationships between different types of countryside user, and the effectiveness of partnership working between land managers and other agencies. Focus groups are a particularly useful method of obtaining the views of different client groups and providing depth and insight into particular issues. Because the groups were facilitated by MRUK, an independent market research company, the participants were able to talk openly about potentially sensitive issues without concern about their identities being revealed.

Recruitment and Conduct of the Groups

MRUK handled the recruitment for all focus groups. For each of the meetings, an agreed topic guide was used and the discussions were noted during the session. Respondents were assured that the final report would be written in such a way that views could not be attributed to individuals and participants were not expected to comment in detail on their personal circumstances.

The recruitment steps were as follows:

- The Countryside Services Team supplied a list of key contacts.
- MRUK invited those on the list to attend a focus group, enclosing a reply slip and Freepost envelope.
- Where insufficient responses were received, MRUK followed up by phone with those on the list who did not have addresses.
- Each group meeting followed a standard format, with the facilitator delivering a brief presentation of the background to the consultation, before opening the meetings up to discussion and debate. A topic guide was used by to guide the discussion and ensure that all relevant issues were covered.
- Group members were offered a fee of £20 to cover their expenses in attending the meeting.

Type of group	Date	Venue	People recruited	People attended
Members of the public *	7/9/04	Shire Hall	14	14
User group representatives	8/9/04	Shire Hall	10	7
Land managers	9/9/04	NFU, Newmarket	12	11
		Total	36	32

* Some countryside user group representatives attended this group for unaffiliated members of the public. They were asked to speak as individuals and not as group representatives.

Key Findings

Qualitative research provides a way to probe underlying attitudes and obtain an understanding of the important issues. It must be noted, however, that when interpreting these findings that they cannot be stated as statistical evidence. It is also important to note that we are dealing with perceptions, not facts. Although some participants may hold views based on incorrect information, the perceptions are reported in the following report without analysis or comment.

Use of the countryside

Across the three groups, focus group members stated that they used the Cambridgeshire network of ROW routes for a wide range of countryside activities including walking, bird-watching, riding mountain bikes, riding trail bikes, photography, horse riding, carriage driving, dog walking, recreational cycling, cycling to work, athletics training, and boating.

Comments by individual members of the public

- Footpaths, bridle paths and byways are used frequently.
- Circular routes are valued.
- Routes between towns are valued for access and commuting.
- The long distance paths between Histon and the Fens are highly valued.
- Rights of way routes are limited in the north of the county because of intensive agriculture and the topography of the land.

Comments by representatives of countryside user groups

- Most use the countryside routes closest to their homes.
- Most people wish to preserve a 'natural' appearance on routes in order to minimise disturbance to wildlife.
- Most people do not like footpaths that have been cleared too vigorously.
- Safe cycle routes that link to towns or public transport interchanges.

Comments by land managers

- All members had a combination of footpaths, bridleways and permissive paths on their land.
- Some had experience of DEFRA support for stewardship schemes.
- One group member commented that user groups don't always display common sense in relation to access issues, and they are always quick to blame farmers if there are problems with access.

Barriers to Countryside Use

The following list summarises the problems with countryside access identified by members of the three focus groups; individual members of the public, user group representatives and land managers:

Comments on transport issues

- There are few circular routes, and it is difficult for cyclists and walkers to make arrangements to be dropped off and collected.
- It is difficult to use public transport to get to and from the countryside.
- Rural transport timetables deter people in towns from taking public transport for leisure reasons.
- Finding safe parking areas on RoW routes can be a problem.
- Buses are not designed to carry bicycles, and trains are increasingly restricting bicycle carriage.

Comments on routes

- Some popular routes end up on busy roads, which are dangerous to cross.
- There are too few routes for cyclists to use in commuting between villages and towns.
- There are too few bridleways and byways available to cyclists.
- There are too few routes for children to use to cycle safely to and from school.
- Some paths are not cleared well enough to allow runners to pass unscathed.
- There is access through farms for horses, but not carriages. It is difficult to find walks that don't use stiles, and this restricts people with mobility problems.
- Straight paths encourage cyclists to build up speed - endangering other route users.
- The problems with permissive routes is that they can be lost if a farm is sold.
- Locked gates are a problem for a range of users, even though the justification is often sound.
- Paths close to villages may be unpleasant for walkers because of dog mess.
- The use of crop guns in hedges near RoW routes frightens horses.

Comments on maintenance

- Fly tipping in East and South Cambridgeshire is a problem.
- Some farmers fail to reinstate paths after ploughing.
- Many bridleways and byways are too overgrown for use by horse riders.
- There is also a perception that CCC allows paths to become overgrown and impassable, then blitzes them too vigorously - leaving tree stumps, which are dangerous for riders and cyclists.

- The poor condition of wider paths and bridleways makes it difficult for walkers, horse riders and cyclists to use in winter.
- Temporary repairs using gravel create problems for horses.
- There was general agreement that routes should not be cut back too severely for aesthetic reasons and to protect wildlife.
- In general, there is too little clarity about responsibility for clearing waste and debris from RoW routes. Mounds of earth are left behind in some path clearing operations - leading to further access problems for some users.

Comments on Access for People with Disabilities

People with disabilities often use permissive paths, and the access issues on these paths should be recognised. Parish councils are concerned that the RoWIP will force them to spend money to upgrade access for people with disabilities - and they don't have the funds to do this. Most group members agreed that it was impossible to upgrade all routes to full disabled access - and that a limitation on those accessible by wheelchair or pushchair was inevitable. For the above reason, it is important to publish information about accessible walks.

Comments on Information Sources

- People want up to date information about the accessibility of routes for different types of users. Information should be provided on popular routes to indicate who is allowed to use a particular type of path.
- The system of coding signposts is quite complicated in Cambridgeshire because each parish council adopts its own standard.
- People would like information about where to find the permissive routes created by DEFRA.
- Ordnance survey maps and local knowledge are often out of date.
- The CCC website on RoW is impressive, but should have more up to date information on the accessibility of specific routes.
- Some signs are at ground level or hidden by vegetation. More waymarks should be placed at crossroads.

Comments on Seasonal Controls

- Farmers don't adhere to seasonal controls.
- Land managers have a moral, but not legal responsibility to respect seasonal controls.
- Recreational vehicle users are often blamed for damage created by heavy agricultural machinery; therefore it is unfair to use seasonal controls to deny access to vehicles users.
- Self-enforced seasonal controls on cyclists have worked in Soham, and this could be a model.
- Although countryside user club members may be willing to adhere to seasonal controls, this will not prevent individuals from breaching the guidelines.
- Mountain bike users often find gates locked after October whether or not this is required by the weather conditions.
- Locked gates force carriage drivers off paths and onto roads, which is potentially dangerous.
- It is not always possible to publicise the reasons for locked gates, particularly if a route goes through a wildlife breeding habitat.

Comments on Relationships between Users

- National government says that people should have more right to roam, but that farmers should do the work to make this possible for free.
- Some farmers fail to reinstate footpaths within 14 days of ploughing, which forces walkers off RoW routes.
- Because country roads are becoming increasingly dangerous, different types of user are forced onto the same countryside routes, and this creates conflicts.
- Some farmers allow their dogs and pigs to chase horses, cyclists and walkers.
- Some farmers feel that cyclists are irresponsible.
- Carriage drivers [who cannot use bridleways] end up in confrontation with riders who use byways and green lanes.
- Walkers feel that CCC prioritises maintenance of byways and bridleways, and not footpaths.
- Trail riders believe that footpaths are given priority by CCC.
- Dog walkers present problems for farmers when dogs are let off their leads.
- People with cars and motorbikes use bridleways as byways, and this causes problems for other users and land managers.
- Some land managers perceive a conflict of interest between local people living in villages and high profile user groups, such as the Ramblers, and the Open Space and Commons Societies.
- The number of irresponsible users and competing uses of the RoW network mean that friction is a fact of life.

Comments on Health and Safety

Farmers are concerned about the rising number of insurance claims and prosecutions if people are injured crossing their land, and this public liability issue should be addressed nationally. There was concern about the health and safety implications for both farmers and countryside users when routes pass through farmyards. There was also concern that farmyard routes left farmers' homes exposed to vandalism or theft.

Comments on Economic Issues

Land managers need a budget to maintain and provide environmental access. CCC always runs out of money before it can finish doing a job properly. There could be a market in trading RoW rights, as there is in carbon emissions and water pollution. RoW should have an economic value put on it.

General Comments on the RoW Network (Individual users and User group representatives)

- The closer a route is to Cambridge, the better the management of the RoW.
- Riverside paths are perceived as being better maintained than other routes.
- Cross field paths are more pleasant to walk than round the edges of big fields.
- Trail-riders find the byways quite good, unless they have been damaged by heavy agricultural machinery in autumn.
- Recreational vehicle users often feel criticised for travelling on routes that they are legally entitled to use.
- Most group members preferred the concept of minimal maintenance instead of vigorous path clearance.

- Although CCC has the duty to maintain routes, they don't have the funding to carry out their obligations satisfactorily.
- The establishment of P3 coordinators is viewed positively - although some group members would prefer to be able to contact them directly rather than through parish council clerks.
- In general, Rights of Way have improved over the last 30 years.

General Comments on the RoW Network (Land managers)

- It is in farmers' interest to maintain the RoW on their land because they also use the countryside for recreation and they don't want to damage their crops or machinery on poorly maintained paths.
- Payment for maintaining RoW is a very positive incentive.
- Many farmers don't register the RoW on their land, which puts them at a disadvantage.
- Some farmers think that DEFRA will eventually pay them for their RoW.
- Farmers are doing the maintenance work for CCC, but not being paid (or adequately paid) for it.
- Cross-field paths should be eliminated, and replaced by edge of field paths.
- Parish Council volunteers funded by CCC are a valuable asset in maintenance work.
- Farmers are taking increasing responsibility for the maintenance of RoW, but this work is not respected or acknowledged by the public.
- The creation of permissive paths has reduced problems with cars and motorbikes because highways legislation is an effective control mechanism.
- CCC is sympathetic to the position of land managers - it is difficult to provide a RoW network that meets everyone's needs and expectations.

Recommendations

These recommendations on the key issues were generated by the focus group members, and are reported without comment:

Access: Investigate the integration of public transport with RoW routes to encourage more use of public transport for recreational use. Investigate the options to encourage the public transport network to promote the carriage of bicycles to recreational RoW routes.

Path Maintenance: Maintain paths by hand and not by machine, which tends to cut them back too far. Agree an acceptable standard width for different types of paths. Dig up stumps, so that grass cutting is easier. CCC should publicise it when RoW have been cleared so that users are aware which routes are newly accessible. Eradicate blackthorn from paths. CCC should consider paying farmers to maintain different types of routes. Support parish councils in their role as key players in the co-ordination of volunteers to carry out maintenance activities.

Routes: Grade RoW routes for use and importance and maintain them to different standards - for example, footpaths to schools should receive high priority. Maintain more heavily used routes to a higher standard than less well-used routes. Map and link up bridleways and byways to encourage more use by riders and cyclists. Consider the construction of more designated mountain bike and off-road routes. Consider whether some paths could be divided to separate cyclists and walkers. Review all national footpaths, and take local people's views into account in deciding new routes.

Information: Publish up to date information about the accessibility of different routes on the CCC website and parish council information boards. Create an interactive site at the CCC site and have a forum for users to upload information about accessibility or ask questions. CCC should follow through with its plan to publish a biannual magazine that focuses on footpaths and bridleways. Publicise the colour codes on signposts and conduct user tests to see if members of the public understand them. Promote consistent colour coding across the county. Use signs to indicate the name of the next destination rather than just using an arrow to indicate direction. Site signs so that they are clear of vegetation and indicate the obvious routes. CCC should publish guidelines for the general public that explain the farmers' roles and responsibilities, and make recommendations for peaceful co-existence.

Seasonal Controls: Consult key user groups in advance of the issue of voluntary guidance on sensitive routes. Inform people repeatedly about which routes are suitable for different categories of user in winter.

Health and Safety: Clarify the position on farmers' liability for injury that takes place on RoW crossing their land. Investigate how to prevent the illegal use of bridleways by cars and motorbikes, by the use of deterrents such as bollards.

Co-operation with Other: Users Explore the creation of a regular forum for land managers to meet representatives of user groups, such as the Ramblers Association, to discuss potential conflicts.

8.4 1:1 interviews

A series of structured 1:1 interviews was conducted to fill in some of the gaps from the previous consultations. Representatives of the following organisations contributed:

- British Driving Society - carriage driving on byways
- Camsight - people with visual disabilities in the countryside
- County Heritage - linking archaeological interpretation with countryside access
- East Cambs Access Group - people with physical disabilities in the countryside
- County Environmental Education Service - education in the countryside
- National Trust - complementary countryside access provision
- County Ramblers Association - walking in the countryside
- Springfield Special School - students with learning difficulties in the countryside
- Trail Riders Fellowship - road-legal motorcycle riding on byways

Summaries of these interviews have been placed in the ROWIP project file, and have been used to help inform the proposals in the Statement of Action.

8.5 Corporate Consultation Survey 2004

Three questions relating to countryside access were included in the 2004 Corporate Consultation Survey. 1318 responses were received. This represents an encouraging 22% response rate for postal responses (25% including those surveys conducted by telephone), giving a 3% confidence interval. These results have a particular value for ROWIP, as the respondents are not self-selected regular countryside access users. Summary data are presented here - more detail recorded by District can be found in Appendix 5.

Have you used rural paths (such as footpaths, bridleways or byways) in the previous 12 months?

Yes: 66%

No: 33%

If yes, how would you rate your experience of using a rural path?

(Tick one)

Very satisfied: 14%

Satisfied: 53%

Dissatisfied: 22%

Very dissatisfied: 9%

Does not apply/no opinion: 1%

If you have not used a rural path, why not? (Tick all that apply)

Don't like walking, cycling etc: 16%

Lack of time or opportunity: 46%

Lack of information, unclear routes: 17%

Difficulty with accessibility or health restrictions: 18%

The type of landscape in Cambridgeshire or influence of agriculture: 5%

Difficulty getting to countryside: 10%

Other (please write in): 9%

Reasons for not using rural paths

Poor path maintenance: 73%

Excessive dog fouling: 40%

Difficulty finding/following path: 33%

Poor provision for disabled people: 27%

Problems using roads and verges to link paths: 26%

Crime/vandalism: 24%

Paths blocked by crops or ploughing: 24%

Difficulty crossing busy roads: 21%

Paths blocked by fences/barriers: 18%

Cycleways

There was an additional question under 'highways' relating to cycleways (this includes cycle lanes, cycle tracks and dual-use routes). Of 977 replies, 11% were very satisfied, 40% were satisfied, 20% were neither satisfied nor dissatisfied, 18% were dissatisfied and 11% were very dissatisfied.

8.6 Complementary Consultation for Strategic Open Spaces

BMG Research was commissioned to sample nine strategic open spaces in Cambridgeshire and interview 100 people at each. In total 858 responses were recorded as people completed their visits. A Strategic Open Spaces User Survey Report was prepared by BMG in October 2004. The sites were:

- Wicken Fen
- Holme Fen/Woodwalton Fen
- Wimpole Hall
- Coldham's Common
- Wandlebury Country Park
- Milton Country Park
- Grafham Water
- Paxton Pits Nature Reserve
- Hinchingsbrooke Country Park.

Key findings included the following:

- 19% visiting site for first time, 26% visit once a week.
- 56% come at weekends, 31% on weekdays.
- 54% come to walk, 29% nature walks, 25% exercise, 22% family days out and 20% dog walks.
- 84% arrive by car/van, 8% on foot, 4% by bike and 3% by bus.
- Amenities generally rated highly
- 86% feel the site is large enough for the number of visitors
- 44% visit other open spaces in Cambs.
- 70% rate the amount, quality and accessibility of open spaces in the region as good, 10% as poor
- 32% suggest improvements, especially improved/free car parking and more facilities for children.
- 71% would expect to travel between 1 and 15 miles to an open space.
- 4% have a long term illness, health problem or disability; and 2% are of ethnic origin.

This work clearly provides a valuable adjunct to the ROWIP research. The full report is available through the Greenspaces Officer, Countryside Services Team.

8.7 Working with Neighbouring Highway Authorities

Close liaison has been established with neighbouring authorities in the East of England. Regular meetings have been held since early in the project to compare experience and progress made with the ROWIP, organised by the Countryside Agency regional office and latterly facilitated by The Access Company. Additional contact has been made with relevant authorities in the East Midlands region (Northamptonshire and Lincolnshire). Issues addressed include the following:

- Instances of lack of continuity of 'local' Rights of Way / status at border with neighbouring authorities. This appears to be similar in scale to discontinuities within Cambridgeshire, either at former county boundaries or between parishes.
- Instances of lack of continuity of 'strategic' Rights of Way / status at border with neighbouring authorities. A significant example is where rights of way change status between footpath and bridleway on the Great Ouse Washes between Cambridgeshire and Norfolk, which affects users seeking to follow the waterways over a long distance.
- Cambridgeshire residents using countryside access in other authorities, e.g. mountain bikes in Thetford Forest in the absence of accessible large woodlands in Cambridgeshire and residents of Wisbech, which abuts Norfolk.
- Residents in other authorities using countryside access in Cambridgeshire, e.g. residents of Royston (Herts), Peterborough (Unitary) and Newmarket (Suffolk) which communities abut Cambridgeshire.
- The need for coordinated management and maintenance of rights of way which are in moiety or which cross boundaries. This especially applies to Traffic Regulation Orders and temporary closures and diversions.

9 Who has a stake in countryside access?



New footbridge at Wimblington

"Positive response to a carefully prepared footpath and village history trail map which was completed in March 2004"

"The paths alongside the Washes should be made available to cyclists and horse-riders as they are in Norfolk."

"Providing access opportunities that are consistent with protecting private land from rural crime - flytipping, hare coursing etc"

Public Consultation responses

Many people have an interest in the provision of countryside access, and each of their interests can have an effect on the interests of others. In this section, we briefly consider how each can have both a positive and a negative effect. An effective Statement of Action should minimise such conflicts. People working reasonably together might help make such caricatures a thing of the past - to a degree!

Explaining the symbols used

😊 represents what is good,

😞 represents problems,

🕊 represents potential solutions.

9.1 Getting there

😊 Rights of Way were conceived as a transport network, and still provide a sustainable means of travel, which should now be encouraged to reduce the environmental impact of motor traffic. Travel to work, school, shops and local facilities can all use rights of way.

😞 Cost of better surfaces and signing may exceed available budgets. Improving paths for utility use by some can reduce the rural experience or challenge for others.

🕊 Identify those parts of the network, which primarily serve utility users, concentrating appropriate improvements there, while leaving more rural paths more natural.

9.2 Healthy bodies, healthy minds

😊 Walking, running, cycling and other forms of exercise contribute to a healthier population. Rights of Way provide a safe and pleasant environment to encourage people to take more exercise.

😞 Cost of better surfaces and signing may exceed available budgets. Improving paths for exercise by some can reduce the rural experience or challenge for others. Walkers can, however, perceive cyclists and even runners as a threat, and wheels can damage soft surfaces.

🕊 Identify those parts of the network, which are most appropriate for promoted exercise, concentrating appropriate improvements there, while leaving more rural paths more natural.

9.3 Bringing in the harvest

😊 Farmers make their living from the land, and modern land management needs should be considered in sympathetic network improvements.

😞 Illegally not reinstating cross field paths after the two week grace period obstructs paths, stiles can obstruct wheelchairs and those not steady on their feet (the latter especially if the stile not in good condition), and agricultural machinery can damage the surface of byways in winter.

🕊 Future state support for agriculture will include a 'cross-compliance' requirement for the appropriate management of Rights of Way.

9.4 This green and pleasant land

😊 In many places a natural countryside is a major reason for people to want to use the network. Without access, biodiversity cannot be appreciated.

😞 Slow permissions can delay safety and improvement work. Costs are increased by requests for formal wildlife surveys. Uncontrolled dogs can threaten ground-nesting birds.

🕊 A more efficient and flexible working relationship is required between regulators and those looking after access networks. Education for dog owners on good practice when having their dog in the countryside is also important.

9.5 Just walking the dog

😊 Villagers value their local paths, which may be used on a daily basis. Dogwalkers often represent the silent majority of people using the routes near settlements.

😞 Owners often do not clear up after their dogs, leaving an unpleasant environment for residents and a potential health hazard for children. Loose dogs can frighten other users and dogs mix badly with cattle.

🕊 Need to work in partnership with District Councils to provide dog bins and with the Countryside Agency, English Nature and the Kennel Club in the educating of dog owners on their conduct with their dog in the countryside.

9.6 Seeking a challenge

- ☹ Mountain bikers may have no mountains to test their gears on, but still look for a sporting experience off-road to test their skills. Off-tarmac drivers and motorcyclists seek routes to test machines and driving skills.
- ☹ Inappropriate use can illegally damage surfaces - extreme driving is the business of private circuits, not the public highway. Vehicles while are not 'road legal' are breaking the law when on byways. Thoughtless riding and driving can endanger those moving at a slower pace.
- 🕊 Educate users, use voluntary restraints and prosecute persistent offenders.

9.7 Making a living

- ☹ Skilled, locally based contractors provide sustainable, sensitive, cost-effective Rights of Way maintenance.
- ☹ Mechanisation, which reduces costs, can be seen as not sympathetic to the countryside. Framework contracts based around larger road schemes can be inappropriately applied to rights of way.
- 🕊 Continue flexibility in procurement. Better communicate constraints under which works are undertaken.

9.8 The Thelwell experience

- ☹ The rights of way network can provide a safe and pleasant place to ride and drive horses and carriages.
- ☹ Horses can damage surfaces, which prejudices pedestrians against upgrading footpaths to bridleways.
- 🕊 Appropriate construction and maintenance regimes for bridleways.

9.9 Defending public rights

- ☹ Organisations such as the Ramblers Association, British Horse Society, LARA and the Open Spaces Society have a long and honourable record of protecting rights of way through periods when they were under threat.
- ☹ Objections from organisations and individuals pursuing individual agendas can prevent improvements to rights of way which have been agreed by a long (and expensive) period of consensus building between communities, landowners and users. Persistent objections and arguably over-literal interpretations of highway law have dissuaded some highway authorities from undertaking improvement packages at all. National bodies may also object to locally desired and approved schemes.
- 🕊 Develop a consensual mechanism for improvement packages through ROWIP and LAF, which build a presumption for improvement, which can be considered by the inspectorate in the event of objections from parties not centrally involved in the area.

9.10 Wine lakes and grain mountains

- ☹ Countryside Stewardship and future schemes support additional permissive access to the countryside.
- ☹ With grants running at up to £800 per year for permissive access, which does not generally appear on the OS maps carried by users, it will be more difficult to persuade landowners to dedicate new routes.
- 🕊 Need to work together with DEFRA on proposed new schemes.

9.11 Lane but game

- ☹ Those using wheelchairs and sticks benefit from the replacement of stiles by gaps and gates.
- ☹ Gaps and gates can allow inappropriate and sometimes illegal access to footpaths and private land.
- 🕊 Educate users about their rights and responsibilities. Provide kissing gates to control access.

9.12 Couch potatoes

- ☹ If everybody was so boring as to be interested only in Rights of Way, then the network would be overcrowded!
- ☹ Taxes paid to support the health service increase to cope with an unhealthy population.
- 🕊 Promote exercise on rights of way as one possible avenue to better health.

9.13 The open road ...

- ☹ Travellers traditionally used the broader rural droves and byways as transit campsites, grazing their horses on the grass while undertaking seasonal work on the land. Today, traveller liaison officers at district and county level seek to manage issues relating to traveller encampments.
- ☹ There are tensions between modern day travellers with motor vehicles and local communities, and further tensions between different traveller communities. In some cases, the presence of travellers, their dogs or horses can cause perceived and real problems for users of the rights of way network. Despite legislation, there are insufficient traveller campsites available, in part because they are unwelcome in many communities.
- 🕊 A mechanism for providing more traveller campsites is needed to reduce pressure on the rights of way network, especially over the winter.

9.14 The only certainties in life are death and ...

- ☹ Though tax is unwelcome, the money funds improvements to and maintenance of the network.
- ☹ People naturally want minimum tax, putting pressure on budgets, whereby Rights of Way can lose out to other priorities.
- 🕊 Promote importance of Rights of Way to health, transport and economic agendas and to those making budget allocation decisions.

9.15 Whitehall mandarins

- ☹ Improvement initiatives, funding streams and performance measurements intend to improve provision for the people.
- ☹ Non ring-fenced funding gets spent elsewhere, the current legal framework does not facilitate improvement, and outdated BVPI criteria measure against older targets.
- 🕊 Need to lobby at national level for better laws and regulations, while raising perception of the importance of rights of way provision when local spending decisions are being made.

9.16 The long arm of the law

- ☹ Both highway authorities and police work to control abuses.
- ☹ Highway authority powers are limited, enforcement can be politically unpopular, and police have higher priorities than rural rights of way.
- 🕊 Need better partnership working between enforcement agencies.

10 Statement of Action



Wimpole Park

"Many of my B&B guests walk these tracks and they are impassable during winter months, such a loss when the tracks and dykes are full of wildlife."

"More trade if people have an enjoyable walk"

"Where would they put a horse?"

Public consultation responses from rural businesses

The Statement of Action is a required part of the ROWIP. This section identifies specific issues to be addressed and proposes possible solutions and activities. Feedback from the consultation undertaken in 2004, detailed in previous pages informed the proposals put forward and resulted in a list of 96 actions and potential improvements that were presented in the draft plan.

A key issue for the ROWIP is prioritising issues and potential improvements. With a wide range of interest groups, often with conflicting interests, and limited resources, this can be a difficult balance to strike. People were therefore invited to indicate their views on the priority of proposed actions as part of the twelve-week statutory consultation on the draft document during February - May 2005. The draft ROWIP document was sent to all consultees listed in Appendix 1. The highlighted actions from this process now form this Statement of Action and will be the focus for the improvement and future management of countryside access.

These priorities are not within the County Council's capacity to deliver alone. Partnership working will be at the heart of any significant improvement to countryside access in Cambridgeshire. It is also true that some actions will be more easily achieved while others will require substantial funding and co-operation between other parties over an extended period of time.

Priorities expressed by the Local Access Forum were indicated on the consultation table of actions and were based on combining input from the LAF members who individually prioritised the issues in December 2004. Where there was a high level of uniformity in either 'high' or 'low' responses this was marked as 'very high' and 'very low'.

10.1 How the Statement of Action (SOA) is formatted

The Statement of Action is grouped into eight categories, each covering a separate issue.

Guiding principles

A 'guiding principle' is presented corresponding to each issue.

Issues

A variety of issues have been identified based on officer analysis and consultation. These have been grouped under eight headings for the purpose of this analysis.


- SOA1 Making the Countryside More Accessible.
- SOA2 A Safer Activity
- SOA3 57,000 new homes
- SOA4 Knowing what's out there
- SOA5 Filling in the Gaps
- SOA6 Better Land Management
- SOA7 Develop Definitive Map and Other Records
- SOA8 A Better Countryside Environment


Possible solutions to address these issues are analysed in the tables below.

The benefits column gives an indication of the additional benefit of undertaking the action and links:

- A: Promoting a healthy lifestyle.
- B: Delivering a safer highway network.
- C: Providing an inclusive countryside access network
- D: Improving the condition of existing access provision to modern standards.
- E: Providing sustainable access to the countryside.
- F: Maintaining and increasing biodiversity.
- G: Contributing to tourism and rural economic prosperity.
- H: Increasing awareness of the countryside, biodiversity issues and responsible enjoyment of countryside access opportunities.
- I: Improving land management
- J: Providing reliable, enforceable information

Estimated costs are shown according to the following scheme:

 some extra staff time required (noting that there are costs associated with staff)

 significant extra staff time required

£ less than £5,000 per year **££** £5,000 - £50,000 per year

£££ more than £50,000 per year

The lead body is shown in bold, where it is known. Many improvements will be delivered by specific projects, but others will be need to be delivered through regular service mechanisms, and compete for limited resources. These need to be identified to avoid an excessive emphasis on projects at the expense of service delivery:

Consultation Feedback

Specific consultation feedback relevant to each issue is identified.

Current Work

Current work on each topic is reviewed.

Possible Solutions

The tables analyse possible solutions. Given likely funding, not all of these are likely to be possible.

Related Programmes

Related programmes are identified.

SOA1 Making the Countryside More Accessible



Byway improvements at Gypsy Lane Dullingham

Guiding principle GP1

“Countryside access provision should be physically accessible to the widest possible range of people. Management and improvement of the existing Cambridgeshire rights of way network should aim to increase that accessibility, while new countryside access provision should generally be planned to avoid imposing restrictions. Where an existing path may not be fully accessible to those with limited mobility due to limits imposed by external constraints, such route limitations should be effectively communicated to users.”

Issue

Since October 2004, the final implementation stage of the 1995 Disability Discrimination Act makes it an offence to prevent people with disabilities from enjoying countryside access. Stiles in particular obstruct both wheelchairs and people who are not in full health. Stiles are, however, primarily a landowner responsibility. CCC supports landowners by helping to provide gates in appropriate places, but progress is currently limited by lack of resources. Little information is presently available as to which paths are accessible and which are not.

Consultation Feedback

The obstruction caused by stiles features strongly as a concern in the feedback. Discussions with representatives of users with disabilities suggest that information on accessible routes and the monitoring and maintenance of routes declared accessible are as important as opening up individual paths.

Current Work



Historically, there is a duty to pay 25% of landowner costs in providing barrier crossings. Prior to 1996, CCC generally supplied stile kits. To be more proactive in improving access, current policy is generally to supply new low-maintenance metal gates. Landowners, P3 parishes and volunteers are generally expected to undertake installation at the present time. An audiotape and leaflet of countryside access opportunities is available for those with mobility and/or sensory problems. Although now rather dated, the information still has some value.

The Countryside Agency is currently undertaking a Diversity Review researching the groups of people who face barriers to accessing the countryside, those often under represented such as women, children, people with restricted mobility and ethnic minorities. This research will take forward the Government’s Rural White Paper (2000) commitment to carry out a diversity review on access to the countryside.

The full diversity review will look at how we can encourage more people with disabilities, more people from ethnic minorities, more people from the inner cities, and more young people to visit the countryside and participate in country activities. Initially, views will be sought on what people need to enjoy the countryside. Then the Countryside Agency will draw up a plan of action, which will help shape future work in this area.

Possible solutions

SOA1 Making the Countryside More Accessible

Ref	Action	Benefits	Project or service	Costs and resources required					Lead body & potential partners
				Y1	Y2	Y3-5	Y5-10	Y10+	
1/1	Selected surface improvements	ABCD	Project		£££	£££	£££		CCC Disability groups, parishes
	Identify paths, which are significant desire lines for people of all abilities. Undertake appropriate surface improvements. Publicise these routes.								
1/2	Survey network accessibility	CD	Project						CCC Disability groups
	Compile existing information (GIS, BVPI, volunteer surveys). Survey paths where there is uncertainty. Follow Fieldfare methodology. Publish information on CCC internet interactive map, e.g. by colour coding. Explore opportunities for opening up countryside for the mobility impaired and their carers.								
1/3	New structures to BSI standards	CD	Service	££	££	££	££	££	CCC Landowners
	While CCC seeks to follow BSI recommendations for structures, and encourages landowners to do likewise, there is no formal requirement, especially for existing infrastructure. Would apply to bridges, stiles, gates and steps.								
1/4	Accessibility signs & waymarks	CH	Project/ service			£			CCC Disability groups
	Consult re best signage. Design and procure signs and waymarks. Install signs and waymarks on selected paths. Keep stocks of signs and waymarks and use for future maintenance. Might be as simple as vandal-proof adhesive patches, with sufficient space left on future regular signs.								

Note: Action 8/2 in SOA8 covers ploughing and cropping issues, which can also affect accessibility.

Related Programmes

CROW legislation, DDA legislation

SOA2 A Safer Activity



A14 traffic at Fenstanton

Guiding principle GP2

“Countryside access provision should be safe for users. Where significant potential conflict with motor traffic or railways can be demonstrated, then measures to reduce risk will be considered. Where rights of way are subsumed within urban development, then planners will be encouraged to ensure that path design is open and unthreatening. Safety-critical path infrastructure will be regularly inspected.”

Issue

When the rights of way network was first recorded in the 1950s, crossing roads and railways and linking along minor roads and road verges was both feasible and safe. In a busier, faster moving world, roads and railways effectively sever networks and present users with a choice between safety hazards and not using a significant part of the existing network. This is an especial issue for horses, which can react unpredictably to traffic. There were 12 recorded injury accidents involving ridden horses and motor vehicles in Cambridgeshire between January 2001 and September 2004, of which two were serious. These were on roads - no accidents were recorded on byways, while accidents involving just injuries to horses are not recorded. No (human) injury accidents involving driven horses were recorded. It needs to be noted that these statistics take no account of users avoiding locations, which they believe to be unsafe.

Consultation Feedback

Road safety issues featured heavily in both public responses and in specific input from user groups. Specific input has been received from the local chapter of the British Horse Society (BHS).

Current Safety Work

In recent years, there have been specific instances of footpath upgraded to bridleways to provide horse riders with safer off-road routes. A recent example was at Guyhirn. Though Cambridgeshire won a national award for bridleway creation in 2004, progress on this front is relatively slow, and dependant on sympathetic landowners - in the Guyhirn case this was the Environment Agency. When part of the A428 was dualled by the Highways Agency, a bridleway was cut. This was diverted across the slip-roads accessing Cambourne, and Pegasus crossings were installed. In practice these have proved confusing to motor vehicles, and at the time of writing are currently turned off. While Pegasus crossings may be more successful on open stretches of road, there are few other



examples in the county. New cycle bridges have been provided around Cambridge, most recently across the A14 at Milton. Despite requests from the BHS, the Milton bridge was not built to bridleway standards due to a reported lack of demonstrable demand - perhaps not surprising given the alternative of crossing the A14. In addition to these larger projects, a programme of smaller bridge improvements, scrub and surface works seeks to improve the safety of the network.

Work with planners has sought to prevent the creation of ‘crime alleys’ where development subsumes Rights of Way.

Possible solutions

SOA2

A Safer Activity

Ref	Action	Benefits	Project or service	Costs and resources required					Lead body & potential partners
				Y1	Y2	Y3-5	Y5-10	Y10+	
2/1	Improve future road development, A1, A428, A14	BC	Project			£££	£££	£££	Highways Agency CCC
Past road development, especially by the Highways Agency, has left a legacy of network severance and dangerous crossings. Major changes to trunk roads are likely, though the timescales tend to move back. CCC have made input to proposed plans. The Highways Agency needs to plan better RoW provision into what is built.									
2/2	Verge and footway improvements	BC	Project		££	££	££		CCC
Provide and publicise safe routes alongside busy roads where required to connect RoW which otherwise are effectively dead-ended by terminating on busy roads without safe soft user provision, taking into account needs of Protected Road Verges, where appropriate.									
2/3	Safety audit of road crossings	B	Project						CCC road safety User groups
New proposals for rights of way crossing roads are generally consider by CCC road safety, but existing crossings have not been considered. A general audit of RoW/road intersections working down hierarchy from trunk roads would help prioritise improvement works.									
2/4	Implementing safer road crossings	BCD	Project		£££	£££	£££	£££	CCC Highway Divisions, Highways Agency
Provide bridges, refuges, signs and visibility splays where prioritised by 2/3. May need diversions in places.									

Related Programmes

CCC highways are currently surveying the highway network, including verges and footways.

SOA3 57,000 new homes



New housing at Cambourne by Caxton Bridleway 5

Guiding principle GP3

“New development should not damage countryside access provision, either directly or indirectly. New settlements should be integrated into the rights of way network, and improved provision made for the increased population. Where appropriate, development should contribute to the provision of new links and/or improvement of the existing rights of way network”.

Issue

Cambridgeshire and Peterborough’s Structure Plan reflects central government’s request to accommodate 57,000 new homes and their associated infrastructure as part of the M11 corridor expansion, stretching towards Peterborough and to March. This has a double effect - development can adversely affect the existing network, and the additional population will make new demands of the remaining network.

The Highway Authority is able to safeguard existing rights of way and also create improvements to the network as part of development taking place. Improvements to the highway network can be achieved through ‘planning gain’ under section 106 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990. This is referred to as S106 funding. Section 38 of the Highways Act 1980 also enables the Highway Authority to require developers to construct improvements to highways if related to development.

The pressures that new developments can place on SSSIs (Sites of Special Scientific Interest) situated close to the area require sufficient and suitable green infrastructure, and for management of visitors to minimise the impact.

Consultation Feedback

Concern about development pressures featured heavily in both public responses and in specific input from user groups.

Current Work

Preparation of planning guidelines

Regular team input to planning proposals

Cambourne S106

Northstowe planning

LDF input

Cambridgeshire Horizons

Possible solutions

SOA3

57,000 new homes

Ref	Action	Benefits	Project or service	Costs and resources required					Lead body & potential partners
				Y1	Y2	Y3-5	Y5-10	Y10+	
3/1	Development control during development	B	Service						CCC Planners
	Ensure that RoW are protected from inappropriate use during development and that new facilities are provided to a good standard.								
3/2	Minimise damage to existing network	AC	Service						Planners Developers CCC
	Liaise with planners and developers to ensure that new development does not compromise existing countryside access provision. New roads need bridges. Development should link into the network.								
3/3	Secure S106 funding for offsite improvements to RoW for new population	ABC DEF GHI	Service	£££ 	£££ 	£££ 	£££ 	£££ 	Planners Developers CCC
	Liaise with planners and developers to provide new countryside access provision to link new development into an enhanced network catering for increased population. To include new routes, status upgrades, improved facilities and better information, signage and interpretation.								
3/4	Extend Strategic Open Space for new population	CFH	Project	£££ 	£££ 	£££ 	£££	£££	CCC (not RoW) Planners Developers ODPM
	Liaise with planners and developers to provide new open space for new population.								

Related Programmes

Cambourne under construction, Northstowe under negotiation, other new development around Cambridge and elsewhere being consulted upon. Growth area support for Wicken and Coton.

SOA4 Knowing what's out there



Brampton Wood Nature Reserve

Guiding principle GP4

"Up to date, accurate, comprehensive and integrated access information should be made available to all users of countryside access provision."

Issue

The benefits of Rights of Way to public health, sustainable transport, the rural economy and the quality of people's lives are now well established. However, though a minority of people make good use of the network, many do not. This can be due to various reasons, some of which may be addressed by this plan:

Lack of local knowledge: At one time people grew up in villages knowing their parish and neighbouring land. Many are now incomers, and do not have this knowledge. More information and signage on the ground may therefore now be needed.

Perceptions: Those not familiar with the countryside may perceive issues, which are either not present or not general. These can include lack of knowledge about their and others' rights, concerns about unsympathetic landowners, fear of livestock and worry that they may get lost. Whether real or not, these perceptions need to be addressed.

Information: Need a wide range of information in various media to reach more people - not everybody has or can interpret Ordnance Survey maps, even where they are correct (and there are errors on local OS maps).

Inclusively: Ethnic minorities in particular often do not appreciate what rights they have in the countryside, and can feel unwelcome. Aspects of SOA1 relate to this, too.

Parking difficulties and public transport: Having confidence to get to the start of an outing - whether a safe place to leave a motorcar or which bus to catch and when - can be the key to getting into the country.

Urbanising the countryside: Over-provision of signposts and interpretation can reduce enjoyment of the countryside for some users.

Consultation Feedback

A poor knowledge of the opportunities available was apparent from responses received. Disability responses were keen for more access information, while the minimal response rate from ethnic minorities confirms this to be a 'hard to reach' group.

Current Work













Changes to the Definitive Map are advised to the Ordnance Survey, though it can take some time for these to be reflected onto printed maps in the shops, and there appear to be some anomalies in representation. CCC therefore publishes an interactive version of the definitive map on the internet. This has recently been developed to include permissive paths on County Farms land. A range of leaflets is available, including specific guidance on outings not requiring use of a motorcar.

Due to lack of resources, many of these leaflets are now rather old, and distribution channels are limited by the need to recover costs. The Countryside Services Team takes stands to countryside shows to better engage with the public and to promote countryside access both linear and site based. In the past, advertising has been undertaken in local newspapers, but budgets do not currently permit this.

Possible solutions

SOA4

Knowing what's out there

Ref	Action	Benefits	Project or service	Costs and resources required					Lead body & potential partners
				Y1	Y2	Y3-5	Y5-10	Y10+	
4/1	Unify underlying access information	H	Project						CCC Information providers
	Widen GIS and interactive internet map information to include permissive, archaeological sites, access land etc.								
4/2	Local facilities and events	CH	Service						CCC P3 Volunteers
	Extend current P3 scheme to embrace more neighbourhood activities, local map boards and community groups. Officer time needed to support this.								
4/3	Better waymarks	CH	Project then service	 ££	 £	 £	 £	 £	CCC Volunteers
	Currently have limited waymarking using standard colour codes. Better waymarking and new waymarking tools integrating with urban signage would make paths more accessible to new users.								
4/4	Unify marketing of access information	H	Service	£	£	£			CCC Information providers
	Provide access to information through a range of media (leaflets, web, map boards etc)								

Related Programmes

Ordnance Survey plans to show Access Land on 1:25000 maps from November 2005.

SOA5 Filling in the Gaps



Old West River from the air

Guiding principle GP5

“Countryside access provision should build on the platform of the historical network to meet the needs of today’s users and land managers.”

Issue

A central issue for the ROWIP is moving from looking after individual rights of way to addressing the overall rights of way network. Connectivity is then an important issue. Given the lesser extent of the bridleway network compared to footpaths, this is an especial issue for equestrians and cyclists.

Consultation Feedback

Feedback confirms that horse riders and off-road cyclists have especial concerns, but all users from walkers to carriage drivers and 4x4 wish to see a better connected network.

Current Work

The current cycle strategy mostly addresses the needs of skinny urban tyres. The Sustrans network does provide some cycle trails, but these are planned at a regional rather than a local level. A parish by parish analysis has been undertaken which helps show where gaps need to be plugged.

Possible solutions

SOA5

Filling in the Gaps

Ref	Action	Benefits	Project or service	Costs and resources required					Lead body & potential partners
				Y1	Y2	Y3-5	Y5-10	Y10+	
5/1	Identify routes required	ACDEG	Project						CCC User groups Local communities
	Take ROWIP strategy with initial parish analysis and apply throughout county to identify and prioritise missing links and actions required to close them.								
5/2	Appropriate seasonal byway voluntary restraints and TROs to protect bridle access	CF	Project	 ££	 ££	 ££	 ££		CCC Districts
	Provide minimum restrictions on use of byways to protect surfaces and the interests of the wider user community. Costs include legal cost and barriers, though there can be savings on repeated surface repairs. Landowner cooperation is needed to ensure that agricultural use does not cause continued damage.								
5/3	Plan circular routes linked to interpretation	ACD EGH	Service	 ££	 ££	 ££	 ££	 ££	CCC Archaeology NT
	Prioritise path creations for new circular routes on the grounds that this is what is most wanted in rural communities and serves the widest range of existing and potential users. Where possible use existing network, but also provide new links where these are needed.								
5/4	Deliver improved bridleway network	ABC DEG	Service	 £££	 £££	 £££	 £££		CCC User groups Parishes
	Prioritise bridleway improvements on grounds that bridleway users currently suffer highest risk on roads and bridleway network is currently most disjointed. Ensure that bridleway improvements have least possible effect on pedestrians so as to maximise benefit to widest user community.								

Related Programmes

Ordnance Survey plans to show Access Land on 1:25000 maps from November 2005.

SOA6 Better Land Management



Old West River on the ground

Guiding principle GP6

“Management and improvement of countryside access should consider the needs of land management, conservation, heritage and concern about rural crime.”

Issue

- Public access to the countryside can have a negative impact on land management for conservation and the sustainability of vulnerable species and habitats.
- Many farmers and landowners believe that providing public access entails an inappropriate workload and financial burden.
- Concerns about rural crime and the potential effect of increased access can deter landowners from improving access. Issues include flytipping, illegal encampments, theft and burglary, arson, poaching, hare coursing and associated intimidation, illegal off-road vehicle use, and trespass.
- Uncontrolled dogs and fouling are a deterrent to countryside users and makes managing land for access both costly and hazardous.

Consultation Feedback

Questionnaire feedback from landowners and the landowner focus group both aired significant concerns about rural crime.

Current Work




















Farmers are contracted to cut surface vegetation on their own land. While this increases administrative costs compared to larger contracts, farmers' cuts are felt to be more sustainable and to put money back into the rural economy.

Despite some recent problems, rights of way management checks conservation issues using available information including SSSIs and County Wildlife Sites on GIS. Formal inspections by qualified staff are undertaken where the surface vegetation cut crosses SSSIs.

An Assistant Rights of Way Officer has been appointed to liaise with English Nature over access issues relating to designated sites in order to ensure an accessible and diverse countryside that demonstrates best practice in habitat and access management. This will provide an important contact and communication point for these issues.

Possible solutions

SOA6 Better Land Management

Ref	Action	Benefits	Project or service	Costs and resources required					Lead body & potential partners
				Y1	Y2	Y3-5	Y5-10	Y10+	
6/1	Waymarking	CI	Service	 ££	 ££	 ££	 ££		CCC Landowners
Work with landowners to increase waymarking in places where there are concerns about path users causing problems for land management by straying and about inappropriate use of paths. CCC to provide materials for landowners to install on the ground. Officer time needed to check results.									
6/2	Mowing contracts	CGI	Service	 ££	 ££	 ££	 ££	 ££	CCC Landowners
Extend proportion of network, which is cut by landowners on their own land. Though this takes more time to administer the larger number of contracts, there are significant advantages in path 'ownership' and cross-compliance on cross-field paths. Also puts money back into the rural economy.									
6/3	Better conservation liaison	F	Service	 ££	 ££	 ££	 ££	 ££	CCC Landowners Conservation bodies
To counter real and perceived conflicts between countryside access and conservation management, time needs to be invested by CCC in more effective liaison, especially on larger improvement projects.									
6/4	Rural policing	BC	Service	 ££	 ££	 ££	 ££	 ££	Police
Increase resources and profile of resources addressing those aspects of rural crime, which are countryside access, related and which can lead landowners to inappropriately block access.									

Related Programmes

Devils Dyke restoration project http://www.cambridgeshire.gov.uk/environment/countryside/biodiversity/projects/devils_dyke/

SOA7 Develop Definitive Map and Other Records



Ouse Valley Way at Houghton Mill

Guiding principle GP7

"The Definitive Map and Statement should be an accurate, comprehensive, up-to-date and accessible record of the public rights of way network in Cambridgeshire. Proposals for legal changes to the network should be promptly resolved and cost-effective."

Issue

Reliable definitive map data underpin improvements to paths on the ground. The current map is divided between multiple maps relating to previous authorities, and to different scales. The maps are now old, and of limited accuracy. There are many longstanding problems due to historic events, particularly development that has not accommodated the RoW network. Though apparently a long time away, the 2026 deadline imposed by CROW on historic claims will demand significant work throughout the period of the Improvement Plan. Though perhaps less visible than new paths or interpretation, the map is an essential enabler for works on the ground and is needed to provide a reliable record for the public, especially given the likely pace of development over the next few years.

Consultation Feedback

Unsurprisingly, there was little feedback due to a poor understanding of definitive map issues - but respondents are concerned to see improvements on the ground, which need map improvements to deliver.

Current Work

In addition to every day work of investigating claims for rights of way and processing applications for the diversion, extinguishment and creation of footpaths and bridleways, we work proactively with parishes on path reorganisations to achieve a network that better serves the local community.

Although not yet completely verified, the Cambridgeshire RoW network is recorded on GIS and is published through an interactive map on the County Council website.
















Consolidation of the definitive map to produce a single, reliable and easily updated document for the whole county has begun but progress is very slow due to a severe lack of resources.

Mindful of the 2026 cut-off date for recording unregistered historic rights of way, the Cambridgeshire Lost Highways project is reasonably well underway, but is also frustrated by inadequate resources.

Cambridgeshire - in particular the south - is experiencing rapid demographic and commercial growth. The team has been proactive in engaging with the development process in order that rights of way are satisfactorily incorporated into both the major proposals, such as Cambourne and Northstowe, as well as those of smaller scale.

Possible solutions

SOA7 Develop Definitive Map and Other Records

Ref	Action	Benefits	Project or service	Costs and resources required					Lead body & potential partners
				Y1	Y2	Y3-5	Y5-10	Y10+	
7/1	Map consolidation - accurate interactive GIS map	CHIJ	Service						CCC
Consolidate changes from existing definitive maps onto a single reissued map, also represented electronically on GIS to a defined accuracy, e.g. 1:10,000 to OS repositioned base and to reach the widest public arena.									
7/2	Resolving problem paths	CHIJ	Service	 £	 £	 £	 £		CCC Landowners User groups
Catalogue problems with existing definitive routes (e.g. houses built on route); determine preferred action and implement (e.g. diversions).									
7/3	Mapping routes which are not definitive	CHIJ	Service						CCC Highways
Map Unclassified Roads and other routes with public access, which integrate with the RoW network and make information more public.									
7/4	Definitive path widths	CHIJ	Service						CCC
Research and define widths of path widths not recorded on the definitive statement; make Definitive Map Modification Orders to register them on the legal record. Rights of way are also important biodiversity corridors and so establishing their boundaries is crucial to conserving that resource.									

Related Programmes

The Countryside Agency has recently established a national Archive Research Unit to commence the immense task of researching unrecorded potential rights of way in England and Wales.

The phased implementation of sections of CROW Act 2000, e.g. S31(6) registers.

CSS and IPROW are helping to develop best practice for statutory definitive map procedures.

SOA8 A Better Countryside Environment



Geese on Cook's Stream by Godmanchester Footpath 4

Guiding principle GP8

"The countryside access experience in Cambridgeshire should be straightforward, enjoyable and inspiring."

Issue

If being in the countryside is not a pleasant experience, then countryside access is unlikely to be popular. Issues include fly-tipping, agricultural encroachment, misuse of rights of way and dog waste.

Consultation Feedback











Much confusion was evident about who is responsible for what (the County, District, landowner and police all have specific responsibilities), but strong concern about what people encounter and do not like in the countryside was clear.

Current Work

Although constrained by cash limits, CCC endeavours to keep the path network in good condition by regular maintenance. Where cropping problems are reported on arable land, enforcement action is taken, starting with talking to farmers. Problems with fly-tipping and dogs are resolved in partnership with districts. A new fly tipping enforcement strategy will employ an enforcement officer to drive more effective action. Misuse of paths by motor vehicles is referred to the police for appropriate action. The overall condition of the network is monitored through surveys following the 'BVPI178' methodology (5% sample annually checked by officers), but the network is not regularly monitored on a 100% basis, which can result in insurance claims.

Possible solutions

SOA8 A Better Countryside Environment

Ref	Action	Benefits	Project or service	Costs and resources required					Lead body & potential partners
				Y1	Y2	Y3-5	Y5-10	Y10+	
8/1	Anti-flytip programme on paths	CF	Service	££	££	££	££	££	Districts Environment Agency CCC
Deal with flytip backlog. Clear vegetation from tip sites. Surveillance, prosecutions and publicity for frequently misused areas. Fastrack clearance to avoid encouragement of copycat fly tipping. Ensure that public bodies control waste disposal from own projects.									
8/2	Enhance cropping policy to increase compliance with law	C	Service	£	£	£	£		CCC NFU/CLA Landowners
Reduce threshold for action. Target repeat offenders with more proactive inspections. Better mark RoWs on ground. Provide information to agricultural contractors. Encourage local pressure through communities. Develop cross-compliance programmes with DEFRA whereby subsidies are linked to respecting rights of way.									
8/3	Extend mowing programme to mitigate climate change	BC	Service	£££ 	£££ 	£££ 	£££ 	£££ 	CCC Contractors Environment Agency
Increase number of cuts from 2 to 3. Increase length of cut to include more paths. Coordinate better with other cutting agencies, e.g. Environment Agency on riverbanks. Needs more officer time to set up and monitor as well as more money to pay contractors.									
8/4	Volunteer groups	BCF	Service						CCC User groups Volunteers
Effective use of more volunteer groups to improve paths, which would otherwise not be addressed given limited maintenance resources. Need to achieve 'critical mass' to ensure that improvements are commensurate with officer time invested.									

Related Programmes

Devils Dyke Restoration project http://www.cambridgeshire.gov.uk/environment/countryside/biodiversity/projects/devils_dyke/

10.2 Consultation Feedback

As stated previously the Rights of Way Improvement Plan has undergone two consultations. The initial survey was conducted to aid in the production of the draft plan and assessing people's thoughts and requirements from the public path network, and the second was designed to consult on the draft document and prioritise the potential actions needed to improve the network.

The first consultation and the results received are detailed in Section 8 'What do people tell us they want'.

The draft Improvement Plan laid out 96 possible activities laid out under eight themes. Access Officers took these activities to consultation conducting information road show events at five locations in the county. Feedback forms containing the actions were distributed and also made available on the council's website along with the draft ROWIP and supporting documents. Consultation material was sent county wide to businesses, landowners, authorities, agencies, user groups and organisations. Adverts were placed in local papers to advertise the publication of the draft ROWIP and invite people to take part in the consultation. Posters were also placed in local libraries and parishes to advertise the information road shows.

People were asked to state their level of priority for each activity, choices being low, medium or high. The data was collated and the four main priorities were selected from each of the eight sections, providing a more realistic total of thirty-two actions that reflect the issues that most concern people in terms of access and enjoyment of the countryside through the rights of way network. This selection was made taking the activities with the highest level of high priorities. Where the numbers were close the amount of medium responses were also taken into account.

Of the priorities highlighted from the consultation officers also looked into the resources needed and these also were taken into account when finalising the priorities, striking a balance between public opinion and practical implementation in line with statutory duties and policies.

The consultation received over 300 responses, 56 online responses and 30 detailed responses from interested organisations and agencies.

The majority of the actions that emerged from the consultation were the type of activities expected to be raised based on the knowledge of common complaints and issues raised about the network. They also reflect views from the people interested in using as well as currently using the rights of way network as to the work that is required and the improvements that will create and maintain a more accessible network for all users.

A table of the more detailed responses is available online at www.cambridgeshire.gov.uk/environment/countryside/access/rowip.htm

These comments are aimed at and deal with more specific elements of the ROWIP itself. They have been reviewed and discussed and the Council's responses have been provided.

10.3 Making it happen



River Ouse at site of the former Paxton chain ferry, a significant gap in the network

Making plans does not make actions happen on the ground. Consensus, determination to deliver and funding take longer to put in place and a significant activity after publication will be to underpin the delivery of the Plan's activities with consensus building and fund raising. It was therefore important that the initial possible actions were prioritised into the thirty-two actions that will be more realistic to deliver.

These actions chosen through the public consultation reflect the issues that most concern people in terms of access and enjoyment of the countryside through the rights of way network. They also appear to closely uphold the current work and projects in place and provide a positive direction for the delivery of the aspirations for future improvements that will create and maintain a more accessible network for all users.

The Council will look at those activities that can be delivered in the shorter term, both internally and in partnership. For example, these could include mapping external funding opportunities, proactive replacement of stiles with gates where needed, reviewing methods for waymarking, enlisting the skills of LAF and other local volunteers to take forward individual projects e.g. surveying recreational routes. Plans will then be made and funding sought for those activities requiring longer-term delivery.

Making it happen

Ref	Action
1	Build LTP priorities into RoW Team delivery plan alongside community and cultural strategies.
2	Build internal consensus within the new County Council directorates on ROWIP delivery
3	Build external consensus with identified partner bodies on ROWIP delivery. Consider establishing a countryside trust or similar organisation to seek external funding for projects.
4	Deliver improvements using agreed formula for S106 support for countryside access
5	Bid externally for DEFRA ROWIP funding for non-LTP priorities
6	Bid externally for Growth Area Support funding for ROWIP delivery
7	Bid externally for other funding for ROWIP delivery
8	Bid internally for appropriate share of LTP funding
9	Establish contingency protocol for 'create and compensate' valuations and delivery
10	Identify delivery contractors
11	Start to deliver, starting with 'quick wins'
12	Report progress against objectives

10.4 How should we prioritise these activities?



Fen Drayton Nature Reserve

Constraints

In an ideal world legislation would not conflict, there would be agreement on priorities, it would be clear who does what, and organisations would have sufficient money, people and back office systems to deliver improvements. Reality is clearly different, and many of the problems are not within the gift of those interested in countryside access to resolve. All stakeholders need to have an understanding of the issues, the constraints and potential conflicts, the risks, how progress might be monitored and how partnership delivery could best work.

Particular Risks

The following list of risks is undoubtedly not exhaustive, but the risks are cited as examples of issues, which people interested in the implementation and progress of the ROWIP will need to aware of:

- Limited core funding in delivery organisations may not prioritise countryside access in the face of other pressures.
- Satisfying legal duties may limit whether discretionary powers can be exercised. Reacting to daily pressures can limit delivery of strategic improvements. It can be difficult to prioritise improvements, given current legislation and pressures from representatives of user groups to address individual problem reports.
- If an improvement is seen as a statutory duty, then it may not be possible to attract external funding.
- If conflicting interests between interested parties cannot be resolved, then improvements may stall.
- Even if funding is available, there is a limited supply of potential staff with the expertise to progress improvements. Developing new staff takes time and money. This is an especial issue for Cambridgeshire, given that local circumstances make it difficult to attract staff.
- Legal procedures to change Rights of Way may not accommodate the need for network improvements. In particular, in the event of objections to proposals, the public inquiry process is focused on individual paths rather than the network as a whole.
- Network improvements need to address both local and wider county needs. Consultation feedback indicates that there is a perception of conflict between these needs. Given the need to get community support, the right balance may be difficult to strike.
- Uncertainty over land valuations for ‘create and compensate’ schemes may make it difficult to budget for improvements. This problem should reduce once pilot schemes have been completed.
- The guidelines underlying the BVPI 178 surveys address individual rights of way, rather than the network as a whole. Pressures to improve the BVPI score may compromise network level improvements.
- Even if physical network improvements are made, then unless this is effectively communicated to potential users, there may not be a commensurate benefit.

10.5 Monitoring Progress

Success of the ROWIP may only be apparent in the longer term. Monitoring progress in the meantime may be difficult. The existing BVPI 178 indicator is not ideal, though there are discussions at a national level about improvements or a better alternative indicator. The existing Countryside Services Team's Annual report records both reactive and proactive achievement. Progress against ROWIP priorities will be reported in future years and as the ROWIP will form part of the Local Transport Plan, the annual LTP report should also serve to provide details of progress made.

More quantified indicators can be difficult, both because they may not be representative of improvements as a whole, and because they can encourage targeting of resource against improvements which improve the indicator, rather than those which are most valuable. For instance, a frequent suggestion for an indicator is 'increase in the total length of the network'. Such an indicator would ignore the value of a particular improvement. It would value a long link in a remote area, which might see little use over a shorter link close to a community, which might be well used. It would also devalue a parish reorganisation, which might provide substantially better links and better land management if it happened to reduce the total length of paths.

One indicator, which would be very desirable, is in practice difficult to measure. Compared to 'honey pot' attractions where car park traffic can be readily measured, or popular linear routes such as those found on mountain ridges, the diffuse usage of the RoW network can make data from individual site surveys or user measurement devices statistically insignificant. Continued demographic surveys may provide more useful data in the longer term, though an investment in making automatic measurements on more popular routes such as riverside routes might also be worthwhile.

11 Where Next?



Foxton Footpath 1

"It has taken 11 years to get our footpaths diverted"

"Need education and respect of the countryside by the public"

"Need more rural policing"

Public Consultation responses from landowners

After conducting two consultations with stakeholders and many interested parties throughout the last two years in preparation for this Rights of Way Improvement Plan, the next step is to take forward the proposed network improvements under the eight priorities.

1. Make the countryside more accessible to everyone
2. Make the Rights of Way network safer to use
3. Prevent new development from damaging the network
4. Provide up to date, accurate and integrated information
5. Join up the network by filling in the gaps
6. Manage access with farming, conservation, heritage and crime in mind
7. Develop the Definitive Map so it is reliable, accurate and up to date
8. Make using the Rights of Way Network straightforward, enjoyable and inspiring

This will mean working closely with many other agencies, organisations and individuals whose work and interest involves them in rights of way and any improvements made to the network. ROWIP is a shared document, as many functions in different organisations will contribute to the delivery of the Plan and the consultation allowed the plan to be produced with support from these parties.

The Rights of Way Improvement Plan has been published as part of the Council's LTP (Local Transport Plan). It is hoped that opportunities and funding available through the LTP will help deliver some of the improvements. Activities that are deliverable in the short term internally and within the council's budget will be undertaken and plans will be made and other funding will be sourced externally to aid the partnership working with other organisations. A consultant has been commissioned to advise on these and other potential funding strategies.

A full time officer will be responsible for the management and planning of the projects and activities implemented through the ROWIP. They will source funding for access improvements required and work with external partners, groups and organisations to take forward the vision of the ROWIP.

As the Cambridgeshire ROWIP will be one of the earliest completed, the Plan will be updated initially on an annual basis while the national ROWIP process settles down. A complete revision will be undertaken after 10 years in accordance with legislation.

12 Acknowledgements



Flooded Watermeadows at St Ives

"There is a wide range and choice of rights of way to use in Cambridgeshire which give access to a lot of beautiful countryside."

"A14 cuts off access to routes on the other side of the valley."

"Better public transport to the countryside. We do not have a car and it is not always possible to carry bicycles on buses etc. It is nice to get to the countryside without having to use a car, or having to cycle a long way to start the ride."

Public Consultation responses

Thank you to everyone who helped to prepare and develop this plan and who took part in the consultation. A non-exclusive list includes the following. Apologies to any not on the list who should be:

- Cambridgeshire Local Access Forum
- CCC members
- CCC internal steering group and other CCC officers
- Officers of and placements in the Countryside Services Team
- Landowners
- User organisations
- Contractors
- Countryside Agency at national and regional level
- Disability organisations
- District Council officers
- Eastern region ROWIP officers
- Members of the public
- Neighbouring authority ROWIP officers
- Officers from ROWIP pilot authorities
- Ordnance Survey
- Parish Councils
- The Access Company supporting the ROWIP process

Particular thanks to Peter Duthie (Countryside Services Team), who worked on the Rights of Way Improvement Plan for over 2 years assessing the network, following the guidelines and carrying out intensive research and consultation to convey a document that reflects the interests of many in the county, and the future of the rights of way. Thanks also to Anneline Wilson (Countryside Services Team) for help in questionnaire preparation, consultation organisation and the final design and publishing of this ROWIP, Heather McNaughton (Countryside Services Team) for data entry, and Tom Ringer and Trevor Baker (Research Group) for their work on analysing the questionnaire responses.

Photographs in this document were taken by members of the Countryside Services Team with the exception of those on page 9, courtesy of the Frostbite League and page 62, from an aerial survey flown in 2003 by GeoInformation for Cambridgeshire County Council.

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13 References



Haddenham FP22 at High Bridge, Old West River

"I enjoy using all the paths around Alconbury Weston. Woodwalton Fen is also very enjoyable."

"How much enjoyment a day riding a legal motorcycle on legal byways can be."

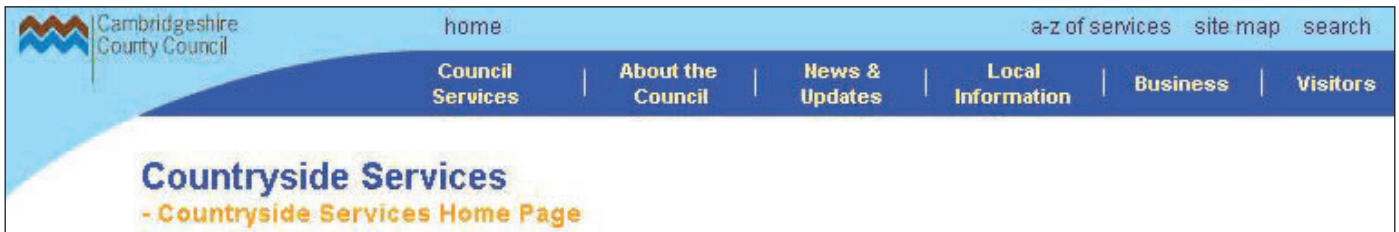
"There are very limited bridleways for use in the County, particularly circular routes which avoid crossing or going along busy roads. This is ironic as the area is very rural and there would seem to be many opportunities to open up more routes for use by horses. The equestrian community is large in Cambs and make significant contribution and investment in country life. Please give us more, safe, riding in the county."

Public Consultation responses

In addition to the pilot plans, the ROWIP pilot process has produced a wide range of research documents which are listed, summarised and linked from the RoW Good Practice website. Many additional sources and documents have been referenced. These range from national work, to work done elsewhere in the country, to specific work done in Cambridgeshire. Examples include:

- 2001 Census (HMSO 2003)
- Bullock Road
- Cambridgeshire P3 Bulletins, 2003, 2004
- Cambridgeshire Guided Busway - various documents - 2003/4
- CAMRA Pubs around Cambridge (2001)
- Caring for Green Lanes (Trail Riders Fellowship, undated)
- Centrewire Designs for Easy Access to Rights of Way 2003
- Chilterns AONB Integrated Access Demonstration Programme (2004)
- Countryside Code (Countryside Agency 2004)
- Equestrian Crossings (DETR Traffic Advisory Leaflet 2003)
- Getting Back on Track - Regenerating Rural Life (Advantage West Midlands, 2003)
- Icknield Way Corridor Study (Keily Hunt Associates 2003)
- Integrated Access in Lancashire (2004)
- IPROW conferences 2003 and 2004
- Lose Hill course - Introducing Rights of Way
- Lose Hill course - Rights of Way Improvement Plans
- Making the Best of Byways (DETR 1997)
- Managing Public Access - A Guide for Farmers and landowners (1994)
- Ordnance Survey Mapping - Explorer series and GIS
- Public Access Study of the Army Training Estate (RPS 2003)
- Public Rights of Way - A Guide for Planners and Developers (Cambridgeshire 2002)
- Rights of Way - a guide to law and practice (J. Riddall & J. Trevelyan, 2001.)
- Rights of Way Improvement Plans - Statutory Guidance to Local Highway Authorities in England (DEFRA 2002)
- Rights of Way Use & Demand Study (Entec 2001)
- Strategic Open Space Study (Cambridgeshire)
- The Economic and Social Value of Walking Ramblers Association, London, Christie Mike and Matthews Jon (2003)
- The Hampshire Integrated Access Demonstration Programme - Final Report (2004)
- The Surrey Countryside Access Initiative - Project Review (2004)
- UK Day Visits Survey 1996 (HMSO)
- Walking for Health Initiative (2004) Medical evidence of benefits of walking www.whi.org.uk
- Health White Paper 2004 - executive summary at [http:// \[REDACTED\]](http://[REDACTED])
- Widen the Choice Action Plan (RSPB/NT 2003)

13.1 Websites



Countryside Services Web Page November 2004

Many websites were consulted during this work. Based on bookmarks kept in MS Explorer, a selection of the organisations and initiatives whose websites were interrogated for information and data includes:

Association of Inland Navigation Authorities

British Canoe Union

British Driving Society

British Horse Society

British Waterways

BTCV

Cambridge Rambling Club

Cambridge Rowing Lake

Countryside Agency

Countryside Recreation Network

Cyclists' Touring Club

DEFRA conservation walks and rides

EEDET

English Heritage

English Nature

Environment Agency

Fen Rivers way

Forestry Commission

Greenways and Quiet Lanes

Health Development Agency

Highways Agency

Icknield Way

Inland Revenue Heritage Assets

IPROW

Landrover Owners Group

LARA

MAGIC Multi-Agency Geographic Information for the Countryside

Middle Level Commissioners

Neighbouring authorities

Office of the Deputy Prime Minister

Sustrans

Trail Riders Fellowship

Trail Running Association

West Anglian Orienteering Club

Widen the Choice

Appendices



Windpump at Wicken Fen

Appendix 1 - Consultees for Statutory Consultation

The success or otherwise of the ROWIP will depend on the support of a wide range of organisations, often beyond the range of those traditionally associated with countryside access issues. The list below has been prepared based on guidance and on contacts made while the plan was being prepared. Although it has been developed while putting names and addresses to the list, this is substantially that used for the consultation.

A1.1 Governmental Organisations etc

Government Office for the East of England
 EEDA (East of England Development Agency)
 Cambridgeshire Infrastructure Partnership
 LAF (Local Access Forum)
 CALC (Cambridgeshire Association of Local Councils)
 5 Districts
 278 Parishes / towns
 TICs (Tourist Information Centres)
 Cambridgeshire Police Authority
 Cambridgeshire Constabulary
 English Nature
 English Heritage
 DEFRA (Department for the Environment, Food and Rural Affairs)
 Countryside Agency
 FWAG (Farming and Wildlife Advisory Group)
 Environment Agency
 Highways Agency
 Bassingbourne Barracks
 Neighbouring authorities

A1.2 Utilities

Water companies
 Gas companies
 British Telecom
 Cable companies
 Electric companies
 Middle Level Commissioners

A1.3 Conservation

Wildlife Trust
 Woodland Trust
 CPRE (Council for the Protection of Rural England)

Greenbelt Project
 Network Rail
 RSPB (Royal Society for the Protection of Birds)
 Biodiversity partnership

A1.4 Land Managers

County Landowners Association
 NFU (National Farmers Union)
 CLA (Country Land and Business Association)
 NT (National Trust)
 RSPB farm
 Larger private estates
 Cambridge Preservation Society
 Magogs Trust
 Agricultural Development in the Eastern Region (ADER)
 (Bernard Pentelow, College of West Anglia at Wisbech)

A1.5 Transport

Bus companies
 Rail companies
 Network Rail
 Sustrans

A1.6 User Groups

Open Spaces Society
 Bridleways and Byways Association
 Ramblers Association (County)
 Ramblers Association (District Groups)
 Cambridge Rambling Club
 (Rambling Clubs)
 Running Group and clubs
 West Anglian Orienteering Club
 BHS (British Horse Society)

Fenland bridleway association
Swavesey bridleway association
TRF (Trail Riders Fellowship)
LARA (Land Access and Recreation Association)
GLASS (Green Lane Association)
4x4 clubs
BDS (British Driving Society)
CTC (Cycling Touring Club)
Mountain bikers
Cycle clubs

A1.7 Education and Youth

Youth Parliament
Cambridge University
CU (Cambridge University) Sports Union
APU (Anglia Polytechnic University)
Environmental Education Service
Scouts
Guides
Boys Brigade
Girls Brigade
Duke of Edinburgh Scheme
YHA Cambridge

A1.8 Health

Healthwalks coordinators
PCTs (Primary Care Trusts)

A1.9 Disability

East Cambs Access Group
Spring Common School
Camsight

A1.10 Other

Ethnic minorities
Citizens Advice Bureaux
Regular contractors who help to maintain the Cambridgeshire rights of way.
East of England Tourist Board
River Cam Conservators

Appendix 2 - Glossary



Fenland drain near Manea

Rights of Way management uses specific terminology. This section seeks to explain some of the more fundamental terms. Several websites provide more information.

The Cambridgeshire RoW website is at

while the Ramblers Association provide a useful guide to Rights of Way law at

A useful text is 'Rights of Way - a Guide to Law and Practice' by Riddall and Trevelyan, published by the Ramblers Association and the Open Spaces Society.

AONB - Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty

BOATs - Byways Open to All Traffic

BDS - British Driving Society - carriage drivers user group

BHS - British Horse Society - riders user group

BSI - British Standards Institute

BVPI 178 - Best Value Performance Indicator 178 - specifies how rights of way surveys should be reported.

CALC - Cambridgeshire Association of Local Councils

CCC - Cambridgeshire County Council

Countryside Stewardship - permissive path scheme funded by DEFRA

County Structure Plan - planning document summarising democratically adopted policies

CROW - Countryside and Rights of Way Act

CSS - County Surveyors Society - an association of Highway Authorities.

Cycle track - a specific legal route dedicated for cycling, distinct from a road carriageway and generally with a tarmac surface

Cycle trail - a generally unsurfaced route, which can legally be used by cyclists. May coincide with a bridleway

Cycleway - a generic term for a route, which can legally be used by cyclists. May be a marked lane on a road, shared with a footway, or a dedicated route. Generally has a tarmac surface

Definitive Map and Statement - legal documents which record public rights of way

DEFRA - Department for the Environment, Food and Rural Affairs

Drove - historic linear route, typically to access fields remote from villages

EETB - East of England Tourist Board

Footway - a route for pedestrians alongside a road (often called a footpath and thereby confused with a public footpath - (see further on)

GIS - Geographical Information System - a computer mapping tool, often associated with GPS (Global Positioning System) to locate features between ground and map

GP - Guiding Principle

IDB - Internal Drainage Board - responsible for watercourses

IPROW - Institute of Public Rights of Way Officers- professional organisation

LAF - Local Access Forum - consultation body set up under CROW.

LARA - Land Access and Recreation Association - a motor vehicle user group

LDF - Local Development Framework - planning document, covering a District

LSP - Local Strategic partnership - planning partnership, covering a district

LTP - Local Transport Plan - bidding document from Highway Authorities to the Department for Transport

Lost Highway - a legally existing public right of way, which has not been recorded on the definitive and must be recorded before 2026 to comply with CROW time limit

National Cycle Network - a cycle network being developed by Sustrans with National Lottery funding

Open Access - The CROW Act introduced a right to roam over areas dedicated for open access - mountains, moors, heath, downs etc and some commons

OSS - Open Spaces Society

P3 - the Parish Paths Partnership, involving local people in public rights of way management.

Permissive path - path where landowner grants access rights, which can be withdrawn

PCT - Primary Care Trust - Trust administering healthcare at local level

PPG17 - Public Policy Guidance section 17

Public Bridleway - public right of way with right of passage on foot, horseback or cycle

Public Byway - public right of way with right of passage on foot, horseback, cycle, driven horse or motor vehicle

Public Footpath - public right of way with right of passage on foot.

Public Right of Way - linear route where the public have a legally enforceable right of passing and re-passing.

RA - Ramblers Association - walkers user group

Restricted byway - as byway, but with no right for motor vehicles

ROWIP - Rights of Way Improvement Plan

RUPP - Road used as a public path - have been reclassified and are no longer used in Cambridgeshire

S106 - Section 106 - monies contributed by developers to provide public infrastructure (often referred to as planning gain)

SAC - Special Area of Conservation - a conservation designation (may encompass several SSSIs)

SOA - Statement of Action

SSSI - Special Site of Scientific Interest - a conservation designation

SUSTRANS - a cycling charity.

TRF - Trail Riders Fellowship - motorcycle user group

TRO - Traffic Regulation Order - typically restricting use of byways by motor vehicles.

UCR - Unclassified road

Waymark - typically a colour-coded 3" disk showing status and route of a right of way, often on a post.

The Countryside Services Team would be pleased to answer any queries not covered by the above.

Appendix 3 - Questionnaire data

This appendix provides more detailed data from the questionnaire responses.

A3.1 Countryside Access User Questionnaire

A summary of responses made to the ROWIP user questionnaire, taken from all 448 responses. Including internet responses seems to have significantly changed some responses compared to a previously distributed analysis of 'paper responses', probably reflecting changes in age and gender. In particular, now have a much higher response for motorised countryside use. Note that rounding errors mean that figures do not add up to 100%. Peter Duthie 30th July 2004.

Personal Information

1) Home Postcode:

Postcode	Number	Postcode	Number	Postcode	Number
CB1	32	PE2	1	PE19	16
CB2	14	PE3	1	PE26	3
CB3	46	PE4	1	PE27	11
CB4	89	PE6	1	PE28	28
CB5	32	PE7	1	PE29	12
CB6	29	PE13	9	SG19	6
CB7	18	PE14	2	SG4	1
CB8	18	PE15	11	SG8	20
CB9	9	PE16	1	Out of county	34
		PE17	1		

2) Gender: Male. 48% Female 52%

3) Age group: Under 11 0% 11 - 18 1% 19 - 24 2% 25 - 44 39% 45 - 59 37% 60+ 19%

4) If you look after a child under 11 yrs old, which role would you see yourself as (tick one)?

Parent. 20% Grandparent 7% Other 3%

5) Ethnicity: White 99% Non White 1%

6) Do you suffer from any form of disability? If YES, what mobility aids you use in the countryside?

3.8% acknowledge disability. 1% use walking sticks; single responses for each of wheelchair and mobility scooter

7) Do you use the Internet for countryside access information (tick all that apply)?

Home 54% Work 23% Elsewhere 7% No 2 7%

8) Are you a member of any of the following organisations, clubs or groups (tick all that apply)?

National Trust 36% Woodland Trust 6% RSPB or WWT 19%
 Wildlife Trust 12% Walking club or association 17% Riding group or society 22%
 Running club 3% Off-road club 13%

9) How frequently do you use/ visit the Cambridgeshire countryside (tick one)?

Never 2% Daily 31% Several days a week 19% Weekly 25%
 Monthly 16% Quarterly 5% Yearly 1%

10) Which of the following prevent you using the countryside in Cambridgeshire or affect how you use it?

Don't like walking/ cycling etc 1%	Lack of time 31%	Lack of information 18%
Difficulty with access 26%	Health restrictions 4%	Personal safety concerns 13%
Livestock/ animals 7%	Type of landscape 9%	Influence of agriculture 19%
Lack of secure parking 13%	Unclear routes 32%	Inability to read a map 1%
Difficulty getting to countryside 6%	Previous bad experience 4%	Other

11) What type of places do you typically visit in the Cambridgeshire countryside (tick all that apply)?

Rights of Way 87%	Permissive paths 65%	Woods/ forests 60%
Nature reserves 57%	Country parks/open spaces 61%	Visitor centres 23%
Rivers/ lakes 58%	Historic features 46%	Other

12) What are your reasons for using Rights of Way (tick all that apply)?

Getting from A to B 24%	Walking 79%	Dog walking 32%	Riding 23%
Carriage driving 2%	Cycling 34%	Health reasons 21%	Landscape 33%
Nature 49%	Meeting people 10%	Picnicking 14%	Education 9%
Off road driving 11%	Photography / art 14%	Solitude 32%	Fishing 3%

13) A - What method of transport do you typically use to get to the countryside?

B - Once in the countryside, how do you get about?

	A	B		A	B		A	B		A	B
Walk	53%	66%	Run	8%	10%	Cycling	29%	29%	Horse	17%	19%
Carriage	2%	2%	Motorbike	3%	3%	4X4 vehicle	15%	9%	Train	6%	-
Bus	4%	-	Taxi	0%	-	Car	-	60%			

14) On a typical visit, how far do you travel on rights of way in the countryside (tick one)?

Less than 1 mile. 3%	1-2 miles 18%	2-5 miles. 31%	5-10 miles 26%
10-20 miles 11%	20-30 miles 5%	30-40 miles 2%	More than 40 miles. 2%

15) When using rights of way in Cambridgeshire, how satisfied are you with the following provisions (one tick per question)?

	Very Satisfied	Satisfied	Dissatisfied	Very Dissatisfied	No opinion
Existing rights of way network	6%	51%	25%	9%	5%
General maintenance of routes (surfaces, obstruction etc).	4%	47%	33%	10%	4%
Accessibility for disabled people	2%	10%	19%	8%	48%
Condition of stile and gates etc.	3%	60%	17%	4%	10%
Signs at route/ road ends	4%	46%	33%	6%	5%
Way markers on routes and paths	4%	47%	32%	6%	6%
Number of routes close to home	5%	37%	30%	15%	8%
Information provided by CCC and partners about Rights of Way	2%	31%	26%	9%	25%
Recording of paths on the Definitive Map and interactive electronic map provided by CCC	3%	26%	12%	6%	43%
Safety and security on Rights of Way	4%	50%	15%	4%	22%

16) Given that resources are limited, what THREE improvements do you think would make using/ visiting the Cambridgeshire countryside easiest and most enjoyable (rank 1 to 3, 1 being the most important)?

Ranked First

Better maintenance of paths 16%	Reduce need to use roads to link routes 4%	Better road crossings 12%
Better information about routes. 12%	Better signing on paths/ routes 3%	More guided walks/events... 7%
More grass cutting 2%	Better general maintenance 3%	Increased barrier-free access 2%
More routes for pedestrians only 11%	More routes for pedestrians, horses & cycles 6%	More routes for pedestrians, horses, cycles and motor vehicles 1%
Improved rural transport 7%	Better car parking provision 4%	Other

Ranked Second

Better maintenance of paths 11%	Reduce need to use roads to link routes 7%	Better road crossings 5%
Better information about routes 15%	Better signing on paths/ routes 5%	More guided walks/ events 3%
More grass cutting 5%	Better general maintenance 7%	Increased barrier-free access 3%
More routes for pedestrians only 9%	More routes for pedestrians, horses & cycles 9%	More routes for pedestrians, horses, cycles and motor vehicles 2%
Improved rural transport 7%	Better car parking provision 3%	Other

Ranked Third

Better maintenance of paths 6%	Reduce need to use roads to link routes 4%	Better road crossings 6%
Better information about routes 7%	Better signing on paths/ routes 6%	More guided walks/ events 5%
More grass cutting 5%	Better general maintenance 9%	Increased barrier-free access 4%
More routes for pedestrians only 7%	More routes for pedestrians, horses & cycles 8%	More routes for pedestrians, horses, cycles and motor vehicles 2%
Improved rural transport 6%	Better car parking provision 5%	Other

17) In the last year, which of the following problems were an issue for you when you used the countryside in Cambridgeshire (tick all that apply)?

Difficulty finding/ following 43%	Difficulty finding/ following permissive paths 23%	Paths blocked by crops/ ploughing 30%
Rights of Way	Lack of suitable circular routes 48%	Routes overgrown with grass 32%
Dead end paths or bridleways 30%	Difficulty crossing busy roads 24%	Lack of river crossings 14%
Poor path maintenance 37%	Poor provision for disabled people (inc. visually) 8%	Paths blocked by fences/ barriers 20%
Problems using roads/ verges to link paths 28%	Crime / vandalism 17%	Traveller encampments 24%
New development spoiling routes 19%	Conflicts with other users 12%	Excessive dog fouling 20%
Conflicts with landowners 12%		
Other		

18) How do you find out about where you can go in the countryside (tick all that apply)?

Local knowledge 78%	Ordnance Survey map 74%	Book or leaflet 38%
Internet 31%	Walk with others/ group 22%	Promoted walks or routes 23%
Word of mouth 46%	Other	

19) On vulnerable unsurfaced byways, what winter controls should there be on recreational motorised use?

	4x4	Motor-bikes
Free use	7%	7%
Restricted use (voluntary or seasonal)	23%	24%
No use	62%	59%

20) Typically, when in the countryside, how much do you spend on rural facilities in a day?

Refreshments (pub/tea room etc)	£5.58	Activities (cycle hire/ horses)	£1.06
Local shops	£1.83	Visitor centre	£0.92
Transport (petrol/ bus/ train)	£4.08	Other	£0.85
			Total £12.06

21) Which of these local promoted long distance routes have you sought out and used in whole or part (tick all that apply)?

Nene Way 16%	Fen Rivers Way 27%	Ouse Valley Way 29%
Three Shires Way 14%	Clopton Way 10%	Hereward Way 9%
Devil's Dyke 35%	Wimpole Way 40%	None 17%

22) If you had to tell a friend about some positive aspects of the Cambridgeshire countryside and its Rights of Way network, what would you say (please give specific examples of places you have enjoyed visiting)?

Detailed responses are listed in full version of analysis, available on the internet.

23) When considering the Cambridgeshire countryside and its Rights of Way, are there any particular things you do not like or would like see being done differently?

Detailed responses are listed in full version of analysis, available on the internet.

24) Is there is anything else you would like to add which you think would benefit or improve people's use and enjoyment of the countryside in Cambridgeshire?

Detailed responses are listed in full version of analysis, available on the internet.

A3.2 Organisation Questionnaire

A summary of responses made to the ROWIP organisation questionnaire, statistics taken from 77 responses received before data entry was undertaken.

1) Name of your organisation

82 organisations responded. These are listed in the full analysis

2) Is your organisation one of the following?

User group 20% Government body 23% Other 23%

3) Which of the following areas is your organisation chiefly concerned with?

National/Regional 7% Cambridgeshire 23% More local 68%

4) How would you rate the Cambridgeshire Rights of Way network for different users?

	Very good	Good	Badly	Very badly	Don't know
For walkers	13%	70%	10%	0%	3%
For riders	5%	36%	22%	8%	26%
For cyclist	1%	29%	35%	12%	20%
For those with disabilities	0%	7%	32%	20%	40%

5) How aware do you feel local people and visitors are of the Rights of Way in Cambs?

Very aware 27% Aware 47% Not aware 22%

6a) Is your organisation aware of the Definitive Map?

Not aware 17% Aware 83%

6b) If you are aware of the Definitive Map, have you used it?

Yes 69% No 31%

7) Has your organisation any evidence which might be useful to the Rights of Way Improvement Plan that people require either more or different access to the countryside?

Detailed responses are listed in full version of analysis, available on the internet.

8) If Rights of Way are planned at a Regional level, how do you think local issues might be overlooked?

Detailed responses are listed in full version of analysis, available on the internet.

9) What would be your organisation's highest priority for immediate improvement to Cambridgeshire Countryside access?

Detailed responses are listed in full version of analysis, available on the internet.

10) Overall, how would you like to see Rights of Way in Cambridgeshire improved over the next 10 years?

Detailed responses are listed in full version of analysis, available on the internet.

11) To improve the Rights of Way network in Cambridgeshire which of the following changes would your organisation like to see take place?

More routes added 53%	Improved routes 49%	Some routes diverted 21%
Some routes downgraded 9%	Some routes upgraded 21%	Other

12) How might conflict between users best be resolved?

Detailed responses are listed in full version of analysis, available on the internet.

13) How well do you think that local plans & partnerships address countryside issues?

Very well 14%	Well 35%	Badly 17%
Very badly. 0%	Don't know 25%	

14) Given that resources are limited, what THREE improvements do you think would make using/ visiting the Cambridgeshire countryside easiest and most enjoyable (rank 1 to 3, 1 being the most important)?

Ranked First

Better maintenance of paths 23%	Reduce need to use roads to link routes 9%	Better road crossings 1%
Better information about routes 24%	Better signing on paths/ routes 7%	More guided walks/events 0%
More grass cutting 3%	Better general maintenance 5%	Increased barrier-free access 1%
More routes for pedestrians only 4%	More routes for pedestrians, horses & cycles 9%	More routes for pedestrians, horses, cycles and motor vehicles 0%
Improved rural transport 4%	Better car parking provision 1%	Other

Ranked Second

Better maintenance of paths 8%	Reduce need to use roads to link routes 12%	Better road crossings 4%
Better information about routes 13%	Better signing on paths/ routes 17%	More guided walks/ events 5%
More grass cutting 5%	Better general maintenance 10%	Increased barrier-free access 0%
More routes for pedestrians only 7%	More routes for pedestrians, horses & cycles 5%	More routes for pedestrians, horses, cycles and motor vehicles 3%
Improved rural transport 4%	Better car parking provision 1%	Other

Ranked Third

Better maintenance of paths 5%	Reduce need to use roads to link routes 8%	Better road crossings 5%
Better information about routes 4%	Better signing on paths/ routes 21%	More guided walks/ events 5%
More grass cutting 5%	Better general maintenance 8%	Increased barrier-free access 4%
More routes for pedestrians only 1%	More routes for pedestrians, horses & cycles 13%	More routes for pedestrians, horses, cycles and motor vehicles 3%
Improved rural transport 4%	Better car parking provision 5%	Other

15) When considering the Cambridgeshire countryside and its Rights of Way, are there any particular things you do not like or would like see being done differently?

Detailed responses are listed in full version of analysis, available on the internet.

16) Is there anything else you would like to add which you think would benefit or improve people's use and enjoyment of the countryside in Cambridgeshire?

Detailed responses are listed in full version of analysis, available on the internet.

A3.3 Land Management Questionnaire

A summary of responses made to the ROWIP land management questionnaire, statistics taken from 154 responses received before data entry was undertaken.

1) Your Postcode:

Postcode	Number	Postcode	Number	Postcode	Number
CB1	18	PE6	2	SG7	1
CB2	3	PE7	5	SG8	18
CB3	11	PE8	2		
CB4	2	PE14	2	NN14	1
CB5	9	PE15	5	NK14	1
CB6	2	PE19	11		
CB7	5	PE26	1		
CB8	6	PE27	1		
CB9	2	PE28	35		
CB10	1				

2) Nature of your interest(s) in the land

Landowner working land 75%	Landowner not working land 2%	Farm manager 5%
Tenant farmer 16%	Contract farming 1%	Estate 1%
Conservation organisation 0%	Public organisation 1%	Other

3) What area of land do you manage?

Under 5Ha 3%	5-50Ha 21%	50-200Ha 26%	200-500Ha 25%	Over 500Ha 21%
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4) How do you principally manage your land?

Arable 73%	Livestock 5%	Both 18%	Other
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5) Is a significant part of the land you manage located near to the urban fringe?

Yes. 21%	No 79%
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6) Do you have any of the following on your land?

Rights of Way 91%	Permissive paths 34%	Permissive land access 4%
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7) In the last week/month, have you experienced any of the following?

Please tick as many as apply	Week	Month	Never
Walkers on rights of way on your land	69%	25%	2%
Riders on rights of way on your land	41%	16%	19%
Cyclists on rights of way on your land	24%	33%	19%
Motorised users on rights of way on your land	10%	23%	33%
Walkers/riders/cyclists/motorised users illegally on your land	36%	31%	9%
Dogs out of control on your land	44%	33%	8%

Please tick as many as apply	Week	Month	Never
Illegal hare coursing on your land	25%	43%	11%
Fly tipping on your land	25%	42%	11%
Illegal travellers encampments on your land	1%	8%	43%
Vandalism to crops / stock	7%	29%	24%
Vandalism to machinery / property	6%	26%	27%

8) In terms of Rights of Way law and best practice, which of the following would you like more advice on?

Ploughing & cropping 10%	Waymarking 16%	Barriers/stiles/gates 18%
Changes to network 22%	Farmers' maintenance agreements 27%	Other

9) How well do you feel that the Rights of Way on your land meet the needs of current users?

Well 83%	Badly 7%	Don't know 5%	Not interested 3%
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10) Given that resources are limited, what THREE improvements do you think would make using/ visiting the Cambridgeshire countryside easiest and most enjoyable (rank 1 to 3, 1 being the most important)?

Ranked First

Better maintenance of paths 16%	Reduce need to use roads to link routes 3%	Better road crossings 1%
Better information about routes 21%	Better signing on paths/ routes 8%	More guided walks/events 1%
More grass cutting 7%	Better general maintenance 2%	Increased barrier-free access 1%
More routes for pedestrians only 2%	More routes for pedestrians, horses & cycles 1%	More routes for pedestrians, horses, cycles and motor vehicles 0%
Improved rural transport 8%	Better car parking provision 2%	Other

Ranked Second

Better maintenance of paths 5%	Reduce need to use roads to link routes 6%	Better road crossings 1%
Better information about routes 11%	Better signing on paths/ routes 17%	More guided walks/ events 3%
More grass cutting 8%	Better general maintenance 5%	Increased barrier-free access 1%
More routes for pedestrians only 4%	More routes for pedestrians, horses & cycles 1%	More routes for pedestrians, horses, cycles and motor vehicles 0%
Improved rural transport 5%	Better car parking provision 1%	Other

Ranked Third

Better maintenance of paths 4%	Reduce need to use roads to link route 3%	Better road crossings 1%
Better information about routes 7%	Better signing on paths/ routes 6%	More guided walks/ events 2%
More grass cutting 6%	Better general maintenance 10%	Increased barrier-free access 1%
More routes for pedestrians only 2%	More routes for pedestrians, horses & cycles 3%	More routes for pedestrians, horses, cycles and motor vehicles 1%
Improved rural transport 6%	Better car parking provision 7%	Other

11) How aware do you feel local people and visitors are of the rights of way in Cambs?

Very aware 46%	Aware 44%	Not aware 7%
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12a) Are you aware of the Definitive Map?

Not aware 25%	Aware 75%
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12b) If you are aware of the Definitive Map, have you used it?

Yes 43%

No 57%

13) How would you rate Rights of Way on your land for different users?

	Very good	Good	Bad
For walkers	34%	56%	6%
For riders	18%	30%	12%
For cyclists	10%	16%	1%
For those with disabilities	2%	12%	21%

14) When considering the Cambridgeshire countryside and its Rights of Way, are there any particular things you do not like or would like to see being done differently?

Detailed responses are listed in full version of analysis, available on the internet.

15) Is there anything else you would like to add which you think would benefit or improve people's use and enjoyment of the countryside in Cambridgeshire?

Detailed responses are listed in full version of analysis, available on the internet.

A3.4 Countryside Business Questionnaire

A summary of responses made to the ROWIP organisation questionnaire, statistics taken from 39 responses received before data entry was undertaken.

1) Your Postcode:

Postcode	Number	Postcode	Number	Postcode	Number
CB1	3%	PE7	3%	SG8	5%
CB2	0%	PE13	10%	SG19	8%
CB3	10%	PE19	8%		
CB4	3%	PE28	18%		
CB5	3%				
CB6	8%				
CB7	13%				
CB8	5%				
CB9	0%				
CB10	0%				

2) Nature of your business

Pub 20% Accommodation 13% Retail 33% Equestrian 20% Other 33%

3) How many full-time equivalent people do you employ?

Self-employed 23% 1-3 people 36% 4-10 people 13% 11-20 people 3% Over 20 people 10%

4) What percentage of your turnover would you estimate comes from countryside users?

Walkers % Horse-riders % Cyclists % Others %

5a) Are you aware of the Definitive Map?

Not aware 77% Aware 23%

5b) If you are aware of the Definitive Map, have you used it?

Yes 5% No 95%

6) In what way might your business benefit from improvements to the Rights of Way network?

Detailed responses are listed in full version of analysis, available on the internet.

7) How do you think better promotion of countryside access might affect your business?

Detailed responses are listed in full version of analysis, available on the internet.

8) Can you think of any drawbacks to having walkers, horse riders or cyclists as customers?

Detailed responses are listed in full version of analysis, available on the internet.

9) How could countryside access provision best be improved for your business?

Detailed responses are listed in full version of analysis, available on the internet.

10) Given that resources are limited, what THREE improvements do you think would make using/ visiting the Cambridgeshire countryside easiest and most enjoyable (rank 1 to 3, 1 being the most important)?

Ranked First

Better maintenance of paths 28%	Reduce need to use roads to link routes 5%	Better road crossings 3%
Better information about routes 15%	Better signing on paths/ routes 3%	More guided walks/events 0%
More grass cutting 5%	Better general maintenance 0%	Increased barrier-free access 0%
More routes for pedestrians only 0%	More routes for pedestrians, horses & cycles 8%	More routes for pedestrians, horses, cycles and motor vehicles 0%
Improved rural transport 8%	Better car parking provision 5%	Other

Ranked Second

Better maintenance of paths 3%	Reduce need to use roads to link routes 8%	Better road crossings 3%
Better information about routes 18%	Better signing on paths/ routes 13%	More guided walks/ events 0%
More grass cutting 5%	Better general maintenance 5%	Increased barrier-free access 5%
More routes for pedestrians only 0%	More routes for pedestrians, horses & cycles 10%	More routes for pedestrians, horses, cycles and motor vehicles 0%
Improved rural transport 3%	Better car parking provision 5%	Other

Ranked Third

Better maintenance of paths 3%	Reduce need to use roads to link routes 3%	Better road crossings 3%
Better information about routes 10%	Better signing on paths/ routes 15%	More guided walks/ events 10%
More grass cutting 0%	Better general maintenance 8%	Increased barrier-free access 3%
More routes for pedestrians only 3%	More routes for pedestrians, horses & cycles 5%	More routes for pedestrians, horses, cycles and motor vehicles 3%
Improved rural transport 10%	Better car parking provision 5%	Other

11) How aware do you feel local people and visitors are of the rights of way in Cambs?

Very aware 28% Aware 36% Not aware 21%

12) When considering the Cambridgeshire countryside and its Rights of Way, are there any particular things you do not like or would like see being done differently?

Detailed responses are listed in full version of analysis, available on the internet.

13) Is there anything else you would like to add which you think would benefit your business through people's use and enjoyment of the countryside in Cambridgeshire?

Detailed responses are listed in full version of analysis, available on the internet.

Appendix 4 – Focus group analysis

A4.1 Individual Countryside Users Group

14 users of Cambridgeshire countryside of whom three people switched from the Wednesday user group meeting. Participants were asked to speak as individual members of the public rather than as representatives of user groups.

A4.1.1 What do people currently do for recreation in the countryside?

Participants highlighted walking; bird-watching; mountain biking on bridleways; photography; horse riding; carriage driving; dog walking; walking small children; recreational cycling; cycling to work; trail riding on motorbikes; training rugby team. Footpaths; bridle paths and byways are all used frequently. They value routes, which are circular for recreation/health grounds, and routes between villages and towns for access and commuting. Being in nature and fresh air is important. They appreciate the country for wide range of health and leisure reasons and because it is where they live. Rights of way network in the north of the county is limited because of intensive agriculture and the nature of the land. Many mentioned that they particularly enjoy riverside walks towards King's Lynn and the Wash. There was a general agreement that RoW have improved greatly in the last 30 years. The reps of user groups such as the Ramblers acknowledged that they generally hear about problem routes rather than routes that are frequently used and where problems are not frequently encountered.

The main problems raised in relation to access to the countryside were:

- Not enough access to the countryside particularly in north Cambs;
- Lack of circular walks;
- Routes which end up on busy roads;
- Lack of routes, which bicycle riders can legitimately use for commuting between villages and towns.
- Lack of safe bicycle routes which children can use safely, year-round to and from school.
- Problem that the paths cleared are not wide enough to run/train safely (in rugby shorts).
- Problem of flytipping. Response to flytipping by East and South Cambs was singled out as being particularly poor. (Ramblers reported an abandoned car on the roman road last year, this year it was still there).
- Failure by farmers to reinstate paths.
- Most bridleways and byways are so overgrown that horses cannot use them.

There was a general perception that the closer to Cambridge the better RoWs were managed and maintained and that more problems were encountered further away from Cambridge. The riverside paths particularly along the Cam were praised for their very good condition. Was this because the river authority maintains them? Some participants considered this to be true - others felt that the river authority do not generally maintain RoW. Long distant paths for example between Histon and the Fens are highly valued. The horse riders are also carriage

drivers and expressed frustration that there is access through farms for horses but not for carriages. Kent Gaps would be much appreciated in this regard.

A4.1.2 Awareness of legislation and rights and responsibilities

Ramblers Association representatives expressed great frustration that the open land access does not benefit Cambridgeshire. They submitted a few areas of downland for consideration but as they were less than 5 ha they were not eligible. Ramblers want legislation to cover woodland and riverside areas as well in order to benefit Cambs. Maintenance and management of RoW (dealing with obstructions). Complaints about long grass and nettles were countered with feelings that the countryside should not be too laundered and that walking through long grass is part of the countryside experience. Another participant pointed out that grass could be left uncut for the sake of nesting birds or wildlife. It was recognised that there is little clarity on whose responsibility it is to clear waste and debris from RoW. One participant said that local authorities have no power to remove debris from private land.

The issue of widths of paths was discussed. It is perceived that CCC let paths become so overgrown that they can no longer be used and then blitz them for clearing. This approach was criticised because Hawthorn and Blackthorn stumps are not cleared adequately and make paths quickly impassable particularly for horses. A contractor at the meeting felt that rather than spending money on making certain byways very wide - that a width that is acceptable to all should be agreed and then all the stumps properly dug up so that basic maintenance like grass cutting is possible.

There were several calls for the CCC to publicise when RoW have been cleared so that users know that they are accessible again. This could promote increased usage to keep the vegetation down (that is apart from blackthorn and hawthorn). One needs to be brutal in clearing blackthorn in order to make any progress. However this is sometimes seen as being in contrast with preserving nature etc.

Several users spoke of mistakes made by CCC where much money was spent to open up RoW but in effect the mounds of earth that were left behind and the lack of access for horse drawn carriages means that they are unable to benefit. The question of money was raised repeatedly over the course of the discussion. Most participants recognised that there would never be enough funding to maintain all footpaths and byways to a high standard. One participant proposed that RoW should be graded for use and importance and that these should be maintained to different standards. For example a footpath to a school would be a priority whereas a little used path should not be prioritised.

A graded system would enable users to know whether a path was always open and accessible or whether it was dependent on season or weather conditions. This would also mean that scarce resources are better prioritised. There was not total agreement with this suggestion: The ramblers felt that the proportion of the transport budget spent on RoW was miniscule. If some of the money for the guided bus were diverted for RoW there would be more health and environmental benefits.

One participant asked whether it was true that 80% of users used 20% of RoW? If that is the case is it possible to identify the heavily used paths and spend more on maintaining them as opposed to less used routes? The horse /carriage riders did not agree with this as the 80% figure only refers to walkers not riders or carriage drivers or cyclists and the routes that they use. The trail riders commented that the byways in Cambs that they use are quite good. The main problem they encounter is the damage caused by heavy agricultural machinery that often destroys fenland routes in autumn. One gentleman observed how in the past farm tracks were maintained by asbestos and wondered if reverting to this would help keep routes accessible? 'I don't want to walk on asbestos paths' seemed to be the general response.

Another gentleman noted that there seemed to be a lot of pleading at the meeting from special interest groups but he felt as a user of the countryside that maintenance and management of RoW should be as minimal as possible as he wants to enjoy the countryside. He would rather walk through nettles than on an asbestos path.

A4.1.3 Access for people with disabilities

Permissive paths are important for local access, particularly for disabled access. In Meldreth the parish council recently completed a riverside path that is only accessible for able bodied. They are concerned that the new RoW plan will force them to spend a lot of money to make it accessible for disabled people particularly as there is a large school for disabled children in the village. The cost of redeveloping as a result of the plan was raised as a key issue. Many participants echoed issues around carriage driving and access for the disabled. However other users pointed out that they do not want the countryside to be paved and that there should be a limitation on the amount of wheelchair / pushchair accessible routes.

A number of paths closest to villages and towns should be accessible for people in wheelchairs or with pushchairs. It was suggested that small armies of individual volunteers could maintain some routes with hand tools. Parishes were seen to have a key role in organising this. The establishment of P3 coordinators has helped. However the RA representatives pointed out that CCC has ruled that the identity of P3 coordinators be kept confidential and that enquiries need to go through the parish clerk - however in many cases there is no parish clerk. So unless someone says that they are the parish representative you don't know who they are.

One participant asked whether it was realistic to expect the entire network to be accessible to wheelchair users? 'No, but we should prioritise certain paths.'

Several people commented that permissive paths maintained by farmers were the only paths in their area that were accessible for wheelchairs or pushchairs.

'The Ely easy access trail was beautiful and accessible but CCC seemed to lose interest in maintaining it and last time I visited it was under 2 ft of water.'

'Books about walks give some information about accessibility for the disabled.'

'Mostly you find out by trial and error - I take my grandchild out in the pushchair and find the route ends and I just can't get any further. - it's very frustrating.'

'Weather and time of year affects accessibility.'

'In Hampshire farmers maintained all the tracks and were paid to do it - why doesn't this happen in Cambs?'

'There is no money - Education and Social Services take most of the budget and won't accept cuts for RoW'.

'When we phone to complain we are told either that farmers are responsible or that the path has been cut back when it hasn't. No one is checking or following up.'

A4.1.4 Sources of information

The group seemed to be confident about their knowledge on RoW. This is because routes are mostly well signposted. However there is little up to date information on whether or not paths are accessible. Up to date information should be available on:

- County Council Website;
- Parish council information boards

One participant mentioned the intention for the CC team to produce a biannual magazine with a focus on footpaths and bridleways, which would publicise accessible RoW. Several were concerned that RoW is confusing for members of the public who use the countryside occasionally and without maps. That the signs once you leave the road often disappear and the colour coded signs may be meaningless to some people.

'Also why don't the signs show where they are going - should have the name and distance of the next village rather than just an arrow.'

A4.1.5 Users

Walkers who use footpaths felt that CCC prioritised maintenance and management of by ways and bridleways. Users of by-ways (e.g trail riders) felt that all attention is on footpaths and that there are not enough by-ways to use. Where there are by-ways they feel that they are blamed for damage when most of the damage is caused by farmers using heavy agricultural machinery (tractors) and landrovers in all weathers. Carriage drivers are technically using vehicles so they cannot use bridleways and can only use byways and green lanes. As they cannot take their horses off road they often find themselves in confrontation with trail riders on the same track.

'Dog walkers are not represented here but in my village there was uproar when a countryside stewardship scheme ended and access to fields where dog walkers go was denied'. We need access close to villages.'

Another problem is that local bus services have been withdrawn. My village is 3 miles from the village college. We are trying to make a linked path that children can cycle safely on, especially in the dark but this is proving very difficult. A private bus company is charging £150 per term per child just to take them to school and back. The Duxford bus no longer needs a subsidy as so many people use it. Why not have a similar service to Wimpole Hall so people can use it without driving there?

'RoW should provide safe access for schoolchildren and get them away from dangerous roads.'

'People also use footpaths to cycle to work because it is safer than cycling on country roads.'

'Yes, but it isn't safe if you are walking on one and get run down by a bike.'

'We should be able to cycle on main footpaths between towns and villages. It's the safest way to get children off the roads and to give them exercise'.

'Could a budget for cycle ways not come from the same sources

as cycle routes? Road chipping is cheap and effective. The path between Coton and Comberton was chipped years ago and it is still in good condition.'

A4.1.6 Motor Vehicles

Whilst you can't deny farmers access to their fields, off roaders get blamed for the mess made by tractors. I know farmers who can't get to their fields because of the damage caused by off-roaders. Problem is caused by lack of drainage - this is heavy clay so once it's wet nothing can be done. Problem that 4x4 drivers ignore the seasonal controls and then do a lot of damage. Walkers can't walk on ground that has been cut up by these vehicles. Horses can't go there either. When gravel is put down it prevents access for horses. Problem is that a small number of irresponsible users and multiple and conflicting uses of the RoW - the friction is a fact of life.

A4.1.7 Economic issues

Wouldn't mind pay and display if I knew that the money was going to be spent on maintaining RoW. Driving to the countryside goes against the principle of walking. It's not practical because they will pay someone to collect the money - or have machines, which will be broken into. The countryside should be open and free. Car parks would be good but should be free of charge. If you have a car park travellers will move in. Car parks on well used paths - with height barriers would be good. Small car park near us is used. Even if there was a charge the CC wouldn't make much money. Wimpole is a popular place to park and walk - they don't charge at the moment. Swaffham Priory parking was well intentioned but hasn't worked. Cars get broken into so no one leaves them there.

It would be good to have circular walks around villages. The village hall car parks are under utilised and could be used for this. It would also bring in money for local pubs, shops etc... If local enterprises worked together to increase access by offering parking they would all benefit. What about having honesty boxes? If you see somewhere is well maintained people are quite generous. They would be broken into. Is this parking question just about making some money for the CCC? The CC should work more closely with the district councils as they have more interest in promoting local tourism. When we made the Ouse river valley more user friendly it brings in lots of people from outside the area. Districts have not realised the full potential of having good RoW.

A4.1.8 What would you like to see done differently in the management of the countryside RoW?

Finish what you start. Minimal but coherent signage. Signposts should tell where the path leads to. If you are not a local you would not be able to follow the Cambs waymarks. Make farmers reinstate paths to the width they are supposed to be. If farmers receive subsidies can they be held responsible to maintain RoW or risk losing their subsidies?

End of discussion

A4.2 User Group representatives

7 in total with representatives from Sustrans, Green Lanes Association, International Mountain Biking Association; Trail rider fellowship; British Horse Society. Two participants regarded themselves as users rather than representatives of user groups - both were walkers.

A4.2.1 Using the countryside

Off road motorcycling, mountain biking, walking, driving 4x4, horse riding, carriage driving, dog-walking, riverside paths for boating, rambling and cycling to work were all highlighted. Most use the countryside closest to their homes. The mountain bike representative would like to see the construction of custom-made off road facilities for mountain biking, which would appeal particularly to young people. One gentleman worked as voluntary warden in Glos and maintained miles of footpaths. Feels that footpaths should remain part of the countryside and that clearance should be minimal so as not to destroy wildlife and to keep the countryside looking pretty. There was agreement that these 'main road' footpaths are unsightly and not enjoyable to walk on. Glos was an area of outstanding natural beauty so paths had to be kept looking beautiful - not the case here in Cambs.

Sustrans rep was keen to discuss the benefits of taking the bus to the countryside to enable access for town people. As a cyclist he feels that only the bravest venture very far as the roads are so dangerous that no one can get to the countryside on their bikes. So families load up their cars to go cycling around Graffham water and Rutland. The cycle network aims to connect places so that cyclists don't have to be fearless to get to places. Work to join up safe routes and make new links. He is also a member of the local access forum in Peterborough.

A4.2.2 Impediments to using the countryside as much as they would like

Rural transport is seen as a service for people who live in the countryside and who don't have cars (a tiny minority). So buses leave early in the morning and return in the evening. This means people in towns without cars can't use buses to get to the countryside for leisure purposes. Some rural villages are hostile to increased bus services because they don't want people from towns coming to their villages. There is a them and us mentality. Problem is that roads used to be safe for everyone to use but as fast cars make country roads too dangerous we are all being forced on to the same routes and this creates conflict and has led to the demand for categorisation. Need public transport to get to the countryside. If we go by car then finding safe parking is a problem. Also if there were buses you could have a linear walk because you don't have to return to your car.

Buses are not useable by cyclists in this country. In other countries buses have been adapted to carry bicycles on the front or back of the bus. Trains won't take bicycles unless they are folded. Even when they do it is very confusing knowing which trains you can use. You can't book tickets over the internet if you are taking a bike. Train situation is getting worse and I have been turned away at the station with my bike. Another problem is that people with mobility problems can't get over the stiles. Organising stile-free walks is very difficult. To replace them all with kissing gates is very expensive. The number of bridleways and byways that cyclists can access is very limited.

Problem for walkers is the amount of sticky mud. Wider paths and bridleways get completely cut up in the winter so you can't

walk on them. They are cut up by agricultural vehicles and horse riders - there should be a system to divide the path half and half for cyclists and pedestrians. Walking in uneven mud is disastrous for older people's joints. Same problem for cyclists - we don't want wide straight paths because then people gather speed and come into conflict with other users. By Soham the paths were cleared but were more like motorways - would be better if user groups were encouraged to maintain paths by hand because machines hack them back too wide. The uneven surfaces of bridleways can be dangerous for horses and riders and there is always the problem of mud. CCC has duty to maintain routes but they always say they don't have enough money.

A4.2.3 Satisfaction with RoW network

How do you know what is a footpath? How are members of the public supposed to know if they are allowed to cycle or not? Coding in Cambs is very complicated - each parish has its own code - how are you supposed to understand the maps, especially if you have come from outside the parish? There are permissive routes created by Defra but how are we supposed to get information about them? Is there a website? Permissive routes are not recorded on ordnance survey maps so people don't know about them. Problem with permissive routes is that owners can close them permanently so if a farm changes hands, routes can be lost. My information is based on having local knowledge and using ordnance survey maps. But these are usually not accurate and need to be updated. I was impressed by the CC website on RoW

RoW information also needs to be available on parish notice boards. Could more information be published about usable roads? This could be posted in libraries, at supermarkets, on websites... The definitive map should be updated yearly. Footpaths are waymarked in yellow - others are different colours - but most people don't know what the colours stand for. There should be people patrolling the footpaths.

Footpaths are 78% of all RoW - horses, bikes etc are not allowed on them so they cannot be causing the damage. Bridleways are 17%, RUPPS 3% and byways 2% - would be interesting to do a survey to regrade the routes according to people who use them - 80% of walkers only use 20% of footpaths. We need bridleways and byways to be linked up so we can use them properly. Many routes start as a bridleway and end as a footpath or in the middle of a field. Signs on the ground get hidden by vegetation. Waymarking is very poor. Signs from the road are generally ok but once you are off the road they disappear. People without maps will get lost. There should be a way mark at any point of doubt which way to go. Statutory green signposts often get stolen. The P3 scheme does a good job. It is easy to organise volunteers from a parish. It would be really useful to have information about the condition of paths - who should we report it to if we find a path is not useable? Can report it on website to Cambs but can't share this with other users - would be good to have an interactive site that people can share information about condition of routes with other people.

The most important thing is know about the existence of a certain route. Then once you know it is there you need to know about the condition of it. We should have guidance about where to and where not to go. Don't you think the ordnance survey maps provide good info? I think the 25,000 is very good. Most people are confident about using maps. But they are the ones that stick to the main paths, which are signposted. Some landowners discourage people from using the land and hide way marks - they also forget that they are responsible for the surface of the path. Farmers try hard to reroute paths - but the

people in little bungalows are worse. Problem is that the network is an old historic network where people walked through farms and past houses but people today don't want routes going right past their houses. Another problem is that leaflets about routes are not updated.

Going back to the question of signage - as a recreational vehicle user I sometimes come into conflict with other users because of the problem of signs. I am a responsible user and only go where I am legally entitled to ride but there is a lack of understanding among the general public about routes, which are legally accessible to vehicles but are also promoted to walkers and horse riders. We don't ride on footpaths or bridleways but we want to be able to use the byways and some people want us to be criminalised for that.

A4.2.4 Seasonal controls

Problem is that farmers don't have to adhere to seasonal controls. A farm near me regularly has shooting parties in the winter despite having seasonal controls for access. The owners of the land can do whatever they want on it and the recreational vehicle users get blamed for causing damage. Land managers have a moral but not legal responsibility to respect seasonal controls. What about for users? I don't have a problem with the concept, as recreational vehicle use needs to be properly managed but when legitimate users are criminalised and denied access for spurious reasons then that is not acceptable. The problem is when the tactic is used to appease people who object to our presence rather than for real maintenance purposes.

In the past motorcycles were included in the seasonal control when we are not responsible for damage to routes. Now that has changed thanks to pressure from the trail riders. The other kind of control is voluntary guidance. In Soham there is a very steep bridleway, which cyclists would ride down too fast. Voluntary guidance about usage in wet weather, speed etc.. was issued and cyclists have kept to it. It is self-enforcing without controls. Majority of people are responsible so if you give guidance about where to avoid in winter they will not go there. But they do need to know about alternatives and this can be difficult to find out.

CCC say that they have tried voluntary restraints but the problem is that there was no real consultation between the CC and user groups involved so the guidance was not accepted. Last year I turned up at a byway, there were no signs as they had been destroyed. If I'd have known there was a voluntary restraint I would not have gone there in the first place. But it seems that CCC uses voluntary restraints as a stepping-stone to seasonal control rather than really trying to make them work by informing users about them. It is very complicated to enforce a voluntary restraint on a legal activity. It's ok if users know each other or are members of a club but it is difficult to control individual members of the public. Most mountain bike users will stay off trails that get damaged in wet weather but the problem is that gates are locked in October whether or not it is wet or dry. From a horse riders perspective I think seasonal controls should be used cautiously and I don't agree with illegitimate use of controls. They can be appropriate but the CC needs to be careful how to use them. The main thing is to respond to the current climate rather than sticking to seasons.

The lockable gates also prevent horse drawn carriages from accessing routes yet they are not responsible for the damage. This then forces horses and carriages onto country roads, which is dangerous for everyone. Routes are sometimes blocked because of wildlife breeding etc.. This can't be publicised because people go hunting for badgers.

A4.2.5 Other obstacles to using RoW

Farmers fail to reinstate footpaths within 14 days of ploughing them up. Walkers then become hostile to farmers if they have to fight their way through RoW. You can walk through fields of wheat but not rape it's too tall. Near us we just took a map and a compass and walked 3 abreast to force a route through. Cross field paths have been moved for so called safety reasons that's a pity as it is not so nice walking around the edges of fields - and they are very big fields! The other thing that ruins enjoyment is the problem of flytipping. People drive a long way down byways to leave computers, wardrobes etc.. Byways are sometimes closed to recreational vehicles just to prevent fly tipping but that is not a legitimate reason to close a byway. I take photos of dumped stuff and put it in the local newsagents window -it's amazing how quickly people will move them again! We need some high profile prosecutions to act as a real deterrent. Often byways are locked to prevent cars being driven down them and burnt out. On the fens gates are locked to prevent hare coursing. Another problem is the footpaths out of villages are dog walker paths and they are filthy. Use of crop guns is a problem - if you don't see them and they are fired from behind a hedge they can make a horse bolt. Some farmers deliberately keep pigs near routes because they know they scare horses. Loose dogs in farmyards chase cyclists and walkers.

A4.2.6 Economic issues - pay and display car parks

They'd be targeted by vandals. Huge expense to collect cash and patrol them Ramblers don't publicise meeting points for fear of cars being targeted by thieves. We should have better public transport not more car parks. Car parks concentrate people using the same stretches of RoW rather than spreading out and doing less damage to paths etc. Is the idea of pay and display as opposed to free parking? How would the money be spent? Forestry commission has honesty boxes, which people seem to use. Parking could work for some horse riders e.g. to drive to Graffham Water but children ride but don't drive - not everyone has a horse box - not all horses will go in boxes.

A4.2.7 What would you like to see done differently?

Involve user groups in the general maintenance. We offer our services but the countryside team does not take this offer up and we always seem to be the last to know about changes or developments. More consultation. 15 years ago when Peterborough was part of Cambs we were involved in technical work like erecting stiles etc.. this is not done so much now. Maybe it is because if people are using equipment then the health and safety people become involved and it all gets really complicated. CCC won't provide money for raw materials even when people are prepared to do the work for free. Is there a volunteer coordinator for path maintenance at the CCC? No, just at parish level. User groups could be more involved in compiling status reports about routes, identifying gaps, reporting good or bad conditions. Should have parish path wardens. Young cyclists need to be better catered for. They are often forced to ride in illegal areas such as the quarry at Cherry Hinton because there is nowhere else to go. If you give people the option to stay on the right side of the law, they will.

End of discussion

A4.3 Meeting of Land Managers

10 land managers and 1 NFU representative

A4.3.1 Introductions

Most participants are landowners with public RoW, 5 have Defra support for countryside stewardship scheme. All have a combination of footpaths, bridleways and permissive paths on land. Two mentioned byways on their land. One farmer /county councillor has recently given up involvement on this issue because of the introduction of the CROW Act and problems with user groups. He felt that user groups don't have common sense when it comes to access, they expect farmers to spend a fortune building bridges over fens to nowhere, that conservationists in search of newts and waterbells paralyse farmers from doing their work and that when something goes wrong (gates left open etc ...) that the farmer is always blamed

A4.3.2 Overall impressions of RoW

'We are managing them better' managing them on behalf of CCC. But CCC gets hundreds of thousands of £ for maintenance which isn't passed on to the farmers who are doing the work. Some receive money from parish funds for maintaining heavily used RoW within the parish. The routes, which are not used, should be moved, rerouted. Would like to move them to where people would use them more. Cottenham Parish council has 12 miles of footpath, which was unusable for many years because of nettles and drainage. A group of volunteers in the village were funded by CCC to clear the path - CCC gave the money directly to the parish council but now the money goes directly to that group of volunteers. It is brilliant and the issue of the state of the footpaths has not been raised at parish council meetings since the group took over maintenance. It is a good example of how paths could be maintained. Main concerns for farmers are around litigation between owners and users. We are asked not cut around ditches to protect habitat of water voles but then if people fall in ditches we are to blame. Is there any way owners can opt out of responsibility for users of RoW on their land?

Our insurance premiums are rising astronomically and claims against us are rising. People make frivolous claims for what was their own fault. Insurance companies pay out because they want to close the file and this impacts on all our premiums. This needs to be tackled nationally under the RoW scheme. People should carry their own public liability insurance if they are out in the countryside. I was told by CCC officer that public liability indemnity was held by the county council - is that the case? But in Peak District this year someone left a gate open and the farmer was prosecuted. The problem is that we can own land in this country but we can't use it how we like - we need planning permission. If the state wants people to wander all over the land then the state should pick up responsibility not the luckless owner. The problem with free access is that we want to encourage people to enjoy the countryside if they are not doing any harm - in some cases walkers can help to prevent vandalism, arson etc. Farmers are now more responsible in the management of RoW than in the past 30 years. Most farmers respect the RoW but do the public treat them with respect?

Other users take for granted that landowners will deliver everything but it costs us a lot of money. My vandalism problems disappeared by making permissive paths and now we can go after the motorbikes and cars by using highway legislation. So the fact that we have made them into RoW has

actually solved a lot of our problems. Most walkers are very nice and I enjoy them being there. Most problems arise from people who shouldn't be there in the first place.

A4.3.3 Knowledge of the Public RoW

Problem is that many farmers don't register RoW on their land - the statutory declaration under the 83 act. Very few people do it but if they did it would protect their rights. Some farmers think that if they don't sign up for RoW now in a few years time they will be paid by Defra for it - why give it away now when you could earn from it in a few years? Well you can terminate the existing agreement with 3 months notice so it's not really a problem. Dogs are increasingly becoming a problem because owners let them off the leads. I have a permissive track and find that people are driving down it to let their dog off at the end of it. Problem is that there is no law which obliges people to keep dogs on leads - just says under control. In the Peak District there are signs about keeping dogs on leads everywhere. Dogs should be on a lead, on a path - not just 'under control'.

Why do we keep opening up the countryside more when we can't control the parts that are already open? If we don't offer it the government will take it - better to do it on our own terms. A major problem is that of security of premises and farm environments.. A bridleway runs through my farm, which people use as a byway - that is a real problem people with cars and motorbikes using bridle ways. Where bridleways leave roads we should put up bollards to prevent drivers. We need to look at the illegal use of bridleways and need to see how they can be gated. Problem is that motorbikes can still get in if horses can. We are working out a plan with the district council to make a circular route - but if just one rambler objects then the whole thing falls apart and has to go to appeal. That is not democratic - we need to make laws to benefit the majority. If the villagers want something how can a rambler who doesn't live in the same county scupper it? Also the CCC picks up the tab for user appeals but the landowners have to cover all our legal costs.

The Commons and Open Space Society are more problematic than the rambles. They search the internet looking for plans to object to - if they see anything that threatens any RoW they will put in an objection - whether or not it makes sense, is supported by villagers ... We need a simplified planning division with more power to the council to make decisions. The whole system is out of date. Villagers should have more say about diversions - in my village the locals all supported a diversion but the rambles objected and put a spanner in the works. That's why the Cottenham group works so well because it is made up of interested villagers. Another problem is that of cyclists using footpaths. CCC don't like bikes on footpaths but kids especially need somewhere safe to cycle.

The majority of cyclists seem to have no knowledge about their responsibilities. When notices are put up they are usually torn down or defaced. CCC are not good at replacing notices. Would be really useful if CC or other authority issued guidelines explaining why landowners do and ask for certain things. For example in our parish people complain that they don't see the wildlife but that is because of the dogs running all the place - they are a menace to birds and small wildlife.

In our area there are magpie traps because they destroy the nests of other birds. But walkers release them not knowing they are putting other wildlife in danger. We should have meetings between us and the RA etc.. to explain that the countryside is managed so that they can enjoy it and what that management

means and entails. We are putting 6m grass strips around our fields for wildlife but then people walk, cycle etc.. down them. Problem is how to enforce good behaviour on RoW. We are starting to address this through a school -farm link. We lecture the kids who visit about respecting the countryside and wildlife - they won't change unless we teach them as youngsters.

A4.3.4 Satisfaction with the RoW network

Most of the network is over 100 years old.

All of us want to abolish cross field routes but opposition from the ramblers etc.. make it very difficult to come up with workable alternatives village to village. (100% of those present wanted to abolish x field RoW). We were lucky we changed ours in the 1970's but the ramblers won't give an inch - they refuse to take a pragmatic view. In one case a development of new houses was moved because of an old RoW. That's why we go down the permissive route because it can blight future planning permission if we do down the statutory route.

A4.3.5 Security

Should be easy to move RoW that go through farmyards. There are clear health and safety implications for having members of the public wandering around working farmyards. Public footpaths threaten property security - we need them to be moved away from our houses.

There are basically 3 types of users:

- the dog poo brigade - local villagers who keep to small area around villages to walk their dogs
- the socks and boots brigade - serious walkers with maps
- the others who we don't want who cause a nuisance, don't stick to paths and are potentially dangerous.

The number of people walking at weekends has risen astronomically. Problem of night joggers and night shooting (although in theory they are not allowed to shoot within 20 yards of a footpath). We have a footpath going through our farmyard and so far have lost more than £4,000 worth of movable tools. Those of us with farms on the edge of towns have more problems. If you are next to a council block you are farming under completely different rules - we need support. The CCC have sympathy for our predicament I think that CC and landowners are in a similar position - both are frustrated trying to provide a RoW network that is useable in the modern age. That's it, it needs to be modernised. We need cycleways within 20 miles of big towns - they don't exist at the moment and farmers will have to make a big sacrifice. People are prepared to cycle a long way to work these days if they can. As landowners we will be asked to provide cycle paths and we should be paid for it.

Problem is that these paths will be used by motorbikes - there are kids around 15-16 who already have motorbikes and their parents encourage them to ride off road on our paths. In the past I have caught them and called the police but I got a death threat from one of the parents. I think that RoW wherever they are, should have a purpose. One farm has 3 paths starting and ending at the same point in one field - what is the point of that? Now paths can't cross the A14 - are we supposed to build footbridges over the A14? There is one over the M11 at Grantchester - cost a fortune just to save walkers a quarter of a mile. On the A14 in Northamptonshire there are footpaths across the road - it is incredibly dangerous.

A4.3.6 Signs

Waymarks should be higher so you can see them from one to the next. I think waymarks are a waste of time - no one knows what the different colours mean. People try to take them home. They should say if they are a bridleway or a permissive route and what that means. Cambs has much worse signage than other counties. Structures like kissing gates where there are cattle - the wooden ones were chopped down for barbecues - now have metal ones but even they get nicked. Fly tipping is a big problem down byways.

A4.3.7 All weather use of RoW

CCC is supposed to be responsible for the surface of the paths but we look after ours, otherwise they become impassable. We have grassed ours over and just keep it mowed. CCC very bad at looking after bridleways - I would rather be paid to do it because I have the machinery. Now I get paid for cutting the grass on my grassed paths. Bridleways are different because people will use them when it is too muddy and they ruin them. We can close our permissive paths seasonally. Or if we were spraying potatoes with acid we would close the path. We have just reorganised all our permissive horse riding routes so that they don't come into conflict with walkers using the same paths. In Bedfordshire they close byways during winter and usually keep them closed if wet weather continues. They are closed with a steel fence to which the farmer has a key if he needs access. Seasonal controls for motorised vehicles are a good idea as it is very costly to reinstate land that has been cut up by vehicles.

A4.3.8 What about seasonal controls on agricultural machines/vehicles?

We don't use tractors on bridleways and byways in the winter - that is just common sense as we don't want to cut them up. It is in our interest to keep them in good condition as we need access during the harvest. 4x4 cause most damage to the byways.

A4.3.9 Working in partnership

Land owners want to be able to use their roads safely without damaging crops or machinery. So it is in our own self interest that we maintain our roads. I cut the footpaths on my farm because I enjoy walking and because I don't want thistles in the crops - but mainly it's a community thing - I like locals coming for pleasant walks on my land. We do it because when it wasn't done in the past, people would just walk or ride in the tramlines of the fields. Now we get paid to do it, which is good. It's not a lot of money but it is relatively easy for us to do. I didn't want to have a local reputation of blocking RoW so I work to keep my footpaths clear. Also if I maintain it, then people will walk and that does keep the vegetation down to a certain extent.

You must realise that those of us here are the converted. Many farmers are not interested in RoW - you are getting a warped view. The farming community is feeling embattled and this is reflected in their attitudes towards the public and RoW. There are difficult awkward farmers, just as there are difficult awkward walkers and other users. We are very clear about our legal responsibilities. Most of the grey areas occur for farmers who basically don't want public access on their land. I have not had any problems dealing with the highway section of CCC.

Around trees and planning permission - relations with CCC can be more difficult. Problem is that the CC runs out of money before it can efficiently do the job and pay for what has been done. We are doing much more work than we are paid for and this should be recognised. There are budget cuts at CC every year - don't see how the RoW improvement plan will be funded. A14 and schools are the council's priority - we will end up picking up the bill. The cost for developers will rise massively. There are questions about RoW and access in section 106 of the development bill. No land will go for development because of the development land tax - if you sign it they will build a bypass.

National government says that the public should have freedom to roam, more footpaths, more cycle paths. They expect farmers to do the work for free. Those farmers who pull down the shutters don't feel as though they are working in partnership but as being told they have to open up more land to the public. It would be nice to open up from place to place so people can cycle, ride and use the countryside. But this requires a lot of money for those new links to be made. Sustrans got money from the lottery - will the RoW. We are currently entering agreements to offer a route, service it and make it permissive - seems like the best way to go.

A4.3.10 Accessibility for people with disabilities

You can't provide accessible RoW because there is not enough money. Cross-country mobility machines cost around £7k - if they have a motor they need a licence. Short of metalling the RoW then access for disabled people is going to be very difficult. Some paths have grids that wheelchairs and pushchairs can cross - money came from CLA. It's laudable but it's not really achievable to a broad extent. Disabled access is bankrupting some churches and schools. It's basically a route down which we don't want to be looking because of the cost benefit ratio. We would rather spend £ to benefit more people rather than a very small number. Maybe if we could develop a market in access to the countryside - if we are not growing crops maybe this could be a way to bring in an income? Land managers need a budget to maintain and provide environmental access. Back to the old argument - you own the land but the state tells you what you can and can't do with it. The countrymen are overrun and ignored.

A4.3.11 What would you like to see done differently in the management of the RoW?

Want to see a revision of all the national footpaths - taking in local people's views and have a common sense not a historic approach. Planners need to show more common sense and understanding. Could there be trading of RoW like there was trading for water? Would need to establish a value for RoW to make that worthwhile. We need a complete overhaul of the RoW. Objective of the improvement plan is to bring the RoW up to date and meet the needs of the various users. But problem is that this can't be achieved because the law says once a highway always a highway so we are totally hamstrung by dead end paths and paths that no one uses. Without goodwill from users we end up with more and more paths but we would like to end up with better paths rather than just more - quality not quantity.

End of discussion

Appendix 5 - Corporate Survey Data

This appendix is adapted from a report by BMG Research presenting the results of the Cambridgeshire County Council Corporate Survey, conducted amongst 1,318 local residents during November and December 2004. The survey covered the following areas:

- Public transport information
- Local bus services
- Highways
- Libraries
- Rural paths
- Facilities for children
- Safety cameras (the Cambridgeshire Safety Camera Partnership)

Method

The target population for the survey was the adult population (18+) of Cambridgeshire. The survey was carried out via a postal methodology, with a single mailing to 5,000 addresses across the County drawn randomly from the PAF file proportionate to LAD. However, due to an error in the mailing file it was necessary to conduct telephone interviews with residents in Huntingdonshire. A total of 1,118 completed postal questionnaires were returned, representing a positive overall response rate of 22% to the postal element. The table below shows how the response rate varies by LAD.

	%
Cambridge City	22
East Cambridgeshire	21
South Cambridgeshire	18
Fenland	26

An additional 200 interviews were completed over the telephone amongst residents in Huntingdonshire, giving a total sample size of 1,318. On an observed statistic of 50%, a sample size of 1,318 is subject to a maximum standard error of +/- 2.70% at the 95% level of confidence. Careful consideration has been given to the impact of employing a mixed methodology, and this has revealed that differences in response between Huntingdonshire and the other LADs are in most cases not a result of the different methodology adopted. The key differences occur where respondents were asked their reasons for answers to specific questions (e.g. why they do not use a library), with respondents in Huntingdonshire tending to mention less reasons overall. This is likely to be because telephone interviews do not allow respondents to have the various options in front of them for detailed consideration, unlike self-completion questionnaires.

Weighting and Profile

As is usually the case the response varies widely by age, with older respondents significantly over-represented, and younger respondents significantly under-represented. For this reason weights have been applied to counteract this bias. Additionally, weights have been applied to ensure that the sample is representative at an LAD level.

Weights have been derived from the Census 2001 Population statistics, with a matrix being developed to weight by age and gender at a district level. Therefore, there are forty individual weighting factors that apply (5 districts * 4 age bands per district * 2 gender groups within each of the age bands for each district).

The table below demonstrates the effect of the weighting process on the LAD profile of the overall sample

Unweighted and weighted sample sizes, by district and age – part one (All respondents)

	Unweighted		Weighted	
	N	%	N	%
By district				
Cambridge City	313	23.7	282	21.3
East Cambridgeshire	207	15.7	174	13.2
South Cambridgeshire	380	28.8	309	23.4
Fenland	218	16.5	198	15.0
Huntingdonshire	200	15.2	355	26.9
By gender				
Male	557	42.3	630	47.8
Female	741	56.2	668	50.7
By age				
18 to 34	183	13.9	391	29.7
35 to 49	339	25.7	353	26.8
50 to 64	361	27.4	291	22.1
65+	401	30.4	249	18.9
Refused	34	2.6	34	2.6

Based on an unweighted/weighted sample of 1,318

Unweighted and weighted sample sizes, by district and age – part two (All respondents)

	Unweighted		Weighted	
	N	%	N	%
By ethnicity				
White	1,204	96.2	1,265	96.0
Mixed	3	0.3	3	0.2
Black	3	0.3	3	0.2
Asian	9	0.7	12	1.0
Chinese	8	0.6	7	0.5
Other	6	0.5	6	0.4
By working status				
Working	724	54.9	836	63.5
Full-time employment	438	33.2	574	43.6
Part-time employment	153	11.6	133	10.1
Self-employed	130	9.9	126	9.6
On govt-supported training	3	0.2	3	0.2
Not working	581	44.2	470	35.8
Full-time education	18	1.4	43	3.3
Unemployed	18	1.4	17	1.3
Permanently sick/disabled	55	4.2	45	3.4
Retired	412	31.3	276	21.0
Looking after home	71	5.4	84	6.4
Other	7	0.5	5	0.4

Based on an unweighted/weighted sample of 1,318

THIS SECTION ASKS ABOUT YOUR USE OF RURAL PATHS THAT THE COUNTY COUNCIL IS RESPONSIBLE FOR.

Rural paths are rural rights of way across countryside. They are usually not paved.

1. Have you used rural paths (such as footpaths, bridleways or byways) in the previous 12 months?

Yes Continue

No Go to 11

2. If yes, how would you rate your experience of using a rural path (Please tick one only)

Very satisfied Satisfied Dissatisfied Very dissatisfied No opinion

3. If you have used a rural path in the previous 12 months and were dissatisfied, why is this? (Please tick all that apply)

- Difficulty finding or following paths
- Poor path maintenance
- Poor provision for disabled people
- Crime/vandalism
- Difficulty crossing busy roads
- Problems using roads and verges to link paths
- Paths blocked by crops or ploughing
- Paths blocked by fences/barriers
- Excessive dog fouling
- Other (Please write in) _____

Now go to Q12

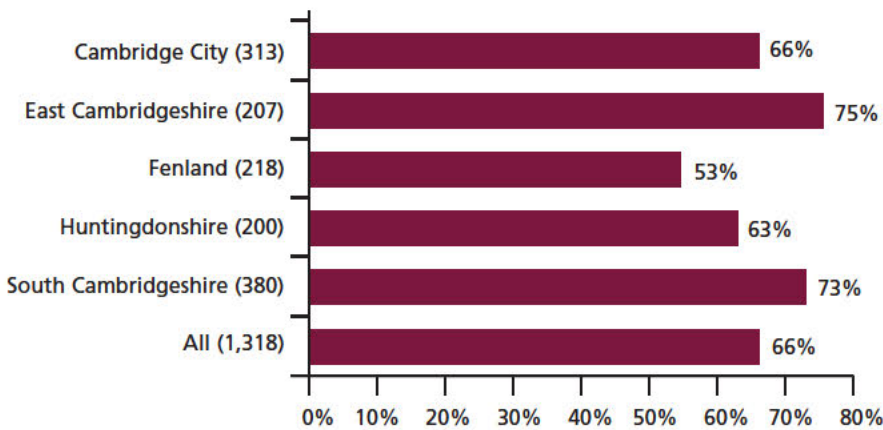
4. If you have not used a rural path, why not? (Please tick all that apply)

- Don't like walking, cycling etc
- Lack of time or opportunity
- Lack of information, unclear routes
- Difficulty with accessibility or health restrictions
- The type of landscape in Cambridgeshire or influence of agriculture
- Difficulty getting to countryside
- Other (Please write in) _____

Q8 The Current Usage of Rural Paths

The County Council is responsible for a number of footpaths, which include bridleways and byways. These are rural rights of way across the countryside, and are usually unpaved. In all, 66% of respondents have used rural paths in the past twelve months, with this proportion ranging from 75% of those in East Cambridgeshire to 53% of those in Fenland.

Proportion of respondents who have used rural footpaths in the past twelve months (All respondents)



Figures in parenthesis denote unweighted sample base

Usage of rural paths is lower amongst older respondents aged 65+ (51%, compared to 64% of those aged 18-34, 75% of those aged 35-49, and 69% of those aged 65+).

Males are also slightly more likely than females to have used rural paths (70% and 62% respectively).

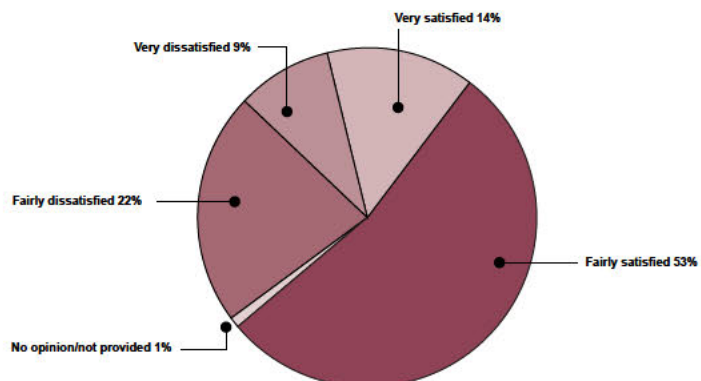
Q9-10 Satisfaction with rural paths

Rating of satisfaction

Respondents who have used rural paths in the past twelve months were asked to rate their level of satisfaction with their experience of using the path. Unlike previous satisfaction questions, this is based on a four-point scale, with no mid-point (neither satisfied nor dissatisfied) being included. Overall, the results are positive, with path users being twice as likely to express satisfaction over dissatisfaction (67% and 31% respectively).

The proportions satisfied with rural paths fall to within +/- 2% of the headline figure (i.e. between 65% and 69%) regardless of respondents gender or age. However, satisfaction with rural paths varies considerably at a district level³, ranging from 79% in Huntingdonshire, to 47% in Fenland.

Satisfaction with the experience of using rural paths
(Respondents who have used a rural path in the past twelve months)



³ Although note that the rating of satisfaction does not necessarily relate to rural paths within the district of residence

Satisfaction with the experience of using rural paths, by district
(Respondents who have used a rural path in the past twelve months)

		Satisfied	Dissatisfied	No opinion/not provided
Cambridge City (197)	%	77	23	<0.5
East Cambridgeshire (148)	%	59	39	2
Fenland (114)	%	47	49	4
Huntingdonshire (133)	%	79	21	0
South Cambridgeshire (272)	%	61	36	2
All (864)	%	67	31	1

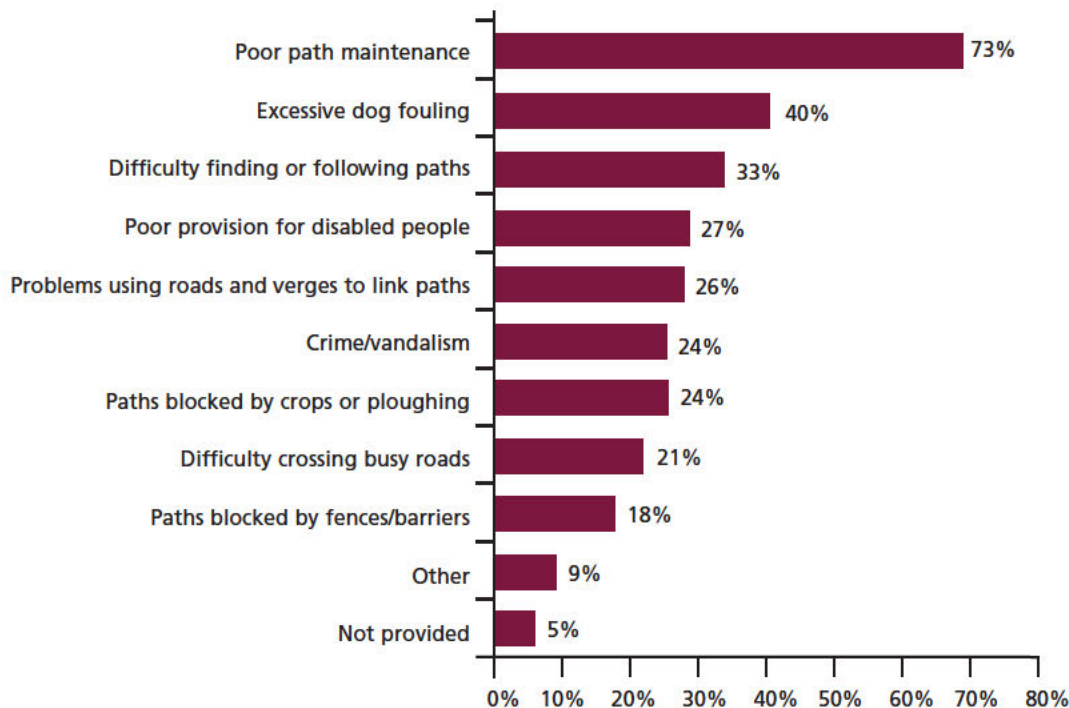
Figures in parentheses denote unweighted sample bases

Causes of dissatisfaction

Of those respondents who are dissatisfied with their experience of using rural paths, poor path maintenance is mentioned by the majority as a cause of dissatisfaction. Other key causes include dog fouling, and/or the difficulty in finding or following a path.

Causes of dissatisfaction with rural paths - prompted

(Users of rural paths who are dissatisfied with their experience of use)



Unweighted sample base = 284. Multiple response

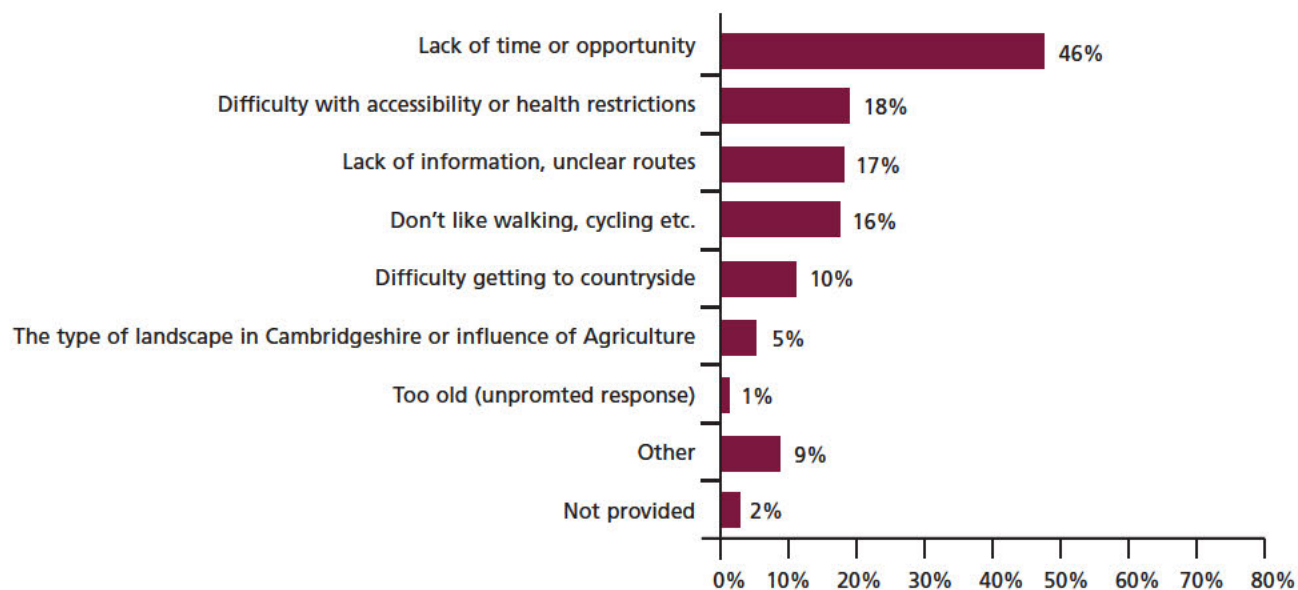
Respondents who do not work due to long-term illnesses or disabilities are more likely to mention the poor provision for disabled people in relation to the headline figure (43% and 27% respectively).

Q11 Barriers to rural paths use

Those respondents who have not used rural paths in the past twelve months were asked to highlight the key barriers preventing their use. The responses are shown in the following graph, with a lack of time or opportunity representing the key barrier.

Barriers to using rural paths - prompted

(Respondents who have not used rural paths in the past twelve months)



Unweighted sample base = 442. Multiple response

Certain barriers are more likely to apply to younger respondents:

- Lack of time/opportunity (62% of those aged 18-34, but only 16% of those aged 65+).

In contrast, access represents a key consideration for those aged 65+:

- Difficulty with accessibility/health restrictions (47% of those aged 65+, but only 2% of those aged 18-34, and 8% of those aged 35-49).
- Difficulty in getting to the countryside (19% of those aged 65+, but up to 7% amongst other age groups).

Appendix 6 - Plans and Strategies

ROWIP guidance suggests that a wide range of plans and strategies may be of relevance to preparing the Improvement Plan. The following, while not an exhaustive list, is representative of the wide range of interests interlocking with countryside access. Though not all have been consulted in detail, the ROWIP seeks to consider the interests represented by these plans and strategies.

A6.1 National

- **DEFRA Stewardship**
DEFRA Land management scheme funded by DEFRA gives payments to land managers to restore/recreate targeted landscapes and improve opportunities for access.

A6.2 Regional

- **Regional Tourism Strategy**
- **Regional Planning Guidance 14**
- **Neighbouring Rights of Way Improvement Plans -** Lincolnshire, Peterborough, Northamptonshire, Bedfordshire, Hertfordshire, Suffolk, and Norfolk. These documents are in course of preparation.
- **Environment Agency**
Regional main rivers and authority water courses. Policy document on public access.
- **English Nature**
Regional Sites and site specific plans - documenting policy on public access
- **English Heritage**
Regional Sites and site specific plans - documenting policy on public access.
- **Open Access Land Map Area 8**
Countryside Agency Map for the region showing open access land and common-land (essentially only Common Land in Cambridgeshire). This came into effect in November 2005.

A6.3 County

- **Cambridgeshire Structure Plan**
Long term guidance on development and land use change in the County, having regard to national and regional policies and the needs and problems of the local area.
- **Cambridgeshire Local Transport Plan 2004-11**
Five year plan outlines the authority's proposals to reduce car use, road accidents and increase travel options in the county. Numerous links with ROW, Safer Routes to Schools, cycling and road building schemes, Traffic Management, Passenger Transport. Cambridgeshire produced an early second LTP to respond to development pressure. From 2005 ROWIP will be incorporated into the LTP.
- **Cambridgeshire Waste Plan**
Outlines present and future requirements for waste disposal - specific sites may provide access opportunities
- **Cambridgeshire Crime and Disorder Reduction Strategy**
Three year strategy on proposals to reduce crime maybe links here with areas designated with High Crime levels and path diversions/extinguishments.

- **Cambridgeshire Community Plan**
County/Districts Links to health, social exclusion, improvements to the environment.
- **Cambridgeshire Cultural Strategy**
Outlines County's cultural background, links with health, arts sport and the countryside.
- **Cambridgeshire Rural Strategy**
Developing services geared to special needs in rural areas
- **Community Safety Strategy**
County/Districts/Police Working with Police and District Councils to address local crime
- **Education Development Plan**
Promoting high standards in schools in Cambridgeshire. This sets out education priorities and actions. Links with initiatives at national level in sports, culture and personal education.
- **Equality Action Plan**
Equality initiatives aimed at mainstreaming equality into business planning, service strategies and community engagement.
- **Cambridgeshire Health Improvement Programme**
County, Districts and PHCT A joint strategy for improving the health of, and health services for local people
- **Economic Development Strategy**
A joint strategy aimed at co-ordinating action to develop the local economy and to ensure that it meets the needs of the residents of Cambridgeshire.
- **Cambridge to Huntingdon Multi Modal Transport Study (CHUMMS)**
- **PPG17**
Planning for Open Space, Sport and Recreation: Districts/County Requirement on Districts to carry out an assessment of facilities for access, open-air recreation, sports etc.
- **PPG13**
Transport: Districts / County Guidance on transport. Former DoE/DOT plan. Gives guidance to local authorities on the integration of land use and transport planning with the aim of reducing the need to travel and reliance on the private car, strong links to LTP.
- **Cambridgeshire Biodiversity Action Plan**
County, Districts, Wildlife Trust, RSPB,
- **Cambridgeshire Minerals Plan**
- **Cambridgeshire Environment Strategy and Action Plan (2002)**

A6.4 District

- **Local Development Plan**
Districts/ Developers Outlines the areas plans for future housing and industry. Gives an indication of where there may be pressure on the network, or opportunities for improved access.
- **Huntingdonshire Marketing Strategy for Tourism 2004-2007**
Aims 'to promote the sustainable development of tourism in Huntingdonshire and to ensure that visitors have a good quality experience whilst in the District'
- (Other District Tourism Marketing Strategies)

- **South Cambridgeshire District Council Conservation Service Operational Plan 2004**

A6.5 Other

- **Primary Care Trust Agenda**
NHS Responsible for implementation of government policies/strategies in Cambridgeshire's health service
- **Sustrans Projects**
Sustrans / County / Districts Development of the National Cycleway Network. New routes planned along existing paths and gives opportunities for new paths.

A6.6 Previous Strategies

- **Cambridgeshire Milestones Statement of Intent (1994)**
- **Environment 2000**
A strategy for action (Cambridgeshire, undated)
- **Countryside Recreation**
Preliminary Guidance on Strategy Preparation (Atkins for Countryside Agency 2000)
- **Use of the (Cams) Countryside (Highwood Research 1994)**
- **Cambridgeshire Rural Strategy (1988)**
- **Cambridgeshire Rural Strategy (revised 1992)**
- **A Study of Countryside Recreation & People with Disabilities in Cambridgeshire (Fieldfare Trust, undated)**

Appendix 7 - Integration of ROWIPs and LTPs

Extract from the 'Full Guidance on Local Transport Plans, Second Edition, Section 5, Local Transport Plan Practicalities', published 8 December 2004. The full guidance is available at http://www.dft.gov.uk/stellent/groups/dft_localtrans/documents/page/dft_localtrans_504005.hcsp

1. Over the course of the second LTP period, Rights of Way Improvement planning will be progressively incorporated into local transport planning. This provides authorities with a new opportunity to ensure local transport planning is making the most effective use of the rights of way network, in both urban and rural areas - particularly in delivering better networks for walkers and cyclists.
2. The Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000 introduced a duty for all local highway authorities to prepare a Rights of Way Improvement Plan (ROWIP). ROWIPs will:
 - provide an assessment of the need to which rights of way meet the present and future needs of the public
 - provide an assessment of the opportunities provided by local rights of way for exercise and recreation
 - and provide an assessment of the accessibility of local rights of way to all members of the community, including those with visual impairment or mobility problems.
3. The aim of integrating these two plans is to:
 - clearly establish the shared aims and establish a definite link between ROWIPs and LTPs;
 - ensure that, as public highways, rights of way are embraced by the LTP process and recognised in LTPs as a key ingredient in the development of an integrated transport network that provides choice in a variety of transport modes;
 - recognise the invaluable role rights of way can play in assisting LTPs to achieve the shared priority and wider quality of life objectives;
 - strengthen and facilitate the long term sustainability of rights of way
 - in the longer term, reduce the quantity of plans produced by an authority
4. The Government recognises that it would be unrealistic to expect authorities to fully integrate the two plans by March 2006, particularly as the first ROWIPs do not have to be completed until November 2007. Full integration will therefore take place from 2010 onwards, building on the development of full ROWIPs. In the meantime, as a first step towards integration authorities are required to submit a short progress report on their ROWIP with their provisional LTP in 2005. This should:
 - identify the stage that the authority has reached in preparing their ROWIP;
 - include a high level statement of policy and objectives for improving the rights of way network;
 - identify any rights of way improvements or proposals that link to the delivery of transport objectives and shared priorities for transport, which include - accessibility, congestion, air quality, road safety and other quality of life issues.
5. Authorities are encouraged to incorporate prioritised rights of way improvements that would help to meet LTP objectives into their provisional (July 2005) LTP implementation programme, to identify the funding source (LTP capital funds or an alternative) and to report on the delivery of those improvements in subsequent Annual Progress Reports. The Government will consider these progress reports and consider whether to ask for further material in final LTPs in March 2006. Where Rights of Way Improvement Plans are not sufficiently advanced to enable priorities to be identified and incorporated into the provisional LTP in 2005, authorities should seek to include them in the final LTP or in subsequent Annual Progress Reports. Authorities may then wish to re-prioritise their LTP delivery programmes to deliver identified improvement schemes on the rights of way network.
6. Not all planned improvements to the rights of way network will be relevant to transport priorities. A full ROWIP will therefore still need to complete by November 2007. Further guidance on the integration of the two plans will be issued in due course.

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Countryside Services Team, Cambridgeshire County Council,

ET1009

Castle Court

Shire Hall

CAMBRIDGE

CB3 0AP

Tel 01223 717445

Email cst@cambridgeshire.gov.uk

Web www.cambridgeshire.gov.uk

Cambridgeshire Rights of Way Improvement Plan

Appendix B – Cambourne West Development Planning Application Improvements



NOTES

- 1. Do not scale from this drawing. All dimensions are in metres unless noted otherwise.
- 2. All levels are in metres relative to ordnance datum newlyn unless noted otherwise.



NOT FOR CONSTRUCTION

P1	21/06/14	First Issue	PK	MAM	MAM
REV	DATE	DESCRIPTION	BY	CHK	APP

REVISIONS

CLIENT

BOVIS HOMES & TAYLOR WIMPEY

PROJECT

SWANSLEY WOOD, CAMBOURNE

TITLE

PROPOSED VEHICULAR ACCESS ARRANGEMENT

SHEET 3 OF 3

Blays House, Wick Road
Englefield Green, Egham
Surrey, TW20 0JL
Tel +44(0)1932 569568
www.royalhaskoningdhv.com

DRAWN	PK	CHECKED	MAM	APPROVED	MAM
DATE	AUG '14	SCALE AT A1	1:1000	AUTOCAD REF.	GY1873-AA-01.DWG

DRAWING No.	9Y1873-AA-03	REVISION	P1
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SHEET LOCATION PLAN