

**Ceredigion County Council**

**Rights of Way Improvement Plan 2019-29**



**Foreword**

*Public Rights of Way provide one of the main means by which*

*people can access and enjoy the countryside. At the same time*

*the Rights of Way network is part of the local travel infrastructure,*

*providing paths from people’s homes to local facilities and*

*places of work.*

*Providing access to our coast and countryside is an essential*

*part of the rural tourism product in Ceredigion and the network*

*of paths is a key economic asset. What’s more, countryside*

*access has an vital role to play in meeting the objectives of the Wellbeing and Future Generations Act. Regular walking, cycling and horse riding can bring benefits through improving people’s health in Wales.*

*The Rights of Way Improvement Plan provides the means by*

*which we can ensure that the Rights of Way network can fulfil its*

*potential. The involvement of the community and partner*

*organisations in the years ahead will be a key element in*

*securing countryside access improvements that will benefit both*

*the local community and visitors to Ceredigion.*

*As the Cabinet member with responsibility for Performance and Economy and a member of Local Access Forum, I look forward to working with you to realise this vision.*

*Cllr Rhodri Evans*

*Cabinet Member*

*Economy and Regeneration*

*June 2019*

**Executive Summary**

**VISION**

*Ceredigion has a distinctive and diverse coast and countryside. The landscape, its habitats and wildlife, its history and culture are valuable assets - valued by local residents and visitors alike. The Rights of Way network offers unrivalled opportunities to enjoy these features. However, the importance of the path network extends far beyond its value for access and enjoyment. It is an asset that underpins the tourist economy of the County and promotes health and wellbeing.*

*The Rights of Way Improvement Plan is the means by which the County Council will plan and prioritise improvements to access in Ceredigion. It is envisaged that by 2028 the path network will be substantially opened and valued by all sections of the community. A continued improvement can only be achieved through the involvement of partners and the plan sets out the ways in which we can work together to achieve common goals.*

***The Rights of Way Improvement Plan provides the means by the rights of***

***way network fulfils its potential – offering high quality access to***

***Ceredigion’s coast and countryside.***

Public Rights of Way provide one of the primary means by which people can access and enjoy the countryside. They are a fundamental to rural tourism and the network of paths is a key economic asset.

Countryside access has an important role to play in health and well-being with regular walking, cycling and horse riding bringing benefits to physical and mental health. Rights of Way are one of our most valued green assets and a modern, connected and well managed network are vital in achieving the objectives and ways of working identified in the Welsh Governments Wellbeing of Future Generation Act.

There are some 2506 km (1566) miles of rights of way in Ceredigion. In addition, there are large areas of Open Access land and a range of countryside sites managed by various organisations.

In producing the Rights of Way Improvement Plan (ROWIP) the County Council has looked at the extent to which the path network meets the present and future needs of the public and the opportunities it provides for access and recreation.

Consideration has been given to different approaches to path management and the Plan highlights matters that need to be addressed, notably the targeting of resources through a Primary Path Network, access for the less-abled and the way in which local communities are engaged in care of our paths.

The promotion of access to the countryside has also been considered. Information about well-maintained path networks, for a range of users, is fundamental to ensuring that tourism and recreation opportunities are maximised.

The Plan consists of two main parts. First, there is an assessment of local Rights of

Way and other access opportunities and how they meet the current and likely future need. Secondly, there is a Statement of Action for the management, improvement and promotion of Rights of Way in Ceredigion for the next 10 years.

The Statement of Action seeks to reflect the aspirations of the public identified in the assessments and sets a framework for the sustained improvement of the path network over the next 10 years. It provides a basis for funding decisions and presents opportunities for working in partnership with other organisations with interests in countryside access, health and well-being, and rural regeneration.

The Statement of Action is built around the following inter-related themes:

1. Maintain the Definitive Map.

2. Maintain and promote the Rights of Way network

3. Meeting the current and future public need

The ROWIP actions are for the most part strategic in nature and intended to be developed through the annual programmes and detailed delivery plans.

The production of the Rights of Way Improvement Plan is a statutory duty, although its implementation is not. However, there is an expectation that the Council will seek to ensure that the plan is delivered. The Statement of Action is ambitious and challenging and will require the continued backing of national and local government and other organisations.

Resources are needed for path management. However, it is also recognised the gains can be achieved through improved efficiency, adopting best practice, partnership working and through the support and engagement of the local community.

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**Part 1**

* 1. **What is the Rights of Way Improvement Plan?**

The Ceredigion County Council Rights of Way Improvement Plan (ROWIP) is produced in accordance with the requirements of the Countryside and Rights of Way (CROW) Act (2000). Local Authorities have a legal requirement to plan strategically for the development, better management and promotion of their existing local Rights of Way and for changes or additions to the Rights of Way network.

In producing the plan, the Council has assessed:

a. The extent to which Rights of Way meet the present and future needs of the public;

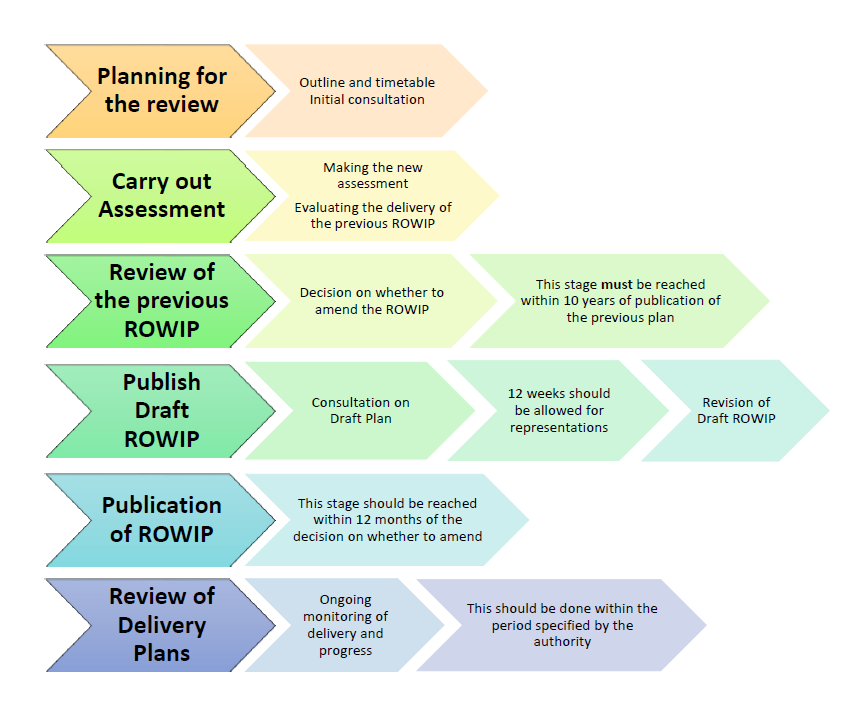
b. The opportunities provided by Rights of Way for exercise and other forms of open- air recreation and enjoyment;

c. The accessibility of Rights of Way to blind or partially-sighted people or others with mobility problems.

The Plan consists of two main elements: First, an Assessmentof local Rights of Way in relation to user needs and secondly, a Statement of Actionfor the management, improvement and promotion of Rights of Way in Ceredigion.

The Ceredigion Local Access Forum has given invaluable assistance and advice at all stages of the development of the Plan.

The process followed by the County Council in the production of the revised ROWIP follows the guidance issued by the Welsh Government and is illustrated in the Figure below.



* 1. **A profile of Ceredigion**

Ceredigion has an area of 1,900 km², mostly made up of agricultural land, open moorland or forestry, with the upland areas to the east forming a significant portion of the Cambrian Mountains. There are almost 100 km of coastline. The main towns are on the coast or in river valleys: Aberystwyth (population 18,000), Cardigan (4,200), Lampeter (3,000), Aberaeron (1,400), Llandysul (1,400) and Tregaron (900).

The population of Ceredigion in 2015 was 74,600, with the latest Welsh Government projections suggesting that this will increase to 77,900 by 2024. Population growth has been dependent on net inward migration for many years. The number of births per year is lower than the number of deaths in the County and there is outward migration of young people seeking job opportunities in urban areas. With the fourth largest land area of the Welsh local authorities, the County is ranked second lowest on population density (41.8 people per km²) and has only one town of any real size, Aberystwyth.

At the 2011 Census the population was 96.7% white, with 93.7% (71,200) white British or Irish, very similar to the all-Wales figure. The non-white ethnicities totalled about 2,500 people, mainly Asian/Asian British (1,100), followed by Mixed/Multiple ethnicity (700), Other Ethnic Group (400) and Black/Black British (300).

Ceredigion is one of the heartlands of the Welsh language. Despite a substantial student population and significant levels of migration, the 2011 Census showed that 47% of the population spoke Welsh, with a range from 35% to over 70% in different parts of the County. In an area like Ceredigion, where almost half the population can speak the language, being able to speak Welsh is a requirement for many jobs in the public sector and the well-being survey reports that it is also highly relevant to feelings of inclusion and identity.

Ceredigion is a County of contrasting landscapes:

The Cardigan Bay coastlinestretches for 60 miles (96 km) between the Dyfi and Teifi estuaries. The coastline includes a wide range of shoreline types, like the dune system at Ynyslas, storm beaches, sandy bays and high cliffs. A substantial proportion of the coast is undeveloped, and four sections are designated as Heritage Coast because of their exceptional landscape quality. Two areas of Cardigan Bay are Marine Special Areas of Conservation because of their importance for biodiversity.

The Cambrian Mountainsform a remote upland plateau, dominated by Pumlumon

Fawr (2468 ft / 752 m in height), that stretches along the length of the County. They comprise large areas of upland pasture and moorland (including substantial tracts of Common Land) and large coniferous plantations.

The river valleys of the Teifi, Aeron, Ystywth, Rheidol and Dyfi descend through steep-sided gorges from their sources in the Cambrian Mountains, eventually forming broad flood plains as they reach the coast.

Undulating countryside is a landscape characterised by small farms and features moulded by agricultural practices over many generations, with intricate field patterns, hedgerows and woodlands. These features give way to open moorland and coniferous plantations at Mynydd Bach and on the fringes of the Cambrian Mountains.

The areas contain a rich variety of habitats, with sea cliffs, sand dunes, wetlands, woodland and upland pasture that support a number of rare or vulnerable species. The rich biodiversity is reflected by a large number of sites covered by statutory nature conservation designations and other informal sites such as Local Nature Reserves and Wildlife Trust sites

The landscape is also rich in historical and archaeology features that are valuable resources in themselves but also hold a fascination for local people and visitors in exploring the countryside. The ‘Spirit of the Miners’ project demonstrated that, with appropriate publicity, the historic landscape of the metal mining heritage of north Ceredigion could be appreciated through the development of path networks. Similarly, the Coast Path project has offered a means to highlight the important maritime heritage of the Ceredigion coast.

The County includes two ‘historic landscapes’ identified in the Register of Landscapes of Historic Interest in Wales (CADW). The first is Upland Ceredigion, an area that includes remains and settlements from prehistoric to more recent times, like Sarn Helen; Strata Florida Abbey; Drover’s routes and the setting for Thomas Johnes’s Hafod. The second is the Lower Teifi Valley, where the historic interest is centred on Bronze Age remains, Mediaeval secular, ecclesiastical and defended sites and recent gentry houses.

These features provide a rich resource for the development and promotion of countryside access opportunities.

* 1. **The importance of Rights of Way and access**

Public Rights of Way provide one of the main means by which people can access and enjoy the countryside. In addition, the Rights of Way network also forms part of the local active travel infrastructure. Paths and cycle routes provide traffic-free routes from homes to local facilities and places of work, so reducing the use of cars for short distance trips.

*Economy*

In Ceredigion, countryside access is a fundamental part of rural tourism and the network of paths is a key economic asset. Some examples below demonstrate the wealth of evidence confirming the economic value of countryside access.

Natural Resources Wales published a report in 2013 on the economic impact of spending by visitors to the Wales Coast Path, which concluded that the path generated approximately £16m added value to the Welsh economy (The Economic Impact Of Wales Coast Path Visitor Spending On Wales 2013).

Rights of Way are of key importance to local regeneration of the rural economy. Even in 2000, spending by walking visitors was estimated to bring over £55M to the rural and coastal economies in Wales (Peter Midmore, ‘The Economic Value of Walking in Rural Wales’, 2000).

According to the Coast Path Visitor Survey(2015 )and Economic Impact of Coastal Walking in Wales( 2014) there were an estimated 43 million visits to the Welsh coast for walking, with direct expenditure by adult visitor that had by then risen to an estimated £540M.

The Walking and Cycling Strategy for Wales (2003) estimated the value of cycling to tourism in Wales was £103M with a prediction that this would have risen to £172M by 2010, though recent financial information does not seem to be available.

*Walkers and the Local Economy*

*In 2015 a path counter recorded over 103,000 people using the Coast Path between Aberporth and Tresaith in the south of the County. The Wales Outdoor Recreation Survey (2014) found that money is spent during 42% of all visits to the outdoors. Thus, more than 40 thousand people may have spent money in either Abeporth or Tresaith directly as a result of walking this section of path. Without the Coast Path more than 40 thousand opportunities each year of benefit to this small part of the local economy might have been lost!*

*Ceredigion is full of such access opportunities ready to be exploited.*

Horse riding is an important tourism activity in Wales. The Wales Tourist Board (2003) estimated that 800,000 riding occasions are taken by visitors in Wales each year, with a resultant direct expenditure of £18.6M, though here again updated information has not been found. Information from the British Equestrian Trades Association indicates that the amount spent by horse owners is £3600 per horse per annum.

Every walker, cyclist, horse rider, carriage driver and off-road driver will contribute either directly or indirectly into the local economy.

There are direct contributions through Food and Drink, Fuel, Accommodation, Car parking, Bus/ train/ferry/taxi fares, Admission fees, Maps/ guidebooks leaflets, etc, and Local Guides.

In addition, there are indirect contributions into the local economy through support and supply services for many of the above, like food producers/suppliers, accountancy and legal service, etc, vehicle maintenance (bikes, cars, carriers, horse boxes, carriages), horses – housing, food, vet bills, farriers bills, clothing, equipment purchase and hire, and important economic benefits tied into health with reduced financial pressures on the National Health Service.

*Health*

The importance of recreational access for health and well-being is widely acknowledged. The Annual Report of the Chief Medical Officer for Wales draws clear associations between activity and health stating:

“*It has been estimated that the cost of physical inactivity to Wales is around £650M per year. Regular physical activity such as walking and cycling has significant benefits for health including lowering the risk of cardiovascular diseases, diabetes, colon and breast cancer, and depression*.”

Research by Walking for Health, an initiative run by The Ramblers and Macmillan Cancer Support, showed that walking and physical activity reduces the risk of colon cancer by 40%, type 2 diabetes by 40%, depression by 30%, coronary heart disease by 20% and Alzheimer’s disease by 40%

A British Horse Society study found horse riding stimulates positive psychological feelings, with riders are strongly motivated by the sense of well-being gained from interacting with horses. Amongst the riders who took part in the survey, 39 % had taken no other form of physical activity in the last four weeks, highlighting the importance of riding to people who might otherwise be sedentary.

A paper published in the British Medical Journal on the “Association between active commuting (walking and cycling) and the incident cardiovascular disease, cancer and mortality” identified that cycling to work is linked to a lower risk of developing cancer by 45 % and cardiovascular disease by 46 %. Overall, people who cycled to work were found to have a 41 % lower risk of premature death from any cause, compared to those who drove or took public transport.

*Active Travel*

The Walking and Cycling Strategy for Wales (2003) indicated that an estimated 26% of all purposeful trips are made wholly by walking. However, only about 11% of people walk to work in Wales and only some 45% of 5 to16 year olds walk to school.

Public Rights of Way play an important part in the Active Travel network. A high percentage of routes identified in Integrated Network Maps coincide with Rights of Way. Likewise the aspirations identified by the public in the production of such maps indicated that improvements to the Right of Way network were essential for Active Travel benefit.

**Part 2**

**THE ROWIP ASSESSMENTS**

The Rights of Way Improvement Plan is underpinned by a number of Assessments that have looked into Rights of Way and access in the County. The Assessments undertaken were:

• An overview of the achievements of the first ROWIP and how the matters considered in its assessment have progressed since it was published

• Evaluating the current condition of the network and its legal record

• Assessing the available evidence relating to current and likely future public need

• An overview of potential crossover between the ROWIP and other plans and priorities and potential partnerships that may arise from them to deliver maximum benefits to the public

• Meeting the Statutory Requirements

The Assessments were considered by the Ceredigion Local Access Forum ROWIP sub-committee and their comments have helped shape the draft Plan. User groups also had the opportunity to input into the process.

The key findings of the Assessments are outlined briefly here. A more comprehensive summary of what was done and the conclusions reached is contained in Annex 1.

**2.1 An overview of the achievements of the first ROWIP and how the matters considered in its Assessment have progressed since it was published.**

In accordance with the Welsh Government Guidance (4.9) this covered the key matters identified in previous Assessments, how the Statement of Action proposed to address them, the extent that those actions were met and any outstanding issues.

The matters addressed in the Statement of Action had been defined in a series of themes:

Maintain the definitive map

Manage and protect the Right of Way network

Meet the needs of users, including those with visual impairment and mobility problems.

Working in partnership

Raising awareness about Rights of Way and access

It was concluded that most of the actions identified had been met either fully or partially, except those that were either of low priority or had been identified in advance as needing additional resources.

The assessment concluded that ROWIP itself had proved to be a useful tool for Authority staff in providing a structured and strategic method of managing Rights of Way. For example, the introduction of the Primary Path Network had provided a rationale for dealing with issues in the face of continued reductions in budgets, whilst the introduction of the Adopt a Path scheme gave a pointer to longer-term solutions and different ways of working to deal with reduced resources.

**2.2 Evaluating the current condition of the network and its legal record**

2.2.1 Introduction

The evaluation showed that despite financial pressures there is much to celebrate, especially with regard to the length of routes that are included on the Primary Path Network. The introduction of the Countryside Access Management System (CAMS) had given much easier digital access to important information.

*Countryside Access Management System (CAMS)*

*CAMS is a database and map management system designed to simplify the task of maintaining Rights of Way that is used widely throughout England and Wales. It delivers detailed path inventories, condition survey data, promoted path management, asset management, surface details, maintenance/enquiry management, contract management and legal events. It is used widely throughout England and Wales. It provides an accurate reflection of the network, including information on infrastructure and issues and paths that are open and available.*

2.2.2 Condition of the Network

The total length of paths on the Primary Path Network (PPN) now stands at 60%, which is a very significant improvement on the previous sample surveys that had averaged only 42% of paths open over a ten-year period. It is commendable that some 78% of multi-user routes are now included, demonstrating the success of the Ceredigion of Horseback project in opening up bridleways. There are far fewer stiles as the Authority has sought to replace them with gates for least restrictive access and the need for improved way-marking has been addressed. The need for better recording by CAMS of path infrastructure and surface condition was highlighted.

*Primary Path Network (PPN*)

*The Ceredigion ROWIP (2008) recognised that resources and funding would dictate the extent to which priorities could be met. It provided a framework for identifying a primary network of routes as a guide for allocation of resources. Routes on the Primary Path Network were classified in Categories 1 or 2.*

*Category 1 comprises linear strategic routes, like the Coast Path and promoted routes such as the Borth to Pontrhydfendigaid path, while Category 2 are other routes of strategic/community value that are open and available.*

*The rest of the network is classified as Category 0 made up of routes that are not currently open and available. However, when an issue is reported on a Category 0 path it becomes part of a 6-monthly review process about reclassification that involves ratification by the ROWIP sub-committee of the Local Access Forum.*

* + 1. Management Arrangements

There was a major restructuring of the Public Rights of Way team in 2015. The team now has 7 staff: a Community Access Officer, 3 Area Rangers, a Wales Coast Path Officer and a Common Land and Access Officer, who all report to the Public Rights of Way Officer. Each Ranger is responsible for managing about 800 km of Rights of Way in a particular area of the County.

A Public Path Order Working Practice (Annex 2) was introduced in 2015 that provides a pragmatic approach to dealing with long-standing and historical issues on the network and also has allowed the Authority to pursue diversions, where the interests of both the public and the Authority are served.

When it was recognised that adequate resources were not likely to be made available, a sub-set of the paths, known as the Primary Path Network (PPN), was identified with the aim of ensuring that it is “open and available” for public use (see Annex 3). It can be noted that only 14% of the problems reported by the public have related to paths not on the PPN, thus validating this selective approach.

* + 1. Resource Implications

Projections from an earlier Countryside Council of Wales study have estimated the annual cost of managing Rights of Way at about £378 per km. In contrast, during the 10-years of previous ROWIP, the budget in Ceredigion has averaged £52 per km. It is thus highly commendable that 60% of the network in Ceredigion is open.

The Authority continues to look at alternative ways of working to maintain and improve services in the face of reduced budgets and resources. The long-established collaborations with the Ceredigion Rights of Way Volunteers in heavy maintenance by footpath working parties has been augmented recently by the introduction of the Adopt a Path scheme and the use of office volunteers.

*Ceredigion Rights of Way Volunteers*

*Ceredigion County Council has a long history of working with volunteers to maintain Rights of Way. The volunteers comprise three teams with links to local Ramblers groups in Aberystwyth, Lampeter and Cardigan. The teams work regularly under the supervision of the respective Council Area Rangers, taking on a wide range of tasks from installing gates and building bridges to pioneering clearance of blocked paths. A study for the Local Access Forum found that over a recent 6-year period this volunteer effort had been consistently equivalent to about 1.3 additional staff members, valued at more than £66k when costed at the minimum wage. The contribution of the Ceredigion Rights of Way Volunteers was given national recognition with a Highly Commended Certificate in the Wales Volunteer of the Year Awards 2016. In addition, a ‘Tools for Teams’ Award from Ramblers Cymru was used to purchase a trailer that was donated to the Council to help the footpath maintenance work.*

2.2.5 Promoted Routes

2.2.5 Promoted Routes

Much work has been undertaken in recent years to augment the number of promoted routes. Initiatives like Paths for People, Ceredigion on Horseback and the development of the Coast Path have all resulted in greater awareness of the opportunities available for outdoor recreation. However, there is a general lack of promotional material available in the majority of settlements across the County. The promotional material available for cyclists does not make distinction between cycling

*‘Adopt a Path’*

*An ‘Adopt a Path’ scheme, administered through the ROWIP grant, was launched in April 2016. By December 2017 some 60 new volunteers had been recruited who had devoted about 600 hours to vegetation clearance and light maintenance on their local paths.*

abilities though the Council Tourism website “Discover Ceredigion” does provides information on cycling opportunities and includes links to the Sustrans website, which identifies off-road, easy-gradient, family-friendly cycle provision. There is also a lack of provision of promotional material for less-abled users, carriage drivers and those in mechanically propelled vehicles. Greater partnership working with internal and external stakeholders is needed, both to identify the provision that is available and to prepare new promotional material. More partnership working is also essential to create a single coherent contact point for access provision in the County. More information is also needed on the Council interactive map about the suitability of routes, like path surfacing and potential barriers.

*‘Paths for People’ and ‘Ceredigion on Horseback’*

*‘Paths for People’ and ‘Ceredigion of Horseback’ were projects with financial support through the Rural Development Plan for Wales 2007-2013. The former created a series of community walks, described in an attractive booklet, that are based around 11 small rural settlements in the County. Council Rangers, volunteers and contractors worked together during 3 years to reclaim footpaths that had long been lost installing new gates, bridges and other infrastructure.*

*‘Ceredigion on Horseback’ was an equivalent project concerned with bridleways. Twelve circular rides were created and publicised in a booklet, together with one linear route extending the entire length of the County from Machynlleth to Newcastle Emlyn.*

2.2.6 Legal Record

The National Parks and Access to the Countryside Act (1949) required County Councils in England and Wales to produce a Definitive Map and Statement for their area. The Definitive Map and Statement for Ceredigion is held at the County Council Offices at Penmorfa, Aberaeron.

Definitive map and statement can be something of a misnomer; in that they are not completely definitive. They are documents that are often open to mistakes/anomalies providing plenty of room for individual interpretation.

The definitive map in Ceredigion was prepared at the smallest allowable scale of 1;25,000, which proves problematic in providing definitive locations, widths and alignments of routes on the ground.

Likewise the quality and contents of definitive statements differ greatly from one community council area to the next; some include a great deal of details including all limitations, widths and names of the witnesses who walked them and on what date; others provide nothing but a start/end point and status of the routes

There are often cases where the statement and map are in direct conflict with each other. In these instances other sources of information such as 1905 maps, drafting maps, physical ground features etc. are inspected in order to ascertain the correct alignment. Occasionally the only way to resolve such issues is via a definitive map modification order, which can be time consuming and bureaucratic.

There are a number of cases where routes change status on the county boundary; unfortunately there is little that can be done with such routes without the full cooperation of neighbouring Authorities and landowners. Fortunately these anomalies mainly exist in quite remote and inaccessible parts of the county where their impact on the public are negligible.

There are currently no resources to undertake a full and thorough review of the definitive map and statement during the previous ROWIP period; consequently it is updated on a continual basis when anomalies are identified.

The table below identifies the known outstanding legal processes related to the legal record of public rights of way (Definitive Map).

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Legislative process | Number of Outstanding Cases |
| Claims under s53 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 | 7 |
| Orders under the Highways Act 1980 (diversions, creations, extinguishments) | 12 |
| Orders under the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 | 1 |
| Reclassifications under s54 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1980 | 173 |

The Authority has worked hard to ensure it is up to date with applications for amendments to the definitive map; the reclassification of Roads Used as Public Paths is the major piece of work remaining to be completed. It should be noted however that despite the apparent low number of claimed routes under s53 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act, the Authorities ability to resolve these is dependent on the ability to bring in additional resources, which are not currently available.

It is also worth noting the Welsh Government proposals within the white paper on access and recreation; wherein there is a proposal for one statutory map covering all access opportunities. If brought into fruition this will undoubtedly have an impact on the definitive map and the procedures that surround it. Until these proposals are completely known and understood it would be prudent to continue the status quo of identifying and dealing with anomalies on a continual basis rather than looking to publish a revised definitive map and statement.

**2.3 Assessing the available evidence relating to current and likely future public need**

This assessment explored the views of the public on Rights of Way and access to the countryside. It looked at the way in which the Rights of Way network is used, the views and aspirations of the local community and visitors, and the factors that currently discourage or prevent use of public paths and the countryside in general.

The first part of the assessment was a review of the findings from a wide range of studies into Rights of Way and countryside access including:

*Wales Outdoor Recreation Survey 2014*

*Access and Outdoor Recreation Green Paper 2015*

*Wales Coast Path 2015 Ceredigion Data*

*National Assembly for Wales Key Statistics for Ceredigion*

*National Equestrian Surveys*

*Saddling up for Success – a Riding Tourism Strategy for Wales’ WTB (2003)*

*ROWIP meeting with local horse riders*

*Cycling UK Survey*

*Ceredigion Coast Path counter data*

*Cambrian Mountain Exemplar Project*

*Report on Motorcycle Tourism in West Wales*

*Ceredigion Assessment of Local Wellbeing*

It concluded with the production of set of draft Themes and Actions that were then made available to the public, disseminated to the statutory consultees and sent to targeted stakeholders, including user groups, local clubs/societies and service users. Public events were held across the County and social media messages posted to raise awareness to the consultation.

Some of the key findings are given here:

The assessment found that some 85% of people accessing the countryside do so on foot, with about 39% of visits to the outdoors made by people with dogs. Most walks are less than 3 hours, while the average distance on the Coast Path was a return journey totalling about 3 miles.

Information showed that good quality all-weather and all-ability routes are important and could lead to reducing barriers to participation with by those with physical disability (29%), health problems (21%) and old age (14%).

Money spent on food and drink whilst accessing the countryside makes an important contribution to the local economy, with more than 40% of visitors spending money during their visit.

Over two thirds of cyclists access routes directly from home and over half make use of public footpaths; many stating that it was difficult to put together a “legal route”.

Local rides were important to horse riders with many being undertaken without the need to use transport. Most horse riders would prefer to use Public Rights of Way and avoid traffic on roads, with rides varying generally between 5 miles to 15 miles.

The connectivity of the network is a particular issue for cyclists and horse riders.

It was also found that there is a need for greater information on opportunities of access across a range of activities.

Ceredigion is a large, sparsely populated and topographically diverse County with particular challenges when attempting to improve connectivity and achieve economic, health and active travel benefits. The opportunities will differ, so that a locally-driven, targeted and long-term approach is needed to ensure the objectives of the Council are met on a County-wide basis.

**2.4 An overview of potential crossover between the ROWIP and other plans and priorities and potential partnerships that may arise from them to deliver maximum benefits to the public**

Rights of Way are part of the fabric of our towns, villages and countryside and the planning for the network needs to take account of many policy areas including Sustainable Development, Planning and Environment, Economic Regeneration and Tourism, Transport/Active Travel, Active Recreation, and Health and Well-being.

The Rights of Way Improvement Plan sits alongside a large number of strategies and plans produced at National, Regional and Local levels. It is essential that these plans and strategies are known and clear linkages can be shown to meet the aims and objectives of cross-cutting themes.

National Policies and Strategies considered include:

A Walking and Cycling Action Plan for Wales (2009)

Wales Spatial Plan (updated 2008)

The Wales Transport Strategy (2008)

National Transport Plan (2009)

An Active Wales (2011)

Climate Strategy for Wales (2010)

Regional Plans:

TraCC Regional Transport Plan (2009)

Mid-Wales Regional Tourism Strategy (2011)

TraCC Walking and Cycling Strategy (2012)

Local Policies and Plans:

Single Integrated Plan

Corporate Strategy

Active Travel, from The Active Travel (Wales) Act (2013)

Health & Well-being from The Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act (2015

Destination Management Plan

Local Development Plan

Place Plans

In summary, the policy objectives are:

* To ensure that the ROWIP translates national and local policies into effective action.
* To ensure that the ROWIP recognises the importance of Rights of Way and access for recreation, tourism development, sustainable transport and health.
* To seek a high profile for ROWIP actions within other corporate plans and strategies
* To ensure that ROWIP policies are effectively integrated with other relevant local plans and strategies.
* To ensure effective joint working within the Authority and with partner organisations.
* To seek to ensure that the development of ROWIP policies and actions maximises opportunities for securing additional funding for access initiatives

**2.5 Meeting the statutory requirements**

Section 60 of the Countryside and Rights of Way (CROW) Act (2000) established the statutory requirements that Local Authorities need to meet when preparing ROWIPs.

It states that every Local Highway Authority shall prepare and publish a plan, to be known as a Rights of Way Improvement Plan, containing the Authority’s assessment of the following matters:

*The opportunities provided by local Rights of Way for exercise and other forms of open air recreation and the enjoyment of the Authority’s area*

*The accessibility of local Rights of Way to blind or partially-sighted people and others with mobility problems*

*The extent to which local Rights of Way meet the present and future needs of the public*

* + 1. **The opportunities provided by local Rights of Way for exercise and other forms of open air recreation and the enjoyment of the Authority’s area**

2.5.1.1 Public Rights of Way

With over 2500km of Rights of Way in the County, the network provides the most important opportunities for the public to gain access the countryside.

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Category | Rights of Way by length | | | |
|  | km | Miles | % |  |
| Footpath | 1663 | 1039 | 66% |  |
| Bridleway | 522 | 326 | 21% |  |
| Restricted Byway | 308 | 193 | 12% |  |
| Byway Open to All Traffic | 13 | 8 | 1% |  |
| Totals: | 2506 | 1566 | 100% |  |

Currently 60% of the Rights of Way in the County are included in the Primary Path Network (PPN), which means that some 1500km are open and available. There are some 660km (78%) of multi-user routes,(bridleways, restricted byways, etc) in the PPN. Approximately 200km are designated as Category 1 routes on the PPN, including the highest profile long-distance routes: Ceredigion and All Wales Coast Path, the Borth to Pontrhydyfendigaid route and the Aberaeron to Lampeter route.

2.5.1.2 Other Access Opportunities

It is clearly evident from the assessment that there is a wide range of other access opportunities available to the public across the County on both a formal and informal basis from a diverse range of providers. They include Schools, Universities and Colleges, Private Landowners through Agri-Environment Schemes, Community Groups, Town & Village Greens and Common Land, Access Land, and Roads, Tracks, Pavements, etc.

The Wales Outdoor Recreation Survey found that more half the people who walk for recreation do so using tracks and pavements. Ceredigion has a relatively low volume of traffic so that minor roads within the County are often used by residents and visitors as means of accessing the countryside.

Public Rights of Way on their own provide a great opportunity for open air exercise and recreation. However, with such a diverse range of “access providers”, one of the biggest challenges is making the public aware of all the opportunities that exist. The responses to the consultation showed that the public are not fully aware of the local walking and riding opportunities. It must be concluded that, given the number and range of the access opportunities available, the Rights of Way network is not used to full potential and improvements need to be made to the way that information is publicised.

2.5.2 **The accessibility of local Rights of Way to blind or partially-sighted people and others with physical impairments.**

The assessments found that relatively few rural Rights of Way are suitable for use by people with acute mobility problems. The nature of the rural terrain will always be a barrier to some users, with the topography of Ceredigion being a fundamental constraint. However, it should be possible to raise the profile of the current opportunities in addition to identifying where physical improvements may be possible. .

Suitably accessible paths on Rights of Way were identified at Aberporth, Aberystwyth Rheidol Trail, Cenarth, Tre Taliesin, Aberaeron, Llanybydder and Bontgoch. However, apart from mention of the first on the Ceredigion website, there was no promotional literature available.

Other possible opportunities were also noted including Aberystwyth Plascrug Avenue, Llety Parc – Blaendolau, Borth promenade, Cardigan and Llandysul riverside walks, Ystwyth Trail at Llanilar, Rhydyfelin, Llanfarian, Ystrad Meurig and Tregaron, the Cors Caron boardwalks and Aberaeron Harbour and sea front, though no promotional literature was currently available about them.

Some “quick win” improvements that could be made without the need for substantial additional resources were noted including promoting the opportunities that do exist through the production of “in-house” material and making information on potential barriers (like stiles, gradients, etc) available on promotional material and the Council interactive map.

However, longer-term improvements need to be made through working in partnership with groups with mobility problems and in identifying opportunities to augment “access for all” routes.

The creation of routes with characteristics suitable for those with mobility problems is recognised as being a major constraint that will continue into the future as resources become even more scarce. One of challenges will be the building up of community resilience so that local residents can take ownership of improvements and developments. The production of Local Access Plans is seen as means of moving towards this end.

2.5.3 **The extent to which local Rights of Way meet the present and future needs of the public**

2.5.3.1 Walkers

* Walkers can use the entire Primary Path Network, which is open and usable and amounts about 1500km of linear access on some 60% of the Rights of Way in the County.
* The CROW Act (2000) introduced a new right of access to ‘open access land’ which amounts to about 26,000 ha or about 14.2% of the land area.
* The average walking distance appears to be relatively short. Evidence from the assessments quotes it at about 3 miles. In response, the Authority has now placed greater emphasis on including routes close to settlements on the Primary Path Network. The information found in the assessments supported this approach, with even short walks being important for health reasons, benefits being particularly associated with frequent participation in doorstep activities.
* Connectivity of the network is important for walkers and the importance of good surfaces like pavements has been identified. Close working with internal stakeholders in the Authority is therefore important to safeguard and promote future use.
* The Paths for People project proved popular and was useful in identifying opportunities for circular routes near settlements. However the review of promotional literature identified a lack of provision in many settlements in the County with only 45 out 135 settlements served by a promoted route, and only 5 of 21 larger service centres having close access to a promoted route.

In summary there seems to be a more than adequate level of provision for walkers to meet the present and likely future need. However, more needs to be done to raise awareness of the opportunities that are available, especially for those individuals exhibiting protected characteristics under the Equalities Act.

2.5.3.2 Cyclists

* The popularity of cycling is on the increase. Based on a review of promoted literature and responses from local cycling groups there appears to be a lack of safe off-road cycling provision in the County. Anecdotally, there also appears to be an opportunity for better promotion of the provisions that do exist, especially in larger service centres, like Aberystwyth. Welsh Government proposals for possible increased access by cyclists to footpaths and access land may also assist in addressing this issue in the future.
* 78% of multi-user routes (i.e. bridleways, restricted byways and byways open to all traffic) in the County are included in the PPN. Provision for cyclists is also augmented through the road network and land managed by Natural Resources Wales.
* Recent initiatives to improve access for horse riders have also had the effect of providing greater opportunities for off-road cycling / mountain biking. However the review of promotional literature again identified that cyclists lacked such provision for route near most settlements and service centres in the County.
* Natural Resources Wales open access policy for cyclists is a valuable asset, with the Nant yr Arian visitor centre providing world-class, mountain-biking provision and easy-gradient access for children and beginners.
* There is currently no distinction between different cycling abilities when it comes to the production of promotional material. It must be concluded that most of the routes currently promoted on the Council’s “Walks and Rides” page would only be suitable for more advanced or fitter riders. The Council Tourism website “Discover Ceredigion” provides some information on cycling opportunities within the County and also includes links to the Sustrans website, which does identify off-road, easy-gradient, family-friendly cycle provision. Projects like the Ystwyth Trail have been important in this respect as have the improvements to multi-user paths in Aberystwyth and Cardigan. However there is a general lack of provision across the County.

In summary, the adequacy of the network in meeting the present and likely future needs depends on the type of cycling activity in question. For more advanced riders this need seems to be largely satisfied through current provision, though more could be done to ensure connectivity of the network and to raise awareness of the provision that is currently available. However, there is a lack of provision of easy-gradient, family -friendly cycle opportunities with only a limited number of suitable routes in the County. It can again be noted that this type of use is particularly important for health reasons.

More could be done to promote the opportunities that exist, though greater investment in new provision would need to be prioritised. Greater community involvement is needed both in identifying new opportunities and in sourcing the funds to realise future ambitions.

2.5.3.3 Horse Riders

* Horse riding is an important contributor to the Ceredigion economy and its popularity is set to increase. Connectivity of the multi-user network has been identified as an issue that needs to be investigated and improved. Proposals by the Welsh Government for possible increased access to footpaths and access land may address this issue.
* It has previously been noted that 78% of the multi-user routes are included in the Primary Path Network, so that more than 600km of accessible routes are available to horse riders. In addition, there is further provision through the road network and land holdings belonging to Natural Resources Wales.
* The Local Authority seeks to improve the multi-user network as much as possible for the benefit of horse riders, by installing easy-latch handles and ensuring that gates open and close easily to allow easy access on horseback. Much of this work is dependent on partnership working with landowners, who may have differing aims and objectives, so finding a balance can often be difficult in a stock-rearing County like Ceredigion.
* The Ceredigion on Horseback project opened up much of the bridleway network with a significant number of promoted routes. However, the review of available promotional literature again identified a lack of provision in many settlements in the County.
* Improvements that have been suggested include path surfacing, improved connectivity of the network, removal of obstructions and padlocks from gates, and more information about riding opportunities

In summary, there seems to be much provision for horse riders, though more needs to be done to ensure connectivity of the network and to raise awareness of the opportunities that are currently available both using Rights of Way and other sources. This is especially true in relation to external providers like Natural Resources Wales who, due to their land holding, could contribute more fully.

The topography of Ceredigion as a County can form a natural constraint, which is difficult to overcome, when considering surface improvements and their sustainability. Much work has been done to improve the accessibility of the network for horse riders, but there is still a long way to go, so that installing more easy-latch handles and partnership working with landowners and the public is essential into the future.

Greater community involvement is needed both in identifying new opportunities and in sourcing the funding to realise future ambitions.

2.5.3.4 Blind or partially-sighted people and others with mobility problems

* The popularity of easy-gradient access suitable for all ages and abilities is highlighted by the Coast Path counters at Aberporth which found that some 100,000 people use this route annually.
* The review of promotional literature identified that there is a lack of promoted material on routes for less-abled users,
* Not enough is known about the accessibility of local Rights of Way to blind or partially-sighted people and others with mobility problems**.** There was a lack of responses from less-abled users to the review process. There may be a number of reasons, though it does suggests that the Authority could work closer with user-groups and forums to understand better the needs and desires of such users.
* The nature of the rural terrain will always be a barrier to some users, with the topography of Ceredigion being a considerable constraint. There are however opportunities to raise the profile of the current opportunities, whilst also looking to identify physical improvements where possible.
* The Council applies least restrictive access principles to all works, working to the hierarchy of gaps/gates/stiles, which does assist with the accessibility of the network.
* The CAMS system does not provide information on the location of easily accessible routes or how many exist, so that it is difficult to ascertain what length of rights of way are accessible to all. Development work on is needed on CAMS to enable recording of information relating to path surfaces.
* There is need to provide information on barriers to access on promotional literature and through the Council interactive map, though resources will be needed to undertake development work to CAMS.

In summary, there seems to be a lack of provision for blind or partially-sighted people and others with mobility problems throughout the County. Opportunities do exist; some of which are on public Rights of Way, however most of these are not currently publicised. Despite least restrictive access principles being applied the physical characteristics of the Right of Way network is a considerable constraint.

Given the resources, improvements could be made in the way that information is recorded on the CAMS system and made available to the public about limitations, like gates and stiles.

A closer working relationship with groups of people with vulnerable characteristics would be beneficial in identifying improvements that can be made and investigating partnership working.

Greater community involvement is needed both in identifying new opportunities and in sourcing the funding to realise future ambitions.

2.5.3.5 Mechanically Propelled Vehicles

* Research undertaken for Tourism Society Wales estimated that motorcycle tourism alone is worth at least £70M to the Welsh economy per year.
* The review of promotional literature found that there is a lack of promoted material for mechanically propelled vehicles.
* The number and length of Byways Open to All Traffic (BOATs), Unclassified Roads/Green Lanes in the County do provide a resource for this type of use, especially in the Cambrian Mountains. However, the length of routes having the characteristics that are enjoyed by most off-road drivers is fairly short in the County, with BOAT’s, for example, only totalling 14km.
* The lack of provision does cause pressure on the network that is available.
* There are opportunities for landowners such as Natural Resources Wales to get involved in the amount of provision available; thereby possibly reducing the pressure on the highway network.

In summary, there is a lack of information available about whether the network adequately meets the current and likely future needs of mechanically propelled vehicles. Anecdotally, it has been said that the NERC Act (2006) has had an effect on the level of illegal use and the Public Rights of Way team have been made aware of fewer incidences of illegal use.

The relatively few and short total length of such routes available in the County does suggests that there is a lack of adequate provision.

There are economic benefits to be realised through this use and more could be done to promote the legal opportunities that exist.

Greater partnership working is required both internally and externally to ensure that safe responsible use is promoted. In addition, more needs to be done to investigate opportunities for cooperative working with groups such as Treadlightly who may be able to provide volunteer labour to maintain some rural roads.

2.5.3.6 Carriage Drivers

* There appears to be a lack of available data on the benefits of carriage driving to the economy, to health and active travel, and the extent to which carriage drivers make use of the Right of Way network. Anecdotal information suggests that there may be a perception that path surfaces and limitations like gates provide insurmountable barriers to such use. In such circumstances, it may be necessary to create a demand through working with groups such as the British Driving Association to identify and promote opportunities.

The number and length of routes in County suggests that there is ample provision for this type of use, which could possibly be augmented through the use of Natural Resources Wales land. There may be potential economic benefits to be realised through this use and more could be done to promote the opportunities that do exist.

**Part 3**

**3.1 Introduction to Statement of Action and Delivery Plans**

A key component of the Rights of Way Improvement Plan is the Statement of Action that sets out the actions proposed by the Council to realise the vision for Rights of Way and access in Ceredigion.

The Statement of Action addresses the issues raised during the Assessments and public consultations undertaken as part of the ROWIP review process It contains both the key aims and priorities arising from the Assessments and the longer -term strategic commitments. The Statement of Action is built around three inter-related Themes that identify the key aims and priorities:

1. Maintain the Definitive Map.

2. Maintain and promote the rights of way network

3. Meeting the current and future public need

Each theme has a number of component Actions that define long-term strategic commitments, which are in turn sub-divided into a number of Targets. The Targets form the basis for Delivery Plans. They will be referenced within the Councils Corporate Business Plan\*\* updated on a quarterly basis and fed into Performance and Service Reports for Council Cabinet and Scrutiny Committee.

\*\*The Councils Corporate Business plans are closely aligned with the Wellbeing of Future Generation Act and the wellbeing goals and ways of working are referenced strongly within these documents.

Each Target is given a RAG status depending on the resources required /available for its completion.

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| R | Resources not currently available. Additional funding required to deliver this action. |
| A | Resources available although subject to constraints/limitations |
| G | Resources currently available. A reduction in funding would require status to be reassessed |

Each target will have short term measures provided as means of achieving the overall target. Additionally each target will be provided a priority status:

A – High

B – Medium

C – Low

The actions are prioritised based on the evidence provided by the assessments.

**3.2** **Statement of Action**

The Statement of Action is set out in tabular form and included as a separate annex (Annex 5).

The table below summarises the additional resources required to achieve the themes and actions identified within the Statement of Action. The majority of these are

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| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Priority** | **Additional resources** | | | |
| **Staff** | **Capital** | **Total** | **Total Annual cost** |
| A | £60-£80k | £307-£635k | £367-£695k | £345-£650k |
| B | £90-£120k | £90-£190k | £180-£310k | £180-£310k |
| C | £90-£120k | £2-£5k | £92-£125k | £90-£120k |

**Theme 1**

**Maintain the Definitive Map**

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| **Theme 1** | |  | **Maintain the Definitive Map** | | | |
| **Action 1** | | ***Determine Modification Orders within set timescales*** | | ***RAG Status*** | ***Priority*** | ***Resource required*** |
| **Targets:** | **1.1** | Complete outstanding case by the end of the plan period. | | R | B | Additional officer for life of plan – £30-40k per year |
|  | **1.2** | Process new cases | | A | A | Achievable within current structure and budget; depending on numbers received. |
|  | **1.3** | Maintain electronic records | | G | A | Achievable within current structure and budget |
|  | **1.4** | Record lost ways | | R | C | Additional officer for life of plan – £30-40k per year |
|  | **1.5** | Review Definitive Map | | R | C | Additional officer for life of plan – £30-40k per year |

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| **Theme 1** | | **Maintain the Definitive Map** | | | |
| **Action 2** | | ***Create new Rights of Way where a new path (or higher rights on existing paths) would be in the public interest*** | ***RAG Status*** | ***Priority*** | ***Resource required*** |
| **Targets:** | **2.1** | Implement Public Path Order working practice | G | A | Achievable within current structure and budget |
|  | **2.2** | Identify areas where new routes would be of public benefit | R | B | £10-50k costs per year for lifetime of plan |

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| **Theme 1** | | **Maintain the Definitive Map** | | | |
| **Action 3** | | ***Support applications for the diversion of Rights of Way where the line of the amended route would be in the public interest*** | ***RAG Status*** | ***Priority*** | ***Resource required*** |
| **Targets:** | **3.1** | Process Diversion applications.  All diversion order to be made within 12 months  of valid application | G | A | Achievable within current  structure and budget |
|  | **3.2** | Implement Public Path Order working practice | G | A | Achievable within current  structure and budget |

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| **Theme 1** | | **Maintain the Definitive Map** | | | |
| **Action 4** | | ***Prioritise and resolve outstanding Orders for the Reclassification of RUPPS.*** | ***RAG Status*** | ***Priority*** | ***Resource required*** |
| **Targets:** | **4.1** | Publish RUPP confirmations at a rate that  ensures that all reclassification orders are  confirmed by the ROWIP review in 2028.  Approximately 20 per year | R | B | Additional officer for life of  plan – £30-40k per year |

**Theme 2**

**Maintain and promote the Rights of Way network**

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| **Theme 2** | | **Maintain and promote the Rights of Way network** | | | |
| **Action 1** | | ***Operation of Primary Path Network (PPN) to guide allocation of resources for path management*** | ***RAG Status*** | **Priority** | **Resource Required** |
| **Targets:** | **1.1** | Manage issues in line with established practices under the Primary Path Network (PPN). Retain 60% of the PROW network  on the PPN | G | A | Achievable within  current structure and  budget. |
|  | **1.2** | Review all issues received on Category 0 routes on a 6-monthly basis, ensuring effective governance of Local Access Forum sub-committee within review process. | G | A | Achievable within  current structure and  budget. |

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| **Theme 2** | | **Maintain and promote the Rights of Way network** | | | |
| **Action 2** | | ***Working with volunteers*** | ***RAG Status*** | ***Priority*** | ***Resource Required*** |
| **Targets:** | **2.1** | Lead and develop established volunteer groups throughout the County  Target of 80 work party days per year | G | A | Achievable within  current structure and  budget. |
|  | **2.2** | Maintain and develop interest levels in the Adopt a Path scheme  Target of 200 active volunteers by the end of the plan period | G | A | Achievable within  current structure and  budget. |
|  | **2.3** | Continue development of the scheme into other types of work  Target 4 individuals per year for brush cutter training | R | A | £2-5k per year for  lifetime of plan |

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| **Theme 2** | | **Maintain and promote the Rights of Way network** | | | |
| **Action 3** | | ***Manage and develop the Ceredigion and All Wales Coast Path and link routes*** | ***RAG Status*** | ***Priority*** | ***Resource Required*** |
| **Targets:** | **3.1** | Maintain Coast Path in line with established quality standards  Regional Management Plan to be completed by 2019 | A | A | Achievable within  current structure and  budget. Budget only until 2022 |
|  | **3.2** | Develop and improve safe cycling and less- abled access provision from suitable service centres | R | A | £50k - £100k per year for  lifetime of plan |
|  | **3.3** | Update existing promotional material where necessary. Target all Local Authority produced literature by the completion of the plan | A | A | Achievable within  current structure and  budget. Budget only until 2022 |
|  | **3.4** | Develop circular walks/rides from settlements along the Ceredigion Coast Path. Target all settlements to be covered by the end of the plan | A | A | Achievable within  current structure and  budget. Budget only until 2022 |
|  | **3.5** | Develop multi-user access where possible | R | B | £50k - £100kper year for  lifetime of plan |

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| **Theme 2** | | **Maintain and promote the Rights of Way network** | | | |
| **Action 4** | | **Provide information on countryside access opportunities in Ceredigion** | **RAG Status** | **Priority** | **Resource Required** |
| **Targets:** | **4.1** | Provide information on potential barriers to  participation i.e. stiles, wet/uneven ground, etc  Establish new interactive map by 2020 | R | A | £15k – £20k one off cost &  £4k annual running costs |
|  | **4.2** | Establish “activity” search engine on C&C website for locals and visitors  To be completed by the end of the plan period | G | B | Achievable within  current structure and  budget. |
|  | **4.3** | Develop new promoted routes throughout the county targeting locations with no current provision. All LDP settlements by the end of the plan period. | G | A | Achievable within  current structure and  budget. |
|  | **4.4** | Identify access provision from internal & external providers and how this can be identified on CAMS and linked through Council websites All major providers identified by end of plan period | A | B | Achievable within  current structure and  budget. Dependent on other commitments. |

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| **Theme 2** | | **Maintain and promote the Rights of Way network** | | | |
| **Action 5** | | **Maintain and develop IT systems to assist in path management** | **RAG Status** | **Priority** | **Resource Required** |
| **Targets:** | **5.1** | Continual development of CAMS to assist in management of path network. Arrange annual service visits and schedule development tasks. | G | A | Achievable within  current structure and  budget. |
|  | **5.2** | CAMS to be linked into corporate system under service re-design. To be complete by 2019 | A | A | Achievable within  current structure and  budget. Dependent on other commitments. |
|  | **5.3** | Outdated information to be removed from CAMS legal records; Common Land module to be updated.  To be complete by then end of the plan period | R | C | £2-5k one off cost |

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| **Theme 2** | | **Maintain and promote the Rights of Way network** | | | |
| **Action 6** | | **Working in Partnership** | **RAG Status** | **Priority** | **Resource Required** |
| **Targets:** | **6.1** | Ensure effective working relationships with farmers  and landowners  Contact 100% of landowners prior to undertaking  works on public right of way  Maintain landowner balance on Local Access Forum | G | A | Achievable within  current structure and  budget. |
|  | **6.2** | Ensure effective links with other plans and strategies  such as Active Travel, Destination Management,  Tourism, etc through continual dialogue and  awareness of works planned/undertaken.  Target 6 monthly updates with internal colleagues. | G | A | Achievable within  current structure and  budget. |
|  | **6.3** | Raise awareness of the Countryside Code and  Responsible access through public website and links  on promotional material | G | A | Achievable within  current structure and  budget. |
|  | **6.4** | Ensure effective governance of Local Access Forum  and associated sub-committees | G | A | Achievable within  current structure and  budget. |
|  | **6.5** | Encourage the production of Local Access Plans as an evidence-based means of long- term improvement planning. Local Access Plans will be prepared in partnership between the Local Authority and Town/Community Councils and local groups and underpinned by a series of toolkits.  Target of 10 LAP’s to be produced in the first 3 years of the plan period | R | A | Additional officer for life of plan – £30-40k per year |

**Theme 3**

**Meeting the current and future public need**

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| **Theme 3** | | **Meeting the current and future public need** | | | |
| **Action 1** | | **To provide access for all in Ceredigion** | **RAG Status** | **Priority** | **Resource Required** |
| **Targets:** | **1.1** | Apply least restrictive access to all works undertaken on PROW | G | A | Achievable within  current structure and  budget. |
|  | **1.2** | Work with communities to identify opportunities to improve access for all in suitable settlements.  Target of 10 LAP’s to be produced in the first 3 years of the plan period | R | A | £25-50k per year for  lifetime of plan |
|  | **1.3** | Create high quality, easy gradient, all-weather and stock- free access opportunities within communities. Target service centres with adequate local amenities such as toilets and car parking. Target completion of 1 project per year from the annexed list (annex 4) | R | A | £50-100k capital costs  per year for lifetime of  plan |
|  | **1.4** | Provide information on barriers to access on promotional literature and through Council interactive map.  Establish new interactive map by 2020 | R | A | £15k – £20k one off cost  & £4k annual running  costs |
|  | **1.5** | Be ready to access any funding opportunities for path improvements as they arise | R | A | Additional officer for life  Of plan – £30-40k per  year |

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| **Theme 3** | | **Meeting the current and future public need** |  |  |  |
| **Action 2** | | **Promote walking opportunities within 3 miles of settlements** | **RAG Status** | **Priority** | **Resource Required** |
| **Targets:** | **2.1** | When reviewing Category 0 routes priority to be given to routes within 2 km of a recognised settlement. | G | A | Achievable within  current structure and  budget. |
|  | **2.2** | New promoted material for walkers to concentrate on routes between 1 and 3 km from recognised urban and rural service centres.  Identify linkages to good quality “green/blue spaces” near settlements, such as common land, Natural Resources Wales sites (all land identified under the CROW Act 200), Charitable Trusts, Local Nature Reserves, National Nature Reserves  3 new routes to be created annually | G | B | Achievable within  current structure and  budget. |

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| **Theme 3** | | **Meeting the current and future public need** |  |  |  |
| **Action 3** | | **Promote cycling and horse-riding opportunities within close proximity of settlements targeting those with adequate amenities such as toilets, parking, shops etc.** | **RAG Status** | **Priority** | **Resources Required** |
| **Targets:** | **3.1** | Develop new promoted routes, targeting recognised urban and rural service centres. Identify linkages to good quality “green/blue spaces” near settlements, like common land, Natural Resources Wales sites, Charitable Trusts, Local Nature Reserves, National Nature Reserves  Promotional material to be created for 3 routes annually | G | B | Achievable within  current structure and  budget. |
|  | **3.2** | When reviewing Category 0 routes priority to be given to routes with links to recognised settlements. | G | A | Achievable within  current structure and  budget. |
|  | **3.3** | Identify easy gradient cycling routes suitable for  children/families  Target completion of 1 project per year from the  annexed list (annex 4) | R | A | £50-100k capital  Costs per year for  lifetime of plan |

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| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Theme 3** | | **Meeting the current and future public need** | | | |
| **Action 4** | | **Improve provision of information with regards to routes for mechanically propelled vehicles** | **RAG Status** | **Priority** | **Resources Required** |
| **Targets:** | **4.1** | Identify opportunities for legal and responsible  opportunities for mechanically propelled vehicles in  Ceredigion | R | B | Additional officer for life of  Plan. £30-40k per year |
|  | **4.2** | Produce promotional material as appropriate | R | B | Included above |

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| **Theme 3** | |  | **Meeting the current and future public need** | | | |
| **Action 5** | | **Improve provision of information with regards to routes for carriage driving** | | **RAG Status** | **Priority** | **Resources Required** |
| **Targets:** | **5.1** | Identify opportunities for off -road carriage driving in  Ceredigion | | R | B | Additional officer for  life of plan. £30-40k  per year |
|  | **5.2.** | Produce promotional material as appropriate | | R | B | Included above |

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| **Theme 3** | | **Meeting the current and future public need** | | | |
| **Action 6** | | **Identify access improvement projects throughout the County** | **RAG Status** | **Priority** | **Resources Required** |
| **Targets:** | **6.1** | Identify Rights of Way and Access improvement projects; current programme included in Annex 4 | R | A | £50-100k capital  costs per year  for lifetime of  plan |
|  | **6.2** | Investigate improvement projects identified as part of  the review process. | R | A | £50-100k capital  costs per year  for lifetime of  plan |

**3.3 Delivery Plans**

Delivery Plans consist of three main elements:

* An Evaluation of Progressin delivering the ROWIP and previous Action Plans

Regular monitoring and evaluation being important in order to demonstrate the benefits of investment and to provide evidence to inform future planning

* A Review of Policiesfor the management of local Rights of Way. All key policies for the management of local Rights of Way will be reviewed and will include (if available):

Maintenance, improvement, and enforcement of public Rights of Way i.e. the Primary Path Network

Managing the Definitive Map & Statement

Authorisation and recording of limitations

Changes to the network, such as diversions, extinguishments and creations of Public Rights of Way.

* SMART Work Plansidentifying and setting out the component tasks required to deliver the main aims in the Statement of Action for the better management and improvement of the network over the delivery period.

**3.3.1 Measuring Progress**

Delivery Plans and Work Plans will be identified within Local Authority business planning and reporting processes. Delivery Plan and SMART Work Plan objectives will be identified in the Local Authority Level 3 Service Plan for Public Rights of Way/Access. The diagram below identifies the reporting structure of Local Authority Business Plans.

**Understanding Local Authority Business Plans**

* **Level 1 Business Plan**- Business Plan for Economic and Community Development (Completed Annually/Reported Quarterly)
* **Level 2 Team Description** – Individual Team Descriptions including the High Level objectives that feed into the Business Plan (Completed Annually)
* **Level 3 Service Plan** – This is the detailed action plan containing the actions required to deliver the High level objectives (Completed Annually/Reported Quarterly. These will include ROWIP objectives/targets
* **Staff Appraisals** – this is the detailed staff plan that contains the targets/actions to meet the objectives within the Service Plan. Completed annually

It is proposed that Delivery Plans are also reported annually to the Local Access Forum; either through main meetings or sub-committees.

**3.3.2 Delivery Plan Content**

The template for Delivery Plans is included below and will identify delivery/key partners, resources required/availability, a link to the Statement of Action, timetable and policy link. Delivery Plans will be prepared and completed annually and fed through into Head of Service reports to Cabinet and Scrutiny committees; those actions deferred from the action plan into the delivery plan will be decided annually and based on available resources. Targets will be set at the commencement of each financial year; along with a review of the targets for the previous year

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| --- | --- | --- |
| **ROWIP Theme** | Reference number | |
| **ROWIP Action** | Reference number | |
| **Resources** | Provides an indication of the resources for the delivery of actions, based on the R/A/G ‘traffic light’ system: | |
| R | Resources not currently available. Additional funding would be required to deliver this action. |
| A | Resources available although subject to constraints / limitations (e.g. time-limited grant programmes). |
| G | Resources currently available. A reduction in funding would require status to be reassessed. |
| **Comments** | Background about the action | |
| **Policy links** | Associated Policies | |
| Policy Requires Review – Y/N | | |
| **Delivery Partners** | Internal/external partners | |
| **Current performance** | Description / indication of performance in delivering action | |
| **Target** | The target and / or timescale to be achieved. | |
| **Review of Action 2018-19 (or relevant year)** | Review / description of progress. | |
| **Monitoring & Reporting** | ROWIP targets are updated into the Business Plan on a quarterly basis. These are fed into Performance and Economy service reports for Council Cabinet and Scrutiny Committees. Reported annually to LAF. | |

**Part 4**

**Annexed Documents**

**Annex 1**. ROWIP Assessments

**Annex 2.** Public Path Working Practice

**Annex 3.** Report on the Development of the Primary Network

**Annex 4.** Rights of Way Improvement Projects

\*\*Annexed documents are available to view online at <http://www.ceredigion.gov.uk/>