

READING BOROUGH COUNCIL

RIGHTS OF WAY IMPROVEMENT PLAN: 2023 to 2033



MARCH 2023



Reading
Borough Council
Working better with you

CONTENTS

1.	Introduction	5
1.1	Background	5
1.2	The Legislative Background	6
1.3	Local Access Forum (LAF)	7
1.4	What Do We Mean by Rights of Way?	8
2.	VISION AND OBJECTIVES	9
2.1	Vision	9
2.2	Targets	10
3.	ROWIP1	11
3.1	The First Rights of Way Improvement Plan	11
3.2	Our Achievements	11
4.	ROWIP2 - POLICY CONTEXT	13
4.1	The Link to Strategies and Policies	13
5.	OUR NETWORK	14
5.1	The Network	14
5.2	Keeping a Record of the Public Rights of Way	15
5.3	Maintaining and Improving the Public Rights of Way	19
6.	METHODOLOGY FOR UPDATING ROWIP	22
6.1	Our Methodology	22
7.	COLLECTING EVIDENCE	24
7.1	The Public Consultation	24
7.2	Headline Results from Consultation	25
7.3	Audit of the Condition of the Network	28
8.	ASSESSMENT OF THE NETWORK	29

9.	The Plan	31
9.1	Theme 1 - Better Information	32
9.2	Theme 2 - Improving the Condition of Network	32
9.3	Theme 3 - Encourage Use of the Network	32
9.4	Theme 4 - A Better Connected Network	33
9.5	Theme 5 - Used by All	33
9.6	Theme 6 - A Safe Network	33
9.7	Theme 7 - Delivering the Plan	34
10.	THE ACTION PLAN	35
11.	DELIVERY OF THE PLAN	46
11.1	Responsibilities	46
11.2	Funding	47
12.	GLOSSARY	49

Appendices

Appendix 1: Policy Context

Appendix 2: The Network

Annex A: List of Public Rights of Way

Annex B: Definitive Map

Appendix 3: Collecting Evidence

Annex A: Public Survey Results

Annex B: Template for Footpath Audits

Appendix 4: Assessment of The Network

Annex A: The Usage of the Network

Annex B: The Needs of Different User Groups

Annex C: The Barriers to using the Rights of Way

Annex D: The Paths as part of the Transport Network

Annex E: Opportunities to Extend the Network

Annex F: The Condition of the Paths

Annex G: Suitability of Paths for Different User Groups

Appendix 5: Assessment of Condition of the Network

Annex A: Footpath Statement of Action Plan

Annex B: The Combined Footpaths Statement of Action

Foreword

Our Rights of Way Improvement Plan sets out plans to maintain and enhance our Rights of Way network across the Borough. As we continue our drive towards achieving our climate emergency aims, this plan will become an increasingly important sub-strategy to our emerging Reading Transport Strategy.

The overall objective of this plan is to encourage more people to choose walking and cycling for local journeys, or as part of longer multi-modal journeys.

The Council's Corporate Plan highlights the needs for ensuring a Healthy Environment for everyone, where residents and visitors alike can easily enjoy the benefits of clean air and active travel. The tangible benefits of ensuring everyone has equal access to good, accessible routes for walking and cycling are widely recognised in terms of the improved mental and physical health and longer life expectancies that a more active lifestyle delivers.

By improving our Rights of Way, we can continue to enhance those opportunities for everyone. Through this plan, we aim to evaluate and develop current access to local Rights of Way that exist on private or public land, for both visitors and residents, of all ages and levels of mobility. This will ensure that we have a network that everyone can take advantage of.

The Rights of Way Improvement Plan sets out our plans to maintain, improve and grow our local network and to provide greater connectivity across the Borough, including to key local centres, schools, workplaces as well as leisure and retail facilities, either directly or through connecting to other local routes.

Through the implementation of this plan and through complementary measures within our Local Cycling and Walking Strategy, we look to increase the levels of active travel around Reading through improvements to the infrastructure of our active travel network. It is our hope that improved Rights of Way access will attract and inspire everyone to reap the rewards of a more active lifestyle, benefitting not only themselves, but the environment through increased active travel.



1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background

The Public Rights of Way are paths that the public has the right of access, which allow people to pass along them, even if the land is privately owned.

Reading, as largely an urban area, has a relatively small Public Rights of Way network, with 44 footpaths, three bridleways and one restricted byway. However, its importance should not be underestimated and there are some key routes connecting people to important destinations, such as the town centre, Reading Station, Green Park and Thames Valley Business Park. These routes are used by people traveling to work and school as well as rural-type routes that are attractive for leisure purposes.

Every local authority is required by law to produce a Rights of Way Improvement Plan (ROWIP), which must be reviewed every ten years.

The ROWIP is a strategic document setting out its goals and priorities for Public Rights of Way and access. This is a wide-ranging plan, covering all aspects of the management, maintenance, and improvement of the Public Rights of Way network to meet the current and future needs of the public. The aim of this plan is to maintain a high-quality accessible network that suits the needs of the people for walking, cycling and horse riding.

Our first Rights of Way Improvement Plan (ROWIP1) was published in November 2007 as a result of The Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000 (Section 60), placing a duty on all local highway authorities to prepare a Rights of Way Improvement Plan. ROWIP1 set out several actions required to enhance our network. The actions were based on an assessment of needs of users and through consultation with key organisations and the Local Access Forum. Several improvements were delivered through ROWIP1 to ensure the network is suitable for all the people who want to use it and to encourage its future use.

This is our second Rights of Way Improvement Plan (ROWIP2), which builds upon the ROWIP1 and updates it with the latest transport strategies. ROWIP2 is strategically linked to Reading Transport Strategy (RTS) in line with the Department for Transport's Local Transport Plan (LTP) guidance.

Reading Transport Strategy (RTS), sets out plans to enhance our Rights of Way network to provide a better experience for its users and to encourage more people to choose to walk or cycle for local journeys, or as part of longer multi-modal journeys. The plan recognises the economic, health and environmental benefits of walking and cycling on the Public Rights of Way footpaths in terms of reduced congestion, improved air quality, increased physical activity and reduced greenhouse gas emissions from transport.

Linking ROWIP2 to RTS will help promote a shift to active travel, create a more connected transport network and ensure the implementation of schemes that meet several joint objectives. ROWIP2 will also sit alongside the Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan (LCWIP), which sets out our long-term aspirations for cycling and walking, and better integrating routes into the overall transport network.

The Local Access Forum, providing a key advisory role for Natural England and Local Authorities, were heavily involved in the development ROWIP2.

The development of the ROWIP 2 included the views the public, who were consulted with in Summer 2021, and has captured the key themes identified from the responses received.

1.2 The Legislative Background

As a highway authority we have a duty under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 and the Highways Act 1980 to keep a record of the Public Rights of Way and make sure they are open for public use. The legal record of a highway authority's Rights of Way network is known as the 'Definitive Map and Statement'.

The duty to keep public Rights of Way open and record their location also applies to historical public Rights of Way (pre 1949) that have not been recorded on the definitive map or statement.

The Highway authority also has a duty to keep the public Rights of Way well maintained at the public expense, fit for use, make sure obstructions are removed, maintain some bridges, provide a contribution to landowners' costs for replacing and maintaining structures, adding signage and making sure the public's rights to use a public right of way are protected. Source: [Public Rights of Way: local highway authority responsibilities - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/public-rights-of-way-local-highway-authority-responsibilities)

While carrying out maintenance or improvements, the Highway Authority must have regard for the conservation of biodiversity.

The Highway Authority must have a Rights of Way Improvement Plan (ROWIP) (see The Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000 (Section 60)). This is a strategic

document setting out its goals and priorities for Public Rights of Way and access. This is a wide-ranging plan, covering all aspects of the management, maintenance, and improvement of the Public Rights of Way network to meet the current and future needs of the public. The plan must be reviewed every 10 years and progress should be monitored towards implementing it and meeting targets set out in the plan.

The ROWIP must go further than basic legal duties. It must fully consider the needs of the wider public and not just those who already use the Public Rights of Way. It must assess how the Public Rights of Way network meet those needs, now and in the future. The Highway Authority must also consider the accessibility needs of people in developing the plan and when carrying out improvements.

Anyone can apply to modify the definitive map or statement, and once an application has been submitted Reading Borough Council has a duty to consider whether to make an order. If this is accepted, full consultation will take place and legal notice published on the route and in local papers. The Secretary of State may become involved where a claim takes over a year or where there are objections.

1.3 Local Access Forum (LAF)

The Local Access Forum's membership consists of landowners and managers, local interest groups, network users and officers from Reading, Wokingham, and West Berkshire unitary authorities.

This group provides a key advisory role for Natural England and Local Authorities and was involved in the development of ROWIP1. The LAF have played a key role in developing ROWIP2 during the consultation.

1.4 What Do We Mean by Rights of Way?

Rights of Way are rights granted that allow the public to pass over specific routes, whether public or privately owned. Rights of Way are classed as minor highways. There are various categories of Rights of Way, which are detailed in the Table below. 'Unofficial' Rights of Way have also been included, although these are not on the definitive map, they still have a role to play in an inter-connected, multi-functional network.

Table 1: The different types of Rights of Way - official and unofficial

Rights of Way Type	Explanation
Footpaths	A right of way by foot.
Bridleways	A right of way by foot, horseback and cycle.
Restricted Byways	A right of way by foot, horseback and also for non-mechanically propelled vehicles such as bicycles and horse drawn carriages.
Byways Open to All Traffic	A right of way for all traffic, but are used by the public mainly for walking, riding horses or cycling.
'Unofficial' Rights of Way	Explanation
Cycle tracks and Cycleways	A right of way by cycle and usually foot
Footways on streets / roads	Footways are used by foot, pushchair and wheelchair.
Paths related to developments	Permitted paths are not highways but are routes that landowners allow the public to use.
Towpaths	A path along a canal or river traditionally used for towing boats.
Quiet Streets	Streets that are not heavily used by traffic and are pleasant for walking and cycling routes.
Wide Verges	Wide verge running alongside a road, not usually found in towns / cities.
Paths in woodland	Paths in woodland.
Paths in parks	In most parks in Reading can be used on foot or on cycle.
Open spaces	An open space within a town that has the potential to provide environmental, social and/or economic benefits to communities.

2. VISION AND OBJECTIVES

2.1. Vision

Our vision is to:

To maintain and enhance our Public Rights of Way network to be open to the public, safe, clean, well maintained and in good condition, to better connect people to places integrating with our walking and cycling network, supporting healthy lifestyle choices, and achieving inclusive growth so everyone benefits from Readings' success.

The major objectives for ROWIP2 have been developed in line with 5 objectives of our emerging RTS and LCWIP:

Clean and Green



Enhance and maintain the Public Rights of Way network, to make it attractive, clean, and green and ensure all people feel safe and happy to use it when cycling or walking for leisure, local journeys or as part of longer multi-modal journeys.

Supporting Healthy lifestyles



Encourage people of all ages and abilities to use the Public Rights of Way by prompting active travel and increasing their confidence in using the network. Promoting a healthy lifestyle through the delivery of initiatives and campaigns emphasizing the benefits from active travel.

Enabling Sustainable inclusive growth



Provide a well-connected Public Rights of Way network connected into the cycling and walking networks linking into key destinations, so to reduce car use, enable sustainable travel without congestion, reduce travel costs and achieve inclusive growth

Connecting People to Places



Provide a safe, attractive and used by all Public Rights of Ways network well connected with the cycling, walking and highway routes, linking residential areas, employment sites and transport interchanges, so all people can with ease actively travel to the places they need

Enabling Smart solutions



Integrate smart solutions to provide information that is easily and quickly accessible to the public on the Public Rights of Ways network and all its links to the highway, cycling and walking networks.

2.2. Targets

Rights of Way routes are used for walking and cycling as part of the whole network, therefore we will use walking and cycling targets to monitor usage as part of our wider network.

We will aim to achieve our vision by:

- Increasing the proportion of adults walking at least 3 times per week for main journey purpose from 30.8% (2017/18) to 50% by 2036
- Increasing the proportion of adults cycling at least 3 times per week for main journey purpose from 5.1% (2017/18) to 10% by 2036
- Increasing the number of people walking into the town centre from 29% to 35% by 2030, and to 40% by 2036
- Doubling the number of people cycling into Reading town centre from 4% to 8% by 2030, and to 10% by 2036
- Increasing the number of children cycling and walking to school
- Reducing the number of cyclists and pedestrians injured on our roads

Our overall transport targets are currently being reviewed as part of the process of preparing the emerging Reading Transport Strategy. These targets are therefore subject to change following development of the strategy, and consideration will be given to inclusion of a more specific Rights of Way target as part of the overall performance monitoring programme.

3. ROWIP1

3.1. The First Rights of Way Improvement Plan

Our first ROWIP, published in November 2007, set out several actions required to enhance our network. The actions were based on an assessment of needs of users and through consultation with key organisations and the Local Access Forum.

3.2. Our Achievements

The key deliverables from the ROWIP1 period include those items noted in Figure 3.1 below.

Figure 3.1: Some of our achievements

Information



- Definitive map online
- A website with strategy and info
- A digital interactive map
- A map and leaflet walking routes

Condition



- An inspection and maintenance regime
- A resurfacing programme on key routes
- Bank repairs alongside the River Thames
- Strengthening of canal banks alongside the Kennet
- Footpaths enhanced to resolve flooding

Encourage use



- Reading Walks Programme established
- Wetland Enhancement Programme alongside the River Kennet

Better Connected



- Christchurch Bridge - a new pedestrian and cycle bridge over the River Thames
- Napier Road underpass for pedestrians and cyclists a route towards Thames Path;
- Added to the network - FP 47
- New pedestrian bridge over the railway linking FP 1 (Thames Towpath) with FP 29

Access



- Modified the barriers at Fobney Lock for access to cyclists and wheelchairs

Improving the condition of the network

- An inspection and maintenance regime is in place for the network.
- Resurfacing programme has been implemented to improve the surfacing on key routes including Footpath 1 alongside the River Thames and Footpath 2 alongside the River Kennet.
- Bank repairs along Footpath 1 alongside the River Thames.
- Strengthening of canal banks alongside the Kennet.
- Some footpaths or sections of footpaths were enhanced to seek to resolve flooding issues.

Improving the safety of the network

- Lighting installed along Thames Towpath from Reading Bridge to Kings Meadow, Footpath 1.

Achieving a better-connected network

- New pedestrian bridge installed over the railway linking Footpath 1 (Thames Towpath) with Footpath 29 (A329 Oxford Road).
- Christchurch Bridge delivered, a new pedestrian and cycle bridge over the River Thames connecting Footpath 1 with Footpath 24.
- Napier Road underpass for pedestrians and cyclists opened up providing a walk/cycle route towards Footpath 1.
- Footpath 47 (from the southern end of Russet Glade along Jefferson Close to its junction with Wandsworth Court) added to the definitive map.

Encouraging the use of the network

- Reading Walks programme established.
- Wetland enhancement programme alongside the River Kennet, Footpath 2.

Providing information on the network

- Definitive map digitised online on the Council's public facing website.
- A website with Public Rights of Way footpath information and strategy.
- A digital interactive map on the website showing the Public Rights of Way (PRoWs) combined with walking and cycling routes to key locations.
- A downloadable Reading walking map showing the PRoWs combined with the other walking routes in Reading.

Achieving access to all

- Modified the barriers which improved access at the Katesgrove Underpass, at both ends of Waterloo Meadows, and at Fobney Lock - Footpath 2 a traffic free route so that can be used also by cyclists, wheelchairs and mobility aides.

4. ROWIP2 - POLICY CONTEXT

4.1. The Link to Strategies and Policies

ROWIP2 supports key strategies and policies. The Council has ambitious plans to increase walking and cycling in the local and wider area, therefore these links will help ensure Rights of Way are enhanced as part of the wider walking and cycling network and contributes to wider initiatives. ROWIP2 supports the national, regional, and local policies as can be seen the figure below:

Figure 4.1: ROWIP2 link to national, regional, and local strategies



A more detailed analysis of the policy context is included in [Appendix 1: Policy Context](#)

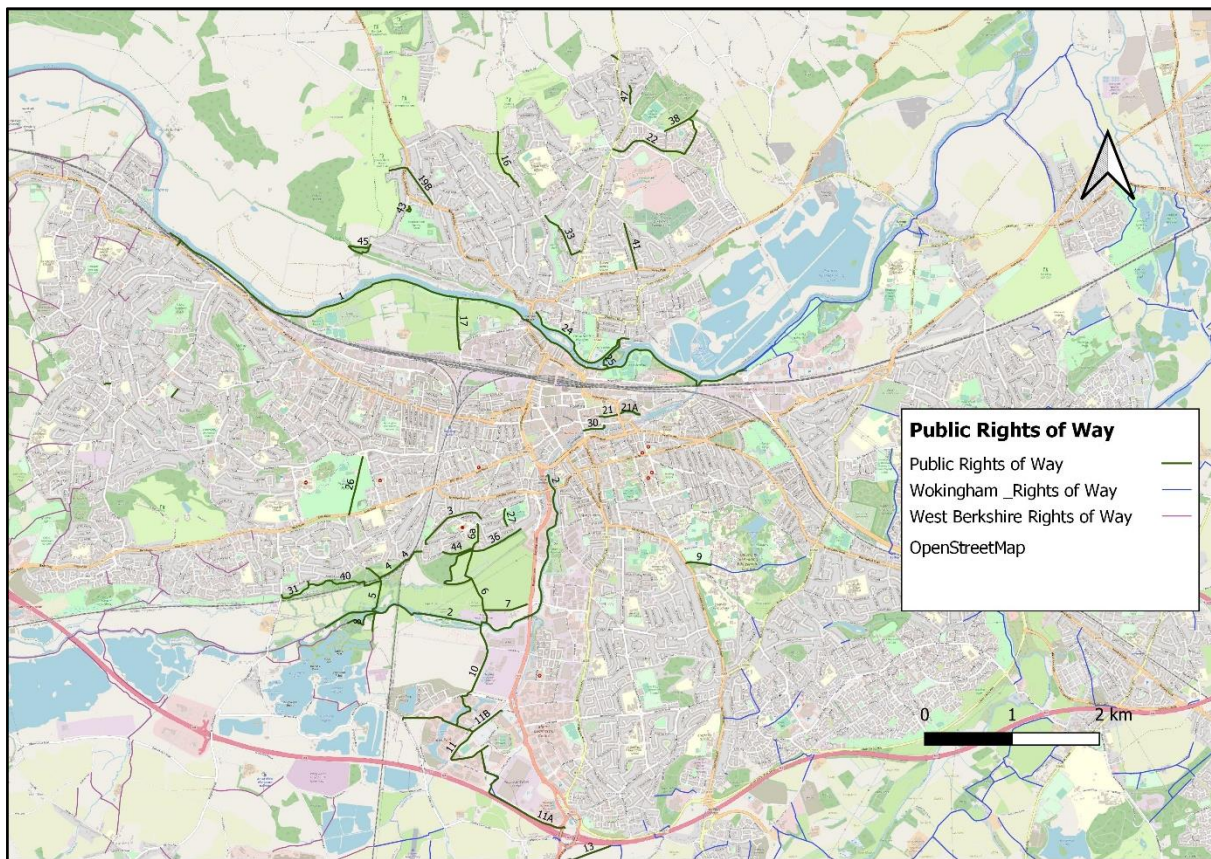
5. OUR NETWORK

5.1 The Network

Reading currently has 35km of network that the public have a right to use that are detailed on the definitive map. The network consists of 44 footpaths, three bridleways and one restricted byway.

The numbered list of Rights of Way footpaths, bridleways and byway matching this map can be found with a more detailed map in [Appendix 2: The Network](#)

Figure 5.1 RBC Rights of Way Network with Neighbouring Local Authorities



The now constrained boundaries of the Borough were largely established in the Edwardian era, and therefore the borough only forms the core of the greater Reading suburban area. As a result, the length of Public Rights of Ways within the Borough is limited to 34 km in total. Many are in urban or suburban environments, and are, thus, surfaced to match that environment.

The Borough is largely urban or suburban in nature, with the only sector of the town where there is open country being situated in the South-Western quadrant, where

many of our Rights of Way are located. These also connect the West of Reading to Green Park and Reading International Business Park and so could provide important links for employment and leisure purposes.

National Cycle Network routes 4 and 5 form part of our Rights of Way network alongside the River Kennet and River Thames, these routes connect to neighbouring authorities and provide key routes for both commuting and leisure.

The remainder of the network is made up of links through residential suburban areas and play an important role in providing shorter and safer routes to schools and local centres, away from traffic and road routes.

5.2 Keeping a Record of the Public Rights of Way

Highway Authorities must keep a record of the public Rights of Way and make sure they are open for public use. The legal record of a highway authority's Rights of Way network is known as the 'Definitive Map and Statement'.

5.2.1 The Definitive Map and Definitive Statement

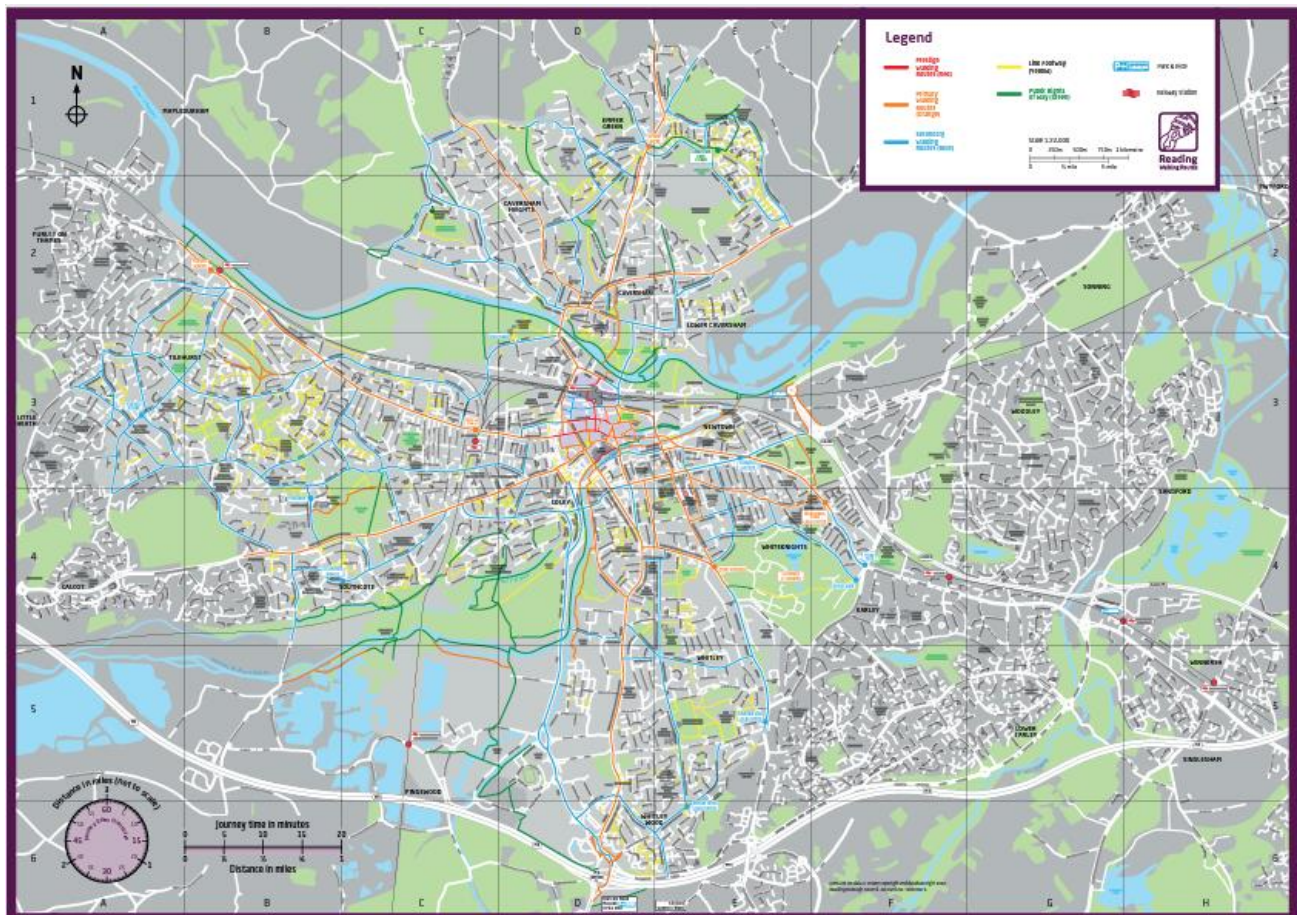
All the Public Rights of Way are listed and described in the Definitive Map and accompanied by the Definitive Statement. Both are held and updated by Reading Borough Council. They provide the conclusive evidence that the Public Rights of Way shown upon them legally exists.

- **The Definitive Map** - is a map prepared by a surveying authority which is a legal record of the public's Rights of Way.
- **The Definitive Statement** - is statement that accompanies the Definitive Map and includes descriptions of every path indicated on the Map, including legal restrictions, widths and other information.

5.2.2 Other footpaths that are not on the Definitive Map

Authorities are required, under Section 36(6) of the Highways Act 1980, to keep a list of highways maintainable at public expense - often referred to as the 'list of streets' which is open to public inspection'. The Council maintains a walking map (Figure 5.2) which can be found online at: www.reading.gov.uk/transport/walking

Figure 5.2 The footway available to walk in Reading



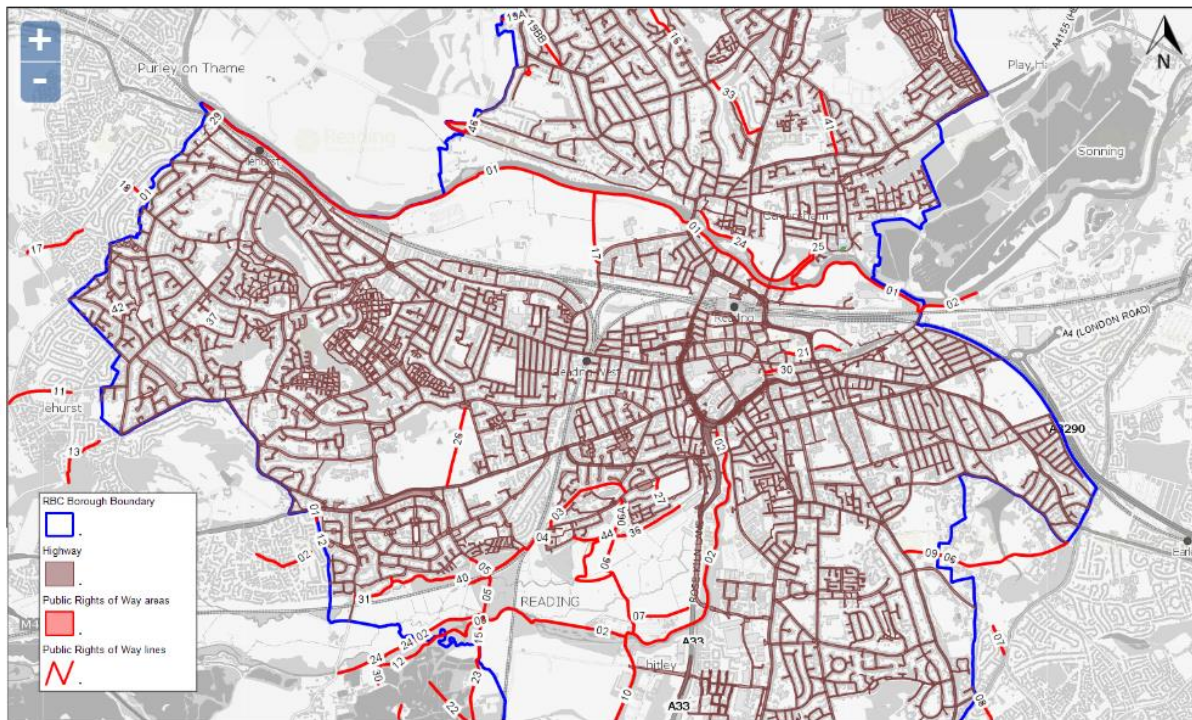
The map in figure 5.3 below shows all the footway maintained by Reading Borough Council highway:

- All the Highway (in brown)
- The Rights of Way footpaths (in red) that are within Reading Council boundary (marked in blue).

There are footways, passages, and alleys, which are neither recorded on the definitive map, nor are maintained as part of the public highway network. Use of these may be restricted to certain people, for instance adjacent residents, and the alleyway is maintainable at their expense. Nevertheless, over periods of time, the public may have developed unrestricted use of such ways. The Map above shows all footways in Reading.

It might be possible that if public use of these particular ways can be adequately demonstrated, claims could be made for the paths to be added to the definitive map, in appropriate circumstances.

Figure 5.3 The footway maintained by Reading Borough Council the highway and public Rights of Way within the boundary



5.2.3 How did the Rights of Way become established?

There are four ways to establish a Public Right of Way:

- **Compulsory Path Order** - The local authority makes an order to create a footpath or bridleway over land in their area where they think it would add to the public's convenience or enjoyment. There is a period set for objection by the landowner/ public.
- **Creation Agreements** - The local authority enters into agreements with landowners to create footpaths, bridleways or restricted byways. The agreement is drawn up and signed by the two parties.
- **Express Dedication** - A landowner may expressly dedicate a right of way over his or her land, but this is rare. Then no agreement is required.
- **Presumed Dedication** - Most Public Rights of Way have come into existence by presumed dedication - this refers to a long-established principle that long use by the public without challenge can constitute evidence that the landowner intended to dedicate the used route as a public right of way.

5.2.4 The legal process for changes/additions to the Definitive Map and Statement

There are two major legal processes available to the public and the Council to make changes to the definitive map and statement.

- **Definitive Map Modification Orders (DMMO)** - These orders are about getting a right of way recorded or modified on a definitive map. This is about rights that should exist but not recorded as public rights or not recorded correctly. The application is based on evidence of regular usage of the path and presumed dedication by the landowner, or historical document evidence demonstrating it was used once as public path.
- **Public Path Order (PPO)** - These orders are about the creation of new Public Rights of Way or closure, or diversion of existing Public Rights of Way. There are many reasons for applying for a Public Path Orders. A path may be created based on the benefits to the public or the need for access, a path may be closed or diverted due to nuisance caused by the public.

5.2.5 Identifying gaps and linking the network

Reading Borough Council has an open policy that allows people to apply for a new right of way to be added to the definitive map or to apply for a path to be re-routed. There is a strict legal procedure to follow, and it can take from 6 months to 2 years to gather evidence and make a decision.

As gaps are identified in the network, via public consultation / correspondence, developments and other means, Reading Borough Council will assess these gaps in relation to whether they will enhance the network (especially in terms of whether the route will provide access to facilities). Should the proposal meet this requirement the Council will consider how to take this forward under the current relevant legislation and guidance.

We also anticipate that the Discovering Lost Way project will feed into the process, see below.

5.2.6 Lost ways and the Discovering Lost Ways (DLW) project

A lost way is a public right of way that for some reason was never recorded or incorrectly recorded and has since become unused or has not yet been incorporated on to the Rights of Way Definitive Map. Nationally there is a substantial amount of the Rights of Ways network that falls into this category.

Reading Borough Council will remain approachable to those wishing to register a claim, within the time frame allocated.

The deadline of 2026, set out in the *Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000* after which it will not be possible to apply for footpaths and bridleways, or higher rights, to be included on the definitive map based on historical documentary evidence (historical is classed as pre-1949) was abolished in 2022 to allow more time for paths to be identified and added to the Public Rights of Way network.

DLW will not create any new rights; but rather relates to gathering historical evidence for rights that already exist, but for various reasons are not shown on the definitive map. The relevant surveying authority will decide on the merits of each formal application whether to change the definitive map, based on existing procedures.

5.2.7 Dealing with statutory protection breaches

Officers from time to time are required to deal with businesses and individuals who for whatever reason breach the statutory protection relating to highways. The initial aim of officers is to assist businesses and others to comply with their legal obligations without unnecessary expense or hardship. However, ultimately, firm action will be taken against those who disregard the law. Enforcement action areas include, Public Rights of Way, Highways and Highways Works associated with new developments.

Improvements such as the creation of routes or the addition of higher rights to existing routes, can be gained by exercising powers under section 25 of the Highways Act 1980. This will be approached in partnership, and agreements shall meet the criteria established in sections 118 and 119 of the Highways Act 1980.

Reading Borough Council will be prepared, where conflict arises to make use of its powers under section 26 of the 1980 Act to create Public Rights of Way (section 26 can be used to create new routes or to add higher rights to existing highways).

5.3 Maintaining and Improving the Public Rights of Way

5.3.1 Legal duties

Reading Borough Council and landowners have a duty to ensure that Public Rights of Way are open and safe for use, free from obstruction and clearly marked. The council are responsible for checking that works requested of owners/occupiers of land e.g., repair of stiles and clearance of crops have been carried out to a suitable standard.

The Council, as Highway Authority, has a duty to maintain adopted highways to safe and serviceable standards. Staff have to protect the rights of the public to use highways by ensuring they are free from nuisance, danger, obstructions, interference and encroachments.

Carriageways, footways, verges and footpaths serving new developments are usually adopted by the Council and maintained at public expense provided they have been constructed in accordance with the Authority's standards.

Maintenance or incident on one of the public right of ways paths can be reported online.

5.3.2 Maintenance of the network

The Rights of Way network in Reading should be maintained on a regular basis, with a maintenance regime unique to each path. Some paths may require to be maintained twice a year while others require more preservation. The regime may also be affected by weather conditions and local events such as the Reading Festival.

Overgrown vegetation is the highest concern of the public and parish and town councils. Overgrown paths reduce the pleasure of using Public Rights of Way and may stop some users, especially people who are less mobile or have visual impairments. Keeping paths clear is a challenge faced every growing season. This should be carried out through delivering an annual clearance schedule for paths.

5.3.3 Audit of the paths

The Right of way network should be routinely inspected by staff. This involves covering almost the entire length of the network to assess the surface condition, vegetation encroachment and signing provision. Audit of the paths identifies problems such as Attractiveness, Surface, Signage requirements, vegetation and physical barriers for users.

5.3.4 Improving the quality of path

Improving the quality of paths through resurfacing and signposting forms part of our improvement plan. In Reading, many footpaths are already well surfaced and accessible to everyone, however we also have a rolling programme of improving the quality of the footpath network. Users can expect all footpaths to be signposted and clear of vegetation or obstruction. We also welcome feedback from disabled users or people who would like to use the footpath network but for some reason cannot, so that we can try and make the network more accessible.

5.3.5 How improvements will be made

Reading Borough Council must use, where feasible, voluntary means to secure improvements to the Rights of Way network. Alternatively, work will be completed as part of larger projects delivered by the Council or where possible by developers.

5.3.6 Crime and disorder on the network

Some of the footpaths in Reading are a cause of concern for local residents, many due to the fact that some paths run alongside back gardens. Some of the footpaths are isolated and because people using the paths are relatively inconspicuous this can increase the risk anti-social behavior. Motorcycle abuse on the Right of Way Network is also a concern and these issues are taken very seriously by the Council, who continues to review what actions can be taken to reduce such activity.

4) Making an assessment - An assessment which forms part of the strategy was carried out using the available evidence (step 3) combined with our knowledge of Reading's transport network. The major assessments covered (further details in Chapter 8):

1. **The needs of the different user groups from the network** (e.g., cyclists, pedestrians, equestrian mobility issues or visual impairment).
2. **The barriers of users from using the network**
3. **The paths as part of the transport network** - as part of the walking /cycling network and to travel to employment, shops, railway stations education, leisure, countryside access
4. **Opportunities to extend the network** - review available options to add more paths to the network
5. **The network condition and level of maintenance**

5) Creating a Plan and an Action plan

A plan with actions was created explaining how we will manage local Rights of Way and consider the needs of different users. The plan includes the proposed actions, costs, time schedule and organisations that will be involved. The action plan can be found in Chapter 9.

6) Publishing the draft ROWIP2 - the plan was published online.

7) Public consultation - a 12 week public consultation was undertaken on the draft plan.

8) Publish the final plan - The ROWP2 will be published online and progress monitored regularly.

7. COLLECTING EVIDENCE

Evidence has been collected to support developing the plan through public consultation, auditing the paths and other feedback provided by the public and Local Access Forum.

7.1. The Public Consultation

Over the summer of 2021 we carried out a consultation on the future of transport in Reading. Including the priorities and the direction of the new strategy.

Our objectives were:

- To hear from as many people as possible how they use the Public Rights of Way network and what they need.
- To hear from organisations that represent users of the network.
- To get early feedback to inform and update our Right of Way Improvement Plan.

The consultation ran from Monday 07 June 2021 to 24 July 2021. We asked the public to have their say on how they use Reading's Public Rights of Way network using an online survey on the Council website. We publicised the consultation through a media launch, which included promotion on the Council's website and social media channels and contacting all relevant organisations and stakeholder groups.

We asked about:

- How people travel on the paths,
- Their barriers to using the network,
- What would encourage them to use the network more,
- Their thoughts on using shared paths for walking and cycling,
- Their rating and thoughts about our priorities for the Right of Ways Improvement plan (ROWIP) and
- About historic Rights of Way not recorded on the definitive map.

In response to the consultation, we received 182 responses to the online survey and a further 20 e-mails from organisations and individuals. Organisations that responded (through e-mail / or identified themselves in the online response) included:

- Mid & West Berks Local Access Forum (LAF)- in their response they represented cyclists, walking groups, horse riders and disability groups.
- British Horse Society,
- Caversham and District Residents Association,
- The Ramblers; and
- Canal & River Trust.

7.2. Headline Results from the Consultation

The following are headline results - more detailed results and charts can be found in [Appendix 3](#).

Using of the Routes - we asked people about the routes that they use, how often and when they use them. The answers were:

- The routes used the most, by 60%-70% of the people, were those along to the rivers Thames (FP1, FP24 and, FP25) and along the Kennet & Avon Canal leading into the town centre (FP2) (see maps <https://www.reading.gov.uk/transport/public-rights-of-way/>).
- 96% of the people said they used the paths on the weekends and 68% said they used them on weekdays.
- People used the paths most between the hours of (07:00 -19:00) - 73% of the people said they use the paths in the *daytime* (10:00 - 16:00), 63% said in the *early evening* (1600 - 1900) and 53% in the morning (07:00 - 10:00).
- The Public Rights of Way network has been used more since the pandemic - 29 % of the people said much more, 39% said more and 27% about the same.
- 80% of the people believe they will continue using the network also more in the future - Reasons for continuing also in the future were an increase in awareness of the existence of the network, change in behavior to be more active and additional spare time available from working from home, 18% do not know.

Barriers to using the network - we asked people what deters them from using the network, about their difficulty in accessing the network due to mobility issues and what would encourage them to use the network more in the future.

The results were the following:

- 53% of the people had some reasons to be deterred from using the network and 47% had no such reason. The barriers described by those deterred were: the condition and maintenance of the footpaths (53%), inconsiderate behaviour of the public on the paths (23%), lack of information about the routes (10%), better access required (8%) and the network being disjointed (6%).
- Encouraging people to use the network more could be achieved by better maintenance of the routes (78%), more information about the network (58%) and better access for restricted mobility users (13%).
- 7% of people had some difficulty accessing the network due to mobility issues such as path width, path surface, gates and physical barriers and 93% had no such difficulty.

Travel and Shared paths - we asked people how they travel on the network and for what purpose. We also asked whether they supported shared use of our Public Rights of Way network for both walking and cycling.

The results were the following:

- People's method of travel on the network was predominantly by walking but a high proportion cycled - 90% walking, 48% cycling and 4.4% horse riding.
- The paths were used by 98% of the people for leisure, 30% to travel to work and 6% to travel to education.
- There was significant support for shared paths - 73% supported shared paths, 10% did not know and 17% did not support.
 - Reasons to support shared paths were recognizing the benefits for both cycling and walking, the need to co-exist and the limited resources available. Some supported shared paths on condition of enough space available for both for cycling and walking, those cycling to be more considerate in their behavior and control their speed and the paths to have clear marking or signage.
 - The reasons not to support shared paths were safety concerns for people walking from people cycling or the width of paths is not sufficient.

The Local Access Forum (LAF) says about shared paths - *"In principle the LAF supports shared use of routes where to do so acts to enhance access opportunities for a broader range of users. Its support carries the proviso that multi-user routes should be able to be used safely by all users including the disabled. The breadth of track and clear signage are important factors for safe use."*

Identifying historic Rights of Way

We asked people to report on any Historic Rights of Way that are not on our list and should be included. There are some historic Rights of Way paths created pre-1949 - that were not recorded on the legal definitive map.

Some people identified Caversham Park BBC site as having historic paths and other people identified paths that were used regularly and were useful to be made into Public Rights of Way.

- 8 people responded saying Caversham Park BBC site has historic paths that need to be reinstated and 2 provided some historical maps and referred to the Ramblers lost paths maps.
- 31 people responded describing other opportunities for creating Public Rights of Way based on regular usage and provided some very useful ideas for extending the network. Some of the ideas following an initial assessment are included in [Appendix 4: Assessment of The Network -Annex E](#)

Priorities for the Rights of Way Improvement Plan

We asked people to rate our five priorities for the Right of Way Improvement Plan and to suggest more priorities. Our 5 priorities are:

- **P1:** To update and improve the information to the public on the Public Rights of Way Network, using up to date technology.
- **P2:** To enhance and maintain the Public Rights of Way network to be clean and green.
- **P3:** To encourage people to use the network for active travel and promote a healthy lifestyle.
- **P4:** To make the Public Rights of Way network better-connected and connected to our walking and cycling networks and key destinations.
- **P5:** To ensure the network is inclusive and can be used by all, including those with restricted mobility and other disabilities.

People strongly agreed or agreed with all our priorities.

- 92% - (P2) To enhance and maintain the Public Rights of Way network to be clean and green.
- 90% - (P4) To make the network better-connected, connected to walking and cycling networks and key destinations.
- 90% - (P3) To encourage people to use the network for active travel and promote a healthy lifestyle.
- 83% - (P1) To update and improve the information to the public on the Public Rights of Way Network, using up to date technology.
- 80% - (P5) To ensure the network is inclusive and can be used by all, including those with restricted mobility and other disabilities.

A priority mentioned by people not specified in our list was to improve safety. Safety for those walking from e-scooters, motor bikes and speeding cyclists. Safety from anti-social behavior or walking in the dark. This priority will be addressed under inclusiveness (P5) and enhancing the network (P2)

The full detailed results of the consultation survey can be found in [Appendix 3: Collecting Evidence](#).

7.3. Audit of the Condition of the Network

We used the Walking Route Audit Tool (WRAT) spreadsheet developed to audit walking routes and provided by Active Travel UK guidance for auditing paths. The primary function of the WRAT was to assess the current condition and suitability of a walking route. The WRAT is intended to be used during or following a site visit and provides a means of ensuring that all of the factors are considered.

Criteria for Auditing the Path

The **Walking Route Audit Tool (WRAT)** uses a range of criteria to assess how well a footpath meets the core design outcomes, with scoring ranging from 2, being the highest, to 0, being the lowest. Not all criteria are relevant to each path. In the audit each category criteria received a description, scoring and the suggested action required.

Audit category for paths	Criteria
Attractiveness	Maintenance
	Fear of crime
	Traffic Noise
	Other - use of guardrail or bollards, lighting present
Comfort	Condition of surface
	Footway width
	width on staggered crossings/ pedestrian islands/refuges
	Parking on footway
	Gradient
	Other - temporary obstructions, Poorly drained footways noticeable ponding issues/slippery surfaces
Directness	Pedestrian desired lines
	Location of crossing follow desired lines
	Other - Routes to/from bus stops not accommodated.
	- Steps restricting access for all users - Confusing layout for pedestrians creating severance issues for users.
Safety	Traffic volume (people, cyclists)
	Traffic Speed
	Visibility
Coherence	Dropped kerbs and tactile paving
Information	Signage
	Location direction boards

Table 7.8: The criteria used for auditing the paths

Results of the Audit

Results of the Audit on the condition of the network have been summarised can be found in the Footpath Statement of Action Plan in [Appendix 5: Assessment of Condition of the Network - Annex A](#)

8. ASSESSMENT OF THE NETWORK

An assessment which forms part of ROWIP2 was carried out. This can be found in detail in [Appendix 4: Assessment of The Network](#) and [Appendix 5 - Assessment of Condition of the Network](#). There were 7 assessments:

a) The usage of the Network - estimating the usage on the network from available statistics to understand current level of used of the PRowS (further detail in [Appendix 4 - Annex A](#)).

b) The needs of different user groups - understanding the facilities and features of the network that different user groups, such as pedestrians, cyclists, equestrians, mobility groups, visually impaired and landowners, value the most and what actions can be taken to address or improve their concerns. This assessment helped shape the actions in the final plan (further detail in [Appendix 4 - Annex B](#)).

c) The barriers to using the Rights of Way - the public survey highlighted the major barriers preventing people from using the Public Rights of Way. We reviewed these barriers accompanied by further detail from the survey and explained the actions we plan to take to address them. This assessment helped define the actions in the final plan (further detail in [Appendix 4 - Annex C](#)).

d) The paths as part of the transport network - we examined the integration of the public Rights of Way paths with the transport network (further detail in [Appendix 4 - Annex D](#)). We examined using maps and tables how the PRow paths can:

- integrate with Reading's walking or cycling network
- be used to combined with these networks to reach key locations such as employment, education, railway stations, local centres and the countryside or greenspace.

This assessment supports our plan by:

- Identifying the rights of way footpaths that contribute the most to our transport network - those that link into LCWIP Strategic walking routes or LCWIP Strategic or planned cycling paths. These should be focused on for further improvements when funding becomes available.
- Identifying quiet walking routes and off-road cycling paths which will combine with the rights of way paths which we plan to make the public aware of in the future.

e) Extending the network

We identified major well joined routes and the disjoint paths and examined their purpose. We also identified the disjoint paths to consider should be extended. This analysis highlights the routes that have potential to be extended. Further detail in [Appendix 4 - Annex E -E1](#).

The public and LAF identified in the survey additional useful paths that can be added to the Rights of Way network and create a useful route we selected the most beneficial. This list will provide us a selection of paths with potential to add to our network should funding become available. Further detail Can be found in [Appendix 4 - Annex E - E2](#).

f) The condition of the paths

An audit on the condition was carried out for all paths. The detailed results of the audit for each path can be found with the actions required for each path in the *Footpath Statement of Action plan* see [Appendix 5: Annex A](#).

Paths that required a similar action to improve their condition were grouped together and can be found in *The Combined Footpaths Statement of Action Plan* see [Appendix 5: Annex B](#). This information will be used to develop future maintenance programmes for the Public Rights of Way.

g) The suitability of footpaths for different user groups

Based on the condition of the paths identified, we examined the suitability of the footpaths for the different user groups pedestrians, cyclists and mobility groups. This will support improving access to user groups all and providing information the public on accessibility. Further detail can be found in [Appendix 4 - Annex F](#)

9. THE PLAN

Following the assessment of the needs of local people and consider and the local requirements a statement of plan was made that includes actions. The main themes in the plan match the priorities which were accepted by the public in the survey and are in line with the RTS major objectives.

Theme 1: Better Information



To update and improve the information about and on the network using up to date technology

Theme 2: Improve the Condition of the Network



To enhance maintain and improve the condition of the public rights of by cutting down vegetation and improving surfaces

Theme 3: Encourage use the Network



To encourage people to use the network for active travel and leisure and promote a healthy lifestyle

Theme 4: Better Connected Network



To make the network better connected to the walking and cycling networks and to key destinations

Theme 5: Used by All



Ensure the network is inclusive and can used by all also those with restricted mobility and other disabilities.

Theme 6: A Safer Network



Ensure the public feels safe, safety from behaviour of the public using the path and safety as a result of the condition of the path.

Theme 7: Delivering the Plan



Efficient delivery of the plan

9.1. Theme 1 - Better Information

To update and improve the information on the network using up to date technology

The survey identified that one of the barriers to people using the network is lack of clear information about the paths. Some people were not aware of the existence of the network until Covid 19 lockdown. People have asked for more information to be provided about the network and how it can be used to enjoy it for leisure and to reach employment /education and key locations.

The survey also identified the requirement for more signage on the network. The audit identified the paths without /or with insufficient signage or damaged signage to be addressed.

9.2. Theme 2 - Improve the Condition of Network

To enhance maintain and improve the condition of the public rights

In the public survey the main reason (53% of respondents) people were deterred from using the footpaths lay in the condition and maintenance of the paths. They found paths on the network badly maintained and visually unpleasing. Overgrown vegetation on paths reduces their pleasure in using the Rights of Way and can stop some users, especially people who are less mobile or have visual impairments. Due to flooding over the winter months, some paths are unavailable for large periods of time.

The LAF has drawn attention to the condition of two paths that require improvement and provide access to the countryside. The public in the survey also identified specific paths that require improvements. The Audit reviewed all paths and identified those that require more vegetation control, paths whose surface condition could be improved and paths on the riverbank that require reinforcement.

9.3. Theme 3 - Encourage Use of the Network

To encourage using the network as part of their daily activities.

The Public Rights of Way can be used for walking and cycling on the network for leisure and exercise, or alternatively as part of the daily journey to school, work, leisure or retail.

If the paths are used even for the part or all the journey to school or work instead of travelling by car this will remove congestion from the roads, provide health benefits to the user and provide a cleaner environment to all.

Encouraging the public to use the network can be done through positive messages and focusing on the benefits and distributing such information to all and to relevant groups. Other options are leading by example in developing led walks / cycling programs using the Rights of Way network.

9.4. Theme 4 - A Better Connected Network

To make the network better connected to other walking and cycling networks and key locations

The survey identified concerns that network was disjointed and not well connected. People want more circular routes (for leisure), and routes should connect to shops, schools, workplaces or to cycle routes or public transport.

9.5. Theme 5 - Used by All

To ensure the network is inclusive and can used by all

The survey identified accessibility issues associated with the network, such as narrow paths, poor surfacing, gates and other physical barriers.

- **People walking or cycling** - found some footpaths were too narrow at places and so were some footbridges. Some footpaths were not suitable for walking due to cows grazing.
- **People cycling** - did not find enough footpaths for bikes
- **people with mobility issues or elderly** found access over bridges, steps, steep gradients and some types of gates difficult.
- **People with impaired mobility or vision** - found the surface type and condition limiting their access.
- **Horse riders** also found Insufficient space for horse riding on some bridleway with overgrown vegetation.

A high proportion 73 % of respondents supported use of shared paths for walking and cycling. The LAF also supports shared use of routes so to enhance access opportunities for a broader range of users.

9.6. Theme 6 - A Safe Network

Improve the safety of the network

In the Survey 23% of the public were deterred from using the path due to inconsiderate public behaviour causing safety issues such as Inconsiderate cyclists, unauthorized Motorbikes, and e-scooters as well as dog walkers with dogs off lead. The survey also identified some paths with an increased level of anti-social behaviour, and a lack of appropriate lighting, reducing the safety of these routes.

The audit confirmed that in order to make the network widely accessible and safe for all, improvements to lighting were required. The audit also identified paths that could be unsafe due to their surfaces with potholes or fallen riverbank, and this should be improved under the maintenance of the path.

9.7. Theme 7 - Delivering the Plan

To deliver the plan

ROWIP2 will be reviewed regularly. Information regarding our actions and progress will be summarised and presented with further actions being included if considered necessary. Timescales and costs and reviewed will also be reviewed through annual monitoring.

The following themes and actions in the plan are produced as a guide for what the Councils and their partners think to achieve over the next 5 years although some actions, like maintenance, and updating the definitive list processes are continuous.

The priorities associated with these actions may change over time due to the changing situation of staff resources, funding, and national and local policies and strategies. These will be reviewed regularly based on the priorities and type of action required.

10. THE ACTION PLAN

The action plan is a statement of actions for each one of the themes described in Chapter 9 of on how we plan to manage the Rights of Way (RoW) in a way that will satisfy all user types. Each statement of action includes the following information:

- ROWIP Theme and ID
- The Planned Action
- Sub Actions
- Timescale
- Partnership Working
- Lead in Reading Borough Council (RBC)
- Delivery Cost
- RTS Themes

Further information on the definitions or groups identified within the Action Plan can be found below.

Timescales

Our actions are subject to the following timescales:

- **Short:** completed by 2023;
- **Medium:** completed between 2024 and 2027;
- **Long:** completed between 2028 and 2030;
- **Ongoing:** Continuous between 2023 and 2033; and
- **Extended Period:** Up to 2038.

Delivery Costs

Provisional costs to deliver the action were categorized the following bandings:

- **Low:** Up to £5,000;
- **Medium:** Between £5,000 and £50,000; and
- **High:** Between £50,000 and £500,000;
- **Very High:** £500,000+; and

Partnership Working

We will work with appropriate partners to deliver our actions, including but not limited to neighbouring authorities, user groups and specialists.

Partners	Partners (continued)
Reading Borough Council	Natural England
Wokingham Borough Council	Cycling England
West Berkshire Council	Ramblers Association
Oxfordshire County Council	British Waterways
South Oxfordshire District Council	Older Peoples Working Group
Local Access Forum	Access and Disabilities Working Group
Cleaner air and safer transport forum	Thames Path Management Group
Cycle Forum	Thames Valley Police
Reading Tourist Board	Horse Riding Society
Individual Users	
Department for Transport	

Reading Transport Strategy Theme Contribution

Actions have been attributed to how they support the RTS themes to make sure they are relevant to our wider transport strategy. They were categorised in the following banding.

- **C&G:** Clean and Green - brings reduction in carbon emissions, and connections to green space.
- **HL:** Healthy Lifestyles - improves personal safety, reduction in collisions, encourages active travel and potential for modal shift to walking and cycling.
- **IG:** Inclusive Growth - serves deprived communities, transport hubs, new housing and employments.
- **P&P:** People and Places - improvements to journey times, number of people who will benefit, and connections to key destinations.
- **SS:** Smart Solutions - use of smart technology generally to find information

Theme1: Provision of Better Information							
ID	Action	Description	Timescale	Partnership Working	Lead in RBC	Delivery Costs	Reading Transport Strategy
1.1	Regular update of the Definitive List and Map and publish on the Reading Borough Council website.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Update the Definitive list and map whenever there is a change made 2) Publish the updated Definitive list and map on the website. 	Ongoing		Transport Planning / Legal Services	Staff costs, Low	HL, IG, P&P
1.2	Add all paths dedicated as part of developments onto the Definitive List and Map.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Add any new paths as part of new developments to the Rights of Way Definitive Map. 	Ongoing	Site Developers	Transport Development Control	Staff costs, Low	HL, IG, P&P
1.3	Update and improve the web-based digital interactive map showing the Rights of Way footpaths.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) The digital interactive map on the website shows the footpaths together with the walking and cycling routes in Reading and key locations 2) Update the map with changes to Rights of Way footpaths, and new footway or cycle routes. 3) Add to the map the Rights of Way paths from other local Authorities 4) Identify further useful information to show on the map e.g. suitability of footpaths for cycling or information for mobility groups. 	Ongoing	Walking Groups Cycling Groups	Transport Planning	Staff costs, Medium	HL, IG, P&P, SS
1.4	Improve and publicise the ROWIP on the Reading Borough Council website	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Improve the Reading Borough Council website on the ROWIP to include more information on using Rights of Ways to travel to key locations and for leisure 2) Make it more accessible to search engines e.g. terms such as 'footpath maps' and 'public Rights of Way maps' 3) Use the council social media to publicise the ROWIP on the website 4) Raise awareness with other user groups 	Ongoing	All Users	Transport Planning	Staff costs, Low	HL, IG, P&P, SS
1.5	Make the network available on apps with navigation systems	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Explore the ability to integrate our Public Rights of Way paths in google maps or other navigation apps. 2) If successful in finding a suitable app company supply them regularly with up-to-date Public Rights of Way information 3) The app would provide a map of all walking routes in Reading, be interactive and include navigation. 	Medium	Google Walking Groups Cycling Groups	Transport Planning	Low	HL, IG, P&P, SS
1.6	Add signage to routes with no signage or insufficient signage	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Identify Footpaths with insufficient signage 2) Identify routes that have a junction with other footpaths, major roads and other Local Authorities. Appendix 4 - Annex D 3) Work with neighbouring authorities to maintain signage standards 4) Create a new up to date plan to improve signage 	Medium	Walking Groups Cycling Groups	Parks / Network Management	Staff, Medium	C&G, HL, IG, P&P, SS
1.7	Add Signboard with map to long routes	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Identify Footpaths suggested for signboards from audit. Appendix 5 -Annex A and B 2) Review all the long routes and those that continue into other Local Authorities, Appendix 4 - Annex D and select those that will benefit the most from adding signboards with maps 	Medium	Walking Groups Cycling Groups	Parks / Network Management	Staff, Medium	C&G, HL, IG, P&P, SS
1.8	Improve all existing signposts and bring them up to date with other relevant transport information	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Identify the Rights of Way footpaths that require signpost improvement. Appendix 4 - Annex D <ul style="list-style-type: none"> o Linking to key locations o Linking to LCWIP Prestige, Primary and Secondary walking routes o Linking to Reading branded Cycling routes 2) Add destination names to identified signposts with key locations or branded cycle routes. 3) Add QR codes to the signposts linking to a map online showing the route 4) For long routes create map boards showing the full route 	Medium	Walking Groups Cycling Groups	Transport planning	Medium	C&G, HL, IG, P&P, SS
1.9	Provide website information on how the footpaths can be used for walking to key locations, employment, education and shopping centres	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Identify the Right of Way footpaths that lead to employment centres, education, shopping centres set out in Appendix 4 - Annex D 2) Identify linking routes to neighbouring authority Rights of Way. 3) Create maps and publish on them on the Reading Borough Council website with further supportive information 	Short	Walking Groups	Transport Planning	Low	HL, IG, P&P, SS

*Note the majority of actions in the table above are unfunded and therefore delivery is subject to securing funding and the available level of resourcing.

Theme1: Provision of Better Information							
ID	Action	Description	Timescale	Partnership Working	Lead in RBC	Delivery Costs	Reading Transport Strategy
1.10	Provide website information on how the footpaths can be used for cycling to key locations, employment, education and shopping centres.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Identify ROWIP routes that cyclists can use that lead to key employment centres, education and shopping centres set out in Appendix 4 - Annex D 2) Identify possible combination with other cycling routes, NCN, Reading branded cycling routes 3) Create maps and publish them on the Reading Borough Council website with further supportive information 	Short	Cycling Groups	Transport Planning	Low	HL, IG, P&P, SS
1.11	Provide website information on how the footpaths can be used for leisure walking, exercise and access to the countryside.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Identify footpath routes that lead to the countryside or that can be used for leisure. Appendix 4 - Annex D 2) Identify possible combination with other walking routes Appendix 4 - Annex D 3) Identify circulate routes for exercise Appendix 4 - Annex E 4) Create maps and publish on Reading Borough Council website with further supportive information on using the footpaths for leisure and to arrive at the countryside 	Short	Walking Groups Cycling Groups Public	Transport Planning	Low	C&G, HL, IG, P&P, SS
1.12	Provide website information on paths so that they can be used safely by cyclists - combined with other off road cycle paths	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Identify Right of Way footpaths suitable for cyclists Appendix 4 - Annex G 2) Confirm how these footpaths link into Reading's branded off-road routes 3) Create a map showing cycle routes away from traffic by combining Rights of Way footpaths suitable for cyclists with off road cycle routes. 4) Publish the map on the Reading Borough Council website with relevant information 5) Publish the map to relevant cycling groups 	Short	Cycling Groups Public	Transport Planning	Low	HL, IG, P&P, SS
1.13	Provide website information on paths to form part of a quiet walking network	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Check which Rights of Way footpaths link to the quiet walking routes in Reading as identified in the LCWIP. Appendix 4 - Annex D 2) Create a map of quiet walking routes in Reading that include the Rights of Way footpaths 3) Publish on the Reading Borough Council website with relevant supporting information 4) Publish to relevant walking groups 	Short	Walking Groups Public	Transport Planning	Low	C&G, HL, IG, P&P, SS
1.14	Provide website information on bridleways and how they link with other Local Authorities	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Identify the bridle ways 2) Check how they link to bridleways of other authorities 3) Create maps and publish on the Reading Borough Council website with further information 4) Publish to relevant Horse rider groups 	Medium	Horse riding groups	Transport Planning	Medium	C&G, HL, IG, P&P, SS
1.15	Provide relevant website information on accessibility of footpaths	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Identify the paths that can be used safely by those with impaired mobility or vision. Appendix 5 - Annex A and Appendix 4 - Annex D 2) Supply information and regularly consult with the relevant stakeholder groups on footpath suitability e.g. the Local Access Forum. 3) Publish this information on the website with a map showing the most suitable paths for those with accessibility needs 	Medium	Disability Groups	Transport Planning	Medium	C&G, HL, IG, P&P, SS
1.16	Provide information on the Rights of Way footpaths for irregular visitors	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Identify future events planned in Reading and their location e.g. Reading festival, University conferences 2) Publish information maps pre-event at relevant locations 	Medium	Tourist information	Leisure & Culture	Medium	HL, IG, P&P, SS

*Note the majority of actions in the table above are unfunded and therefore delivery is subject to securing funding and the available level of resourcing.

Theme 2: To Improve the Condition of Network							
ID	Action	Description	Timescale	Partnership Working	Lead in RBC	Delivery Costs	Reading Transport Strategy
2.1	To improve and maintain the surface of paths	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Carry out regular inspections of the surface of paths on the Rights of Way network in line with the Council's highway risk based inspection and maintenance regime 2) Create a list of paths that require improved surfacing from inspection and survey results. Appendix 5 -Annex A and B 3) Investigate the reasons for surface issues 4) Identify and use funding to improve path surfaces 	Ongoing		Parks / Highways	High	C&G, HL, IG, P&P,
2.2	To manage the vegetation problems of paths	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Carry out regular inspections of the vegetation on paths 2) Create a list of paths identified with vegetation problems using the audits - refer to Appendix 5 -Annex A and B 3) Develop a vegetation control schedule with more frequent visits to problematic paths. 4) Respond to public queries relating to vegetation on paths 	Ongoing		Parks	Low	C&G, HL, IG, P&P,
2.3	To improve Rights of Way footpaths where riverbank reinforcement is required	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Carry out regular inspections of path river-bank conditions on the Rights of Way network in line with the Council's highway risk based inspection and maintenance regime 2) Create a list of paths that require riverbank repairs identified from the audit, the public survey and emails from the public 3) Investigate the reasons for identified problems identified in the audit 4) Check whether the footpaths support and contribute to the walking and cycling network plans, for funding purposes 5) Identify and use sources of funding to improve river banks that impact Rights of Way footpaths. 	Medium	Thames Path	Parks / Highways	High	C&G, HL, IG, P&P,
2.4	To improve path surfaces and drainage where flooding occurs	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Carry out regular inspections of all paths in the winter months to identify flooding problems 2) Review the list of paths that have identified flooding issues in the ROWIP audit and in the public survey - refer to Appendix 5 -Annex A and B 3) Check whether the footpath contributes to the walking and cycling network plans for funding purposes 4) Identify and use sources of funding to reduce and prevent path flooding 	Medium		Parks / Highways	High	C&G, HL, IG, P&P,
2.5	To ensure paths are clean from rubbish	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Carry out regular inspections of the network to identify and clear rubbish on paths 2) From the ROWIP audit Identify paths that require cleaning - refer to Appendix 5 -Annex A and B 3) Create a schedule of paths that need frequent visits 4) Work with local communities and/or local volunteer groups to remove rubbish regularly 	Ongoing	Communities	Parks / Streetcare	Low	C&G, HL, IG, P&P
2.6	To ensure paths are visually pleasing	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Carry out regular inspections of all paths to identify requirements to improve the aesthetics of paths 2) Identify requirements to improve the aesthetics of paths from the ROWIP audit e.g. removal of excessive bins Appendix 5 -Annex A and B 3) Remove excessive bins if required 4) Work with parishes or local volunteers' groups to plant more trees and flowers 	Ongoing	Communities	Parks / Streetcare	Low	C&G, HL, IG, P&P,
2.7	To improve and maintain condition of footbridges	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Undertake regular audits of the footbridges and identify any damage whilst also using the ROWIP audit results for reported problems Appendix 5 -Annex A and B 2) Carry out any required repairs identified in the audits 	Ongoing		Parks / Highways	Medium	C&G, HL, IG, P&P,
2.8	Introduce a graffiti control treatment	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Identify where graffiti is on Rights of Ways from the audits and public complaints which can act as a barrier for use -Appendix 5 - Annex A and B 2) Further improve graffiti removal particularly for high priority routes 	Short	All User Groups	Streetcare	Low	C&G, HL, IG,

*Note the majority of actions in the table above are unfunded and therefore delivery is subject to securing funding and the available level of resourcing.

Theme 3: To Encourage Use of the Network							
ID	Action	Description	Timescale	Partnership Working	Lead RBC	Delivery Costs	Reading Transport Strategy
3.1	Encourage children & young adults to use the network to walk/cycle as part of their journey to school	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Identify schools/colleges close to Public Rights of Way paths - Appendix 4 -Annex D 2) Increase awareness of the network by providing travel planning information to the educational institute, making use of the Public Rights of Way combined with the walking and cycling network 3) Ensure the Rights of Way network forms part of Sustainable Modes of Transport Strategy 4) Where relevant, Schools active in Modeshift Stars suggest an active travel activity using the Rights of Way footpaths 	Medium	Schools	Transport Planning	Medium	HL, IG, P&P,
3.2	Encourage residents to use the network to walk/cycle as part of their journey to work	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Identify contacts in large organisations that could benefit from employees using Public Rights of Way paths to walk/cycle to work e.g. Royal Berkshire Hospital, Reading Borough Council, Reading University - Use Appendix 4 -Annex D 2) Liaise with each organisation and send relevant information for their specific travel plans using the Rights of Way footpaths for walking/cycling. 	Long	Local businesses/ organisations	Transport Planning	Medium	HL, IG, P&P,
3.3	Encourage residents to use the Public Rights of Way network and 'quite routes' to travel to key locations	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Identify quiet walking routes on the network away from the traffic 2) Identify the Rights of Way footpaths that link with other quiet walking routes and leading to key locations use Appendix 4 -Annex D 3) Plot quiet walking routes on a map and publish on the website 4) Promote the website and maps through Reading coms team and walking groups 5) Encourage walking to key locations by organising led cultural walks that include Rights of Way 	Short	RBC -Comms Team, Walking groups	Transport Planning	Medium	HL, IG, P&P,
3.4	Encourage residents to use the Rights of Way network for off road cycling to key locations	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Identify the Rights of Way routes that link with off road cycling paths leading to key locations - Appendix 4 -Annex D 2) Plot and publish maps online with the off-road cycle routes, and their links to PRoWs 3) Promote maps through Reading Borough Councils internal Communications team 4) Promote maps with cycling groups and cycle training groups 5) Encourage cycling with led cycling rides/Adult cycle training sessions using the off road cycling paths 	Short		Transport Planning	Medium	HL, IG, P&P
3.5	Encourage use of the Rights of Way network for access to the countryside	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Identify the Rights of Way footpaths that are part of the countryside or lead to the countryside and parks - Appendix 4 -Annex D 2) Create maps with routes to the countryside and parks and publicise them on the Reading Borough Council website 3) Organise led walks using the network 4) Improve rest facilities on countryside Public Rights of Ways 	Short		Transport Planning	Medium	HL, IG, P&P
3.6	Encourage use of the network to improve fitness	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Identify the most suitable paths for running, walking, cycling and other exercise - e.g., circular work started in Appendix 4 -Annex D 2) Explore funding opportunities through sport England 3) Add information boards with example of exercises at suitable locations, 4) Add sport outdoor training equipment e.g. Bars, cross trainer outdoor 5) Organise outdoor exercise classes - example tai chi , yoga in nature 6) Organise led runs through the network 	Medium	RBC-Leisure & Culture	Leisure & Culture	Medium	HL, IG, P&P
3.7	Encourage use of the network for children and families (for leisure)	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Identify routes combined with Rights of Way most suitable for walks and leisure and close to schools - work started in Appendix 4 - Annex D 2) Identify paths suitable for Children activities 3) Develop for schools active in Modeshift outdoor activities such as treasure hunts, fishing activities, studying of wildlife and nature using the Rights of W footpaths 	Medium	Schools	Transport Planning	Medium	HL, IG, P&P

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Theme 4: To Make the Network Better Connected							
Id	Action	Description	Timescales	Partnership Working	Lead RBC	Delivery Costs	Reading Transport Strategy
4.1	Identify new paths for improving the network based on suggestions in the public survey and by the Local Access Forum	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Review and further assess the list of possible routes to add to the network suggested by LAF and on the public survey. Initial assessment started - Appendix 4 - Annex E (E2) Select the two best options that are feasible to contribute to the whole walking & cycling network and are feasible and work to progress these two options 	Medium	User Groups Landowner	Transport Planning / Legal Services	High	C&G, HL, IG, P&P,
4.2	Identify footpaths as part of the Caversham Park site permissible to the public	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Caversham Park historical site is currently under re-development. Work is being undertaken to make paths that may have been used historically permissible paths Continue work to completion 	Short	User Groups Landowner	Transport Development Control	Low	C&G, HL, IG, P&P,
4.3	Create new paths as part of new developments	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Require a travel plan for new development showing access to roads, schools and other shops Identify useful paths for access to countryside or shortcuts Identify useful paths for fast link to the walking cycling routes / bus stop/key locations Negotiate with the developer to create public Rights of Way 	Ongoing	User Groups Landowner Developers	Transport Development Control	Low	C&G, HL, IG, P&P, SS
4.4	Identify new / extend existing paths to better link communities with the countryside	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Use the current Rights of Way map integrated with walking /cycling which shows community centres and the countryside developed in Appendix 4 - Annex D Identify whether they could be significantly shorter /more direct walking/cycling paths from community centres to the countryside Consider horse riders needs of access to open space and at the fringes of town Identify opportunities to create new paths Select two good beneficial paths Review if the land is owned by the Council and if not, if it can be made a Right of Way. Identify the owner of the land and negotiate use of the Right of Way 	Medium	User Groups Landowner	Transport Planning	High	C&G, HL, IG, P&P,
4.5	Identify new /extend existing paths to better link communities with key locations	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Use the current Rights of Way network map integrated with walking /cycling routes which shows community centres with key locations (hospital, education, railway station) developed in Appendix 4 - Annex E Identify whether the routes could be significantly shorter /more direct walking/cycling paths from the community centres to any of the key locations Identify opportunities to create new paths/extend existing Select 3 good options Review if the land is owned by the Council and if not, if it can be made a Right of Way. Identify the owner of the land and negotiate use of the Right of Way 	Medium	User Groups Landowner	Transport Planning	High	C&G, HL, IG, P&P
4.6	Identify new paths through user groups ideas	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Consultation with user groups (walking, cycling, horse riding, disability) This should be a continuous process Identify their priorities and if they have funding Review options to create new paths 	Ongoing	User Groups	Transport Planning	Low Staff	C&G, HL, IG, P&P
4.7	Identify new /extend exiting paths to improve the cycling network as part of the LCWIP	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Use the Rights of Way map linking into the current cycling network use Appendix 4- Annex D Add new paths to the LCWIP planned cycling network. Identify opportunities to create new paths that improve the major routes in the cycling network (current/planned). Check for LCWIP funding availability Identify owner of the land and investigate feasibility 	Medium	User Groups Landowner	Transport Planning	High/Medium	HL, IG, P&P,

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Theme 4: To Make the Network Better Connected							
Id	Action	Description	Timescales	Partnership Working	Lead RBC	Delivery Costs	Reading Transport Strategy
4.8	Identify new/extend existing paths to improve the priority and strategic walking network LCWIP	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Use the Rights of Way map to link footpaths to the walking network - in Appendix 4-Annex D 2) Identify opportunities to create new paths and improve the priority and strategic walking routes as in LCWIP 3) Identify funding for LCWIP 4) Identify owner of the land and investigate feasibility 	Medium	User Groups Landowner	Transport Planning	High/Medium	HL, IG, P&P,
4.9	Identify new/extend existing paths to improve the quiet walking network	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Use the Rights of Way map to link footpaths to the walking network - in Appendix 4-Annex D 2) Identify the quiet walking routes in the network 3) Identify opportunities to create new /extend existing paths and improve the quiet walking routes in the walking network 4) Select the two most beneficial 5) Identify owners of the land and investigate feasibility 	Medium	User Groups Landowner	Transport Planning	High/Medium	C&G, HL, IG, P&P, SS
4.10	Identify circular routes that can be used for exercise	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Identify circular routes that are part of the Rights of Way network - Appendix 4-Annex E 2) Identify gaps that can improve these circular routes and explore if they can be used for running, cycling or horse-riding 3) Select one or two the most beneficial to take forward 4) Identify owner of the land and investigate feasibility 	Long	User Groups Landowner	Transport Planning	High/Medium	C&G, HL, P&P,
4.11	Identify cross boundary routes with other Local Authorities and promote them to different user groups	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Review all the Cross-boundary Rights of Way footpaths using Appendix 4-Annex D 2) Identify those that could form a long walking/cycling cross boundary route. 3) Look at the needs for horse riding on the fringes of the town 4) Work with neighbouring Local Authorities to identify and address any cross-boundary Rights of Way anomalies and gaps. 	Medium	South Oxford, West Berkshire Wokingham User Groups Landowner	Transport Planning	Medium	C&G, HL, IG, P&P,
4.13	Review disjointed, short or under-used paths - potential for replacing /extending/diverting	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Review the Rights of Way footpaths that are very disjointed Appendix 4-Annex E, short, or under-used (as identified from the Audit) Appendix 5-Annex A 2) Review the reasons for why the paths are not being used 3) Select 2 footpaths that will benefit from being extended / diverted, or replaced. 4) Identify owner of the land and investigate feasibility 	Medium	Landowners,	Transport planning	Medium	C&G, IG, P&P,

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Theme 5 - Used by All							
ID	Action	Description	Timescale	Partnerships Working	Lead RBC	Delivery Costs	Reading Transport Strategy
5.1	Improve network of footpaths to be suitable for people of restricted mobility and/or visual impairment.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Identify the barriers on paths for restricted mobility and visually impaired such as gates, surface, gradient, width - work started Appendix 4- Annex G and Appendix 5 - Annex A 2) Examine the whole network used by the public (not just Rights of Way) for their usability by people of limited mobility or visually impaired 3) Engage with the relevant user groups to verify finding and understand additional requirements - work could be funded by LCWIP 4) Draw up an action plan to eliminate reduce some of the barriers 5) Implement 	Medium	Disability Groups, Old People, Visually impaired. Other User Groups	Parks / Network Management	High	HL, IG, P&P
5.2	Improve bridges on footpaths for use by those with restricted mobility and/or visual impairment	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Identify the bridges that are part of the RoW network from the Audit Appendix 5 - Annex A and B 2) Check their usability for restricted mobility 3) Identify ways of improving their usability for restricted mobility and impaired vision 4) Asses how important they are to enable walking and cycling network 5) For those important - search for funding 6) Carry out improvements to bridges 	Medium	Disability Groups, Old People, Visually impaired. Other User Groups	Parks / Highways	High	IG, P&P,
5.3	Reduce physical barriers for cycling on footpaths where cycling is permitted	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Identify barriers for cyclist like gates, narrow paths, lack of vision and poor surfaces identified in Appendix 5 - Annex A and B and Appendix 4 - Annex G 2) Understand what physical changes can be done to remove /reduce the impact of the barrier if required 3) Identify how the path links into the cycling network - use Appendix 4 - Annex D 4) Prioritise paths that link well into the Reading branded or NCN cycling routes 5) Identify funds to address and carry out changes through LCWIP 	Medium	Cyclist Other User Groups	Parks / Network Management		C&G, HL, IG, P&P
5.4	Reduce physical barriers for those walking on footpaths	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Identify physical barriers for walkers like gates, poor surfaces and flooding identified in Appendix 5 - Annex A and B and Appendix 4 - Annex G 2) Understand the changes that can be done to remove /reduce the effect of the barrier if required 3) Identify how the route links into the priority walking network from LCWIP use Appendix 4 - Annex D 4) Prioritise walking paths that are regularly used and link them into strategic and primary walking routes from LCWIP 5) Identify funds to address and carry out any required changes 	Medium	Walking groups All User Groups	Parks / Network Management	Medium	C&G, HL, IG, P&P,
5.5	Update walking paths that can be upgraded/improved updated to cycling paths or shared path	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Identify which Rights of Way paths are legally cycling paths 2) Identify Rights of Way paths that are suitable for cycling based on the audit results and work in Appendix 5 - Annex A and B and Appendix 4 - Annex G 3) Review the benefits of linking to the cycling network using Appendix C2 4) Get expert assessment of additional work to make it a cycling path 5) Work to update this footpath as a shared path for walking and cycling path 	Medium	Walking Groups Cyclists Groups Other User groups	Parks / Network Management	High	C&G, HL, IG, P&P
5.6	Reduce physical barriers for those horse riding on paths	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Identify physical barriers for horse riders on bridleways, such as surface condition, width of path, overgrown vegetation and gradient - use audit Appendix 5 - Annex A and B and Appendix 4 - Annex G 2) Understand the changes that can be done to remove /reduce the effect of the barrier if required 3) Consider what improvements can be made, ensuring that they do not impact the overall use of the Right of Way 	Medium	Horse Riding society Other User Groups	Parks / Network Management		C&G, HL, IG, P&P

*Note the majority of actions in the table above are unfunded and therefore delivery is subject to securing funding and the available level of resourcing.

Theme 6: To Improve the Safety of the Network							
ID	Action	Description	Timescale	Partnership	RBC Lead	Delivery Costs	Reading Transport Strategy
6.1	Add street lightening on dark paths	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Identify priority paths that require lighting from the audit Appendix 5 - Annex A and B and public survey 2) Check how lighting would contribute to current or future cycling and walking routes 3) Identify possible funding sources to install lighting to priority paths 	Long	Walking and cycling groups Other User Groups	Parks / Streetcare	Staff, High	C&G, HL, IG, P&P
6.2	Reduce illegal activity of paths	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Identify paths with illegal activity from police reports and identified in the ROWIP audit /public survey Appendix 5 - Annex A and B 2) Identify measures to reduce this activity and implement in liaison with the police 3) Install CCTV and lighting on identified paths 4) Review opportunities to introduce enforcement on identified paths 	Short	All User Groups	Parks /Streetcare	Low	C&G, HL, IG, P&P,
6.3	Reduce possible conflict between different types of users of the paths through education	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Identify paths reported as causing conflict between different path users - Appendix 5 - Annex A and B 2) Explore behavioural change through education of awareness of cyclists, pedestrians and horse riders 3) Publicise information on the Reading Borough Council website and social media 	Short	All User Groups	Transport Planning	Low	HL, IG, P&P, SS
6.4	Reduce illegal use of e-scooters / mopeds on paths	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Identify paths that have been reported for illegal use by e-scooters/mopeds via the survey or through the complaints procedure Appendix 5 - Annex A and B 2) Review options to deter illegal activity through enforcement 3) Consider introducing barriers to prevent moped access where safety concerns have been raised. 	Short	All User Groups	Thames Valley Police	Medium	C&G, HL, IG, P&P,
6.5	Consider widening paths where a lot of traffic occurs	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Identify from the audit paths that experience a high volume of traffic speed and volume from walking, cycling or horse-riding Appendix 5 - Annex A 2) Consider widening or segregating the identified paths Appendix 5 - Annex A 3) Consider adding speed control measures on the identified paths 	Medium	All User Groups	Parks / Network Management	High	C&G, HL, IG, P&P

*Note the majority of actions in the table above are unfunded and therefore delivery is subject to securing funding and the available level of resourcing.

Theme 7: Efficient Delivery of Plan							
ID	Action	Description	Timescale	Partnerships Working	RBC Lead	Delivery Costs	Reading Transport Strategy
7.1	Finalise ROWIP2	Publish the final plan online and notify the public	Ongoing	All User Groups	Transport Planning	Low	C&G, HL, IG, P&P, SS
7.2	Assess and update plan regularly	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Update the timescale regularly 2) Those that are short are planned to be carried out that year 	Ongoing	All User Groups	Transport Planning	Low	C&G, HL, IG, P&P, SS
7.3	Encourage partnership working	Partnership working is essential to this plan; <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) reporting issues on the network, 2) suggesting improvements by user groups 3) help enhance the network through voluntary means 	Ongoing	User Groups The public volunteers	Transport Planning	Low	C&G, HL, IG, P&P, SS
7.4	Encourage working with neighbouring Local Authorities	Work with neighbouring LAFs and highway authorities <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) to identify and address cross boundary Rights of Way anomalies 2) to explore opportunities for promoting Rights of Way and circular routes. 3) Explore ways of improving consistency in signage and waymarking on cross-boundary routes. 	Ongoing	Neighbouring local authorities	Transport Planning	Low	C&G, HL, IG, P&P, SS

*Note the majority of actions in the table above are unfunded and therefore delivery is subject to securing funding and the available level of resourcing.

11. DELIVERY OF THE PLAN

11.1. Responsibilities

The Council has legal responsibilities for maintaining and improving the Public Rights of Way in the borough. This responsibility is shared between different departments in the Council and in some cases also by external bodies. The following section provides details of some of the activities undertaken by the Council:

Transport Planning

- Responsible for developing the strategy and ROWIP Strategy, monitoring its progress towards the targets and updating it every 10 years. Updating of the Definitive List and Map when changes occur and have copies of their definitive map and statement and modification orders available for public inspection.
- Providing the public with information on the full range of choices available for enjoying the Rights of Way network itself and the many other publicly accessible routes.
- Ownership of the process of application of changes adding, extinguishing, diverting paths or claiming reinstating historical.
- Extending the network by adding new paths to improve linkage with transport network enabling more sharing of paths and removing barriers for users with disabilities.

Transport Development Control

- Responsible for dealing with all proposals for the development of land affecting public Rights of Way and requiring some change to the paths or creating opportunities to extend the Rights of Way network.

Highways & Network Services, Parks and Leisure

- Responsible keeping the surface of public Rights of Way routes maintained in a fit state for public to be use by ordinary traffic at all times of the year.
- Making sure any obstructions or notices that discourage using the path are removed.
- Maintaining some bridges over natural watercourses, including farm ditches.
- Providing contribution to landowners' replacing and maintaining structures for the control of animals, e.g., gates or stiles and ensuring completion of the work is to a standard the Authority is satisfied with.
- Adding signage where a public right of way leaves metalled roads and where it is considered necessary, to assist to follow the line of the path or way.
- Ensuring that landowners carry out their duties (see below) and taking action if they don't.

Neighbourhoods

- Responsible for dealing with antisocial behaviour happening on the public Rights of Way network.

Streetcare

- Responsible for cleaning rubbish, moving street furniture and the lighting on the paths reported through [Love Clean Reading](#).

Legal Services

- Official holder of the Definitive Map for the Council and provides legal support on claims, applications or conflicts on public footpaths, supporting all other sections of the Council to carry out their duties.

External Bodies

Landowners

- Landowners have a duty to ensure that public Rights of Way routes are visible open safe for use and clearly marked.
- Ensure vegetation does not encroach onto the route from the sides or above.

- Avoid putting obstructions on or across the route, such as permanent or temporary fences, walls.
- Maintain stiles or gates on a public right of way so they are safe and reasonably easy to use.

Thames Valley Police

- Thames Valley Police are responsible for any crime and disorder or illegal activity happening on the paths. This can include crime, using paths with modes of transport that are not legal on the foot path or at speeds not allowed, drug use and any other illegal activity and also anti-social behavior.

Voluntary Work

- Volunteers and volunteer organisations play a critical role in supporting the Council with the maintenance and improvements to many of the Rights of Way network. The Council undertakes to continue proactive engagement with these groups and to better support and co-ordinate the improvement of the network.

11.2. Funding

Improving the Rights of Way Network will contribute to a several of the Council's key priorities and objectives, including, but not limited to environment, health, lifestyle and leisure, culture and diversity, and active travel. Therefore, future-funding sources should be diverse, and must be dealt with by cross-partnerships.

Both capital and revenue funding will be required to put the improvements into practice and to ensure long-term maintenance. At this stage, potential funding sources are:

Internal Revenue Funding

Internal revenue funding is allocated to individual departments of the Council on an annual basis to undertake their range of statutory duties, including those relating to the Rights of Way network.

Local Transport Plan – Grant Funding

Funding from the Local Transport Plan grants may be available, where Rights of Way improvements link into Transport Strategy objectives and projects.

LCWIP – Grant Funding

Funding from LCWIP and active travel grants may be available, where Rights of Way improvements contribute to the existing the strategic walking and cycling network.

Section 106 Agreements

In accordance with Government Policy and the requirements of Planning Policy Guidance 13 (PPG13), development should be located where access to it can be obtained by alternatives to the private motor vehicle, such as walking, cycling and the use of public transport.

One of the ways that this target can be met is to have a network of safe, direct and secure paths. Developers will be expected to ensure that they enhance and improve Public Rights of Way in the vicinity of or near to their proposals so that the future occupiers have safe walking and cycling opportunities to their sites, which will encourage modal shift to be achieved.

Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL)

The Council currently secures infrastructure contributions from developers in two ways. Firstly, it agrees legal agreements under Section 106 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (Section 106 agreements, as above) as part of planning permissions which can include both financial and non-financial obligations. Secondly it charges the Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL), which is a levy charged on development depending on the amount of floorspace and use.

CIL Funds are split between strategic developments and neighbourhood projects, with 15% of CIL raised spent within the neighbourhood in which development takes place. The Council, through consultation determines local CIL projects that deliver benefits to the local community.

Funding sources linked by compatible agendas and partnerships

The funding sources below are all very important and could assist in being additional funding opportunities. These sources will be investigated further, and where appropriate added to this improvement plan as projects are agreed:

- Sport Development – Reading Borough Council
- Cross Boundary Highway Authorities project – Wokingham, West Berkshire and South Oxfordshire Authorities
- Health agenda
- Lottery Funding

GLOSSARY

DEFRA - Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs

DFT - Department for Transport

LAF - Local Access Forum

LCWIP - Local Cycling and Walking Investment Plan

LTP - Local Transport Plan

PROW - Public Rights of Way

RBC - Reading Borough Council

ROW - Rights of Way

ROWIP - Rights of Way Improvement Plan

RTS - Reading Transport Strategy

SMOTS - Sustainable Modes of Travel Strategy