

Cabinet – 19 March 2008

Walsall Borough's Rights of Way Improvement Plan

Portfolio:	Councillor A Harris - Transport
Service:	Engineering and Transportation
Wards:	All
Key decision:	Yes
Forward plan:	Yes

1. Summary of report

- 1.1 This report seeks Cabinet endorsement of Walsall Borough's Rights of Way Improvement Plan. The Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000, introduced a statutory requirement for each local highway authority in England, to produce a rights of way improvement plan.
- 1.2 Walsall Borough's Rights of Way Improvement Plan outlines potential improvements to the network of public rights of way within the borough, including footpaths, bridle ways, byways and cycle routes. Improvements to both the physical network and working practices are included.

2. Recommendations

- 2.1 That Cabinet approves Walsall Borough's Rights of Way Improvement Plan.
- 2.2 That Cabinet recommends that Council adopts Walsall Borough's Rights of Way Improvement Plan as approved Council policy.

3. Background information

- 3.1 Walsall Borough's Draft Rights of Way Improvement Plan was submitted to the Neighbourhoods Scrutiny & Performance Panel on 6 December 2007. The report was noted. Questions were raised on adoption of footpaths (pathway from Midland Road to Lowe Avenue) and alley gating (the requirement to close off problem alleyways due to crime or antisocial behaviour and legal procedures which must be followed). These issues have been taken on board to be addressed during implementation of specific actions, pending adoption of the document by Council as approved Council policy.

- 3.2 The main aim of Walsall's Rights of Way Improvement Plan (ROWIP) is to introduce actions to improve Walsall's public rights of way network and its maintenance, to ensure that it meets present and future needs of the borough. Particular emphasis is placed upon improving the public rights of way network for those with mobility or visual impairments, and for improving access to leisure and recreational opportunities.
- 3.3 There are currently around 85 km of public rights of way which are recorded on the Definitive Map and Statement. These include footpaths, bridleways, restricted byways and byways open to all traffic. In addition to this there are around 60km of adopted footpaths recorded on the list of streets. These two distinct categories of public rights of way form Walsall Borough's core network of highways paths and improvements to these are the main focus of Walsall's Rights of Way Improvement Plan.
- 3.4 There are a number of other types of path which are not highways paths, but are managed by other council service areas or sometimes third parties. Examples include leisure and countryside services promoted routes, safer routes to school and canal towpaths. These are recognised as an important part of Walsall Borough's network of public rights of way and wherever possible improvements will be implemented to the core highways paths which promote linkages to this wider network. There is also a commitment to improve cross boundary routes with neighbouring local authorities.
- 3.5 Investigation into the current public rights of way network, including maintenance regimes, inspections and improvement programmes, has highlighted a number of potential weaknesses and areas for improvement.
- 3.6 Consultation has been undertaken, in accordance with statutory requirements. (See paragraph 10)
- 3.7 A review of local, regional and national strategies, along with relevant legislation has been undertaken to ensure proposals for actions are aligned with key proposals and statutory duties.
- 3.8 An action plan and ten themes have been introduced based upon the above findings. Each theme has introduced an overall aim and robust actions for improvement. Key partners and resources which will be required to deliver these actions are detailed.
- 3.9 Walsall Borough's Rights of Way Improvement Plan and specific actions outlined will be reviewed and monitored on a periodic basis in line with the Local Transport Plan, service planning and local area agreements/ multi area agreements, as appropriate.
- 3.10 A service plan target has been set to further prioritise actions outlined and commence with implementation of the priority actions. Quick wins will be implemented firstly, while further investigation is undertaken into other actions. Quick wins identified include:
- An accessibility audit of all public rights of way to identify potential barriers to access and a programme of improvements to improve access for the disabled

- A programme of planned maintenance and inspections on both urban and rural public rights of way.
- Introduction of enforcement guidelines to improve practices for dealing with obstructions on public rights of way
- A review of the current situational interventions policy to include new gating orders and improve procedures for closing public rights of way due to crime and anti social behaviour

3.11 Action Plan – 10 themes for improvements are detailed within Walsall's Rights of way improvement plan. The 10 themes are:

- Theme 1 – Improved access for all
- Theme 2 – Regeneration
- Theme 3 – Definitive Map and Statement
- Theme 4 – Create new public rights of way
- Theme 5 – Information provision and promotion
- Theme 6 – Inspections and Maintenance
- Theme 7 – Rationalisation of the existing public rights of way network
- Theme 8 – Crime and anti social behaviour
- Theme 9 – Improvements to the existing public rights of way network
- Theme 10 – Byways open to all traffic

The Action Plan is included as an Appendix to this Report. The draft ROWIP and Addendum are available for inspection in the political group rooms and on the council website. The final ROWIP will be produced to incorporate the Addendum. Some minor changes are detailed within the addendum which includes mainly alterations to the format or clarity of information. All other items have already been included within current draft.

4. Resource considerations

4.1 **Financial:** Public rights of way receive an annual revenue budget of £25,000 for maintenance, to finance patch repairs, clearance works and minor repairs, along with a capital allocation from the Local Transport Plan of £70,000 for larger scale reconstruction or resurfacing works. Over financial years 2006/07 and 2007/08 Local Area Agreement funding of £50,000 and £60,000 respectively, has also been secured for additional works to enhance our Best Value Performance Indicator 178 (the ease of use of public rights of way in the Borough) score. The council does not yet have a full notification of the allocation of the single capital pot to enable consideration on whether to continue to support these projects. The single capital pot will pick up capital grants that were formerly part of the Local Area Agreement.

Were these additional funds to become available there are a number of actions which are a relatively low cost (under £5,000) which can primarily be covered by them. These will be delivered on a prioritised basis over a 5 year period.

Other actions represent a higher cost implication and will only be implemented subject to availability of funding. Bids will be made to support these from the single capital pot and the mainstream capital programme through strategic choices. Other funding sources may include Landfill Tax Credits, Aggregates Levy, Section 106 or improvements through the planning application process and commercial sponsorship. There are also significant opportunities to co-ordinate improvements and maintenance with other council service areas or external organisations to maximise use of resources, and to establish volunteering opportunities with Walsall's Local Access Forum and other Community and Voluntary Organisations. Walsall's Local Access Forum is an advisory group, attended by local volunteers with an interest in public rights of way. They have assisted with production of Walsall Borough's rights of way improvement plan and pledged further support for delivery of actions. Initial discussions have also been held with probation services and the young offender's service regarding the scope of utilising their support for clearance works on public rights of way.

- 4.2 **Legal:** It is a statutory duty that the council, as highway authority for the area, produces a rights of way improvement plan. Failure to adopt this document will mean that we fall short of our statutory duty.

The council also has a statutory duty to assert and protect public rights of way. Actions outlined within Walsall's rights of way improvement plan will allow us to improve our existing working practices thereby ensuring that all statutory duties are adhered to in robust and consistent manner.

Public rights of way can only be diverted, extinguished or created in specific circumstances subject to a Legal Order being confirmed. There are specific legal criteria and it will only be possible to proceed with a Legal Order where it can be demonstrated that the legal criteria is met.

- 4.3 **Staffing:** There are currently two full time officers employed within Engineering & Transportation Services, who are specifically responsible for public rights of way. Funding for the Temporary Assistant Rights of Way Officer post will be coming to an end in March 2008.

Actions outlined will need to be delivered on a prioritised basis to ensure that they can be delivered with the existing staffing level. Additional staffing will need to be secured to support some of the actions and a major review of the document. Several of the actions will require investigation of historic records and statutory duties, which have recently been introduced under the Countryside and Rights of Way Act, 2000. The full extent of additional resources that will be required will be determined fully following this further investigation. If additional staff posts are created, or if there are amendments to existing posts to assist with delivery, it will be necessary to seek a joint delegation.

There are opportunities to involve current volunteers on the Local Access Forum, or to develop further volunteering opportunities, to support some of the actions outlined.

5. Citizen impact

Improvements to public rights of way have a bearing on the well-being and satisfaction of all residents of the borough.

6. Community safety

Physical improvements to public rights of way and improvements to their maintenance can have a positive impact on crime prevention. By creating a pleasant, clean and well-kept appearance with good natural surveillance, legitimate right of way users will feel safe and be encouraged to use the public right of way. The increased use of the public right of way and additional surveillance can in turn, can help to reduce incidents of crime and anti social behaviour. There are some urban public rights of way which do unfortunately attract high levels of crime and antisocial behaviour. Public rights of way officers currently work closely with officers from the Safer Walsall Borough Partnership to implement solutions to reduce crime in these areas, including alley gating schemes where appropriate. Provisions are included within Walsall Borough's rights of way improvement plan to build upon these existing practices.

7. Environmental impact

Public rights of way play an important role in promoting and encouraging the use of sustainable methods of travel. Improvements to the network will help to encourage more residents and visitors to the borough to travel by sustainable modes rather than car, having an impact upon the reduction of traffic congestion and associated pollution and road safety problems. Further consideration will be given to each specific action when implemented during consultation, to ensure a pro-active approach to minimising environmental impacts. Greater use of public rights of way is also linked to the improved health of individuals living in local communities.

8. Performance and risk management issues

- 8.1 **Risk:** It will only be possible to implement some of the actions for improvements subject to securing additional funding, staffing or support of other service areas. Progress will be reviewed and monitored periodically. Opportunities to correct any shortfalls in funding or staffing, or to amend delivery programmes and timescales, will be investigated at this time. The requirement for support of other service areas to assist with delivery, primarily Legal Services and Safer Walsall Borough Partnership, has been identified within the Service Plan. This will also be reviewed periodically. There are also risks of high or increased insurance claims associated with delivery of regular inspections and maintenance. Planned maintenance on footpaths which are predominantly urban will be included within the Invitation to Tender (ITT) for the Highways Maintenance Partnership, whilst for those which are predominantly rural, links are to be strengthened with Leisure and Countryside Services' ongoing maintenance programmes to reduce this risk.

8.2 **Performance management:** Best Value Performance Indicator 178, measures the ease of use of public rights of way in the borough. This performance indicator is not included within the new national targets. Use of this indicator is to be retained to measure progress as a result of implementation of the rights of way improvement plan, although the exact format will be reviewed. A steady improvement has been achieved in the score for this indicator, from 36.1% in 2005/06 to 77.3% in 2007/08. This improvement has been possible due to an increase in the number of footpaths improved utilizing additional funding secured through Local Area Agreements.

9. Equality implications

Public rights of way can provide an invaluable and straightforward means of access to amenities for local residents. Geographically, the highest concentrations of no-car households correspond with wards which fall within the most deprived wards within the borough. Improvements to public rights of way will therefore benefit residents residing in the most deprived wards. Equalities monitoring has been undertaken during ongoing consultation and a reasonable cross sample indicative of the population of the borough has been achieved. Further monitoring will be undertaken during additional consultation.

10. Consultation

Targeted distribution of 2000 newsletters and surveys was undertaken during July and August 2007. These were also published in the local press and on the council's website. Views on both positive and negative aspects of our network were invited. During January and February 2008 the draft rights of way improvement plan and 2000 copies summary version were produced and distributed to public rights of way users to obtain their views on the content of the document and action plan. This was supported by a structured programme of presentations with various user groups and interested parties, which has been ongoing from July 07 to February 08. Further consultation will be undertaken during implementation of specific actions as appropriate.

Background papers

- Draft Rights of Way Improvement Plan & Addendum

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10 March 2008



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10 March 2008

Walsall Borough's Rights of Way Improvement Plan

Information collected on public rights of way has highlighted a number of local issues which can be categorised into the following themes:

Theme 1 – Improved access for all

There is a need to improve disabled access not only to meet the requirements of the Disability Discrimination Act 1995, but also to ensure that with an ageing population, Walsall borough's public rights of way network can meet the future needs of residents and visitors. Different user groups have distinct needs and preferences so improvements to the existing public rights of way are needed in line with the needs of all users, including the local community and visitors.

Aim – To improve access for all users, with particular emphasis on improving access for the mobility and visually impaired.

Actions	Tasks	Staff time and partnership involvement	Costs	Potential source(s) of funding	Timescale
1.Improved Access to Public Rights of Way for all user groups					
1. Improve access for all users, with particular emphasis on improving access for the mobility or visually impaired.	1.1 Develop audit criteria with assistance of Disability Forum and proofing group	Some additional public rights of way staff time. Internal support of Countryside, Leisure and Equalities. Potential to develop criteria with volunteers including Local Access Forum Members, Walk Leaders, Ramblers Association, and Disability Forum & Proofing Group.	Under £5,000	Can be covered by existing resources.	1-5 years
	1.2 Undertake audit of all public rights of way	As above	Under £5,000	As above	1-5 years
	1.3 Develop programme of improvements in line with findings of audit.	Public rights of way staff time. May require involvement of Countryside, Leisure and Equalities staff during development of solutions. Will require landowner agreement/ support. Potential to involve probation services, Youth Offending Service, Forest of Mercia and other volunteers in installation of improvements will be investigated. Links with NHS PCT to be investigated.	Over £20,000	Additional funding required to meet costs. Investigate funding through Aggregates Levy or Landfill Tax, Local Area Agreements or Multi-Area Agreements. Potential to fund physical improvements by pooling and aligning resources from appropriate service area, or with partner organisations	1-5 years

Theme 2 – Regeneration

The borough of Walsall currently experiences areas of deprivation higher than the national average and has a high proportion of land which is earmarked for strategic regeneration. This represents an opportunity to secure improvements to existing public rights of way, or to create new routes within the priority regeneration areas. This will ensure that the public rights of way network is improved to meet the changing use of the area and to improve connectivity between new housing, industry and local amenities.

Aim – To ensure that improvements to existing public rights of way and creation of new routes are secured during regeneration of priority areas to meet present and future demand.

Actions	Tasks	Staff time and partnership involvement	Costs	Potential source(s) of funding	Timescale
2. Regeneration					
2. Secure improvements to existing public rights of way and create new routes during regeneration and development of key sites to ensure that present and future needs are met.	2.1 Review current links between public rights of way and planning and regeneration services and identify scope for improvements to existing or creation of new public rights of way during ongoing regeneration and development.	Public rights of way staff time. Will require support of officers in highways development control, planning and regeneration services.	Under £5,000	Can be covered by existing resources.	1-5 years
	2.2 Introduce improved systems for commenting on planning applications and securing improvements to public rights of way, which co-ordinate with highways development control and strategic aims e.g. the UDP.	Public rights of way staff time. Will require support of officers in highways development control, planning and regeneration services.	Under £5,000	As above	1-5 years
	2.3 Improve information for potential developers on diversion, creation or extinguishment of public rights of way, including information on the legal order processes and pricing.	Public rights of way staff time. Will require support of officers in highways development control, planning and regeneration services.	Under £5,000	As above	1-5 years
	2.4 Pursue necessary legal orders, advise on construction and implement physical improvements to the network. Legal support also required.	Public rights of way staff time. Will require legal support, and possibly support of officers in highways development control, planning and regeneration services.	Over £20,000	Construction and legal order costs are typically met by the developer. Section 106 funding, Landfill Tax credits or commercial sponsorship will be investigated in cases where this is not possible.	Ongoing

Theme 3 – Definitive Map and Statement

Public rights of way are currently recorded in two different ways; on the Definitive Map and Statement and on the list of streets. At present the Definitive Map and Statement is divided into nine surveying authority areas, which are conversant with the old district boundaries and changes to the borough boundary. Adopted footpaths recorded on the list of streets are not currently recorded on the definitive map. Some of the public rights of way shown on these two documents are currently inaccurate, so procedures to keep the Definitive Map and Statement up to date need to be improved. Investigation into the extent of the problem will be needed initially, followed by a review of procedures and implementation of priority based programme of actions to bring the Definitive Map and Statement up to date.

Aim – To improve procedures for updating the Definitive Map and Statement and ensure that they are up to date.

Actions	Tasks	Staff time and partnership involvement	Costs	Potential source(s) of funding	Timescale
3. Definitive Map and Statement					
3. Improve procedures for updating the Definitive Map and Statement and ensure they are up to date and effectively maintained.	3.1 Review definitive map and statement, including diversion extinguishment or creation orders which have been undertaken, to identify any discrepancies.	Public Rights of Way legal services - will require increased legal support.	Under £5,000	Can be met by existing resources.	1-5 years
	3.2 Review adopted footpaths on list of streets and identify whether these need to be added onto the definitive map and processes which would need to be followed.	Public Rights of Way legal services - will require increased legal support.	Under £5,000	Can be met by existing resources.	1-5 years
	3.3 Investigate consolidation of definitive map from nine surveying authority areas into one borough wide map and statement.	Public Rights of Way legal services - will require increased legal support.	Between £5,000 and £20,000	Additional funding for legal costs. Strategic Choices, LAA or MAA	5-10 years
	3.4 Implementation of all necessary Orders including Definitive Map Modification Orders and Consolidation.	Public Rights of Way legal services - will require increased legal support.	Over £20,000	Additional funding for legal costs. Strategic Choices, LAA or MAA	Modification orders-ongoing, Consolidation 10-15 yrs

Theme 4 – Create new public rights of way

There is a clear requirement for creation of new public rights of way to meet demand from certain user groups in certain areas of the borough. For example, consultation has identified a clear need for more bridle paths, shared use routes for cycling and walking and additional footpaths to improve links between existing public rights of way. Current safer routes to school work and school travel plan development is allowing identification of areas where safe off-road routes for walking and cycling for access into schools is required. The importance of developing cross boundary routes by working with neighbouring authorities is also paramount.

Aim – To create new public rights of way which will strengthen links to local amenities and improve connectivity of the existing network.

Actions	Tasks	Staff time and partnership involvement	Costs	Potential source(s) of funding	Timescale
4. Create New Public Rights of Way					
4. Create new public rights of way which will strengthen links to local amenities and improve connectivity of the local network.	4.1 Identify areas for creation of new public rights of way for walking, cycling and horse riding.	Local Access Forum members Local Neighbourhood Partnership / Community Action Groups, Leisure and Countryside Services, Planning and Regeneration Services.	Under £5,000	Can be covered by existing resources.	1-5 years
	4.2 Prioritise routes.	Public rights of way, Local Access Forum members.	Under £5,000	Can be covered by existing resources.	1-5 years
	4.3 Develop and publish Register of Definitive map modification orders.	Public rights of way officers, ISS or Legal support may be required.	Under £5,000	Can be covered by existing resources.	1-5 years
	4.4 Pursue Definitive map modification orders.	Public rights of way officers. Legal support required.	Over £20,000	Legal Order costs?	5-10 years
	4.5 Install improvements required.	Public rights of way officers. Investigate potential to work with Forest of Mercia, Probation Services, Youth Offending Service and NHS PCT for implementation of some of the improvements.	Over £20,000	Existing resources will partly cover this. LAA, Landfill tax credits, section 106 funding, commercial sponsorship to be investigated	5-10 years

Theme 5 – Information provision for users of the network

Availability of information on public rights of way within the borough of Walsall is currently poor. Various leaflets are produced to promote public rights of way, but these are concentrated in specific locations, such as parks and nature reserves, or focus upon one user group only. There is considerable scope to introduce improved and co-ordinated information on public rights of way.

Improved information provision, including leaflets and on-line information, which details public rights of way and any barriers to access along the route, will enable potential users to make informed decisions about whether the route is suitable for their use. There is potential to link promotion of public rights of way in the borough into the newly developed national school travelwise database, and to introduce a new borough-specific geographical information system on the Walsall Council website. Both options are to be investigated.

On-route information was reported to be problematic in some locations and this is supported by findings of routing inspections. Installation of signs and way markers is important to allow users to clearly follow the route of the public right of way and to help to prevent trespass. Regular inspections and installation is important, as signs and way markers can often be subject to vandalism, wear and tear or damage by vehicles. Where there are shared use routes, signs are important to inform users of the presence of others. There is also scope to introduce route specific information on signs, including a reference number to enable easy identification of locations where problems are identified.

There is also considerable scope to raise the profile and awareness of public rights of way procedures and practices. Improvement of on-line information or production of leaflets/ fact sheets would raise the profile of our work and outline how others can become involved. Information on the rights of way improvement plan, diversion or extinguishment orders, public path creation orders, crime prevention, the role of Walsall's Local Access Forum and problem reporting are all areas which may benefit from improved information.

Aim – To introduce improved and co-ordinated information, which promotes and encourages all users to access public rights of way, and raises the profile, awareness and understanding of our roles.

Actions	Tasks	Staff time and partnership involvement	Costs	Potential source(s) of funding	Timescale
5 Information provision and promotion					
5. Introduce improved and co-ordinated information, promoting and encouraging use of public rights of way by all, particularly focusing upon the needs of the mobility or visually impaired.	5.1 Develop on line information investigate using Travelwise and / or Global Information System (Similar to planning portal) then implement.	Public rights of way officers with support from countryside services, print and design, leisure services and information system support.	Under £5,000	Can be covered by existing resources.	1-5 years
	5.2 Develop public rights of way leaflets containing route specific information which highlights potential barriers to access, enabling users to determine suitability of the route for their use.	Potential to involve Forest of Mercia to produce co-ordinated information.	£5,000-£20,000	Can mainly be covered by existing resources. Investigate potential to pool resources with other service areas and external organisations.	1-5 years
	5.3 Improved on site information including signs and way marking.	Potential to involve Local Access forum members or other voluntary/ community organisations to assist with numbering signs.	£5,000-£20,000 (annual commitment likely to be required)	As above	1-5 years
	5.4 Improve information on the key roles of public rights of way.	Develop promotional leaflets or guidance sheets, web-based information and newsletters. Review topics highlighted for promotion, which include the Rights of Way Improvement Plan, searches, diversion, extinguishment and modification orders, Local Access Forum, crime prevention and problem reporting to ensure all key areas are included.	£5,000-£20,000	Can be covered by existing resources	1-5 years

Theme 6 – Inspections and maintenance

Not all public rights of way are inspected on a regular basis and with the abolition of Best Value Performance Indicator 178 which records the ease of use of public rights of way in the borough, there is a possibility that routine inspections may become less of a priority. However, it is considered important that routine inspections, similar to BVPI 178 surveys, are continued to allow an understanding of the overall condition of the rights of way network which can in turn be used for monitoring effectiveness of improvements. Inspections will also allow identification of routes which require improvements to ensure public safety, enable preventative maintenance and ensure that potential problems are identified and resolved.

There is currently a highways maintenance and procurement strategy in development which will introduce improved inspections for public rights of way in the borough. There is also scope to introduce improved clearance and maintenance on some of the more rural rights of way in the borough, by working with external partners including Forest of Mercia.

Aim – To review current maintenance and inspection procedures (pending introduction of the new maintenance and procurement strategy) and to investigate the scope for further improvements.

Actions	Tasks	Staff time and partnership involvement	Costs	Potential source(s) of funding	Timescale
6. Inspections and Maintenance					
6. Review maintenance and inspection regimes (pending introduction of the new maintenance procurement strategy) and investigate the scope for further improvements.	6.1 Review Highways Maintenance and procurement strategy.	Public rights of way staff time. Potential to involve Local Access Forum members.	Under £5,000	Can be covered by existing resources.	1-5 years
	6.2 Introduce new in house inspections, similar to Best Value Performance Indicator 178.	Public rights of way staff time. Potential to involve Local Access Forum members, countryside and leisure services, external organisations such as Forest of Mercia.	£5,000-£20,000	Can mainly be covered by existing resources. Investigate potential to pool resources with other service areas and external organisations.	1-5 years
	6.3 Investigate potential sources for clearance of Rural Public Rights of Way and their Maintenance.	Public rights of way staff time. Potential to involve Local Access Forum members, countryside and leisure services, external organisations such as Forest of Mercia.	£5,000-£20,000 (annual funding needed)	As above	1-5 years
	6.4 Introduce regular cleaning and tidying of Public Rights of Way within the borough.	Investigate the use of the Probation Service or volunteers to keep Public Rights of Way clean and tidy.	£5,000-£20,000 (annual funding needed)	As above	1-5 years
	6.5 Review and improve current access land management practices.	Public rights of way staff time. Legal service and leisure and countryside service involvement is required, along with Local Access Forum.	£5,000-£20,000	As above	5-10 years

Theme 7- Rationalization of the existing public rights of way network

In several of Walsall borough's open spaces, there are differences between the definitive line of the route and as walked or promoted route. The inherent effect of this is that definitive routes have fallen out of use in favour of alternative routes. It will be necessary to carry out investigation into the extent of this problem and to rationalise the network across each of the borough's open spaces to ensure that definitive routes match with the used or promoted routes. Each affected site will be very different by nature, so will be considered on a case by case basis.

Aim – To investigate potential for re-aligning definitive routes with promoted and as walked routes, allowing pooling of resources for improvements and providing a more joined up network.

Actions	Tasks	Staff time and partnership involvement	Costs	Potential source(s) of funding	Timescale
7. Rationalisation of the existing public rights of way network					
7. Investigate potential for re-aligning definitive routes with promoted and as walked routes, allowing for provision of a more joined up network and pooling of resources.	7.1 Review all promoted walks across countryside services sites, in the borough, and how well they match definitive routes. Each area is to be reviewed individually on a prioritised basis.	7.1 Public Rights of Way, with involvement of Countryside Services and Leisure Services. Potential to involve Local Access Forum members, Walk Leaders "Friends of" groups and other user groups. Investigate potential to work with NHS PCT	Under £5,000	Can be covered by existing resources.	1-5 years
	7.2 Introduce a program to rationalise network bringing promoted route in line with definitive routes. This will include a program of diversion, extinguishment and modification orders, followed by infrastructure improvements.	7.2 Legal orders will require Legal Services support potential to pool resources from other service areas to achieve high standard of overall improvements and co-ordinated approach to infrastructure.	Over £20,000	Additional funding required to meet legal costs. Investigate funding through Aggregates Levy or Landfill Tax, Local Area Agreements or Multi-Area Agreements. Potential to fund physical improvements by pooling and aligning resources from appropriate service areas to be investigated. Additional funding essential to allow project to go ahead. Investigate other partner funding, e.g. NHS PCT	5-15 years (specific areas to be implemented on a case by case basis)

Theme 8 – Crime and anti social behaviour

Walsall Council has already introduced a policy to deal with crime and anti social behaviour on public rights of way, which has had some successes. An issue of crime and anti social behaviour continues to be a key concern of the community of Walsall, affecting mainly urban alleyways. The policy is due to be reviewed with the introduction of Gating Orders under the Clean Neighbourhoods and Environment Act, 2006. Current procedures and practices implemented with the Safer Walsall Borough Partnership will continue to be used to address the problems of crime and anti social behaviour. Any problems with implementation experienced previously will be addressed during the policy review.

Aim – To review existing crime prevention and “alley gating” procedures on public rights of way, particularly focusing upon revision of the current policy to include implementation of new Gating Orders.

Actions	Tasks	Staff time and partnership involvement	Costs	Potential source(s) of funding	Timescale
8. Crime and Anti-social behaviour					
8. Review existing crime prevention and "alley-gating" procedures on public rights of way, particularly focusing upon revision of the current policy to include implementation of new Gating Orders.	8.1 Review policy following introduction of gating orders.	Public rights of way, with support of Safer Walsall Borough Partnership and Legal Services. Local Access Forum involvement also required.	Under £5,000	Capital funding until March 2009 (managed by SWBP). Additional funding required after this, examples include Local Area Agreements or Multi Area Agreements.	1-5 years
	8.2 Continue to support existing situational interventions on public rights of way under the Safer Walsall Borough Partnership's Improving Security in Local Neighbourhoods Programme.	Public rights of way and Safer Walsall Borough Partnership.	£5,000-£20,000 (ongoing annual costs likely to be required)	As Above	1-5 years, ongoing if problems persist
	8.3 Improve Information for Councillors, Local Neighbourhood Partnership and Community Action Groups on "Alley gating" schemes.	8.3 Safer Walsall Borough Partnership, Community Action Groups, Local Neighbourhood Partnerships and Local Access Forum members to be consulted.	£5,000-£20,000	As Above	1-5 years

Theme 9 – Improvements to existing public rights of way

Within the borough of Walsall, funding for maintaining and improving public rights of way has typically been low. This has resulted in a backlog of public rights of way which are in need of resurfacing or reconstruction work. Much progress has been made recently to improve public rights of way in line with the requirements of BVPI 178, which has received Local Area Agreement Funding. An increased number of footpaths have been resurfaced, cleared of vegetation or fly tipping, and received new signs or way marking. A notable improvement has been seen in several public rights of way in the borough, with some previously obstructed routes being brought back into use or significantly improved, promoting use. Continuation of improvements to public rights of way, post Local Area Agreement funding, which is currently secured until the end of March 2008, needs to be addressed.

There is only a limited amount of access land located within the borough, with several small pockets located to the North East. This can also play an important role in terms of promoting access for leisure and recreation including walking, cycling and horse riding. Progress made toward improvements to access land has been slow and there is considerable scope to improve accessibility of this.

Aim – To review and improve as necessary, current management and improvement programmes for public rights of way and access land, building upon the success of recent programmes.

Actions	Tasks	Staff time and partnership involvement	Costs	Potential source(s) of funding	Timescale
9. Improvements to existing public rights of way					
9. Review and amend as necessary, current improvement programmes for public rights of way to ensure continued improvements in line with users' needs.	9.1 Review current improvement programmes, primarily the Local Area Agreements funded programme.	Public rights of way officers, Walsall Borough Strategic Partnership, Planning and Regeneration, Highways Development Control. Potential to involve Local Neighbourhood Partnerships Community Action Groups and other local partners to assess the effectiveness of measures to date at addressing locally identified priorities.	Under £5,000	Can be covered by existing resources.	1-5 years
	9.2 Ensure continuation of improvements which are meeting key local priorities.	Public rights of way officers, Walsall Borough Strategic Partnership, Planning and Regeneration, Highways Development Control. Potential to involve Local Neighbourhood Partnerships, Community Action Groups or other local partners to assess the effectiveness of measure to date at addressing locally identified priorities.	Over £20,000 (ongoing annual costs will be required)	Local Area Agreement funding currently secured until March 2008. Potential continuation until March 2009, other funding e.g. further Local Area Agreement or Multi Area Agreement to be investigated.	1-5 years

Theme 10 – Byways open to all traffic

All Roads Used as Public Paths have recently been reclassified as Restricted Byways, under the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000. Our definitive map and statement still shows them as Roads Used as Public Paths. There are ten Byways Open to All Traffic which were historically incorrectly recorded on Land Terrier maps as footpaths and have been managed incorrectly as a result of this. Investigation is required into the implications of this and a programme of actions is required to ensure that they are correctly recorded and brought up to an appropriate standard.

Aim – To investigate reclassification of roads used as public paths as restricted byways and byways open to all traffic and introduce a programme for reclassification and improvements

Actions	Tasks	Staff time and partnership involvement	Costs	Potential source(s) of funding	Timescale
10. Byways open to all traffic					
10. Investigate reclassification of roads used as public paths to restricted byways and byways open to all traffic and introduce a programme for reclassification and improvement.	10.1 Review all byways open to all traffic and roads used as public paths recorded on the definitive map and statement.	Public rights of way officers, Legal support needed, potential to involve Local Access Forum Members.	Under £5,000	Can mainly be covered by current resources.	1-5 years
	10.2 Check legal processes or procedures for reclassification.	As above.	£5,000-£20,000	Can mainly be covered by current resources.	1-5 years
	10.3 Identify physical improvements or legal orders which are required at each affected site and introduce a programme of planned improvements as necessary.	As above.	Over £20,000 (ongoing annual costs likely to be required)	Additional funding required for Legal costs and necessary improvements.	5-15 years

Walsall Borough's Rights of Way Improvement Plan

Draft – January 2008

Contents

Summary	3
Consultation Form	5
Equal Opportunities Form	7
Section 1 – The importance of the Public Rights of Way Network	9
Section 2 – Walsall Borough's Public Rights of Way Network	13
Section 3 – Legal, policy and strategy context	27
Section 4 – The current situation	29
Section 5 – Consultation and survey responses	47
Section 6 – Action Plan	49
Appendices:	
Appendix 1 – List of Consultees	61
Appendix 2 – Map showing definitive and adopted paths	63
Appendix 3 – Legal Statutes and policy in full detail	65
Appendix 4 – Street Pride Inspections	71
Appendix 5 – Table of potential public rights of way	81
Appendix 6 – Consultation responses	83
Appendix 7 – Survey	115
Appendix 8 – Newsletter	123

If you require this document in large print or an alternative format, please contact us on 01922 652445 to discuss your requirements.

Summary of Walsall Borough's Draft Rights of Way Improvement Plan

All local authorities within England and Wales have a statutory duty under the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000 to produce a Rights of Way Improvement Plan. It must outline potential improvements to public rights of way which are needed to meet present and future needs of both residents and visitors, with particular focus upon the needs of the mobility or visually impaired.

Walsall Council, as highway authority for the area manages a network of public rights of way, which comprises those which are recorded on the definitive map and statement and list of streets. These form the core network of public rights of way in the borough. These include footpaths, bridle paths, restricted byways and byways open to all traffic, which can be used by walkers and horse riders primarily, but may have a right of access for cyclists, horse drawn carriages or occasionally motor propelled vehicles, dependent upon their classification. They generally include off road routes such as urban alleyways or routes across parks and open spaces.

There are also a number of other types of routes, which may be the responsibility of third parties that can also play an important role in terms of access to local amenities and the countryside. This includes, for example, canal towpaths, promoted routes such as the beacon way, and permissive routes across privately owned land. Improvements to the core network of highways paths is the core focus for improvements outlined within Walsall's Draft Rights of Way Improvement Plan, but wherever possible improvements will be made which will promote linkages to the wider network.

Investigation into the current public rights of way network, including maintenance regimes, inspections and improvement programmes, has highlighted a number of potential weaknesses and areas for improvement. Further issues have been highlighted during consultation with rights of way users. A newsletter and survey was distributed during July and August 2007, which was published in local press and on the councils website and invited views on both positive and negative aspects of our network. This was supported by a structured programme of presentations with various user groups and interested parties, which has been ongoing from July until December 2007. A review of local, regional and national strategies, along with relevant legislation has been undertaken to ensure proposals for actions are aligned with key proposals and statutory duties.

An action plan and ten themes have been introduced based upon the above findings. Each theme has introduced an overall aim and robust actions for improvement. Key partners and resources which will be required to deliver these actions are detailed within section 6.

Walsall's Rights of Way Improvement Plan and specific actions outlined will be reviewed and monitored on a periodical basis.

Consultation on Walsall's Draft Rights of Way Improvement Plan is currently underway and written comments/ representations are requested. Should you wish to make any comments or representations, please complete and return the attached comments form, or telephone 01922 652445, should you wish to discuss an alternative format. All responses must reach us by 29th February 2008.

Copies of the full version of the document can be downloaded and/or printed from the council website (<http://www.walsall.gov.uk>), or to access a hard copy, please telephone 01922 652445.

Walsall's Draft Rights of Way Improvement Plan **Consultation**

Please cut out and use the below form to make comments on Walsall's Draft Rights of Way Improvement Plan.

Responses should be returned to Public Rights of Way, Engineering and Transportation, Freepost WL53 Walsall MBC, Civic Centre, Darwall Street, Walsall, WS1 1DG, by no later than **29th February 2008**.

1. Overall, how do you rate the **content** of the draft rights of way improvement plan? (Please tick)

Excellent Good Average Poor

Please use the below space for comments about the **content** of the draft rights of way improvement plan

2. Overall, how do you rate the **layout** of the draft rights of way improvement plan? (Please tick)

Excellent Good Average Poor

Please use the space below for comments about the **layout** of the draft rights of way improvement plan

3. Overall how do you rate the **ease of understanding** of the rights of way improvement plan? (please tick)

Excellent Good Average Poor

Please use the space below for comments about the **ease of understanding** of the draft rights of way improvement plan

4. Generally as a whole, how do you rate the overall document? (please tick)

Excellent Good Average Poor

Please use to space below for comments about the overall document.

5. If you require individual feedback in relation to the comments you have raised, please provide your name, address, telephone and e-mail, below and state your preferred method of contact.

Please use the space below for any further comments or attach additional sheets if necessary. All representations are requested in writing, but please contact us if you wish to discuss an alternative format.

Equal Opportunities Monitoring Form

Please provide us with some details about you. Your answers here will enable us to analyse the results in more detail. The information you provide will only be used for the Rights of Way Improvement Plan and will not contain any information that could identify you.

1. What is your postcode? We will only use this information to help analyse the results geographically. Please enter your postcode in the spaces provided below.

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2. Are you male or female? Please tick ✓ one box only.

Male ₁ Female ₂

3. To which of the following age groups do you belong? Please tick ✓ one box only.

Under 16 years	<input type="checkbox"/> ₁	25 - 34 years	<input type="checkbox"/> ₄	56 - 64 years	<input type="checkbox"/> ₇
16 - 18 years	<input type="checkbox"/> ₂	35 - 44 years	<input type="checkbox"/> ₅	65 - 74 years	<input type="checkbox"/> ₈
19 - 24 years	<input type="checkbox"/> ₃	45 - 55 years	<input type="checkbox"/> ₆	75 - 84 years	<input type="checkbox"/> ₉
Prefer not to say	<input type="checkbox"/> ₁₀				

The Disability Discrimination Act considers a person disabled if:

You have a longstanding physical or mental condition or disability that has lasted or is likely to last at least 12 months, and this condition or disability has a substantial adverse effect on your ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities.

4. Do you consider yourself to be disabled as set out under the Disability Discrimination Act?

Please tick ✓ one box only.

Yes ₁ **Continue to question 4**
 No ₂ **Go to question 6**

5. Please state the type of impairment which applies to you. People may experience more than one type of impairment, in which case you may indicate more than one. If none of the categories apply, please mark 'Other' and specify the type of impairment.

Please tick ✓ all that apply.

Physical impairment	<input type="checkbox"/> ₁	Sensory impairment	<input type="checkbox"/> ₄
Mental health condition	<input type="checkbox"/> ₂	Learning disability/difficulty	<input type="checkbox"/> ₅
Long-standing illness or health condition	<input type="checkbox"/> ₃	Other (please write in below)	<input type="checkbox"/> ₉₅

Prefer not to say ₉₈

6. Please state the type of impairment which applies to you. People may experience more than one type of impairment, in which case you may indicate more than one. If none of the categories apply, please mark 'Other' and specify the type of impairment.

Please tick ✓ all that apply.

- | | | | |
|---|---------------------------------------|--------------------------------|--|
| Physical impairment | <input type="checkbox"/> ₁ | Sensory impairment | <input type="checkbox"/> ₄ |
| Mental health condition | <input type="checkbox"/> ₂ | Learning disability/difficulty | <input type="checkbox"/> ₅ |
| Long-standing illness or health condition | <input type="checkbox"/> ₃ | Other (please write in below) | <input type="checkbox"/> ₉₅ |

Prefer not to say ₉₈

7. To which of these groups do you consider you belong? Please tick ✓ one box only.

White

- British ₁
- Irish ₂
- Other White background ₃

Black or Black British

- Caribbean ₁₂
- African ₁₃
- Other black background ₁₄

Mixed

- White and Black Caribbean ₄
- White and Black African ₅
- White and Asian ₆
- Other Mixed background ₇

Chinese / other ethnic background

- Chinese ₁₅
- Any other ethnic background ₉₅
- (Please tick and write in below)

Asian or Asian British

- Indian ₈
- Pakistani ₉
- Bangladeshi ₁₀
- Other Asian background ₁₁

Prefer not to say ₉₈

8. Are you a member of any community group(s) or voluntary organisations, residents associations or forums, etc? Please tick ✓ all that apply.

Yes ₁ **Go to question 9**

9. Please write in the names of any community group(s) or voluntary organisation(s) you belong to in the space provided below.

Please cut out and return this form with the Draft Rights of Way Improvement Plan Comments Form.

Responses should be returned to Public Rights of Way, Engineering and Transportation, Freepost WL53 Walsall MBC, Civic Centre, Darwall Street, Walsall, WS1 1DG, by no later than **29th February 2008.**

Section 1

The Importance of the Public Rights of Way Network

1.1 Introduction

Public rights of way (PROW) are an important commodity providing a method for the community and visitors to the Borough of Walsall to gain access to recreation areas and local amenities. They provide a straight forward means of travelling, particularly for short journeys and are an important asset which can help to improve the quality of life for local residents and visitors alike.

Public rights of way provide a vital means to:

- Visit green spaces and recreational facilities to gain fresh air, exercise, walk the dog, or improve fitness
- Travel to key local services and amenities such as schools or other educational establishments, shops, libraries, hospitals and medical centres, local employment centres and public houses, for example
- Provide links to bus and train stations, thereby supporting sustainable modes of travel
- Allow access to visit friends, family members and neighbours supporting social interaction and community cohesion.
- Provide a "life-line" link to vulnerable community members including the elderly, young, those who do not have access to a car or those who reside in the more isolated areas of the borough.

The introduction of the Countryside and Rights of Way Act (CROWA), 2000, provided a new approach to the management and development of public rights of way and introduced new duties for local highway authorities to improve their networks. This was further supported by the findings of the national rights of way survey conducted by the Countryside Agency (now Natural England), in 2000. This identified that no local council had obtained the target for all rights of way to be properly maintained by 2000. Renewed emphasis was placed on local highway authorities to improve maintenance and management of existing PROW and create new relevant routes that would make a difference to the community who use or would like to use footpaths, bridleways and byways. It was vital for all local highway authorities to grasp an understanding of how the community and visitors use public rights of way, so they can plan to meet the range of needs and expectations of the community with different abilities. Rights of Way Improvement Plans (ROWIPs) are therefore seen as an important tool to provide this.

1.2 Representations or comments on Walsall's Draft Rights of Way Improvement Plan

Views are invited on Walsall's Draft Rights of Way Improvement **Plan by 29th February 2008.**

Please make representations or comments in writing to:

**Public Rights of Way
Engineering and Transportation
Walsall Council
Civic Centre
Darwall Street
Walsall
WS1 1DG
Fax: 01922 653780
E-mail: publicrightsofway@walsall.gov.uk**

A Draft Rights of Way Improvement Plan Consultation form has been developed, which you are encouraged to cut out and use, but if you do not have a copy, or feel that it does not meet your requirements letters and e-mails will also be accepted. If you wish to discuss any alternative arrangements for making representations or comments, please telephone 01922 652445.

Walsall's final Rights of Way Improvement Plan will be completed by March 2008. Please ensure any comments you wish to make reach us by the 29th February 2008 to allow us time to consider them and make necessary alterations. If you would like to receive specific feedback in relation to any comments you make, please state so and provide us with your name, address, telephone and e-mail.

1.3 Location

Walsall borough is located in the West Midlands region and borders with Birmingham City Council, Dudley Metropolitan Borough Council, Sandwell Borough Council, Staffordshire County Council and Wolverhampton City Council. The importance of considering improvements to public rights of way which will improve permeability across local authority boundaries is recognised. Discussions were held with neighbouring authorities from an early stage during the development of this document, to ensure that links beyond the boundaries of the borough of Walsall are considered.

1.4 Context

Walsall Council recognises the importance of PROW and their contribution to the above and is therefore committed to improving the current public rights of way network.

Walsall Council is committed to producing a plan by March 2008, to meet Government's targets for the better provision for walkers, cyclists, horse riders and members of the community with visual and mobility problems, in accordance with sections 60-62 of the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000.

As the local highway authority for the area, Walsall Council is committed to improving PROW in the borough of Walsall to meet present and future demand. This ROWIP will identify the current needs and barriers to access and set challenges for improvements which will improve the accessibility of our network.

Walsall Council's Corporate Plan 2007-2008 introduced a vision for improvements to the borough with 10 strategic priorities which were determined following detailed consultation with local people, local agencies and organisations. Maintenance and improvements of PROW can play an important role in achieving these 10 strategic priorities detailed below, impacting upon priorities 1, 2, 3, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9 and 10, below.

1. Ensure a clean and green borough
2. Make it easier for people to get around
3. Ensure all people are safe and secure
4. Make our schools great
5. Make Walsall a healthy and caring place
6. Encourage everyone to feel proud of Walsall
7. Make it easier to access local services
8. Strengthen the local economy
9. Listen to what local people want
10. Transform Walsall into an excellent local authority

1.5 Our Approach

To produce this ROWIP a systematic approach has been taken, as outlined below:

Firstly, current information on public rights of way was collated and examined, which was used to produce an overview of the condition and status of our public rights of way network, including details of ongoing maintenance and identified problems. Results of routine surveys and inspections gave us a clear indication on the condition of these paths and what needs to be done to bring these paths up to a good standard of user ability.

Baseline information on the make up of population was also collated which is based upon the information that is available from 2001 census records. We analysed this information to identify current trends and patterns which may affect public rights of way in the borough of Walsall at present or in the future.

We liaised with Countryside and Leisure Services on promoted and permissive routes to ascertain their current plans for structured improvements or maintenance throughout the network of paths that currently exist within country side parks and green open spaces. In the consultation period we also gained the views of key organisations with an interest in public rights of way on current or future proposals which may have an impact upon public rights of way. External organisations, responsible for promoted or permissive routes, for example British Waterways and Forest of Mercia, were also contacted at this stage.

We reviewed and summarised relevant legal and policy issues currently affecting public rights of way. Key regeneration strategies were also investigated which will have impact on the need for public rights of way in the future.

To ascertain the current and future needs of our users we devised a newsletter and survey form which could be completed on the Council's website or downloadable form from the council's website that could be completed and returned to public rights of way team within Walsall Council. Over 3000 hard copies of the questionnaire and survey were distributed.

During the public consultation period we have had the involvement of Walsall's Local Access Forum not only advising us on potential improvements to our existing network or possible locations for creation of new public rights of way, but also on publicity and distribution of the newsletters and surveys to other members of rights of way user groups. To promote the public consultation, and encourage participation we contacted a wide range of voluntary and community groups such as the Walsall Disability Forum, Black and Ethnic, Cycling Forum, etc., to gain their views. Please note this is only a summary of those invited to respond to consultation. A full list of consultee's can be viewed in appendices item 1.

The public consultation exercise was promoted on Walsall MBC's website and local press including the Walsall Advertiser and Walsall Chronicle, to encourage views of the local community.

An action plan was then compiled, based upon our findings from the above. General themes were identified and ten distinct aims have been introduced relating to each of these. Actions outlined detail priorities for improvements to the network public right of way within the borough of Walsall in the short medium and long term.

Identified improvements will be implemented by Walsall Council, in partnership with other key organisations. Some of the actions will only be implemented subject to availability of resources. The action plan will be reviewed and monitored on a regular basis, in line with local transport plan reviews and service planning to ensure that each of the actions outlined is still relevant and being implemented in accordance to plan.

















Section 2

Walsall Borough's Public Rights of Way Network

There are several types of path present which make up the public rights of way network in the borough of Walsall. The public rights of way team at Walsall Council are responsible for management and maintenance of public rights of way which form part of the highways network, i.e. they are recorded on the definitive map and statement or list of streets. There are several other types of path present within the borough, which may be owned or managed by other parties, but are still important in terms of the overall network. A description of each of the types of route and their relevance to the Rights of Way Improvement Plan is provided within this section.

2.1 The Definitive Map & Statement

The Definitive Map and Statement for Walsall Council records public rights of way in the borough of Walsall, in one of four categories (footpaths, bridleways, roads used as public paths or byways open to all traffic). Different users, including pedestrians, cyclists horse riders, horse drawn carts or carriages and motor propelled vehicles have rights of access according to the classification, which is summarised in the table below.

Access route	Legal Users					
Footpath						
Cycle track						
Bridleway						
Restricted byway						
Byway open to all traffic						

A plan showing the location of all definitive public rights of way is provided as **appendices item 2**.

If a way is recorded on the Definitive Map then that is conclusive evidence of public rights along the way unless there has been a legally authorised amendment. However, the fact that a way is not shown on the map is not proof that the public has no rights over it and thus, the map may be subject to change.

The map is accompanied by the Definitive Statement which may contain information about the rights of way, such as start and end point. The Definitive Map and statement are held at Walsall Civic Centre and are available for inspection during office hours.

As highway authority for the area Walsall Council has a statutory duty, under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981, to keep the Definitive Map up to date by legal orders. We also have a duty to investigate applications to add or delete rights of way or to change their status.

2.2 The History of the Definitive Map and Statement

The first Definitive Map came into existence as a result of the National Parks and Countryside Act 1949, which required all county councils in England and Wales to carry out a survey of their area and produce a map showing footpaths, bridleways and byways which were, or could reasonably be alleged to be, public rights of way. This was referred to as the draft map and was accompanied by a draft statement and was open to objection.

In the 1950s, during the time when public rights of way were being mapped, there was a greater number of county councils and former county boroughs. As a result of local government reorganisations and boundary changes, a total of nine surveying authorities made up the borough now known as Walsall.

The Secretary of State dealt with all objections, either confirming or rejecting them, and a Provisional Map and Statement were produced. This then led to the production of the first Definitive Map.

The Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 changed the procedures for compiling the Definitive Map and came into force in 1983. The Third Review was abandoned. The Definitive Map is now under continuous review and changes are made to it by Definitive Map Modification Orders as and when they occur.

The surveying authorities and breakdown of public rights of way within each of these areas is summarised in the below table.

Breakdown of classification of public rights of way within surveying authority areas

	Footpath No:	Length (Metres)	Bridle-way No:	Length (Metres)	Road used as public path No	Length (Metres)	Byway open to all traffic No:	Length (Metres)	Total No:	Length (Metres)
Aldridge/Brownhills	86	41255	0	0	0	0	0	0	86	41255
Darlaston	23	3241	0	0	0	0	1	45	24	3286
Walsall	112	22179	0	0	1	677	0	0	113	22856
Wednesbury	10	1729	0	0	0	0	0	0	10	1729
Wednesfield	3	877	0	0	1	304	0	0	4	1181
Willenhall	61	12212	6	1380	6	925	9	1502	82	16019

From the above table, it can be seen that all bridleways within the borough are located within the surveying authority area of Willenhall. Byways open to all traffic and roads used as public paths, which may also be used by horse riders are all located within the surveying authority areas of Willenhall and Darlaston. This represents a disproportion of distribution of bridleways within the borough, with them all located within predominantly built up areas of the borough and none located within the greener areas to the east of the borough. Other classifications of public rights of way are generally evenly distributed across the borough.

The Countryside and Rights of Way Act (CROWA), 2000 reclassified all roads used as public paths as restricted byways. Within our Definitive Maps and Statements, all of the affected routes are still shown as roads used as public paths so the necessary steps which need to be implemented and potential impacts on the network need to be reviewed and necessary actions implemented. There has also been

a misadministration where ten byways open to all traffic were recorded incorrectly as footpaths on internal land terrier maps, which has led to them being maintained as footpaths since the 1980's. A programme of improvements to bring these up to the appropriate standard has commenced, with each of the affected routes being reviewed on a case by case basis, then improved as necessary.

It is also acknowledged that some of the public rights of way currently included on the Definitive Map and Statement are incorrect. Some public rights of way may have become less well used over time and new desire lines have developed which deviate from the recorded route. It is also apparent that some rights of way may have been recorded incorrectly during the draft stage, or may have been diverted or extinguished without the necessary changes being made to the Definitive Map and Statement. Therefore it will be necessary to undertake a thorough investigation to identify all inaccuracies. This will introduce a planned programme of changes to the network, and then the Definitive Map and Statement. Amendments to the network and Definitive Map and Statement will be implemented to address these inaccuracies subject to meeting the requirements of legal orders, consent of landowners, availability of resources and consideration of local issues.

2.3 Making Changes To The Definitive Map and Statement

Changes can be made to the map most commonly by Modification Orders and Public Path Orders.

Modification Orders may be made:

- To add a right of way where it is shown to exist but not recorded on the Map.
- To alter the status of a right of way.
- To delete a right of way where it is shown to be included on the Map in error.
- To record a width in the definitive statement.

Anyone may apply to Walsall Council for a modification order to be made. The application should be accompanied by a plan showing the route and also, where appropriate, by user evidence forms.

Public Path Orders may be made:

- To divert an existing right of way where this is in the interests of the applicant or of the public as a whole and the new route is not substantially less convenient for the users.
- To extinguish an existing right of way where it can be shown that the right of way.

Anyone contemplating applying for a Public Path Order should consult with the Rights of Way officer for the Walsall area.

Walsall Council is directly responsible for maintenance of rights of way which are recorded on the Definitive Map and Statement, so these are of direct importance to the Rights of Way Improvement Plan. Statutory duties also include the requirement to keep a register of applications made for modification orders, which must be available for viewing on the internet. Currently we are not meeting this requirement so will need to introduce a new system and maintain it during routine reviews of the council website.

2.4 Adopted Footpaths

Adopted footpaths are part of the highways network other than those that are recorded on the Definitive Map. The adopted footpath network is maintained by the Council, as Highway Authority for the area. In general, adopted footpaths form part of the main network and link public footpaths which are minor highways. They are mainly recorded on the 'List of Streets', although there are a number of others which have come into existence through express dedication by relevant Council committees.

Records of adopted footpaths and those which have come into existence through express dedication are currently split between different council service areas and therefore we do not have an accurate

record in one location of all of these. Information is mainly available in paper format and although work has commenced on recording these on Geographical Information Systems this needs to be finalised and checked for accuracy against paper records. It will also be necessary to ascertain that, for each of the expressly dedicated footpaths, the necessary procedures required by statute have been adhered to.

When producing this Rights of Way Improvement Plan details have been extracted from the list of streets, and records held in public rights of way and legal filing. The interim findings of this are shown in **appendices item 2**. However, further investigation is required to ensure that all adopted footpaths have been correctly recorded, so the current details outlined may be subject to change.

Adopted footpaths are also of direct importance to the Rights of Way Improvement Plan, as they are the Council's responsibility to maintain.

2.5 Unadopted Footpaths

These are footpaths which are not maintained by the Highway Authority. They are usually the responsibility of a third party or in private ownership. Some unadopted footpaths are in Council ownership and are publicly maintained by other service areas within the Council, such as leisure and countryside services.

Unadopted footpaths are not part of the highway network, and therefore improvements fall outside the remit of the rights of way improvement plan. However, their importance as part of Walsall's rights of way network is recognised. There may be potential to improve links to unadopted footpaths, or to bring the highways network and unadopted footpaths network in line using public path orders to create new or improved routes. Further research is required to map and compare them to the network of definitive and adopted footpaths. They will also require assessment to identify their local importance to the public rights of way network.

There are some promoted and permissive routes which fall within this category, which are widely recognised. Although they are not recorded as part of Walsall borough's network of definitive or adopted paths, they are recognised as important routes contributing towards the overall network. Several of them may be owned and managed by third parties, but it is important that these routes are considered during development of improvements to ensure that there is a well connected network and co-ordinated network.

The council will have more influence over unadopted footpaths which are within their ownership. Where the land is owned by a third party, there are legal processes which may be followed to add the route onto the Definitive Map and Statement. It would not be possible to pursue these unless the council was satisfied that statutory criteria are met.

2.6 Canal Towpaths

Canal towpaths are legally part of the canal. The towpath beside a canal is usually available for public use on foot, and sometimes by bicycle. This is normally on a permissive basis but some towpaths are public rights of way. Many towpaths are owned by British Waterways, who are generally responsible for their upkeep. You should follow bylaws or restrictions on towpaths and be especially careful at locks.

The Council has no direct involvement in the maintenance or improvement of canal towpaths, but is committed to working with British Waterways to improve links between public rights of way and canal towpaths.

2.7 Access Land, Common Land and Village Greens

Walking on access land gives you the chance to enjoy vast areas of the outdoors without the need to stick to paths. Commonly known as the 'right to roam' this right covers most areas of registered common land. The Open Access symbol is used to mark the boundaries of land available for area-wide access. You can carry out most recreational activities that are on foot, such as walking, bird-watching,

climbing and running. Activities which are prohibited include: camping, cycling, horse riding, motor sports and the driving of any vehicle other than a mobility scooter or buggy. Land owners and land managers do have the right to close off access land for reasons of maintenance, nature conservation or for public safety.

Common land is usually in private ownership, with rights of common over it. Common land is defined under the Commons Registration Act, 1965. There is a statutory right of access on foot to nearly all registered common land, notably under Part I of the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000. In some areas, restrictions on the new right of access may be necessary to protect the interests of land management or wildlife. Access under the 2000 Act is also subject to exceptions: for example, it does not apply to golf courses, racecourses or airfields, even where these are common land. The main features of common land are that it is generally open, unfenced and remote.

Town or village greens have a similar history to common land. However, they are defined separately for the purposes of the Commons Registration Act. Village greens are usually areas of land within defined settlements over which local inhabitants can indulge in lawful sports and pastimes. These might include organised or ad-hoc games, picnics, fetes and other similar activities. Whilst land forming town or village greens may be privately owned, many greens are owned and maintained by local Parish or Community Councils. Some greens may also have rights of common (i.e. grazing of livestock) over them.

Within the borough of Walsall, there are several areas which have access land, common land or village green status. These can play a valuable role in terms of access for leisure and recreational purposes and therefore have been considered within the remit of this document. Areas are mainly to the north of the borough and include:

- Brownhills Common
- Pelsall Common
- Pelsall Wood Common
- Pelsall North Common
- Nest Common

Maintenance and management of access land falls mainly to the responsibility of Countryside and Leisure Services, but often has recorded public rights of way running in the vicinity or across the sites, along with non highways paths such as permissive or promoted routes below. This is a key area for consideration of improvement due to the overall aim of this plan to improve access to leisure and recreational facilities. Common Land and Village Greens are maintained by Planning and Regeneration Services, and although they are few in number their importance in terms of access for recreation is also recognised.

2.8 Permissive and promoted routes

A permissive path, sometimes called a concessionary path, is a path which the land owner permits the public to use, with the intention that it should not become a public right of way. The landowner may erect notices to that effect, and perhaps close the footpath once a year. Because a permissive path is not a public right of way, it is not in general subject to rights of way law. Permissive paths can be a supplement to the right of way network. Permissive paths can also provide useful routes away from traffic in urban areas.

There are several examples of permissive routes which are present across the borough of Walsall, which form promoted routes. Types of promoted routes include National Trails, Long Distance Routes and Recreational Routes. National Trails are usually nationally recognised trails. They include some of the best-known routes in Britain, passing through some of its most beautiful countryside and areas of great historic interest. They are all well-waymarked using the standard acorn symbol, and described in a series of official guide books. Recreational Routes, in addition to the nationally recognised trails, are many more waymarked routes, usually created with the involvement of local authorities and with the

help of local Ramblers and other walkers who work voluntarily to waymark, maintain and describe the routes. There is an enormous variety of these paths, from short health walks and urban 'green chains' to lengthy cross-country treks of several hundred kilometres. Each is waymarked with its own logo or the name of the route, though standards of waymarking and format and availability of leaflets and guidebooks vary enormously.

Permissive routes are maintained and managed by the relevant land owner(s) so will not directly be improved within the remit of this Improvement Plan. However, options to strengthen links between the network of highway paths and permissive routes is of relevance.

An analysis has been undertaken to identify how definitive routes differ from promoted routes.

2.9 Cycle Routes

These include cycle tracks and the National Cycle Network. The National Cycle Network is made up of many cycle tracks and paths which form the main. Cycle tracks are ways on which people have a right to cycle, and possibly to walk. Shared use on footpaths means footpaths are segregated by markings on the ground separating walkers from cyclists. This means cyclists and walkers can use the same path without conflict. Cycle routes can also be found along canal sides and links into leisure routes.

There are a number of both off and on road cycle routes and although these are not directly maintained by the public rights of way service area, there is a dedicated cycling officer with responsibility for improvement. Some routes are maintained by the council, others are maintained by Sustrans. The importance of improving links between public rights of way and cycle routes is recognised.

Walsall borough has a network of both off road and on-road cycle routes which include Sustrans Route 5 of the National Cycle Network, safer routes to school and canal tow-paths. There is a proposed programme of improvements to the network of cycling paths, which includes proposals for the introduction of new routes, both on and off road.

2.10 Users and their needs

The requirements for the physical design and construction of a public right of way will differ considerably between one route and another. This may be due to differing local features or the intended use.

Please see section 5 for full details of the consultation and responses received, should you require further details.

Users of public rights of way can be classified under the following:

2.10.1 Walkers

These are individuals who use public rights of way for journeys by walking and can be further subdivided in the following way:

Functional – these are walkers who use public rights of way for essential journeys including, for example, commuting to work or a place of education, attending a medical appointment or shopping. Relevant routes will typically be in an urban or semi urban area, linking employment, education and local amenities, and may link to other modes of transport, district centres or residential areas. Their requirements include a direct linear route, which is typically hard surfaced, clean and free from obstructions.

Recreational – this includes those who walk for pleasure or exercise, including dog walkers. Their requirements will typically include routes which are rural or semi rural including those across parks and open spaces. Their requirements include a good surface, clear signs and way markers, where the route deviates from a hard surface and they are likely to prefer a circular route, which starts and ends at the same location, possibly with information on points of local interest along the route.

Ramblers – this includes those who walk for pleasure or exercise, on a more structured basis possibly as part of a formal group or programmed walk. Their preference is likely to be rural routes, which run

across fields, possibly over grassland with no defined route on the ground. They may follow a map, promoted walk or route guide. Characteristics of a right of way which are likely to be preferred by this type of walker will include good signs and way marking to allow the route to be easily identified; suitable information on the location of routes is important. Barriers may be encountered such as stiles or kissing gates, which should be in good working order and generally the route needs to be kept free from obstructions such as vegetation, flooding, ploughing and cropping. Some mud or uneven surfaces may be acceptable and add to the experience of feeling away from the hustle and bustle of built up areas.

Runners/ joggers – some people may wish to use public rights of way for running or jogging. We have received only limited responses from those who wish to use public rights of way for this purpose. Generally it is perceived that there will be a range of requirements depending upon the type of jogging which is undertaken, which could vary from training for on-road events such as marathons, cross country running, or informal use purely for exercise. Therefore preferences will vary, but generally it is perceived that good links between rights of way will be required to facilitate use for this purpose.

Comments have been made by the Local Access Forum and various walking groups, which supports the above needs of walkers.

2.10.2 Cyclists

Use of public rights of way for cycling, can also be split into two distinct groups:

Functional use – this includes, for example, commuting to a place of work or education, or for journeys to access local amenities. Cyclists who are using public rights of way for this purpose are likely to require a smooth surface, with adequate width for two cyclists to pass with ease and careful consideration of legal obstructions such as motorcycle barriers to ensure they may pass through unhindered. A hard surface such as asphalt is likely to be most effective to prevent wear and rutting from tyres.

Recreational use – journeys by bicycle for leisure or exercise are included here. Requirements are similar to those for functional use, but users falling into this category are more likely to be circular routes.

The Cycling Forum also outlined a requirement for improving on road cycle routes and canal towpaths, so the importance of providing good links between each of these is recognised. Off road cycle routes are particularly important when considering safer routes to school.

2.10.3 Horse riders

The majority of use of public rights of way for horse riding is thought to be for leisure purposes. Typically the route must be wide enough for 2 horses to pass and overhanging features must be of a sufficient height to allow easy passage. Routes must be kept clear of obstructions in line with these requirements. Surfaces likely to be required are softer, maybe comprising of natural grass or compacted stone.

Representations have been made by horse riders who have highlighted the extent of problems they experience with horse riding within the borough, due to the shortage of suitable routes. All bridleways within the borough are located within the areas of Willenhall and Darlaston, to the west of the borough. This does not correspond with the locations of riding stables and desired locations of route which tends to be located towards the east of the borough in areas such as Aldridge and Streetly.

There are travellers' horses tethered within some areas of the borough, including Willenhall, Darlaston and Bloxwich areas, for example. No representations have been made in relation to this.

2.10.4 Trotting carts or carriages

Discussions with Local Access Forum members have been held and it is thought that there is little requirement to improve routes for this type of user. Generally, the majority of users of trotting carts or carriages tend to use them on the main highway network rather than on public rights of way. There have been no representations to provide new or improved routes for this purpose. It is considered that use of public rights of way by this type of user could be more dangerous in some circumstances if the routes were short and there was a possibility that a horse could bolt and run out into vehicular traffic.

2.10.5 Motor propelled vehicles

There have been no representations from this particular user group and it is felt that there is no specific demand for public rights of way in the borough for this purpose.

2.10.6 Disabled access

Disabled users of public rights of way will have a variety of different needs, dependant upon the nature of their disability. It is important that the needs of disabled users are addressed in accordance with the Disability Discrimination Act, 1995. Walsall Council is committed to improving access to public rights of way to meet the needs of disabled users. Representations made show that disabled access is a concern of the community, with access for wheelchairs, mobility scooters, the blind and mobility impaired highlighted. Availability of suitable information, in line with disabled user's requirements has also been reported as a concern.

2.10.7 Shared use routes

There are already shared use routes present within the borough, some of which have proven very successful. They have a vital role to play in provision of safe off road routes away from traffic. Some concerns have been raised about potential conflicts between different user groups on a shared use route. When considering development of shared use routes, the potential conflicts between users will be considered and steps taken to reduce this during early design stages.

2.10.8 Guidance on users needs

There are several best practice guides which outline specific requirements that may benefit particular users groups, some of which are advisory, others which are based upon legal criteria. Two examples of guidance regularly used include:

- The Metric Handbook Planning and Design data, 2nd Edition, edited by David Adler
- Inclusive Mobility, produced by the Department for Transport

Please note this is not an exhaustive list and there may be more relevant best practice guidance, or additional legal requirements which must be adhered to. These will be considered in conjunction with the above summary of users requirements when considering improvements to public rights of way.

2.11 Key local issues

It is essential that the general make up of the borough and its communities are considered as an integral component of Walsall's Rights of Way Improvement Plan as this will help to provide an understanding of the needs of users of the network. Consideration of current population information, key trends and levels of deprivation will help to provide an understanding of the need of present users of public rights of way along with how this may change in the future. Keeping abreast of key local trends will ensure that proposed improvements to public rights of way are robust enough to cope with the changing needs.

Within this section an overview of census information is given, along with details of the levels of deprivation experienced and health issues.

2.11.1 Census trends

The population of the Borough at the 2001 Census was 253,499. This was a slight decrease (2.3%) from the figure of 259,488 for 1991. Underlying this trend for decline in Walsall's population is a tendency for net loss through migration, partly offset by a small natural increase in the local population. It should be noted, however, that the net migration figures are made up of a complex pattern of gross flows in both directions.

Walsall has an age structure which is broadly similar to the national average, but with a slightly higher proportion of children aged up to 14, a lower share of 30-44 year olds and a higher proportion of people aged between 45 and retirement.

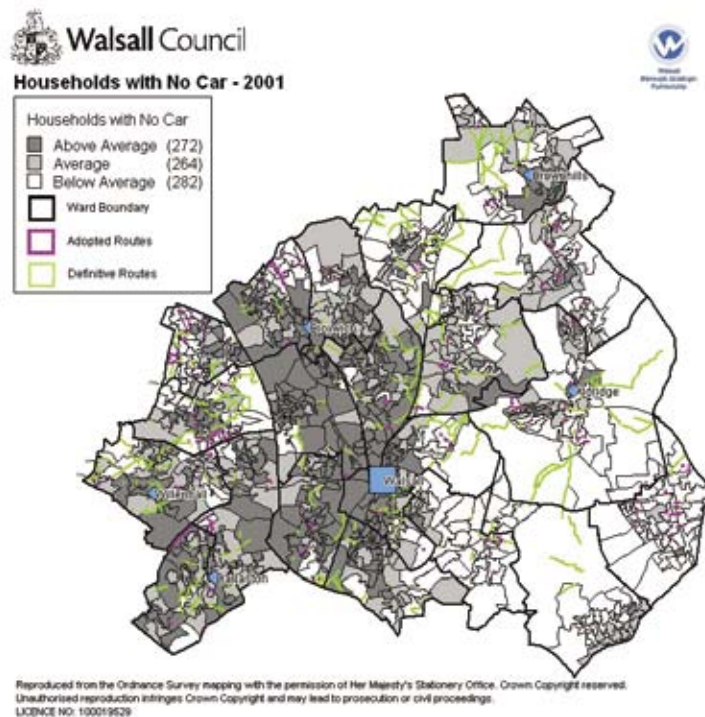
The population is also increasingly ageing: the numbers over retirement age, particularly over 75 years, have continued to increase significantly in recent years.

The Borough's ethnic population in 2001 was 13.6% of the total, but with considerable variation at ward level. Most are of Indian, Pakistani or Bangladeshi origin, although there is also a significant population of Afro-Caribbean background.

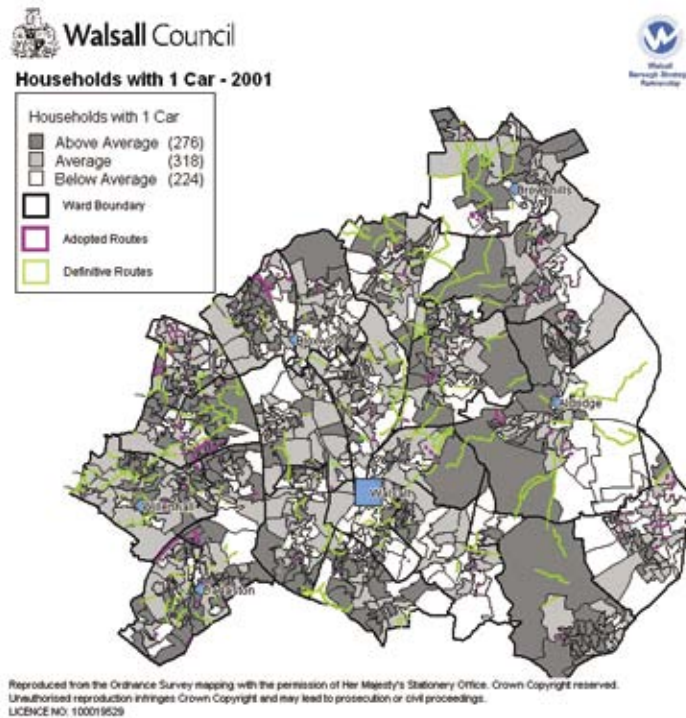
Despite the fall in population, the number of households in the Borough has continued to increase, from 97,849 in the 1991 Census to 101,333 in 2001. The apparent paradox of more households within a declining population is explained by a reduction in average household size, which in turn is due to a complex set of factors, including the changing age structure of the population and social trends such as fewer marriages and an increasing divorce rate.

2.11.2 Census maps

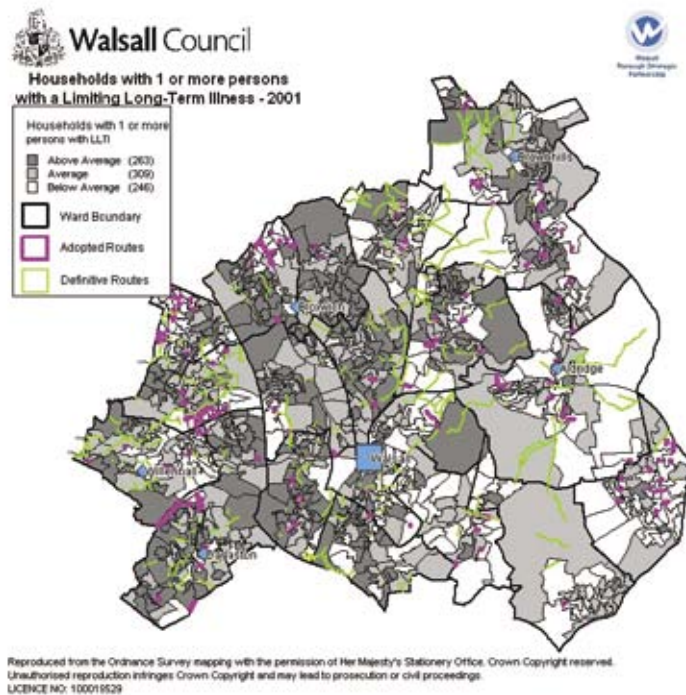
Map 1, below - Indicates households with no car -2001 and on examining the information it clearly shows that the majority of people without cars live in the west of the borough with the exception of Brownhills which has a reasonable number of people without cars per households.



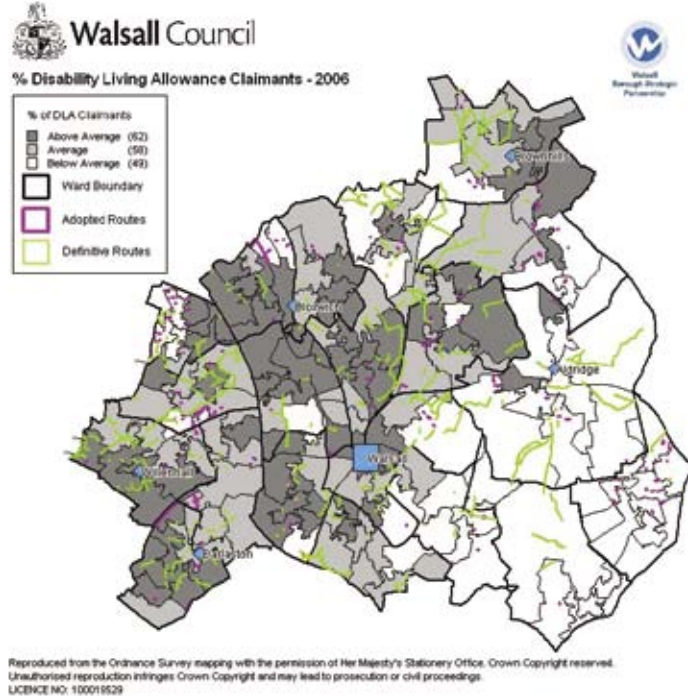
Map 2, below - Indicates households with 1 car -2001 and on examining the information it clearly shows that the majority of people with one car live in the more rural parts of the borough around Aldridge with the exception to the West of the borough where certain areas contain a population of people who only have one car.



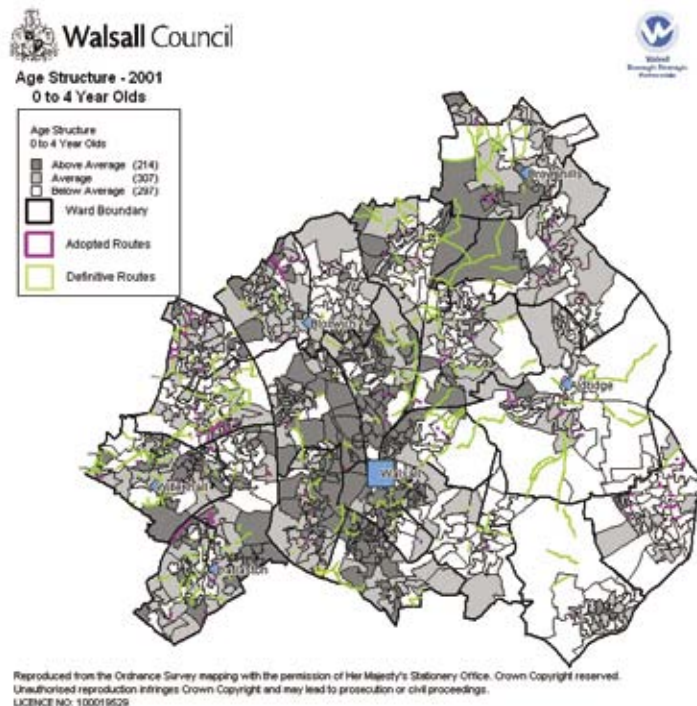
Map 3, below - Indicates Households with 1 or more persons with a limiting Long-Term Illness -2001 and on examining the information it clearly shows that the majority of people with a long – term illness live in the West of the borough places such as Darlaston, Willenhall, Bloxwich and some parts of Walsall itself. We also have a reasonable number of people with a limiting Long-Term Illness living in Brownhills.



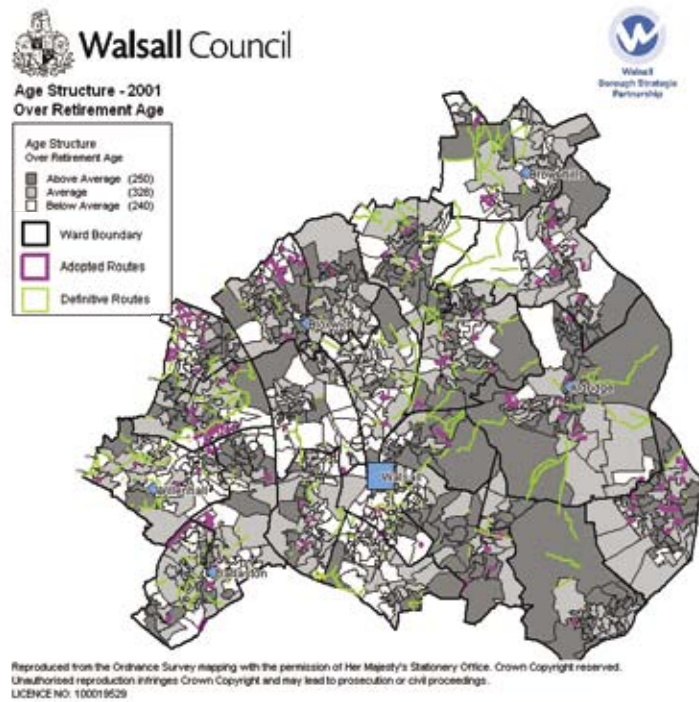
Map 4, below - Indicates the amount of people that claim Disability Living Allowance in 2006 and on examining the information it clearly states the majority of claimants live in the following areas: Darlaston, Willenhall, Walsall South West and Bloxwich. We also have a reasonable number of claimants just south of Brownhills. Also according to this information we have very few people that claim disability living allowance around Aldridge.



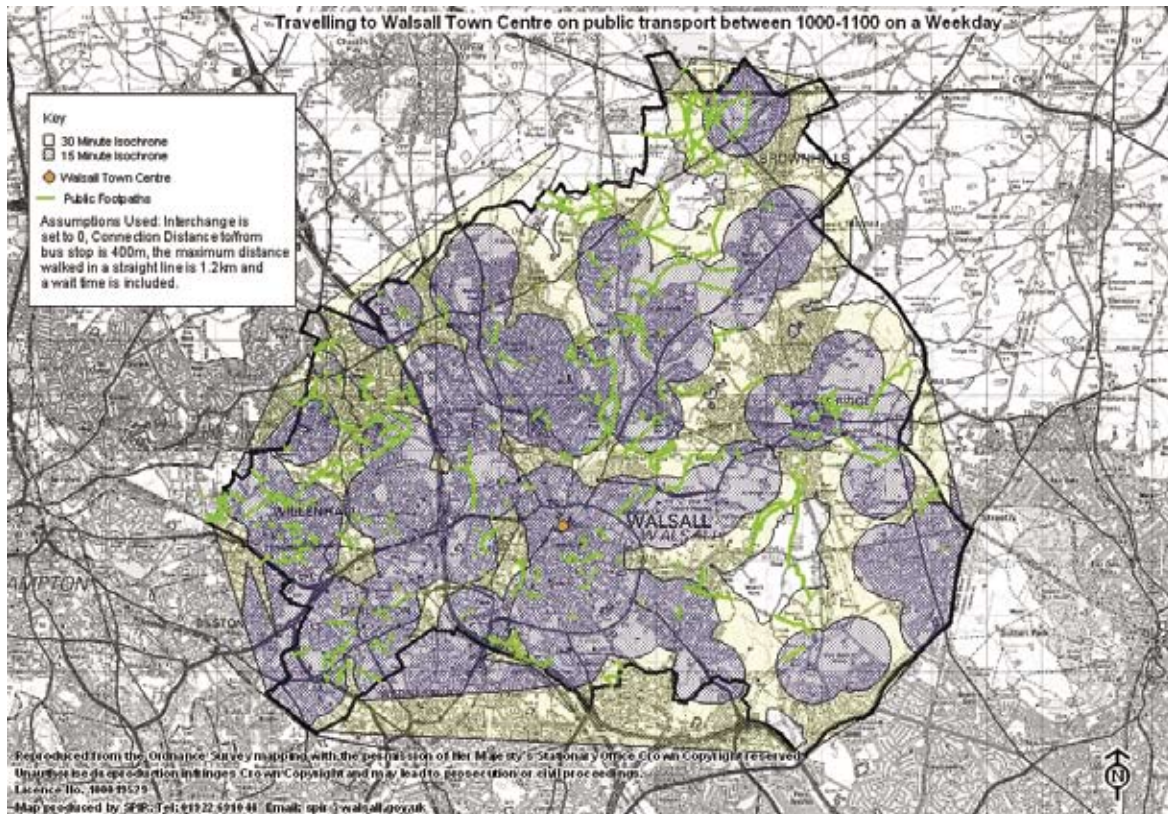
Map 5, below - Indicates Age structure -2001 0 to 4 years olds and on examining the information it clearly states the a higher amount of children under four years old live in the following areas: Willenhall, Darlaston, West of Walsall and South of Brownhills. Also according to this information very few people have children under four years old in Aldridge.



Map 6, below - Indicates Age structure-2001 over Retirement Age and on examining the information it clearly states a higher amount of people over the retirement age live in Aldridge, Bloxwich and Brownhills compared to Darlaston and Willenhall.



Map 7, below - Illustrates bus services within Walsall Borough and provides an indication of how public rights of way may play an important link to the community in accessing these services within the borough.



2.11.3 East/west split of the borough

There is a significant difference between the east and west of the borough, which has been referred to as the east / west split. A review of census information and the indices of deprivation has been conducted, which has highlighted this issue.

Wards to the west of the borough have higher levels of:

- Population density
- Dependent children
- Ethnic minority groups
- Single households under pensioner age
- Lone parent households with dependent children, and those with no earners
- Overcrowded households
- Households with no car
- Unemployed people

Wards to the east have higher levels of:

- Retired people and those over age 75
- Owner occupiers
- Economically active males and females

Wards in the more rural east of the borough such as Aldridge Central and south, Brownhills and Pheasey have the lowest population densities.; By contrast, wards to the centre and west of the borough such as Blakenall, Pleck and Short heath have the highest densities.

The Indices of multiple deprivation, 2004 introduced super output areas and compared levels of deprivation in England and Wales. The indices of multiple deprivation combines a number of indicator on income; employment, health and disability; education, skills and training; barriers to housing and services; crime and the living environment, to provide an overall indication of the levels of deprivation experienced. Within the borough of Walsall 17% of super output areas were within the 10% most deprived areas in England and Wales and 41% were in the 20% most deprived in England and Wales. The majority of super output areas which fall within these two categories are concentrated in the east of the borough.

2.11.4 Health issues

Walsall NHS Teaching Primary Care Trust analysed and investigated prevalent health issues within the borough within their Lifestyle and Health in Walsall survey, 2005. Some of the findings are detailed below.

a) Obesity and Overweight in Walsall

About 19% of Walsall respondents were obese and 38% were overweight. This is equivalent to 35,000 people obese plus 72,000 people overweight in the borough of Walsall. The obesity rate peaks at over 25% in people aged 45-64 years, whilst overweight increases to 47% in older people aged 65-74.

Obesity in Walsall was more prevalent among the more deprived sections of the community (22% in IMD1 versus 14% in IMD5) IMD stands for Index of Multiple Deprivation which gives each local authority its level rankings. This is split into six areas of importance which are Income, employment, Health & Disability, Education, skills & Training, Housing & Services, Crime and Living Environment. Each area has its own weighting of importance which is then analysed to a local authority level rankings,

being one for highest level of deprivation to five being the lowest of deprivation for Walsall. In contrast, overweight prevalence was higher among the more affluent socio-economic groups.

Across ethnic groups in Walsall, the 2005 survey suggested that obesity was less prevalent in the Asian community (14%) than in the White population (19%). Nevertheless, over 30% of Asian, Black or White ethnic groups were overweight.

There was a substantial variation in obesity and overweight across Walsall wards. In five wards (Pheasey, Birchills, Aldridge North and Walsall Wood, Blakenall and Brownhills) over 60% of respondents were either obese or overweight. The three wards with the lowest combined obesity/overweight rates were St Matthews (45%), Short Heath (51%) and Paddock (53%).

b) Smoking in Walsall

21% of men and 20% of women in Walsall indicated they were smokers in the 2005 survey (equivalent to 19000 men and 20000 women in the total population), which was marginally higher than the regional average prevalence rates. In Walsall's Asian community, the survey suggested that smoking was almost exclusively confined to men (17%).

Smoking prevalence was highest among younger age groups aged 25-44 years (27-28%). Among the most deprived socio-economic group (IMD1 quartile), smoking prevalence was more than 2.5 times higher than in the most affluent section of the Walsall population (IMD5).

The survey indicated a substantial variation in smoking prevalence across wards in Walsall, ranging from 10% in Aldridge North and Walsall Wood to over 30% in Bentley and Darlaston North and Blakenall. Since the 2001 survey, smoking prevalence had fallen in 12 wards (particularly in Short Heath, Birchills Leamore, Blakenall, and Aldridge North and Walsall Wood) but had increased in 8 wards (particularly in Palfrey, St Matthews and Willenhall).

The survey also indicated that 17% of adults were living with a smoker. This is equivalent to about 33,000 people potentially subject to passive smoking. In addition, more than a quarter of children (under 18) were in a household where the respondent was a smoker. This would be equivalent to about 17,000 children in the Walsall population. However, the latter may be an underestimate, since it does not include children living in a household where there is a smoker but the smoker was not the respondent to the survey. A secondary schools survey in 2003 found that 58% of 12-15 year olds in Walsall were living with a smoker.

c) Mental health

Many people in the United Kingdom suffer from mental health conditions such as stress, depression and not being able to cope with their lives in general. This could be after a loss of a job, a bereavement of a loved one or even the breakdown of a relationship. The frequency of mental health disorders in the United Kingdom is thought to change slightly every year, nobody can know the exact figures as many cases go unnoticed for a long period of time, but it is possible for 1/6 of the British population to be affected by a life disrupting mental illness at any one time.

Section 3

Legal, policy and strategy context

There are many legal powers which Walsall Council, as Highway Authority for the area, can use to improve its network of definitive and adopted footpaths. A summary list and overview of relevant statutes, national, regional and local policies, and their relevance to public rights of way and the rights of way improvement plan is provided within this section. This list is not an exhaustive list and may be subject to change, as new legislation or policies are introduced. Please refer to the relevant act or policy document for full details.

Any new legislation or relevant strategies that come into force during the lifetime of this plan and their relevance will be reviewed on a regular basis. Actions outlined for improvements to Walsall Council's public rights of way network will also be reviewed regularly and will take account of any new legislation and policies.

The following table provides a list of all relevant legislation, national, regional and local policies. Further details on their relevance to Walsall's Rights of way Improvement Plan is provided within the appendices item 3.

Details of Legal Statutes, National Policy, Regional Policy and Local Policy

3.1 Summary List

Legal Statutes	Title	Year
	Clean Neighbourhoods and Environment Act	2006
	Countryside and Rights of Way Act	2000
	Crime and Disorder Act	1998
	Disability Discrimination Act	1995
	Town and Country Planning Act	1990
	Road Traffic Regulation Act	1984
	Cycle Tracks Act	1984
	Wildlife and Countryside Act	1981
	Highways Act	1980
	Countryside Act	1968
National	Policy	Date & Source
	Guidance on Local Access Forums in England	Department for Environment Food and Rural Affairs 2007
	Improving Information for Disabled People	Office for Disability Issues 2007
	Living Places	Communities.gov.uk 2004
	Sustainable Communities in the West Midlands	Communities.gov.uk 2003
	Making the Connections	Social Exclusion Unit 2002
	Inclusive Mobility	Department for Transport 2002
Regional	Policy	Date & Source
	West Midlands Regional Spatial Strategy	Government Office West Midlands, 2004
	Delivering Advantage:	Advantage
	West Midlands Economic Strategy and Action Plan 2004 - 2010	West Midlands, 2004
	Centro's 20 year Strategy	Centro 2003
	West Midlands Local Transport Plan	West Midlands Joint Committee 2006
Local	Policy	Date & Source
	Equal Opportunities	Walsall Council
	Walsall Green Space Strategy	Walsall Council 2006
	Walsall Cycling Strategy	Walsall Council 2003
	Walsall Compact	Walsall Council 2005
	Walsall Plan -Unitary Development Plan (UDP)	Walsall Council 2005
	Walsall Walking and Mobility Strategy	Walsall Council 2003
	Health Profile for Walsall 2006	Department of Health 2006
	Our Healthier Nation	Walsall NHS Primary Care Trust 2005
	Walsall's Community Plan	Walsall Borough Strategic Partnership 2005
	Situational Crime Interventions Policy	Safer Walsall Borough Partnership 2005
	Lighting up Walsall	Walsall Council 2002
	Equality and Diversity Strategy	Walsall Council 2006
	Disability Equality Scheme	Walsall Council 2006

Section 4

The current situation

4.1 Introduction

It is important to determine baseline information so that it is possible to ascertain current strengths and weaknesses with the public rights of way network and current management and practices. This will allow for acknowledgement and continuation of practices which have worked well, but will also allow for identification of problem areas or gaps in current provision. Collecting and reviewing information of this nature will allow identification of areas which would benefit from improvement and also provide a benchmark for improvement.

Within this section key local information, current management practices, improvement programmes and identified problems are outlined to provide an overview of the current situation in respect of public rights of way in the borough of Walsall. This baseline information has then been reviewed and key areas or themes for improvement have been identified.

4.2 Cycling

Many cyclists use public rights of way to beat congestion within towns and cities in the United Kingdom, with Walsall being no exception to this. Within the borough of Walsall over recent years we have actively encouraged this by developing new cycle paths across the town from north to south and east to west. These paths are close to our public rights of way networks which enable cyclists to ride their bicycles safely away from main stream traffic.

Cycling is the most economical, environmentally friendly and healthy form of transport. It is a realistic form of transport for short everyday local trips, but at present cycling only makes up less than 2% of all journeys in the West Midlands. The West Midlands Local Transport Plan target is to increase the proportion of cycling journeys to 3% by 2006, but Walsall Council hope to exceed this figure. The National Cycle Route 5 runs through the borough from Chasewater to Yew Tree Lane and onto Sandwell Valley, passing directly through Walsall town centre. Facilities for cyclists have been improved in a number of sites across the borough over recent years, but this is only the start of an on-going process.

The main aim of Walsall's Cycling Strategy is to encourage more cycling, by providing high quality facilities for both new and experienced cyclists. This will be done through developing safer cycle links between Walsall town centre and the district centres. These routes link some of the borough's main trip destinations as they include schools, employment the area's public transport interchanges and leisure facilities.

To maximise the benefits for cyclists the Walsall cycle network will aim to connect to networks being developed in adjacent areas such as Wolverhampton, Sandwell, South Staffordshire and Birmingham, as well as to the wider National Cycle Network. The network will be based on a combination of existing roads and the off-road greenway network, including canal towpaths. This achieves a balance between off and on road routes, and offers the best opportunities for cycling in Walsall. Complementary connections can be made to the basic routes, ensuring that the overall network meets the needs of cyclists of all abilities and user groups.

4.3 Safer Routes to School

The school run is now a major contributor to rush hour congestion and children's health and independence are affected. The Government wants to see 90% of secondary school pupils walking or cycling to school by 2010.

The Council co-ordinates a Safer Routes to School program which aims:

- To improve the safety of the journey to and from school.
- To reduce the number of pedestrians and cyclist casualties.
- To generate a more sustainable approach to pupil and teacher travel by the school, so reducing the use of the private car for the school journey.
- To promote educational and practical opportunities for young people to determine changes to their own environment and travel habits.

The Council prioritises its program of major Safer Routes Schemes for secondary schools, based on a number of factors within the vicinity of each school in question. Factors include the number of young pedestrian and cyclist casualties, existing travel modes and the number of young people living close to the school. Schemes concentrate on improving road safety and creating better access for pedestrians and cyclists, and they often include the provision of quality cycle security and storage measures on school sites. All schemes go through a consultation process with young people and the local community. The Council's Safer Routes program is now expanding to include more primary schools alongside the work already being done with secondary schools. The schemes are designed to have community wide benefits extending beyond the locality of the school, and where possible are linked with other pedestrian and cycling schemes forming part of a network.

Successful Safer Routes projects involve more than just engineering measures, with education, training and publicity campaigns all playing an important part.

Schools involved with safer routes should develop a Travel Plan, outlining the school's commitment to reduce congestion outside the school and promote decreased dependence on the car for people travelling to the school. School travel plan initiatives typically include programmes such as 'walking buses' or 'cycle trains', where trained adults accompany groups of young people to school.

Schools not in Safer Routes priority areas, but who are actively developing a school travel plan, may be able to receive funding for minor measures as part of the plan or to prepare for a larger project in the future.

Travel plans for community and companies within the borough are also in development. These may also provide an indication of barriers to sustainable modes of travel such as cycling and walking, including potential problems or areas for improvement with the public rights of way network. They will be monitored and any public rights of way issues identified will be considered.

4.4 Planning and regeneration context

Within the borough of Walsall there are many planning and regeneration strategies, currently underway to improve the quality of life of residents to the borough and provide a strong local economy. The key drivers for regeneration, to meet these aims include:

- Transport and accessibility
- Economy and employment
- Town and district centres
- Environment and quality of life
- Housing

There are several key regeneration schemes proposed, some of which are currently in development, others which are nearing completion. These include a mix of projects which will focus on improved housing, improved public realm, enhanced local facilities, and opportunities for business and learning. Improvements are being delivered through a number of key programmes delivered by Walsall Regeneration Company, Walsall Strategic Regeneration Framework, Town Centre Transport Package and Traffic Management.

It is essential that links between public rights of way and regeneration proposals are considered so that improvements to the existing network can be made, or new routes can be provided which will meet the changing environment as these key regeneration areas. This will help to ensure that the present and future needs of users of the public rights of way network are met.

Some of the key regeneration schemes, broken down into key regeneration areas are outlined below.

4.4.1 Walsall

There are several key projects focusing upon Walsall Town Centre. These include Walsall Gigaport, which proposes a series of office developments; St Matthews Quarter including a new ASDA superstore and niche shops; Walsall First Business and Learning Campus, which will include a new campus anchored by the new college and retail investment; Bradford Place and Station Street, upgraded bus facilities and links to the railway station; New Gallery Square which aims to attract new creative industries with restaurants and café bars; and Waterfront North and South which will create designer homes, green offices and public art along the canal and town wharf.

Also linked to the development of the town centre is a new development to the Manor Hospital through Public Finance Initiative Funding and Canalside Communities proposal which will include creation of significant new sustainable communities merging with existing ones from the Town Centre, to Reedswood and onto Leamore.

4.4.2 Aldridge

The strategic regeneration framework proposes the improvement of the district centre, remodelling the district centre, remodelling the precinct and north side of the High Street to provide a mix of residential and retail. The aim is to provide a more open environment, larger shop units and improved car parking.

Plans also include a new railway station on the existing heavy rail line south of the district centre, environmental and security improvements to the Redhouse Estate and the redevelopment of garages sites to provide housing for sale, shared ownership and social rent.

There are also proposals to improve public realm and conservation areas, encouraging private sector investment to retail facilities.

4.4.3 Bentley

The area developed has a largely post-war municipal housing estate now managed by Walsall Housing Group. The estate has an established local centre but some of the facilities are being rationalised and the opportunity exists to create a new focus to the area. Elsewhere a review of existing and under-used open spaces may create opportunities for new development to provide a choice of housing tenures.

The strategic Regeneration Framework proposes improvements to the local centre to provide new housing and enhanced public spaces, creating a new urban heart. In particular the centre will be reinforced by the provision of a new library and related community facilities.

4.4.4 Bloxwich

The town centre is linear and ill defined with no clear gateways. Parts of Bloxwich show signs of housing market failure, car parking for shoppers and visitors is limited and poorly located and some key facilities are disconnected from the district centre. There is potential for developing sites to the north and south of the centre, and the attractive conservation areas within the High Street could be enhanced.

Walsall's New Deal project has helped fund the transformation of the Market Square including improved pedestrian links.

The Strategic Regeneration Framework encompasses 21 projects for Bloxwich. These cover:

- Bloxwich District Centre – environmental improvements, traffic management and parking strategy.

- Creating a gateway site to Bloxwich through the demolition of Ball and Leadbeater Houses and redevelopment.
- An enlarged and improved Asda superstore on southern gateway to the centre.
- Residential and commercial mixed use development.
- Re-location of Bloxwich Railway Station.
- Environmental improvements and estate remodelling including new shops and private sector housing in the surrounding Blakenall Heath, Mossley, Leamore, Beechdale and Dudley Fields areas.

4.4.5 Brownhills

Brownhills has a very linear centre while suffering from heavy traffic. Proposals exist for a package of highway improvements which include the partial pedestrianisation of High Street. The main shopping precinct requires upgrading to modern standards and there are opportunities for new, canalside residential development.

The Strategic Regeneration Framework identifies several projects for Brownhills: food and retail, traffic improvements, public transport and pedestrian access.

Three canalside mixed tenure schemes would provide over 200 new properties with a mixture of three storey apartments, one and two bedroom flats and four bedroom detached homes.

Housing developments in three areas of High Street could lead to the building of nearly 300 new homes. These would include four storey apartments, one and two bedroom flats and three bedroom semis. More than 60 flats would be cleared to make way for the new homes.

4.4.6 Darlaston

A small compact centre, Darlaston presents some major regeneration challenges. The centre is tightly constrained by the road network and surrounding residential developments while recent developments have diverted trade and activity away from King Street resulting in high vacancy levels in the retail outlets. Difficult trading conditions have been further exacerbated by poor design and environmental quality.

The Strategic Regeneration Framework proposes remodelling the district centre around King Street introducing new activities and larger shop units. It also involves the relocation of key services and agencies into the centre, and the introduction of new residential uses. Planned projects include:

- Investment in adjacent residential areas.
- Reclamation and redevelopment of brown field sites and contaminated land.
- Location of public services in King Street.

Darlaston Strategic Development area also proposes the development of over 20 hectares of brownfield land next to the M6. This will provide attractive locations for major national and international companies and support smaller start ups and growing businesses.

4.4.7 Goscote

Through membership of the Housing Marketing Renewal Steering Group for the Black Country and Telford, funding has been secured to develop a comprehensive development masterplan for the area. Through the development of an integrated housing master plan, a vision for the area will be developed with residents and other key stakeholders in order to ensure that any future investment will be sustainable and long lasting.

The Strategic Regeneration Framework proposes a comprehensive redevelopment through:

- Selective demolition with the aim of diversifying both tenure and property type, leading to significant numbers of new homes being built.

- Enhancing the existing open space and utilising the canal as a key regeneration of the area.
- Exploring solutions for the restoration and environmental improvements to restoration and use of contaminated land.
- Improvements to car parking, traffic calming and environments to residential streets.
- Engaging local residents and stakeholders in influencing and shaping solutions for long lasting regeneration.
- Undertaking housing improvements up to the decent homes standard in areas of sustainable stock to ensure long term sustainability.

4.4.8 Moxley

Moxley acts as a major gateway not only to Walsall, but to the wider Black Country boroughs of Sandwell and Wolverhampton. There are many development opportunities located around the local centre, which can provide the impetus for major change in the area. Moxley, whilst having a rich industrial heritage, lacks identity and suffers from an unbalanced housing market with over reliance on social rented stock. As such, there is a need to broaden tenure choice and to promote opportunities for affordable housing.

The strategic Regeneration Framework proposes a significant housing-led regeneration programme for the Moxley area, which will see the clearance and remodelling of a number of development sites, together with a large residential and open space development project for the 50 acre Moxley Tip/AP UK site, a former landfill/industrial site which has blighted the area for many years. Moxley has many environmental advantages, such as the Walsall Canal and Moorcroft Woods Local Nature Reserve, which will be improved and better connected to create a new linear park within which new development will be set.

4.4.9 Pleck

Pleck is in a strategic location for the amenities of the town centre and the local transport network. Recent studies have identified an urgent need for aspirational mixed tenure housing to replace the unattractive and unpopular blocks of flats on Old Pleck Road.

The regeneration site in Old Pleck Road is currently occupied by six tower blocks. Five out of the six have been scheduled for demolition. Scrimshaw House is to be retained until Bovis has completed the redevelopment of Marion Talbot House which will provide replacement homes for the residents. The six blocks are to be replaced by a mix of good quality housing for rent and private sale. There will be 183 homes built on the site, 154 for sale and 29 for rent. Eleven of these will be large family homes to meet the needs of the local community. The site at Marion Talbot House will be redevelopment to provide 39 two bedroom apartments for the elderly.

Bovis Homes will be entering an agreement with Walsall Housing Group to deliver construction training which will be aligned to Walsall's enterprise and training agenda. Proposals will be drawn up for improving the environment and public realm in the area. The cost of this additional work will be part financed through VIEW, Walsall Council's and Walsall Housing Group's charitable company, set up to fund regeneration projects in Walsall.

4.4.10 Willenhall

The opportunity exists to arrest any further decline and recreate an urban village centre with a sensitive blend of refurbishment and new development. In addition the structural changes in manufacturing industry means that redevelopment opportunities exist within those areas immediately surrounding the centre. This redevelopment can link the existing more suburban residential areas with the centre in a more coherent form.

The emphasis within the Strategic Regeneration Framework is for the housing-led regeneration of Willenhall. There are a number of development opportunities including the enhancement of the centre through a mix of redevelopment and environmental improvements to create an urban village.

4.4.11 Summary of relevance of regeneration to public rights of way

There are significant opportunities to improve existing public rights of way and develop new routes which will improve permeability and access between each of the key regeneration areas and other key areas of housing, employment and local facilities. It is essential that where there are existing public rights of way within development areas which are in need of improvement, or where there are opportunities to create new public rights of way to improve access for the local community and visitors, that these opportunities are included as an integral component of the development of the area. A high quality network of public rights of way which provides linkages between key urban centres and regeneration areas will promote use of sustainable travel, help to design out crime and fear of crime, and enhance access to local communities.

Potential to secure improvements to public rights of way through planning and regeneration will require further investigation into the presence of existing public rights of way within regeneration areas, proposals for new routes outlined within planning and regeneration strategies and potential creation of new routes of improved linkages between existing routes. Currently, public rights of way work with planning, regeneration and highways development control to secure improvements to public rights of way when planning applications are received. This current approach could potentially be improved by ensuring the improvements to public rights of way are highlighted within key strategies, and working more closely with regeneration and planning services from an early stage.

4.5 Canals

The role that inland waterways can play, both in urban and rural areas, in providing segregated links for walkers, cyclists and the disabled is fully recognised. Walsall Council is currently discussing partnership arrangements with British Waterways and other parties with a view to fully integrating highway based pedestrian and cycle track links canal based links where appropriate.

Canals played an important role in the development of the Borough as a thriving industrial and commercial location. The legacy of Georgian and early Victorian civil engineering projects is a network of about 30 miles of waterways, and associated structures, which are still in use today. They are important features of the townscape, providing linear open spaces, wildlife corridors and habitats, community boundaries, functional routes for pedestrians and cyclists and architectural and historical interest.

The canals in the Borough are classified as "remainder waterway" which means that British Waterways are not obliged to keep them in navigable condition. Nevertheless, the canals are frequently used by touring boats (there is a boatyard to the north of the Borough at the end of Cannock Extension Canal) and they remain an important environmental asset.

The Council will encourage improvements which will foster the increased use of canals for boating, including secure moorings and other canal side facilities, and will support the upgrading of the canals in the Borough to "cruise way" status. Improved links to the wider canal network outside the Borough will also be encouraged, including restoration to the disused Lichfield and Hatherton canals.

There is considerable scope for developing transport and recreation routes alongside canals for pedestrians and cyclists. Towpaths are an important part of the Greenway network.

Discussions with British Waterways have confirmed that they have an overall aim to promote accessibility onto canal towpaths. This could be of relevance to the public rights of way network, to strengthen links between priority access points onto the canal towpaths and public rights of way. Walsall Council is committed to working with British Waterways to improve accessibility of the rights of way network which will compliment this proposal. Areas which have been highlighted for accessibility improvements onto canal towpaths include:

- Pelsall Lane/ Clayhanger Lane (links to Sustrans Route 5 and several definitive public rights of way).
- Pier Street Bridge (near to Brownhills District Centre, Clayhanger Common and new housing, some potential to link to definitive public rights of way).
- Adam and Eve Bridge (near to public rights of way off Manor Farm Drive).
- Bentley Wharf Bridge (links to definitive public rights of way in Rough Wood and Bentley Haye).
- Stokes Bridge (links to definitive public right of way off Green Lane/ Remington Road).
- Yorks Bridge, Norton Road to Stoney Lane (links with definitive rights of way around Fishley Lane area).
- Goscote Estate (several definitive rights of way in regeneration area).
- Brawns Road Bridge and Riddians Bridge (potential links to definitive rights of way off Aldridge Road, Bosty Lane and Barr Beacon area).
- Gillity Bridge (potential links to definitive rights of way around Truro Road area).
- Scarborough Bridge (several potential links to definitive rights of way).
- Pleck Road/ Garrett Street (no definitive rights of way directly affected).
- Primley Avenue to Bentley Lane (Links to Darlaston Strategic Development area though greenway outlined in Urban Development Plan).
- Walsall Town Centre Wharf, by the Art Gallery is a proposed regeneration area. There are currently no recorded public rights of way in this area.

4.6 Current management practices

The existing management and maintenance of public rights of way is summarised below.

There are dedicated officers in the Engineering and Transportation Service Area who work on public rights of way, focusing upon definitive and adopted routes (see section 2). Their role includes the management of public rights of way in line with the statutory duty to assert and protect public rights of way. The main practices associated with this include:

4.6.1 Inspections

a) Best Value Performance Indicator 178 – “the ease of use of public rights of way”

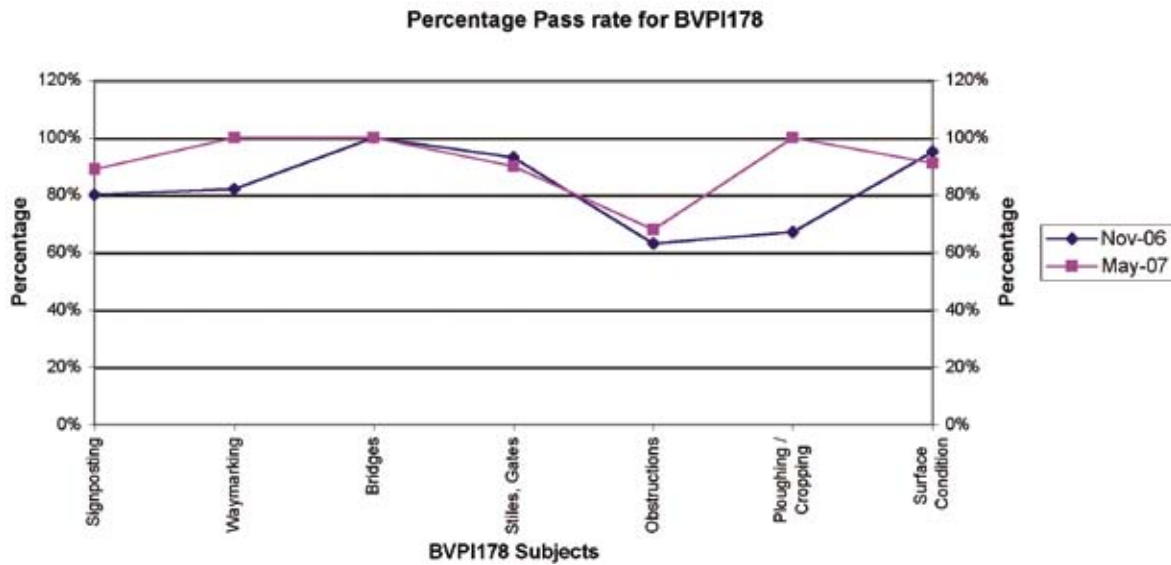
Every year as part of the Audit Commission Act 1998 and the Local Government Act 1999, all local councils in England and Wales have a legal duty to measure their level of performance in certain areas, against national key performance indicators. Best Value Performance Indicators (BVPI) are used to measure actual performance against other local councils and are a useful tool for identifying areas for improvement, and setting priorities.

Best Value Performance Indicator 178 relates to five percent of total lengths of rights of way within the borough that are easy to use and these lengths must be selected randomly from the definitive footpaths, bridleways and byways the borough has.

The indicator examines the number of rights of way (listed on the Definitive Map and Statement for Walsall Council) that:

- Must be sign-posted where they leave the road in accordance with the Countryside Act 1968.
- Are free from unlawful obstructions (such as overgrown vegetation and fences that block local rights of way).
- The surface and lawful barriers must be in a good state of repair and to a standard necessary to enable the community to use the right of way without undue inconvenience.

There have been significant fluctuations in the overall percentage pass of surveys, with a significant dip in the score experienced in May and November 2005. The low score at this time was partly attributed to a high percentage of failures due to high rainfall which had resulted in flooding. The below table outlines the pass levels of recent BVPI surveys.



The results of these surveys do not provide an accurate picture of the state of all public rights of way, as only a random sample is surveyed each financial year. They do however highlight some of the key problems which are encountered and provide an indication of improvements needed. In Nov 2006 "bridges" and "surface condition" had the highest pass rates, whilst "obstructions" and "ploughing and cropping" were the most frequently occurring problems. In May 2007, "way marking", "ploughing and cropping" and "bridges" all had 100% pass rates. "Obstructions" and "sign posting" were the most frequently occurring problems, although both of these the scores were slightly higher than for November 2006.

Recent information from the Audit Commission has confirmed that a new set of performance indicators is to be introduced. Best Value Performance Indicator 178 is not included so will be abolished. Therefore, in future this indicator will no longer be monitored, although there is an interest in the future monitoring of Walsall's public rights of way network, using a similar methodology.

b) Street Pride Inspections

In 2004 condition inspections of definitive public rights of way were undertaken by Streetpride. This provided a useful snapshot of the current condition of all definitive routes within the borough and highlighted any surface defects which were in need of repair. A breakdown of the problems identified is included within the following tables:

Street Pride Surveys 2004

Aldridge and Brownhills

No Street Pride Survey		No defects		Defects / Work or monitoring required									
Number of paths	Lengths of Paths (metres)	Number of paths	Lengths of Paths (metres)	Type of Surface defects					Other defects				
				Obstruction	Surface Conditions	Tree roots lifting footpath	Missing Sign post / handrails / bollard	Excess dumping / litter	Stiles - limited access for disabled	Overgrown			
28	9735	62	28656	3	4	3	1	1	0	1			
28.0%	23.0%	62.0%	678%										

Darlaston

No Street Pride Survey		No defects		Defects / Work or monitoring required									
Number of paths	Lengths of Paths (metres)	Number of paths	Lengths of Paths (metres)	Type of Surface defects					Other defects				
				Obstruction	Surface Conditions	Tree roots lifting footpath	Missing Sign post / handrails / bollard	Excess dumping / litter	Stiles - limited access for disabled	Overgrown			
11	1446	12	1049	1	0	1	0	2	0	0			
40.7%	44.0%	44.4%	31.9%										

Walsall

No Street Pride Survey		No defects		Defects / Work or monitoring required							
Number of paths	Lengths of Paths (metres)	Number of paths	Lengths of Paths (metres)	Type of Surface defects			Tree roots lifting footpath	Missing Sign post / handrails / bollard	Excess dumping / litter	Stiles - limited access for disabled	Overgrown
				Obstruction	Surface Conditions	Surface Conditions					
19	4270 18.2%	56 49.1%	10073 42.9%	39 34.2%	9129 38.9%	9	18	4	7	2	2
16.7%											

Wednesbury

No Street Pride Survey		No defects		Defects / Work or monitoring required							
Number of paths	Lengths of Paths (metres)	Number of paths	Lengths of Paths (metres)	Type of Surface defects			Tree roots lifting footpath	Missing Sign post / handrails / bollard	Excess dumping / litter	Stiles - limited access for disabled	Overgrown
				Obstruction	Surface Conditions	Surface Conditions					
0	0 0.0%	6 60.0%	986 57.0%	4 40.0%	743 43.0%	0	3	0	1	0	4
0.0%											

Wednesfield

No Street Pride Survey		No defects		Defects / Work or monitoring required								
Number of paths	Lengths of Paths (metres)	Number of paths	Lengths of Paths (metres)	Number of paths	Lengths of Paths (metres)	Type of Surface defects						
						Obstruction	Surface Conditions	Tree roots lifting footpath	Missing Sign post / handrails / bollard	Excess dumping / litter	Stiles - limited access for disabled	Overgrown
2	605 51.2%	2	576 48.8%	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
50.0%		50.0%	48.8%	0.0%	0.0%							

Willenhall

No Street Pride Survey		No defects		Defects / Work or monitoring required								
Number of paths	Lengths of Paths (metres)	Number of paths	Lengths of Paths (metres)	Number of paths	Lengths of Paths (metres)	Type of Surface defects						
						Obstruction	Surface Conditions	Tree roots lifting footpath	Missing Sign post / handrails / bollard	Excess dumping / litter	Stiles - limited access for disabled	Overgrown
21	3178 19.2%	30	6505 39.2%	31	6898 41.6%	3	14	2	0	5	3	3
25.6%		36.6%	39.2%	37.8%	41.6%							

(For full results see appendices 4)

The most frequently recurring issues identified during these Street Pride inspections in order of priority are:

- Surface condition (39)
- Obstruction (16)
- Excess dumping/ litter (16)
- Tree roots lifting surface (10)
- Overgrown (10)
- Missing sign, post, hand rail or bollard (5)
- Stiles (5)

Within the surveying authority areas of Aldridge, Brownhills, Walsall and Wednesbury, surface condition was most frequently occurring. In the surveying authority area of Darlaston, excessive dumping and litter was most frequently occurring. Wednesfield was surveyed and no defects were reported. Please note that not all definitive footpaths within the borough were surveyed, but these findings do provide a good indication of the overall condition of public rights of way in the borough of Walsall and highlight priority areas in need of improvement.

c) Other inspections undertaken by Walsall Council

Informal inspections are also undertaken on all definitive and adopted footpaths by public rights of way officers. There is currently no structured programme for these inspections, they tend to be undertaken when interest arises, such as requests for improvement or investigation of issues. Typically, issues such as obstructions by overhanging vegetation, up-growth or boundary fences encroaching onto public rights of way, uneven surfaces and pot holes, muddy surfaces or floods and litter or fly tipping are reported in this manner. Crime and anti social behaviour reports are common in some of the urban public rights of way. There are recurring issues in some specific locations for example fly tipping is a recurring issue in some of the wider and more isolated public rights of way, rural paths tend to experience problems with up growth/ overgrowth and boggy or uneven surfaces, and urban locations can experience more crime and anti social behaviour, or surface problems.

d) Ramblers Associations' Grid Squares

The Ramblers Association has recently undertaken a national initiative to walk public rights of way in ordnance survey grid squares nationally. Local Ramblers Association representatives in Walsall borough have walked all grid squares and reported issues to public rights of way officers. Findings of these investigations have generally been good, although some obstructions and problems with signs/ way marking have been identified in some locations.

4.6.3 Walsall Local Access Forum

Local Access Forum is a statutory advisory body with no executive functions. Under the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000, it requires councils to establish Local Access Forums to advise them on:

- The improvement of public access to land for the purposes of open air recreation.
- The management of Access Land (Open Country and Registered Common Land).
- The Rights of Way Improvement Plan.
- Informing the data gathering exercise to which the existing network meets present and future needs.
- General public access issues in the local area.

In general, the Local Access Forum advises on strategic and planning issues relating to rights of way but not on individual cases. The Forum is also required to also take into account the interests of the managers of the land and nature conservation.

The Walsall Local Access Forum covers the whole of the Walsall borough. Under the Local Access Forum (England) Regulations 2002 Local Access Forums are required to have a minimum of 10 members and a maximum of 22, at present the Walsall Local Access Forum has 16 members.

Appointing authorities (in this case Walsall Council) are required to select members who appear to be representatives of fields of interest and not individual organisations:

These include:

- a) Those who own land and occupy land over which local public rights of way exist with an interest in:- agriculture, community safety, crime and security, land development, school and hospital property.
- b) Users of local rights of way, with interests in:- walking, cycling, access for people with disabilities, horse riding, public transport, off road vehicles and community health.
- c) Other members of the forum should represent wider interests such as:- business, retailing, education, economies, law, nature conservation, heritage, tourism and sport.

The regulations also require that the membership of forums to be balanced between representatives of the above but should be reasonably flexible and capable of being adapted to local circumstances. The achievement of the balance in individual cases would be best determined at local level by the appointing authorities.

Walsall's Local Access Forum (LAF) has progressed significantly in the past twelve months. Meetings have been held every two to three months to assist with development of the Rights of Way Improvement Plan. Members of the forum commented upon the content of the improvement plan and provided suggestions for areas of improvement, which can be summarised as the following:

- a) Stiles were reported to be problematic for some walkers, even those with a good level of mobility as they can be difficult to climb. Use of alternatives, such as kissing gates to replace stiles, was raised as a potential action for improvement. Clarification of responsibility for repair or replacement of damaged stiles was also raised as a concern.
- b) Lighting columns within the borough of Walsall all have a label detailing a unique reference number, which allows for easy identification of the location if a problem is experienced. One of the LAF members raised a suggestion to follow a similar approach by including a label on all footpath signs within the borough which includes the footpath reference number, as he witnessed when walking in the Isle of Wight.
- c) Concerns have been expressed over shared use routes for cycling and walking as some cyclists may be inconsiderate to walkers when using the same route. As a result of this actions being considered to resolve conflict between users include:
 - I. Notices clearly identifying shared use route to warn cyclists and pedestrians of each other's presence.
 - II. Clearly dividing the route with pedestrians on one side and cyclists on the other.
 - III. Raising awareness through School Travel Plan Development and events such as Bike to Work day.
- d) It became apparent during the early stages of development of the Rights of Way Improvement Plan that there are few bridle paths located in some areas of the borough, meaning that horse riders often have to travel along roads or canal tow paths rather than safe off road routes. A local horse rider, who has opted not to become a member of the LAF, but wishes to support their work, has assisted by mapping routes which horse riders currently use and desirable areas where horse riding could be improved. This has provided a basis which will be investigated to support the creation of new bridle ways. The views were supported by horse riding members of the LAF.

e) A mapping exercise was undertaken to identify potential new public rights of way, which mainly focused upon routes which are known to be in use, but are not recorded as public rights of way. A table showing the interim findings of this mapping exercise is provided as appendices item 5. This list will be subject to change as new routes may need to be added, or some shown may need to be removed if they do not meet legal requirements or conflict with other local priorities.

4.6.4 Current programmes and initiatives

The importance of improving the borough of Walsall's public rights of way network has been recognised locally and therefore has received additional funding to address key local concerns. Recent improvement programmes have included:

a) Routine maintenance

Annually a small revenue budget and capital budget is allocated for improvements to public rights of way. The revenue budget is used mainly for small scale improvements, and routine maintenance or repairs such as repair of pot holes, installation of vehicle barriers, removal of litter or fly tipping and clearance of vegetation. The capital budget is used mainly for larger scale resurfacing schemes. Budgets have traditionally been low, so there are several public rights of way which have been highlighted as in need of major restructuring or resurfacing work, which will be implemented subject to availability of funding and other resources.

b) Walsall Borough Strategic Partnership

Walsall Borough Strategic Partnership (WBSP) has a vision is to create an inclusive, prosperous, and competitive borough, in which its diverse communities feel involved, safer, healthier, and can take pride in its future.

Walsall borough is an area with high concentrations of deprivation, and is one of 88 areas in the country to receive neighbourhood renewal funding (NRF) to tackle deprivation. The council is the accountable body for the funding, but the Walsall Borough Strategic Partnership act as the commissioning agency through which various programmes and initiatives are delivered. The Local Strategic Partnership has a major role to play in ensuring the money is spent in a way that will deliver key targets around education, employment, crime, health and housing, aimed at closing the gap with the best performing areas of the country and administers the funding through Local Area Agreements.

d) Local Area Agreements

A Local Area Agreement (LAA) is a three year agreement that sets out the priorities for a local area, agreed between Central Government and a local area represented by the Local Authority and Local Strategic Partnership. i.e. Walsall Borough Strategic Partnership. LAA's provide the flexibility to find local solutions to local problems and priorities.

The Agreement is structured round four "Pillars":-

- Healthier Communities and Older People
- Safer Stronger Communities
- Children and Young People
- Economic Development and Enterprise

Over recent financial years (2006-07 and 2007-08), LAA funding has been awarded from the Safer Stronger Communities Pillar to improve public rights of way in the borough of Walsall. A number of footpaths have been improved, in line with the requirements of BVPI 178 (above), which have helped to improve our performance towards this indicator and addressed local concerns over poor surfacing, signs and way marking, obstruction by overhanging vegetation, cleanliness and crime/ anti social behaviour. Improvements have included small scale measures such as improved signs and way marking, removal of fly tipping and trimming back of vegetation along with larger measures including resurfacing and restructuring works.

Locally identified issues: Most commonly, reports of problems with Walsall Borough's public rights of way network come from members of the community. These issues may help us to ascertain some of the key problem areas and recurring issues. An in depth summary of local problems is provided within public rights of way survey and consultation responses, section 5. Issues may also be reported through the following channels:

e) Local Neighbourhood Partnerships

Walsall Borough Strategic Partnership (WBSP) is running nine Local Neighbourhood Partnerships (LNPs) in the borough to work with local residents to discuss and make progress on key community issues. LNP's are located in the following areas:



SPIR
Shared Partnership Information Resource

Local Neighbourhood Partnerships



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A Community Action Group (CAG) has been established within each LNP area to allow local residents to attend meetings and influence local decisions in an informal setting. Officers in public rights of way work closely with officers on the CAG's to address any identified issues. Crime, anti social behaviour, fear of crime and cleanliness are the most frequently reported issues. These local concerns will be considered and addressed during proposed improvements to public rights of way.

f) Healthy walking programmes

A good network of public rights of way in the borough of Walsall will help to play an essential role in combating obesity and overweight. Having public rights of way which are clean, well surfaced, without physical barriers to access or, where barriers are encountered, are suitable for those who may be less mobile, along with effective promotion will help to increase use of the network for gentle exercise in line with the National Health Services and Primary Care Trusts targets.

Walsall Council is working in partnership with Walsall Teaching Primary Care Trust to develop a healthy walking programme aimed at providing gentle walks to promote fitness. 'Walsall Walk On' is a weekly programme of free health walks held predominantly in parks and green spaces across the borough. The programme is delivered by Sport & Leisure Development Services and is supported by Walsall Teaching Primary Care Trust. It links to the national walking the Way to Health (WHI) scheme co-ordinated by Natural England.

Each walk is led by a trained Walk Leader who is assisted by a qualified Back Marker meaning that the walks can be tailored to suit everyone's speed and ability, while walking as a group. All leaders are also trained in CPR. The weekly programme provides a range of walks varying in length and terrain with distances from approximately one mile up to about six miles. All walks follow a circular route with the start and finish locations being the same.

All weekly health walks are registered with the Groundmiles exercise incentive scheme. Groundmiles is a scheme that rewards adult participation in a range of activity opportunities. Following registration with the scheme, participants in applicable activities such as Walk On health walks, specialised exercise sessions, rambles and conservation volunteer tasks will be able to collect Groundmiles stamps each time they complete a session. Activities will vary in the amount of Groundmiles that they are worth depending upon the level of participation required. For example, Walk On health walks are worth 5 Groundmiles, with rambles worth 10 and conservation volunteers receiving 15. Once stamps have been collected to the value of 120 Groundmiles they can be exchanged for a £5 shopping voucher.

Walsall Council also supports the Ramblers Association in providing the network of public rights of way within borough which cater for the more active rambler needs in more rural locations of the borough.

The public rights of way team at Walsall Council have had little direct involvement in the development and promotion of the healthy walking programmes outlined above. Recently improved working practices have been established with leisure services and their walk leaders, to ensure that any identified improvements can be made, or problems rectified where there are walks along public rights of way. This needs to be continued and consideration needs to be given to working strengthening these links or extending working practiced to include direct involvement of public rights of way with the National Health Service Primary Care Trust.

In order to support use of public rights of way as a means of exercise and improving health it is considered important that public rights of way are well maintained, clean, with a good surface to encourage use. It is particularly important that there are opportunities for gentle exercise so short walks, without significant gradients or steps, and regular resting points. It is vital that those responsible for maintaining public rights of way at Walsall Council continue to develop links with the healthy walking programmes to identify improvements which can be made to the current public rights of way network which will encourage use.

g) Crime and anti social behaviour

The importance of having safer communities in which to live and work is very much recognised and shared by the people of Walsall and has been identified as such in the Council's "Vision 2008" document which sets out the key priorities for the Council over the next 3 years.

The Walsall Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnership and Drug Action Team (known as The Safer Walsall Borough Partnership) recognises its special responsibility for achieving the particular vision of ensuring that by 2008, all people in Walsall are safe and secure and that year by year Walsall becomes a much safer community (Crime, Disorder and Drug Misuse Reduction Strategy 2005 – 2008).

Under The Safer Walsall Borough Partnership the situational interventions policy has been developed and was endorsed by Development Control Committee in November 2004. This document identifies the measures we can undertake on Public Rights of Way to prevent or deter crime and anti-social behaviour. It also details the council's approach to special extinguishment and diversion orders (crime prevention) which were inserted into section 118B of the Highways Act 1980, by the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000.

More recently, the Clean Neighbourhoods and Environment Act, 2006 has introduced gating orders as sections 129 A-G of the Highways Act. This will allow gating of highways at certain times of the day for prevention of anti social behaviour and crime. The Situational Interventions Policy is to be reviewed to include our approach to these, which will be another useful tool to help to combat problems of crime and anti-social behaviour on public rights of way.

The Safer Walsall Borough Partnership has received a number of requests for installation of situational interventions or alley gating schemes. Of these 72 are on public rights of way. Closure or alley gating of public rights of way using special extinguishment orders will only be implemented in line with this policy and where it can be demonstrated that legal criteria is met. It will only be considered as a last resort. Other measures including improvements to the public rights of way, (e.g. resurfacing or installation interventions), improved maintenance, involvement of others to reassure the public and try to resolve the issue (e.g. Anti social Behaviour Unit, Police, Community Wardens) will be utilised in the first instance, before closure is considered. The policy requires review and amendment to outline the approach which will be taken to pursue the newly introduced gating orders.

4.7 Air quality

The whole of the borough of Walsall was declared an Air Quality Management Area in 2006 due to high levels of nitrogen dioxide associated with the M6 motorway and other major roads. Screening is also carried out for levels of carbon monoxide, benzene, butadiene, lead, sulphur dioxide and particulates (PM₁₀). It has been determined that 40 junctions in the borough are likely to exceed the daily (24 hour mean) PM₁₀ air quality objective.

The main reasons for tackling poor air quality are its links to quality of life and risks to health, both short and long term. Policies to improve air quality cannot, however, be considered in isolation from those designed to address climate change, a key example being the mutual benefits drawn from reducing the impact of transport systems. To this end, the Government expects local authorities to adopt an integrated approach to dealing with environmental issues, including both regulatory powers and non-regulatory initiatives, e.g. school travel plans, public information campaigns, 'walk to school' initiatives. Reducing the number of vehicles making short journeys which could be made by walking or cycling would be particularly beneficial to local communities.

Section 5

Consultation and Survey Responses

5.1 Introduction

During preparation of Walsall's draft rights of way improvement plan consultation has been undertaken to ascertain the views of the local community, on the current public rights of way network, perceived problem areas and potential improvements. Guidelines on the type and level of consultation which is required have been laid out in statutory and best practice guidelines, which have been taken into consideration and adhered to. Our approach has been to undertake a survey of users needs, which is detailed within 5.2 below; consult with existing community/ voluntary groups and local forums, as detailed in 5.3 below and finally to obtain views on the draft rights of way improvement plan, which is the stage we are now at. Please see section 1 for details on how to comment on this document,

5.2 What our respondents told us – summary of survey results

Full details of the consultation responses are provided within appendices item 6 A copy of the newsletter and survey form is also provided as appendices items 7 and 8. The following provides an overview of some of the key findings.

Just over a half of those who responded to our questionnaire were male (52.7%). 76.3% were British, and 87% were aged 35 or over. 15.5% said they had a disability.

82% of our respondents reported using a public right of way during the last 12 months. Fifty nine percent used urban routes and alleyways almost every day, or at least once a week. Only 12.3% of respondents said they had never used these routes, or that the question didn't apply. Small percentages, 3.3% and 2.5% respectively, had used urban routes and alleyways within the last year or longer ago. Over one fifth (22.9%) reported usage within the last 6 months.

There are 17 kilometres of cycle route in Walsall. Three quarters of respondents to our questionnaire had used a cycle route at some time, and more than a third (37.4%) had used a cycle route within the last month. Taking usage within the last 6 months into account, this rises to almost a half (49.5%). Just over one in ten (11%) had used a cycle route within the last year or longer ago, whereas nearly 40% said they had never used a cycle route, or that the question did not apply.

A larger proportion of our sample reported using bridleways (58.6% within a month) and canal towpaths (62.3% within a month) more frequently than cycle routes. This may reflect the fact that we specifically targeted horse riders in our survey. Also, there are many more kilometres of canal towpath than cycle routes.

Routes across public parks and open spaces, nature reserves and woodland paths were very popular and regularly used – 99.2% of those surveyed had used them at some time. Only 5.8% had never used nature reserves and woodland paths. Interestingly, 70% of respondents had used routes across fields during the last 6 months. This could indicate that many of those surveyed make good use of such routes for recreation.

While more than a quarter of our sample (28.6%) used a public right of way to get to work, more than a half (53.1%) never used them for this purpose. However 10.5% of our sample recorded daily use for school journeys, and 61.8% of respondents reported using a public right of way to link to a bus stop or railway station within the last 6 months.

Leisure, recreation and exercise are shown to be important reasons for using a public right of way according to those surveyed. Daily, weekly and monthly usage was reported at 26.7%, 38.2% and 21.4% respectively. Only 4.6% of the sample had never used public rights of way for recreational purposes.

A large proportion of respondents (75.2% within the last 6 months) were likely to use public rights of way to visit local attractions, and over a third (37.3%) would use one to visit a friend at least weekly. However, nearly a third of the sample said that this latter type of use did not apply to them.

Walking is the preferred mode of travel of our sample. Forty-six percent of our sample walk along a public right of way almost every day, with a further 30.4% doing so at least once a week. Smaller numbers jog or run, with 9.1% of those who ticked that box doing so at least once a week. However, this was too energetic for 68% of our sample! Less than a third use public rights of way for horse riding, and 18.1% of those that do said they did so at least once a week.

Nearly forty three percent (42.9%) had cycled along a public right of way during the last 6 months. Using a motor propelled vehicle or trotting cart was not well reported, but neither was travelling with a wheelchair or pushchair – 84.2% said they had never done this, or that it didn't apply. Only 6.1% had done so during the previous 6 months. Most respondents (64.8%) arrive at the starting point of a route on foot. 15.2% drive there, and 9.0% cycle to it.

There was a range of opinions regarding breaks in public rights of way. More than a third (36.6%) disagreed or strongly disagreed that a break in public right of way makes it more interesting; almost the same number (35.8%) neither agreed nor disagreed, whereas just over a quarter (26.6%) agreed or strongly agreed. However, 34.4% of respondents indicated that they would be discouraged from using a public right of way if it had a break. Furthermore, more than half our sample (54.1%) felt that breaks in a public right of way are dangerous, while nearly a fifth (18.6%) think this is not the case. The remaining quarter of respondents (25.2%) neither agree nor disagree with this.

36.8% of our sample thought the overall condition of our public rights of way was good or very good, just less than a fifth (18.8%) felt they were in poor or very poor condition, and 38.9% reported that they were between the two.

5.3 Consultation with community/voluntary organisations and local forums

Summary of comments received from various forums and groups is still in development and consultation is ongoing. This will be finalised pending comments on the draft improvement plan.

5.4 Consultation on Walsall's draft rights of way improvement plan

This section will be completed pending comments of the draft rights of way improvement plan

Section 6

Action Plan

Information collected on public rights of way has highlighted a number of local issues which can be categorised into the following themes:

6.1 Theme 1 – Improved access for all

There is a need to improve disabled access not only to meet the requirements of the Disability Discrimination Act 1995, but also to ensure that with an ageing population, Walsall borough's public rights of way network can meet the future needs of residents and visitors. Different user groups have distinct needs and preferences so improvements to the existing public rights of way are needed in line with the needs of all users, including the local community and visitors.

Aim – To improve access for all users, with particular emphasis on improving access for the mobility and visually impaired.

Strategic priorities met – to be completed

Actions	Tasks	Staff time and partnership involvement	Costs	Potential source(s) of funding	Timescale
1. Improved Access to Public Rights of Way for all user groups					
1. Improve access for all users, with particular emphasis on improving access for the mobility or visually impaired	1.1 Develop audit criteria with assistance of Disability Forum and proofing group	Some additional public rights of way staff time. Internal support of Countryside, Leisure and Equalities. Potential to develop criteria with volunteers including Local Access Forum Members, Walk Leaders, Ramblers Association, and Disability Forum & Proofing Group	Under £5,000	Can be covered by existing resources	1-5 years
	1.2 Undertake audit of all public rights of way	As above	Under £5,000	As above	1-5 years
	1.3 Develop programme of improvements in line with findings of audit	Public rights of way staff time. May require involvement of Countryside, Leisure and Equalities staff during development of solutions. Will require landowner agreement/support. Potential to involve probation services, Youth Offending Service, Forest of Mercia and other volunteers in installation of improvements will be investigated. Links with NHS PCT to be investigated	Over £20,000	Additional funding required to meet costs. Investigate funding through Aggregates Levy or Landfill Tax, Local Area Agreements or Multi-Area Agreements. Potential to fund physical improvements by pooling and aligning resources from appropriate service area, or with partner organisations	5-10 years

6.2 Theme 2 – Regeneration

The borough of Walsall currently experiences areas of deprivation higher than the national average and has a high proportion of land which is ear-marked for strategic regeneration. This represents an opportunity to secure improvements to existing public rights of way, or to create new routes within the priority regeneration areas. This will ensure that the public rights of way network is improved to meet the changing use of the area and to improve connectivity between new housing, industry and local amenities.

Aim – To ensure that improvements to existing public rights of way and creation of new routes are secured during regeneration of priority areas to meet present and future demand.

Strategic priorities met – To be completed

Actions	Tasks	Staff time and partnership involvement	Costs	Potential source(s) of funding	Timescale
2. Regeneration					
2. Secure improvements to existing public rights of way and create new routes during regeneration and development of key sites to ensure that present and future needs are met	2.1 Review current links between public rights of way and planning and regeneration services and identify scope for improvements to existing or creation of new public rights of way during ongoing regeneration and development	Public rights of way staff time. Will require support of officers in highways development control, planning and regeneration services	Under £5,000	Can be covered by existing resources	1-5 years
	2.2 Introduce improved systems for commenting on planning applications and securing improvements to public rights of way, which co-ordinate with highways development control and strategic aims e.g. the UDP	Public rights of way staff time. Will require support of officers in highways development control, planning and regeneration services	Under £5,000	As above	1-5 years
	2.3 Improve information for potential developers on diversion, creation or extinguishment of public rights of way, including information on the legal order processes and pricing	Public rights of way staff time. Will require support of officers in highways development control, planning and regeneration services	Under £5,000	As above	1-5 years
	2.4 Pursue necessary legal orders, advise on construction and implement physical improvements to the network. Legal support also required	Public rights of way staff time. Will require legal support, and possibly support of officers in highways development control, planning and regeneration services	Over £20,000	Construction and legal order costs are typically met by the developer. Section 106 funding, Landfill Tax credits or commercial sponsorship will be investigated in cases where this is not possible	Ongoing

6.3 Theme 3 – Definitive Map and Statement

Public rights of way are currently recorded in two different ways; on the Definitive Map and Statement and on the list of streets. At present the Definitive Map and Statement is divided into nine surveying authority areas, which are conversant with the old district boundaries and changes to the borough boundary. Adopted footpaths recorded on the list of streets are not currently recorded on the definitive map. Some of the public rights of way shown on these two documents are currently inaccurate, so procedures to keep the Definitive Map and Statement up to date need to be improved. Investigation into the extent of the problem will be needed initially, followed by a review of procedures and implementation of priority based programme of actions to bring the Definitive Map and Statement up to date.

Aim – To improve procedures for updating the Definitive Map and Statement and ensure that they are up to date.

Strategic priorities met – To be completed

Actions	Tasks	Staff time and partnership involvement	Costs	Potential source(s) of funding	Timescale
3. Definitive Map and Statement					
3. Improve procedures for updating the Definitive Map and Statement and ensure they are up to date and effectively maintained.	3.1 Review definitive map and statement, including diversion extinguishment or creation orders which have been undertaken, to identify any discrepancies.	Public Rights of Way legal services - will require increased legal support.	Under £5,000	Can be met by existing resources.	1-5 years
	3.2 Review adopted footpaths on list of streets and identify whether these need to be added onto the definitive map and processes which would need to be followed.	Public Rights of Way legal services - will require increased legal support.	Under £5,000	Can be met by existing resources.	1-5 years
	3.3 Investigate consolidation of definitive map from nine surveying authority areas into one borough wide map and statement.	Public Rights of Way legal services - will require increased legal support.	Between £5,000 and £20,000	Additional funding for legal costs. Strategic Choices, Local Area Agreements (LAA) or Multi Area Agreements (MAA)	5-10 years
	3.4 Implementation of all necessary Orders including Definitive Map Modification Orders and Consolidation.	Public Rights of Way legal services - will require increased legal support.	Over £20,000	Additional funding for legal costs. Strategic Choices, Local Area Agreements (LAA) or Multi Area Agreements (MAA)	Modification orders-ongoing, Consolidation 10-15 years

6.4 Theme 4 – Create new public rights of way

There is a clear requirement for creation of new public rights of way to meet demand from certain user groups in certain areas of the borough. For example, consultation has identified a clear need for more bridle paths, shared use routes for cycling and walking and additional footpaths to improve links between existing public rights of way. Current safer routes to school work and school travel plan development is allowing identification of areas where safe off-road routes for walking and cycling for access into schools is required. The importance of developing cross boundary routes by working with neighbouring authorities is also paramount.

Aim – To create new public rights of way which will strengthen links to local amenities and improve connectivity of the existing network.

Strategic priorities met – To be completed

Actions	Tasks	Staff time and partnership involvement	Costs	Potential source(s) of funding	Timescale
4. Create New Public Rights of Way					
4. Create new public rights of way which will strengthen links to local amenities and improve connectivity of the local network	4.1 Identify areas for creation of new public rights of way for walking, cycling and horse riding	Local Access Forum members Local Neighbourhood Partnership / Community Action Groups, Leisure and Countryside Services, Planning and Regeneration Services	Under £5,000	Can be covered by existing resources	1-5 years
	4.2 Prioritise routes	Public rights of way, Local Access Forum members	Under £5,000	Can be covered by existing resources	1-5 years
	4.3 Develop and publish Register of Definitive Map modification orders	Public rights of way officers, ISS or Legal support may be required	Under £5,000	Can be covered by existing resources	1-5 years
	4.4 Pursue Definitive Map modification orders	Public rights of way officers. Legal support required	Over £20,000	Legal Order costs	5-10 years
	4.5 Install improvements required	Public rights of way officers. Investigate potential to work with Forest of Mercia, Probation Services, Youth Offending Service and NHS PCT for implementation of some of the improvements	Over £20,000	Existing resources will partly cover this. LAA, Landfill tax credits, section 106 funding, commercial sponsorship to be investigated	5-10 years

6.5 Theme 5 – Information provision for users of the network

Availability of information on public rights of way within the borough of Walsall is currently poor. Various leaflets are produced to promote public rights of way, but these are concentrated in specific locations, such as parks and nature reserves, or focus upon one user group only. There is considerable scope to introduce improved and co-ordinated information on public rights of way.

Improved information provision, including leaflets and on-line information, which details public rights of way and any barriers to access along the route, will enable potential users to make informed decisions about whether the route is suitable for their use. There is potential to link promotion of public rights of way in the borough into the newly developed national school travelwise database, and to introduce a new borough-specific geographical information system on the Walsall Council website. Both options are to be investigated.

On-route information was reported to be problematic in some locations and this is supported by findings of routing inspections. Installation of signs and way markers is important to allow users to clearly follow the route of the public right of way and to help to prevent trespass. Regular inspections

and installation is important, as signs and way markers can often be subject to vandalism, wear and tear or damage by vehicles. Where there are shared use routes, signs are important to inform users of the presence of others. There is also scope to introduce route specific information on signs, including a reference number to enable easy identification of locations where problems are identified.

There is also considerable scope to raise the profile and awareness of public rights of way procedures and practices. Improvement of on-line information or production of leaflets/ fact sheets would raise the profile of our work and outline how others can become involved. Information on the rights of way improvement plan, diversion or extinguishment orders, public path creation orders, crime prevention, the role of Walsall's Local Access Forum and problem reporting are all areas which may benefit from improved information.

Aim – To introduce improved and co-ordinated information, which promotes and encourages all users to access public rights of way, and raises the profile, awareness and understanding of our roles.

Strategic priorities met – to be completed

Actions	Tasks	Staff time and partnership involvement	Costs	Potential source(s) of funding	Timescale
5. Information provision and promotion					
5. Introduce improved and co-ordinated information, promoting and encouraging use of public rights of way by all, particularly focusing upon the needs of the mobility or visually impaired	5.1 Develop on line information investigate using Travelwise and / or Global Information System (Similar to planning portal) then implementation	Public rights of way officers with support from countryside services, print and design, leisure services and information system support	Under £5,000	Can be covered by existing resources	1-5 years
	5.2 Develop public rights of way leaflets containing route specific information which highlights potential barriers to access, enabling users to determine suitability of the route for their use	Potential to involve Forest of Mercia to produce co-ordinated information	£5,000-£20,000	Can mainly be covered by existing resources. Investigate potential to pool resources with other service areas and external organisations	5-10 years
	5.3 Improved on site information including signs and way marking	Potential to involve Local Access forum members or other voluntary/ community organisations to assist with numbering signs	£5,000-£20,000 (annual commitment likely to be required)	As above	1-5 years
	5.4 Improve information on the key roles of public rights of way	Develop promotional leaflets or guidance sheets, web-based information and newsletters. Review topics highlighted for promotion, which include the Rights of Way Improvement Plan, searches, diversion, extinguishment and modification orders, Local Access Forum, crime prevention and problem reporting to ensure all key areas are included	£5,000-£20,000	Can be covered by existing resources	1-5 years

6.6 Theme 6 – Inspections and maintenance

Not all public rights of way are inspected on a regular basis and with the abolition of Best Value Performance Indicator 178 which records the ease of use of public rights of way in the borough, there is a possibility that routine inspections may become less of a priority. However, it is considered important that routine inspections, similar to BVPI 178 surveys, are continued to allow an understanding of the overall condition of the rights of way network which can in turn be used for monitoring effectiveness of improvements. Inspections will also allow identification of routes which require improvements to ensure public safety, enable preventative maintenance and ensure that potential problems are identified and resolved.

There is currently a highways maintenance and procurement strategy in development which will introduce improved inspections for public rights of way in the borough. There is also scope to introduce improved clearance and maintenance on some of the more rural rights of way in the borough, by working with external partners including Forest of Mercia.

Aim – To review current maintenance and inspection procedures (pending introduction of the new maintenance and procurement strategy) and to investigate the scope for further improvements.

Strategic priorities met – To be completed

Actions	Tasks	Staff time and partnership involvement	Costs	Potential source(s) of funding	Timescale
6. Inspections and Maintenance					
6. Review maintenance and inspection regimes (pending introduction of the new maintenance procurement strategy) and investigate the scope for further improvements	6.1 Review Highways Maintenance and procurement strategy	Public rights of way staff time. Potential to involve Local Access Forum members	Under £5,000	Can be covered by existing resources	1-5 years
	6.2 Introduce new in house inspections, similar to Best Value Performance Indicator 178	Public rights of way staff time. Potential to involve Local Access Forum members, countryside and leisure services, external organisations such as Forest of Mercia	£5,000-£20,000	Can mainly be covered by existing resources. Investigate potential to pool resources with other service areas and external organisations	1-5 years
	6.3 Investigate potential sources for clearance of Rural Public Rights of Way and their maintenance.	Public rights of way staff time. Potential to involve Local Access Forum members, countryside and leisure services, external organisations such as Forest of Mercia	£5,000-£20,000 (annual funding needed)	As above	1-5 years
	6.4 Introduce regular cleaning and tidying of Public Rights of Way within the borough	Investigate the use of the Probation Service or volunteers to keep Public Rights of Way clean and tidy	£5,000-£20,000 (annual funding needed)	As above	1-5 years
	6.5 Review and improve current access land management practices	Public rights of way staff time. Legal service and leisure and countryside service involvement is required, along with Local Access Forum	£5,000-£20,000	As above	5-10 years

6.7 Theme 7- Rationalization of the existing public rights of way network

In several of Walsall borough's open spaces, there are differences between the definitive line of the route and as walked or promoted route. The inherent effect of this is that definitive routes have fallen out of use in favour of alternative routes. It will be necessary to carry out investigation into the extent of this problem and to rationalise the network across each of the borough's open spaces to ensure that definitive routes match with the used or promoted routes. Each affected site will be very different by nature, so will be considered on a case by case basis.

Aim – To investigate potential for re-aligning definitive routes with promoted and as walked routes, allowing pooling of resources for improvements and providing a more joined up network.

Strategic priorities met – To be completed

Actions	Tasks	Staff time and partnership involvement	Costs	Potential source(s) of funding	Timescale
7. Rationalisation of the existing public rights of way network					
7. Investigate potential for re-aligning definitive routes with promoted and as walked routes, allowing for provision of a more joined up network and pooling of resources	7.1 Review all promoted walks across countryside services sites, in the borough, and how well they match definitive routes. Each area is to be reviewed individually on a prioritised basis	7.1 Public Rights of Way, with involvement of Countryside Services and Leisure Services. Potential to involve Local Access Forum members, Walk Leaders "Friends of" groups and other user groups. Investigate potential to work with NHS PCT	Under £5,000	Can be covered by existing resources	1-5 years
	7.2 Introduce a program to rationalise network bringing promoted route in line with definitive routes. This will include a program of diversion, extinguishment and modification orders, followed by infrastructure improvements	7.2 Legal orders will require Legal Services support potential to pool resources from other service areas to achieve high standard of overall improvements and co-ordinated approach to infrastructure	Over £20,000	Additional funding required to meet legal costs. Investigate funding through Aggregates Levy or Landfill Tax, Local Area Agreements or Multi-Area Agreements. Potential to fund physical improvements by pooling and aligning resources from appropriate service areas to be investigated. Additional funding essential to allow project to go ahead. Investigate other partner funding, e.g. NHS PCT	5-15 years (specific areas to be implemented on a case by case basis)

6.8 Theme 8 – Crime and anti social behaviour

Walsall Council has already introduced a policy to deal with crime and anti social behaviour on public rights of way, which has had some successes. Issues of crime and anti social behaviour continues to be a key concern of the community of Walsall, affecting mainly urban alleyways. The policy is due to be reviewed with the introduction of Gating Orders under the Clean Neighbourhoods and Environment Act, 2006. Current procedures and practices implemented with the Safer Walsall Borough Partnership will continue to be used to address the problems of crime and anti social behaviour. Any problems with implementation experienced previously will be addressed during the policy review.

Aim – To review existing crime prevention and “alley gating” procedures on public rights of way, particularly focusing upon revision of the current policy to include implementation of new Gating Orders.

Strategic priorities met – To be completed

Actions	Tasks	Staff time and partnership involvement	Costs	Potential source(s) of funding	Timescale
8. Crime and Anti-social behaviour					
8. Review existing crime prevention and “alley-gating” procedures on public rights of way, particularly focusing upon revision of the current policy to include implementation of new Gating Orders	8.1 Review policy following introduction of Gating Orders	Public rights of way, with support of Safer Walsall Borough Partnership and Legal Services. Local Access Forum involvement also required	Under £5,000	Capital funding until March 2009 (managed by SWBP). Additional funding required after this, examples include Local Area Agreements or Multi Area Agreements	1-5 years
	8.2 Continue to support existing situational interventions on public rights of way under the Safer Walsall Borough Partnership’s Improving Security in Local Neighbourhoods Programme	Public rights of way and Safer Walsall Borough Partnership	£5,000-£20,000 (ongoing annual costs likely to be required)	As Above	1-5 years, ongoing if problems persist
	8.3 Improve Information for Councillors, Local Neighbourhood Partnership and Community Action Groups on “Alley gating” schemes	8.3 Safer Walsall Borough Partnership, Community Action Groups, Local Neighbourhood Partnerships and Local Access Forum members to be consulted	£5,000-£20,000	As Above	1-5 years

6.9 Theme 9 – Improvements to existing public rights of way

Within the borough of Walsall, funding for maintaining and improving public rights of way has typically been low. This has resulted in a backlog of public rights of way which are in need of resurfacing or reconstruction work. Much progress has been made recently to improve public rights of way in line with the requirements of BVPI 178, which has received Local Area Agreement Funding. An increased number of footpaths have been resurfaced, cleared of vegetation or fly tipping, and received new signs or way marking. A notable improvement has been seen in several public rights of way in the borough, with some previously obstructed routes being brought back into use or significantly improved, promoting use. Continuation of improvements to public rights of way, post Local Area Agreement funding, which is currently secured until the end of March 2008, needs to be addressed.

There is only a limited amount of access land located within the borough, with several small pockets located to the North East. This can also play an important role in terms of promoting access for leisure and recreation including walking, cycling and horse riding. Progress made toward improvements to access land has been slow and there is considerable scope to improve accessibility of this.

Aim – To review and improve as necessary, current management and improvement programmes for public rights of way and access land, building upon the success of recent programmes.

Strategic priorities met – To be completed

Actions	Tasks	Staff time and partnership involvement	Costs	Potential source(s) of funding	Timescale
9. Improvements to existing public rights of way					
9. Review and amend as necessary, current improvement programmes for public rights of way to ensure continued improvements in line with users' needs	9.1 Review current improvement programmes, primarily the Local Area Agreements funded programme	Public rights of way officers, Walsall Borough Strategic Partnership, Planning and Regeneration, Highways Development Control. Potential to involve Local Neighbourhood Partnerships Community Action Groups and other local partners to assess the effectiveness of measures to date at addressing locally identified priorities	Under £5,000	Can be covered by existing resources	1-5 years
	9.2 Ensure continuation of improvements which are meeting key local priorities	Public rights of way officers, Walsall Borough Strategic Partnership, Planning and Regeneration, Highways Development Control. Potential to involve Local Neighbourhood Partnerships, Community Action Groups or other local partners to assess the effectiveness of measure to date at addressing locally identified priorities	Over £20,000 (ongoing annual costs will be required)	Local Area Agreement funding currently secured until March 2008. Potential continuation until March 2009, other funding e.g. further Local Area Agreement or Multi Area Agreement to be investigated	1-5 years

6.10 Theme 10 – Byways open to all traffic

All Roads Used as Public Paths have recently been reclassified as Restricted Byways, under the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000. Our definitive map and statement still shows them as Roads Used as Public Paths. There are ten Byways Open to All Traffic which were historically incorrectly recorded on Land Terrier maps as footpaths and have been managed incorrectly as a result of this. Investigation is required into the implications of this and a programme of actions is required to ensure that they are correctly recorded and brought up to an appropriate standard.

Aim – To investigate reclassification of roads used as public paths as restricted byways and previously incorrectly recorded byways open to all traffic and introduce a programme for reclassification and improvements

Strategic priorities met – To be completed

Actions	Tasks	Staff time and partnership involvement	Costs	Potential source(s) of funding	Timescale
10. Byways open to all traffic					
10. Investigate reclassification of roads used as public paths to restricted byways, and byways open to all traffic and introduce a programme for reclassification and improvement	10.1 Review all byways open to all traffic and roads used as public paths recorded on the definitive map and statement	Public rights of way officers, Legal support needed, potential to involve Local Access Forum Members	Under £5,000	Can mainly be covered by current resources	1-5 years
	10.2 Check legal processes or procedures for reclassification	As above	£5,000-£20,000	Can mainly be covered by current resources	1-5 years
	10.3 Identify physical improvements or legal orders which are required at each affected site and introduce a programme of planned improvements as necessary	As above	Over £20,000 (ongoing annual costs likely to be required)	Additional funding required for Legal costs and necessary improvements	5-15 years

6.11 Deliverability Issues

Actions outlined within the above action plan have currently been prioritised into actions for implementation in the short, medium and long term. Investigation into the deliverability of each of the actions has begun, and it will be necessary to further prioritise these actions giving consideration to key local priorities, along with factors which may affect deliverability such as availability of resources, meeting legal requirements, negotiation/agreement of third parties to implementation. The first stage in the deliverability of the above actions will therefore be to introduce a structured programme to ensure delivery within the specified time frames. This will be undertaken within 6 months from the endorsement of the final Rights of Way Improvement Plan and has been supported within the service plan for Engineering and Transportation.

Regular reviews and monitoring will be undertaken in line with ongoing reviews including local transport plan monitoring, service planning and local area agreement/ multi area agreement monitoring where applicable.

This improvement plan does not negate the need for consultation to be undertaken in relation to individual actions outlined. Further consultation in relation to specific actions will be undertaken with relevant parties, whenever applicable.

Appendices

Appendix 1 – List of Consultees

Appendix 2 – Map showing definitive and adopted paths

Appendix 3 – Legal Statutes and policy in full detail

Appendix 4 – Street Pride Inspections

Appendix 5 – Table of potential public rights of way

Appendix 6 – Consultation responses

Appendix 7 – Survey

Appendix 8 – Newsletter

Appendix 1

List of Consultees

- Johnsons Feed Merchants Ltd
- Rockstar Equestrian Tack Shop
- Pennard Saddlery
- Roxanna Horse & Pet Supplies
- Ryknild Saddlery
- G & B Kendall & Sons
- Barnsby Saddles
- Jabez Cliff & Co Ltd
- School Farm Shop
- Barker Saddlery
- Diamond Saddlery
- Beacon Riding Club
- Werns Nest Farm
- Bourne Vale Riding Stables
- Eleven enquiries from the Members of the Public
- Walsall Bangladeshi Progressive Society
- Aldridge Running Club
- Aaina Asian Women's Group
- Women's Centre
- RSPB St Mary's RC School
- Black Country Walking Club
- Gujerati Hindu Social and Cultural Centre GHSC Centre
- African – Caribbean Luncheon Club
- Walsall Sikh Forum
- Walsall Refugee and Asylum Seeker Support Association
- Pakistani Muslim Welfare Association
- Union of Muslim Organisations in Walsall
- Bangladeshi Community Services
- Indian Workers Association
- Safer Walsall Borough Partnership
- Leisure Services Walk Leaders
- Countryside Services
- British Waterways
- Walsall Council Libraries
- Leisure Centres
- Youth Services Union House

- Moxley People Centre
- Cycling Forum
- First Stop Shop
- Over 50's Forum
- Citizens Panel
- Walsall Disability Forum
- Black Minority Ethnic Forum
- Sixteen members of the Local Access Forum
- Forest of Mercia
- Walsall Housing Group
- Sure Start Palfrey, Children's Centre
- Sure Start Alumwell/Pleck
- Birchills Sure Start
- Darlaston Sure Start
- Rethink Schoolhouse Project, Brownhills Activity Centre
- Bloxwich Police Station
- The Ramblers Association
- Open Spaces Society
- The Auto-Cycle Union Limited
- Access Department, The British Horse Society
- Cycle Touring Club
- Byways and Bridleways Trust

Appendix 2

This appendices item is a separate map which shows all public rights of way that are highways paths for which the responsibility for maintenance falls to public rights of way. It includes Definitive Public Rights of Way (shown in green) which are recorded on the Definitive Map and Statement and Adopted footpaths (pink) which are recorded on the List of Streets. Please note that this information has been taken from the councils' geographical information systems and not the original records. A review is proposed to ensure that all newly created public rights of way, or those which have been diverted or extinguished are correctly recorded so this map will be subject to change pending the review.

If the map has become separated from this document and you would like to request another copy, please get in touch with us.

The information contained within this map should not be relied upon for the purposes of land searches; for accurate and up to date information, please contact us to arrange for the necessary checks to be undertaken.

Public Rights of Way

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Appendix 3

Legal Statutes

Act Title	Overview / Key Points	Importance to Public Rights of Way
Clean Neighbourhoods and Environment Act 2006	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Setting Standards in the Environment * Making the our Neighbourhoods cleaner places to live and work *Improving of security within our neighbourhoods 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> *Combating of litter and fly tipping on Public Rights of way *Removal of abandoned vehicles from Public Rights of Way. *Gating orders to improve security on Public Rights of Way
Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> *Rights of Way Improvement plans *Special Extinguishment Diversion orders (Crime Prevention) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> *Production of Rights of Way Improvement Plan *Powers to permanently close Public Rights of Way for Crime Prevention
Crime and Disorder Act 1998	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> *Crime and Community Safety *Anti social behaviour * Local authorities responsibilities to prevent crime and disorder 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> *Dealing with Crime and Anti-Social behaviour within our network of Public Rights of Way network. *Measures local authorities can do such as dispersal orders to prevent crime.
Disability Discrimination Act 1995	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> *To prevent discrimination against a person who has a disability *To educate the community with regards to disability issues 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> *Making of Public Rights of Way network more accessible to people who have a disability. *Information on stating which Public Rights of Ways that have access problems or have steps and slopes,
Town and Country Planning Act 1990	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> *Developing best practice techniques within planning of our towns. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> *Dealing with all planning issues concerning aspects that cover Public Rights of Way matters within our towns.
Road Traffic Regulation Act 1984	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> *This gives the Council powers to make prohibition of traffic orders. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> *Allows the installation of Barriers where motorcycles enter Public Rights of Way networks.
Cycle Tracks Act 1984	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> *Development of Cycle Tracks 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> *The conversion of footpaths into cycle tracks
Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> *Introduced statutory duty for Highway Authorities to keep Definitive Map and Statement up to date 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> *Ensures that information or legally recorded public rights of way is accurate
Highways Act 1980	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> *Removal of overgrown vegetation and obstructions from the highway * Lighting of highways *Installation of barriers and bollards 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> *Making of Public Rights of Way network accessible by cutting back overgrown vegetation and removal of obstructions. *Lighting Regulations regarding Public Rights of Way. * Restricting access to motorised vehicles on Rights of Way paths.
Countryside Act 1968	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Installation of Signposts and Waymarkers 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Allows local authorities to erect signposts and waymarker on any land that has a Right of Way path after consultation with the Land Owner.

National Policies

Policy	Overview / Key Points	Importance to Public Rights of Way
Guidance on Local Access Forums in England Department for Environment Food and Rural Affairs 2007	*Setting of limits of authority to local access forum group members	*Local Access Forums are a voluntary members of the public who advise as to the improvement of public access to land in the area for the purpose of open-air recreation and the enjoyment of public rights of way in the area.
Improving Information for Disabled People Office for Disability Issues 2007	*Communication to help a person who has a disability *Develop a better understanding to disability issues	*Using various forms communications to advise people with disabilities about the network of rights of way. *Remove barriers where possible that can cause difficulties for people who have disabilities
Living Places Communities.gov.uk 2004	*Improvements to towns building. *Development of the infrastructure *Planning new landscapes *Creating of new uses	*Repairing of Dangerous walls close to Rights of Way paths * New signs and lighting to Public Rights of Way *Street furniture bollards and barriers on Public Rights of Way *New cycle paths close to rights of ways networks
Sustainable Communities in the West Midlands Communities.gov.uk 2003	*Improving green spaces *Building a better housing and environment for the community	*Reduce the fear of Crime. *Development of new rights of way paths with the regeneration of local towns
Making the connections Social Exclusion Unit 2002	*Encourage journeys by sustainable modes of transport. *Look at all links in the journey chain. *Reduce social exclusion	*Identify priority routes for repair, develop new links etc to ensure access for all the community. *Reduce the impact of road traffic - congestion, accidents and cutting off communities , by improving and promoting public rights of way
Inclusive Mobility Department for Transport 2002	*A Guide to best Practice on Access to Pedestrian and Transport Infrastructure	*A tool to make sure that public rights of way conform with Disability Discrimination Act 1995

Regional Policies

Policy	Overview / Key Points	Importance to Public Rights of Way
West Midlands Regional Spatial Strategy Government Office West Midlands 2004	*Document to provide greater opportunities for walking and cycling eg. safe, secure, direct convenient and attractive networks connecting local facilities. *Creates awareness of sustainable development and travel	*Focus on maintenance and cleaning priorities for public rights of way. *Focus on where we can make new links to connect existing public rights of way to enhance the network. *Develop new key paths leading to bus stops and train stops/stations
Delivering Advantage: West Midlands Economic Strategy and Action Plan 2004 - 2010 Advantage West Midlands, 2004	*Promotes walking, cycling and public transport. *Improve accessibility and mobility in urban areas.	*Development of new walking and cycling paths to create an opportunity for sustainable travel. *Focus on ways of making paths accessible to all members of community
Centro's 20 year Strategy Centro 2003	*Developments of high-quality public transport services and facilities. *Improve integrated linked network of different modes of transport	*Investigate paths linking to bus stops and train stops/stations and improve their quality in maintenance and cleaning.
West Midlands Local Transport Plan West Midlands Joint Committee 2006	*Ensure that the transport system underpins the economic revitalisation of the West Midlands Metropolitan Area. *Ensure that transport contributes towards social inclusion by increasing accessibility for everyone *Move towards a more sustainable pattern of development and growth *Improve safety and health for all *Integrate all forms of transport with each other, other land uses, and other policies and priorities	*Regeneration of our towns to make accessibility of Public Rights of Way to all members of the community. *Develop easier walking and cycling paths on Public Rights of Way routes. *Improve Public Rights of Way close to bus stops and stops/stations

Local Policies

Policy	Overview / Key Points	Importance to Public Rights of Way
<p>Walsall Council Equal Opportunities Policy Walsall Council Reviewed Annually</p>	<p>Implementation of four principles:- *Quality - working for the highest feasible standards in services. *Equality - endeavouring to eradicate disadvantage, discrimination and deprivation. *Empowerment- giving people real engagement, commitment, responsibility and influence in decisions *Equity-being impartial, rational and just in all activities and dealings</p>	<p>*Improving quality of Public Rights of Way so most members of community have access to all areas of the borough with ease. *Ensuring that Public Rights of Way don't discriminate against members of the community that are disadvantaged. *Giving members of the community their say on how money is spent on Public Rights of Way. *Making sure all areas of the Walsall are treated the same when it comes to updating our network of Public Rights of Way.</p>
<p>Walsall Green Space Strategy Walsall Council 2006</p>	<p>*Ensure a Clean and Green Borough *Make it Easier for People to Get Around *Ensure all People are Safe and Secure. *Make our Schools Great *Make Walsall a Healthy and Caring Place. *Encourage Everyone to Feel Proud of Walsall. *Make it Easier to Access Local Services *Strengthen the Local Economy. *Listen to What Local People Want. *Transform Walsall into an Excellent Authority</p>	<p>*Make sure our Public Rights of Way are clean, tidy and in keeping with the environment wherever possible. *Make sure we do not close Rights of Way without justification. *Develop the community partnerships in conjunction with Public Rights of Way. *Integrate school travel plans with Public Rights of Way. *Educate the community to make full use of the network Public Rights of Way therefore improving their health and understanding of others within the community. *Community ownership of Public Rights of Way. *Develop new Rights of Way or improve existing to Access Local Services and improve the local economy. *Consult with the community on Public Rights of Way Issues. *Provide the community with an excellent network of Public Rights of Way.</p>
<p>Walsall Cycling Strategy Walsall Council 2003</p>	<p>*Cycling provides a viable mode of transport for local and Borough journeys. *Cycling is the most sustainable form of mechanical travel that is accessible to a large proportion of the population regardless of age or income. *Cycling provides significant health benefits. *Cycling provides a convenient form of transport for short trips. *Cycling has a key role to play in achieving the goals of the West Midlands Transport Strategy.</p>	<p>*To investigate the possibility of more public rights of way having cycle paths incorporated within the network of paths. *To ensure public rights of way are maintained to high standard that have cycle paths incorporated in them. *Promote the use of cycle paths within the public rights of way network therefore increasing the level of health within the community. *Increase the number of cycle paths within borough to make local amenities more accessible for the community. *Make sure cycle paths with Public Rights of Way play a key role within borough of Walsall. *Develop safe routes for cyclist including off road routes away from the flow of traffic</p>
<p>Walsall Compact Walsall Council 2005</p>	<p>The Principles of Walsall Compact are as follows:- Funding, principles of consultation, volunteering, Black and Minority Ethnic (BME) Voluntary and Community Groups, Information and Communication, Disability Organisations, Learning and Development.</p>	<p>*Improving funding for Public Rights of Way. *Setting up of a questionnaire to gain the community views on public rights of way. *Involving all members of the community in the consultation exercise. *Making sure all Information on public rights of way is correct and up to date. *Involving disabled groups in the consultation exercise of public rights of way. *From our consultation exercise learning and developing the network of public rights of way, in line with identified community needs</p>

Policy	Overview / Key Points	Importance to Public Rights of Way
<p>Walsall Plan -Unitary Development Plan (UDP) Walsall Council 2005</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> *Investigate where we should give priorities to the needs of pedestrians and cyclists. *Help people without cars to not be disadvantaged when finding employment. *Develop local opportunities for recreational walking, cycling and horse-riding. *Improve maintenance. *Create direct paths and routes. *Link and integrate the network with other existing routes and paths. *New developments should minimise reliance on the car and encourage walking, cycling and bus/train travel. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> *Identify public rights of way to give priorities to needs of pedestrians and cyclists. *Keep public rights of way in good order so people without cars can use them to gain access to work. *Improve public rights of way for recreational walking, cycling and horse-riding. *Investigate new public rights of way for the benefit of the community. *Develop the public rights of way network so they connect with existing routes and paths. *Encourage the use of public rights of way for the purpose of sustainable travel reducing the need for car travel for short journeys.
<p>Walsall Walking and Mobility Strategy Walsall Council 2003</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> *Complete walk journeys from home and back to visit friends, go to shops, school or work, or use other services, such as leisure facilities, doctors, or banking *Walking as an access stage for longer journeys by other modes, e.g. to railway stations and bus stops. *Walking in town centres, principally for shopping, business and financial purpose. Many of these journeys will originate from car parks or places of work. *Walking for leisure, both short journeys from home, for instance to walk the dog, and purposeful journeys in the countryside and in parks. *Children's play i.e. opportunities for children to interact, meet friends, explore their environment independently and be active. *Attractive and pleasant for the user. *Barrier-free by removing obstacles which deter walk journeys wherever possible. *Safe by, as far as possible, removing the sources of danger without causing delay or diversion to the walker. *Personally secure by design. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> *To market, promote and educate people about the benefits of walking and sustainable issues. *To maintain and ultimately increase the proportion of journeys on foot, both as a mode on its own and in conjunction with other modes of travel, in particular for journeys of around a mile or under. *To improve the quality of life and social well-being of the community and different social groups. *To improve the quality of the walking environment, safeguarding existing pedestrians' rights of way and providing further access to all. *To provide a safe and secure walking environment. *To provide facilities for those with severe mobility problems which meet their needs when not using motor vehicles.
<p>Health Profile for Walsall 2006 Department of Health 2006</p>	<p>Local authority health profile are designed to show the health of people in each local authority area, and include comparisons with other similar populations.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * To focus on improving peoples health and encourage them to walk, cycle and exercise more which they can achieve by using public rights of way within the borough of Walsall.
<p>Our Healthier Nation Walsall NHS Primary Care Trust 2005</p>	<p>A national strategy of saving lives and improving the health of nation with the objective of making the worst off in society understand how they improve their health by exercise and diet.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * To develop targets, monitor the population and educate the community in best forms of exercise and diet with importance to living longer and more healthier. This could mean that the community will be using the networks of public rights of way for their general exercise on a day to day basis.
<p>Walsall's Community Plan Walsall Borough Strategic Partnership 2005</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> *Transforming our look. *Reinventing our Places. *Connecting our People. *Creating new employment opportunities and linking people to jobs. *Targeting achievement among Young People. *Promoting Optimal Health *Acting on Local Priorities. *Building community capacity. *Promoting a vibrant voluntary *Neighbourhood Renewal. * Shared Outcomes/Joint Action. *Performance Managing Delivery and Progress 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> *Support Local Neighbourhood partnerships (LNPs) *Promote volunteering and active citizens. *Involve the Community and Voluntary Sector in service delivery. *Continue to lead on the Neighbourhood Renewal fund programme. *Drive actions within the Local Area Agreements. *Act upon our Improvement Plan.

Policy	Overview / Key Points	Importance to Public Rights of Way
Situational Crime Interventions Policy Safer Walsall Borough Partnership 2005	*Measures to reduce crime within the network of public rights of way, particularly through the improving security in local neighbourhoods programme	*Improvements to public rights of way which may deter crime or make it more difficult to commit crime within the network of paths, bridleways and byways. *Gating orders and closure orders on public rights of way for the purpose of reduction of crime and anti-social behaviour.
Lighting up Walsall Walsall Council in partnership with Amey Walsall Council 2002	*Removal of the ageing stock of street lighting *Improving road safety *Contributing to a reduction in the fear of crime. *Regular maintenance of the street lighting. *Periodic lamp change and cleaning	*Replacement of old lighting units on public rights of way. *Development of safety on public rights of way. *Assisting to help to reduce fear of crime on public rights of way. *Planned maintenance of lamp posts and lighting units on public rights of way. *Scheduled lamp change and cleaning of lamp posts on public rights of way.
Equality and Diversity Strategy 2005 to 2008	*Working closely with the community to improve Council services in equality.	*To Develop a better understanding of the community needs and examine public rights of way to they cater for the community
Disability Equality Scheme 2006 to 2008	*To improve the services and accessibility for people who have a disability and live and work in Walsall.	*Improvements to public rights of way to make them more accessible for people who have a disability within the borough of Walsall

Appendix 4

Aldridge and Brownhills

No Street Pride Survey		No defects		Defects / Work or monitoring required		Type of Surface defects						
Number of paths	Lengths of Paths (metres)	Number of paths	Lengths of Paths (metres)	Number of paths	Lengths of Paths (metres)	Obstruction	Surface Conditions	Tree roots lifting footpath	Missing Sign post / handrails / bollard	Excess dumping / litter	Stiles - limited access for disabled	Overgrown
28	9735	62	28656	10	3872	3	4	3	1	1	0	1
28.0%	23.0%	62.0%	67.8%	10.0%	9.2%							

Aldridge and Brownhills

No Street Pride Survey		No defects		Defects / Work or monitoring required		Type of Surface defects						
Footpath Number	Lengths of Paths (metres)	Footpath Number	Lengths of Paths (metres)	Footpath Number	Lengths of Paths (metres)	Obstruction	Surface Conditions	Tree roots lifting footpath	Missing Sign post / handrails / bollard	Excess dumping / litter	Stiles - limited access for disabled	Overgrown
8	65	1	629									
		2	282	23	294			*				
10	166	3	277	28	138			*				
16	538	4	311	39	548	*						
24	74	5	168	41	771				*			*
37	432	6	86	49	155			*				
48	947	7	142									
56	1010	9	847									
0.153	382	11	89									
		13	241									
		15	127									
		17	467									
		18	437									
		19	508									
		20	208									
		21	250									
		22	752									
		25	236									
		26	340									
		27	1417									
		29	702									
		30	246									
		31	131									
		32	260									
		33	230									
		35	116									
		36	364									
		38	744									

Walsall Borough's Draft Rights of Way Improvement Plan

No Street Pride Survey		No defects		Defects / Work or monitoring required									
		40	214										
		42	801										
		43	424										
		50	122										
		51	961										
		0.149	572										
		0.152	832										
		0.154A	962										
		0.155	580										
39	348	12	718	29	552	*							
48	107	25	780	32	608		*						
49	121	30	640	35	188		*						
0.160	1974	31	560	47	106						*		
0.162	348	33	156	53	512	*							
0.163	688	36	168										
0.167	354	37	867										
0.168	722	38	1397										
		40	637										
		41	656										
		42	507										
		43	183										
		44	84										
		50	58										
		51	98										
		52	54										
		0.164	484										
		0.165	646										
		0.166	608										
		0.169	940										
		0.170	850										
14	388												
15	610												
28	46												
IR/2050	33	IR/2000	201										
IR/2051	43	IR/2049	79										
IR/2052	59	IR/2572	1152										
IR/2053	32	2R/3051	58										
IR/2257	124												
IR/2258	41												
IR/2573	49												
IR/3004	34												

TOTAL

28	9735	62	28656	10	3872	3	4	3	1	1	0	1
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Darlaston

No Street Pride Survey		No defects		Defects / Work or monitoring required								
Number of paths	Lengths of Paths (me-tres)	Number of paths	Lengths of Paths (me-tres)	Number of paths	Lengths of Paths (me-tres)	Type of Surface defects						
						Obstruc-tion	Surface Condi-tions	Tree roots lifting foot-path	Missing Sign post / hand-rails / bollard	Excess dump-ing / litter	Stiles - limited access for disa-bled	Over-grown
11	1446	12	1049	4	791	1	0	1	0	2	0	0
40.7%	44.0%	44.4%	31.9%	14.8%	24.1%							

Darlaston

No Street Pride Survey		No defects		Defects / Work or monitoring required								
Foot-path Number	Lengths of Paths (me-tres)	Foot-path Number	Lengths of Paths (me-tres)	Foot-path Number	Lengths of Paths (me-tres)	Type of defects						
						Obstruc-tion	Surface Condi-tions	Tree roots lifting foot-path	Missing Sign post / hand-rails / bollard	Excess dump-ing / litter	Stiles - limited access for disa-bled	Over-grown
4	314	BP1	144	2	285					*		
8	234	3	315	6	35					*		
15	29	5	36	9	83	*						
16	62	10	45	12	388			*				
17	114	11	80									
18	395	13	30									
19	212	14	61									
25	86	20	82									
		21	61									
		22	33									
		23	86									
		24	76									

TOTAL

11	1446	12	1049	4	791	1	0	1	0	2	0	0
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Walsall

No Street Pride Survey		No defects		Defects / Work or monitoring required								
Number of paths	Lengths of Paths (metres)	Number of paths	Lengths of Paths (metres)	Number of paths	Lengths of Paths (metres)	Type of Surface defects						
						Ob- struction	Surface Con- ditions	Tree roots lifting foot- path	Missing Sign post / hand- rails / bollard	Excess dump- ing / litter	Stiles - limited access for disa- bled	Over- grown
19	4270	56	10073	39	9129	9	18	4	4	7	2	2
16.7%	18.2%	49.1%	42.9%	34.2%	38.9%							

Walsall

No Street Pride Survey		No defects		Defects / Work or monitoring required								
Foot- path Number	Lengths of Paths (metres)	Foot- path Number	Lengths of Paths (metres)	Foot- path Number	Lengths of Paths (metres)	Type of defects						
						Ob- struction	Surface Con- ditions	Tree roots lifting foot- path	Missing Sign post / hand- rails / bollard	Excess dump- ing / litter	Stiles - limited access for disa- bled	Over- grown
14	74	1	32	4	116	*						
28	743	2	46	7	344			*				
39	46	3	116	16	69	*		*				
40	405	5	40	18	54	*				*		
41	177	6	32	19	70	*						
46	40	8	95	20	123	*						
47	233	9	64	21	450	*						
55	945	10	101	26	271				*			
56	563	11	46	29	211	*						
57	355	12	46	30	66	*						
64	102	13	35	31	233		*			*		*
70	147	15	117	33	85				*			
73	54	17	105	36	49	*						
74	58	22	55	38	33	*						
75	48	23	360	45	78							*
83	68	24	243	48	89	*						
91	73	25	101	54	342						*	
98	70	27	620	58	260					*		
101	69	34	65	59	1005						*	
		35	173	60	435	*						
		37	89	61	59	*						
		42	216	62	64	*						
		43	800	65	128	*						
		44	800	76	136	*		*				
		49	202	77	40	*						
		50	215	78	93				*			

Walsall Borough's Draft Rights of Way Improvement Plan

		51	150	80	160		*						
		52	580	84	61		*						
		53	65	88	653					*			
		63	311	89	246	*							
		66	319	90	288					*			
		67	56	92	52					*			
		68	31	93	75	*							
		69	454	94	82	*							
		71	105	95	65	*		*					
		72	66	105	771	*							
		79	197	107	677	*				*			
		81	38	111	490	*							
		82	63	123	606				*				
		85	71										
		86	76										
		87	126										
		96	141										
		97	56										
		99	31										
		100	50										
		102	55										
		103	214										
		104	148										
		106	424										
		108	600										
		109	144										
		110	162										
		112	89										
		113	253										
		114	184										

TOTAL

19	4270	56	10073	39	9129	9	18	4	4	7	2	2
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Wednesbury

No Street Pride Survey		No defects		Defects / Work or monitoring required								
Number of paths	Lengths of Paths (metres)	Number of paths	Lengths of Paths (metres)	Number of paths	Lengths of Paths (metres)	Type of Surface defects						
						Obstruction	Surface Conditions	Tree roots lifting foot-path	Missing Sign post / hand-rails / bollard	Excess dumping / litter	Stiles - limited access for disabled	Over-grown
0	0	6	986	4	743	0	3	0	0	1	0	4
0.0%	0.0%	60.0%	57.0%	40.0%	43.0%							

Wednesbury

No Street Pride Survey		No defects		Defects / Work or monitoring required								
Foot-path Number	Lengths of Paths (metres)	Foot-path Number	Lengths of Paths (metres)	Foot-path Number	Lengths of Paths (metres)	Type of defects						
						Obstruction	Surface Conditions	Tree roots lifting foot-path	Missing Sign post / hand-rails / bollard	Excess dumping / litter	Stiles - limited access for disabled	Over-grown
		2	491	1	133		*					*
		3	87	5	444		*			*		*
		4	95	7	130		*					*
		8	62	10	36							*
		9	176									
		11	75									

TOTAL

0	0	6	986	4	743	0	3	0	0	1	0	4
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Wednesfield

No Street Pride Survey		No defects		Defects / Work or monitoring required								
Number of paths	Lengths of Paths (metres)	Number of paths	Lengths of Paths (metres)	Number of paths	Lengths of Paths (metres)	Type of Surface defects						
						Obstruction	Surface Conditions	Tree roots lifting foot-path	Missing Sign post / handrails / bollard	Excess dumping / litter	Stiles - limited access for disabled	Over-grown
2	605	2	576	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
50.0%	51.2%	50.0%	48.8%	0.0%	0.0%							

Wednesfield

No Street Pride Survey		No defects		Defects / Work or monitoring required								
Footpath Number	Lengths of Paths (metres)	Footpath Number	Lengths of Paths (metres)	Footpath Number	Lengths of Paths (metres)	Type of defects						
						Obstruction	Surface Conditions	Tree roots lifting footpath	Missing Sign post / handrails / bollard	Excess dumping / litter	Stiles - limited access for disabled	Over-grown
26	283	RP13	304									
39	322	18	272									

TOTAL

2	605	2	576	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
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Willenhall

No Street Pride Survey		No defects		Defects / Work or monitoring required								
Number of paths	Lengths of Paths (metres)	Number of paths	Lengths of Paths (metres)	Number of paths	Lengths of Paths (metres)	Type of Surface defects						
						Obstruction	Surface Conditions	Tree roots lifting foot-path	Missing Sign post / hand-rails / bollard	Excess dumping / litter	Stiles - limited access for disabled	Over-grown
21	3178	30	6505	31	6898	3	14	2	0	5	3	3
25.6%	19.2%	36.6%	39.2%	37.8%	41.6%							

Willenhall

No Street Pride Survey		No defects		Defects / Work or monitoring required								
Foot-path Number	Lengths of Paths (metres)	Foot-path Number	Lengths of Paths (metres)	Foot-path Number	Lengths of Paths (metres)	Type of defects						
						Obstruction	Surface Conditions	Tree roots lifting foot-path	Missing Sign post / hand-rails / bollard	Excess dumping / litter	Stiles - limited access (for disabled)	Over-grown
13	182	2	409	6	136		*					
14	166	4	419	7	107							
15	40	5	90	8	727						*	
31	420	16	395	9	335						*	
33	94	17	270	11	544						*	
35	115	26	43	RP18	276							
37	182	28	22	20	177		*					
40	322	29	165	27	324							
68	86	30	327	42	209		*					
71	146	32	143	43	84		*					
73	62	36	368	44	110		*					
76	68	38	380	48	472	*	*					
90	106	39	1075	BP53	629		*					
100	33	41	253	BP55	328					*		
103	128	45	203	BP57	27					*		
107	107	46	45	58	29					*		
110	38	49	117	59	64							*
115	155	50	266	64	53		*					
119	30	54	29	65	120		*					
		BP56	107	66	216					*		
		60	102	67	457		*					
		62	234	74	106		*					
		63	48	77	50	*						

Walsall Borough's Draft Rights of Way Improvement Plan

		80	57	78	100		*					
		81	87	49	46			*				
		82	42	93	266		*					*
		105	176	101	104				*			
		106	282	102	235							
		109	116	112	207		*					
		111	235	113	71			*				
				114	289							*
118	626											
120	72											

TOTAL

21	3178	30	6505	31	6898	3	14	2	0	5	3	3
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Appendix 5

Mapping Exercise

This list will be subject to investigations, so may alter accordingly

	Start	Finish	Route Description	Approx Length	How long has it been in used?	Who uses it? (ie. walkers)
1	Doe Bank Lane -Opposite Dairy Farm	Aldridge Road – Next to Farmer's John Pub	Straight line parallel to Bridle Lane			Horse riders, walkers
2	Cuckoo's Nook – May be part of the Beacon Way	Cuckoo's Nook – Back of Hay Head Farm	Between Definitive paths			Horse riders, walkers
3	Longwood Road	Towards Definitive path and come out by a house				Horse riders, walkers
4	Middlemore Lane / Dumblederry Lane – By railway	By new housing estate – Anchor Meadows				Walkers
5	Bank Street - alongside a pub	Bank Street		30 yards		Walkers
6	Sutton Drive / Chapel Lane – St Margaret's Hospital	Handsworth Drive - By Great Barr Park	Various paths			Horse riders, walkers
7	Riddians Bridge	Between where the Lime Pitts Lakes splits into two				Walkers
8	Chester Road	Back Lane	Investigation – Used to be open to vehicles. Access is now prevented except to walkers. Permissive route?			Walkers
9	Barr Beacon	Barr Beacon	Various routes. Permissive routes?			Horse riders, walkers
10	Daisy Bank / Skip Lane	Fallow Field Road				Horse riders, walkers, cyclists
11	Moxley Road	Victoria Avenue and definitive paths – rear of Broadwaters Avenue			25 years +	Walkers
12	Pinfold Lane – Part of Green Bridge	Pinfold Lane	Situation unclear			Horse riders, walkers
13	Watling Street	Coppice Lane Chester Road North	Several routes around Brownhills common			Horse riders
14	Coopers Bridge swingbridge Farm Pelsall Road	Swingbridge Farm Brownhills	Linear Route around Wyrley & Essington Canal by Catshill Junction Bridge			Horse riders
15	Wood Lane	North Road	Various routes around Wood Common			Horse riders

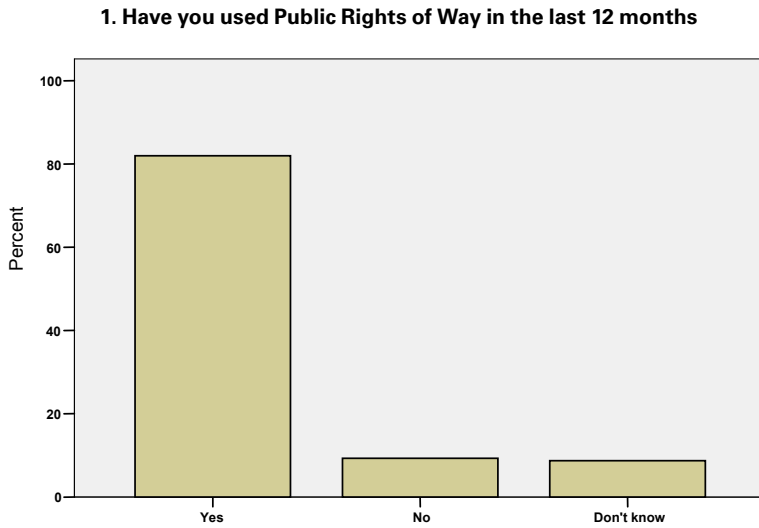
Walsall Borough's Draft Rights of Way Improvement Plan

	Start	Finish	Route Description	Approx Length	How long has it been in used?	Who uses it? (ie. walkers)
16	Pelsall Road Lichfield Road	Mill Street Adult Training Centre	Very long route with two short routes off main route around Ryders Hayes Farm and up Lothian Road across the Lichfield Road and around Moat Farm Way			Horse riders
17	Weatheroaks	Castlebank Plantation	Short route that runs parallel with Chester Road			Horse riders
18	Lichfield Road	Barns Lane	Ground around Stubbers Green finishing at Barns Farm			Horse riders
19	King George Avenue	Beacon Road	A long route covering areas around the municipal golf course, Rushall Canal, Sutton Road, Skip Lane, Barr Lakes Lane, Crook Lane, Pinfold Lane and up and around Barr Beacon Nature Reserve			Horse riders
20	Radley Road	Anglican Way	A route over a Canal Bridge through green belt land close to industrial units in Middlemore Lane			Walkers

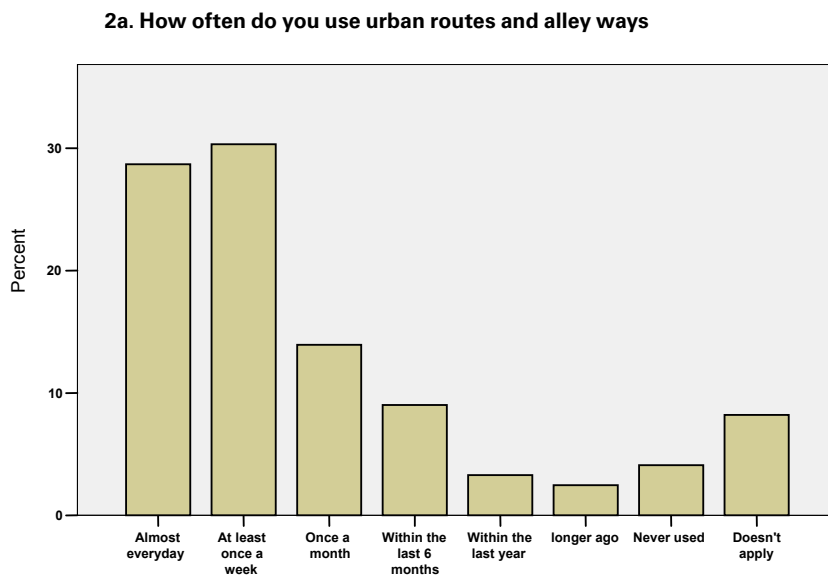
Appendix 6

Public Rights of Way Survey Consultation Responses

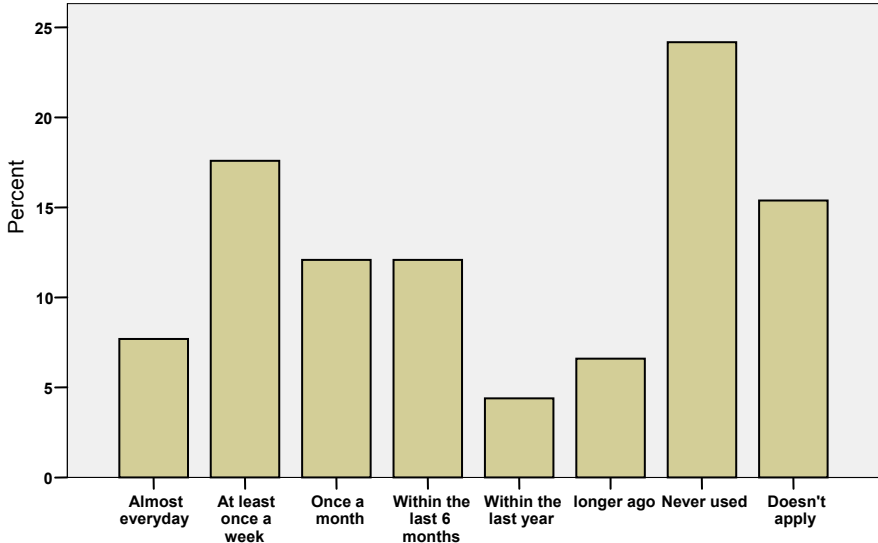
Question 1 – Within the past 12 months, have you used any public rights of way in the borough of Walsall?



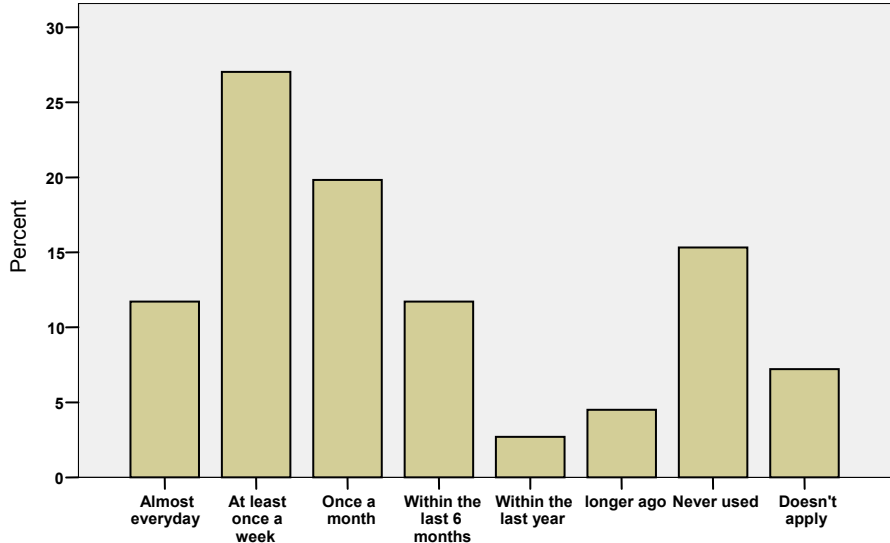
Question 2 – How often if at all do you use each of the following public rights of way in the borough of Walsall?



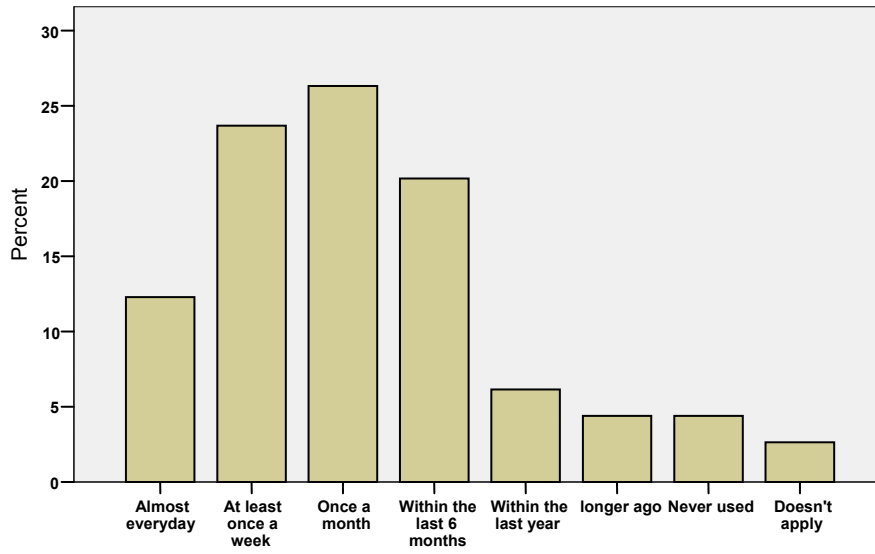
2b. How often do you use Cycle Routes



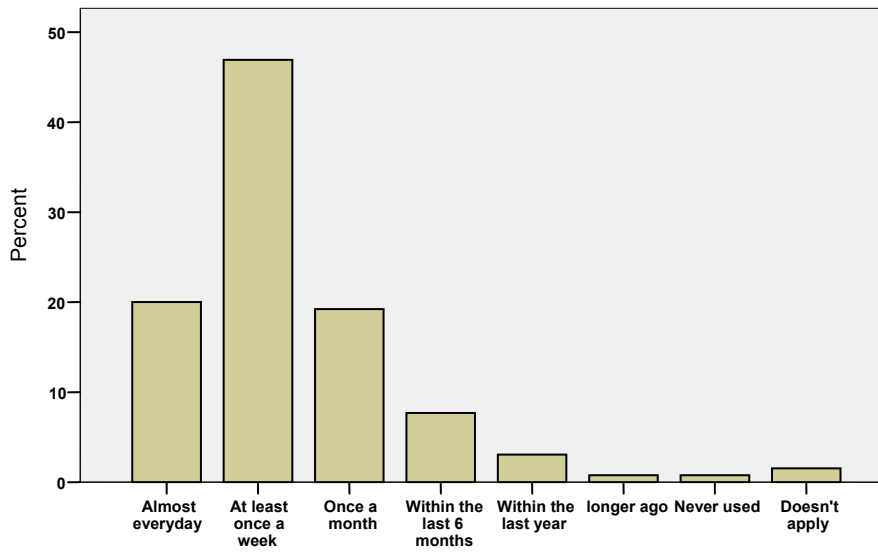
2c. How often do you use Bridleways



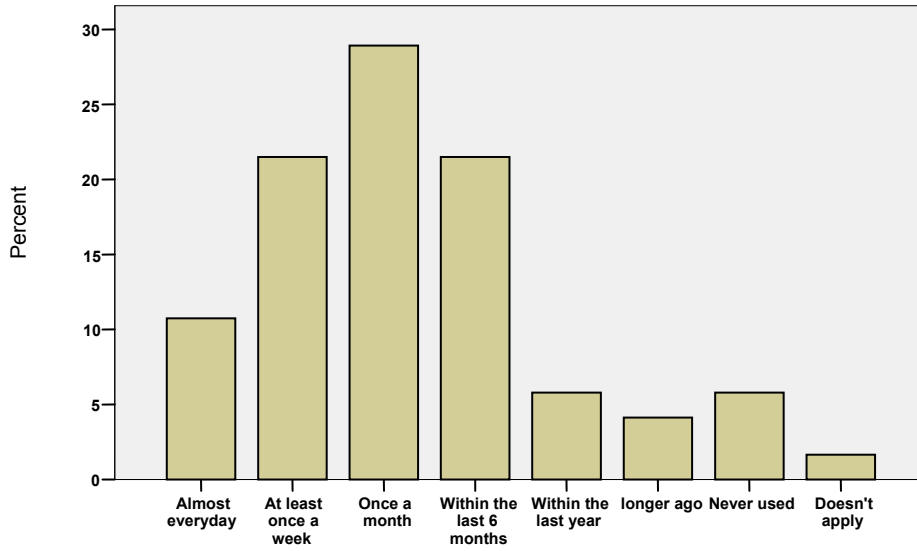
2d. How often do you use Canal tow paths



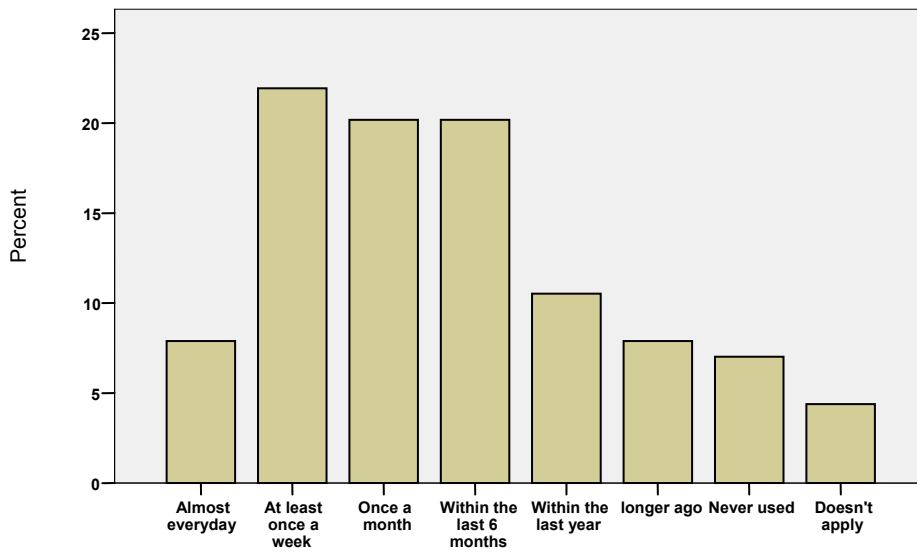
2e. How often do you use Routes across public parks and open spaces



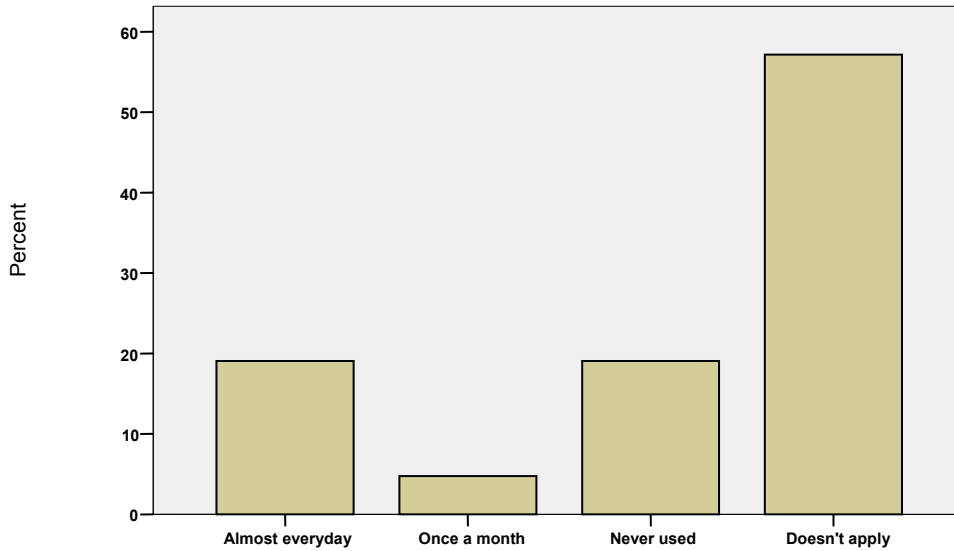
2f. How often do you use Routes across nature reserves & woodland paths



2g. How often do you use Route across fields



2h. How often do you use -other



Question 2h. Other responses received

- Any where you can ride as there are no bridle ways locally
- BOAT
- old railway track in nature reserve
- Footpath
- Parks Palfrey Park
- on national trust properties
- Footpaths Road Crossings
- Roads
- Combined three times a week

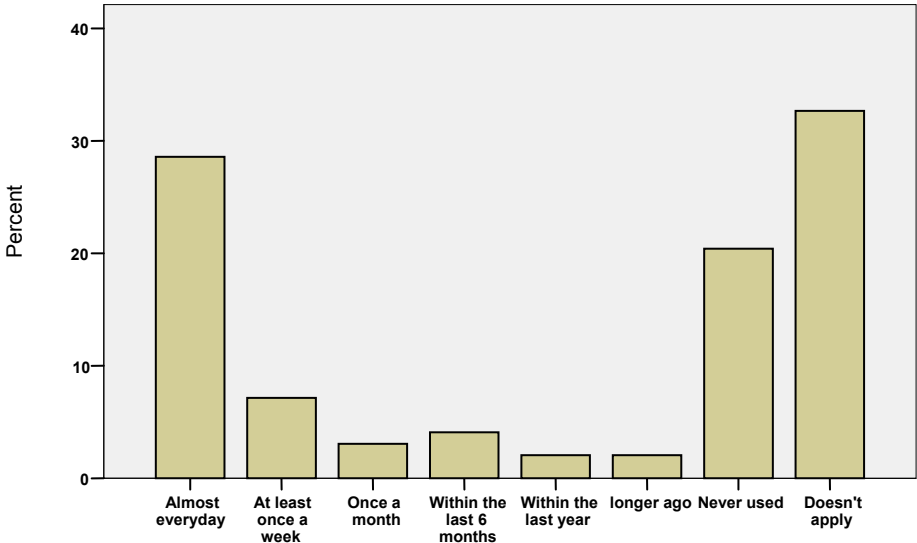
No public Bridle ways in South Walsall

Question 2. Summary of frequency of use of public rights of way in the borough of Walsall

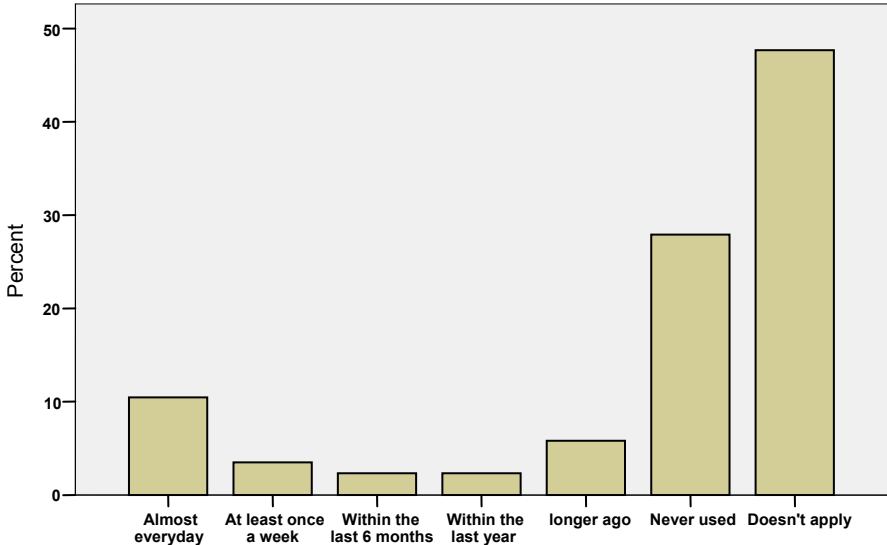
	Almost every day	At least once a week	About once a month	Within the last 6 months	Within the last Year	Longer ago	Never used	Does not apply
a) Urban routes and alleyways	28.7	30.3	13.9	9.0	3.3	2.5	4.1	8.2
b) Cycle routes	7.7	17.6	12.1	12.1	4.4	6.6	24.2	15.4
c) Bridleways	11.7	27.0	19.8	11.7	2.7	4.5	15.3	7.2
d) Canal tow paths	12.3	23.7	26.3	20.3	6.1	4.4	4.4	2.6
e) Routes across public parks and open spaces	20.0	46.9	19.2	7.7	3.1	0.8	0.8	1.5
f) Routes across nature reserves & woodland paths	10.7	21.5	28.9	21.5	5.8	4.1	5.8	1.7
g) Routes across fields	7.9	21.9	20.2	20.2	10.5	7.9	7.0	4.4
h) Other	19.0	4.8	19.0	0	0	0	0	57.1

Question 3- For each of the following reasons, how often if at all do you use public rights of way in the borough of Walsall?

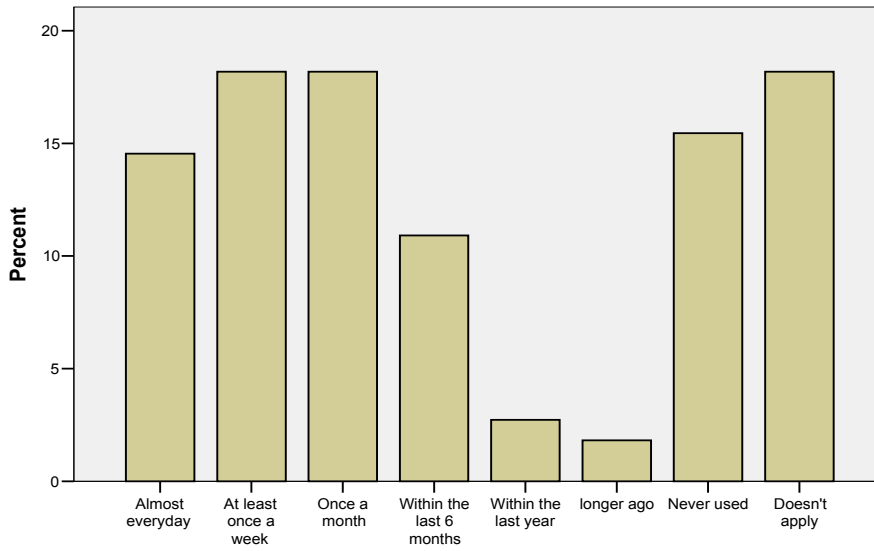
3a. How often do you use PROW -To get to work



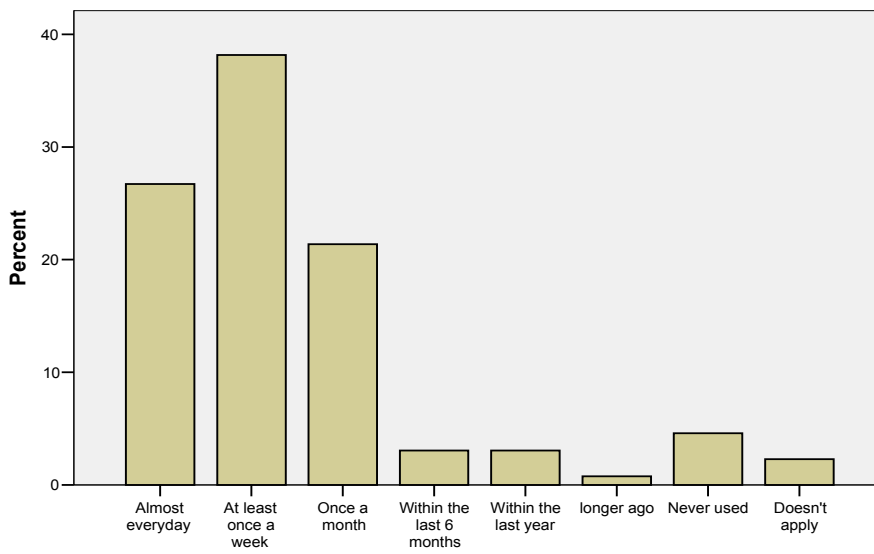
3b. How often do you use PROW -To get to place of study or take children to school



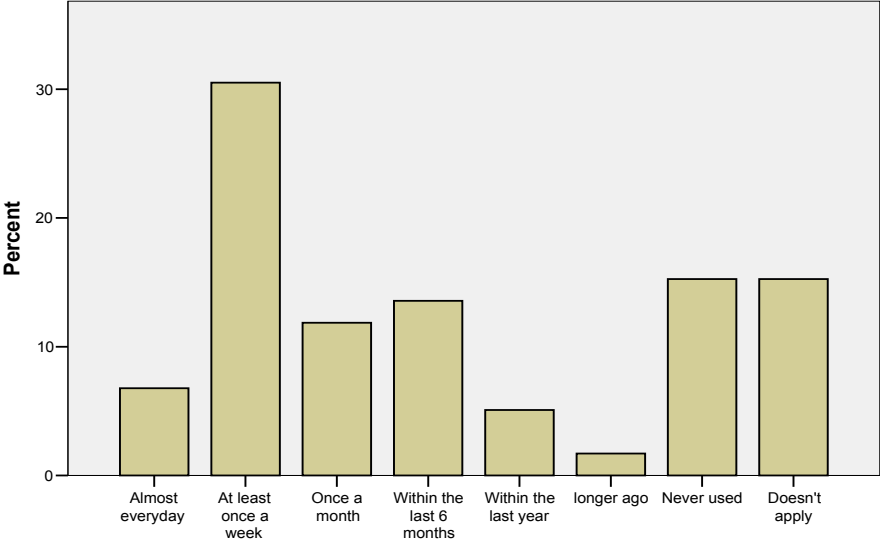
3c. How often do you use PROW -As links to bus stops/railway stations



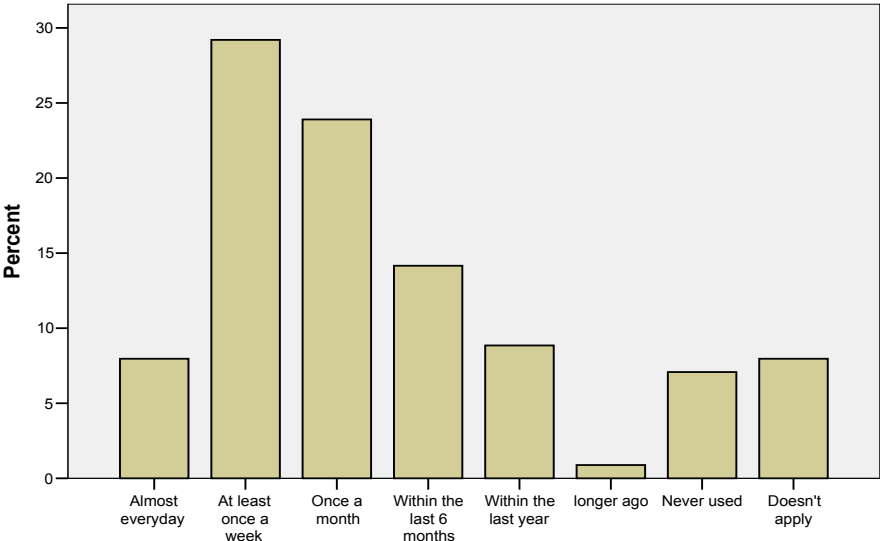
3d. How often do you use PROW -For Leisure, recreation or exercise



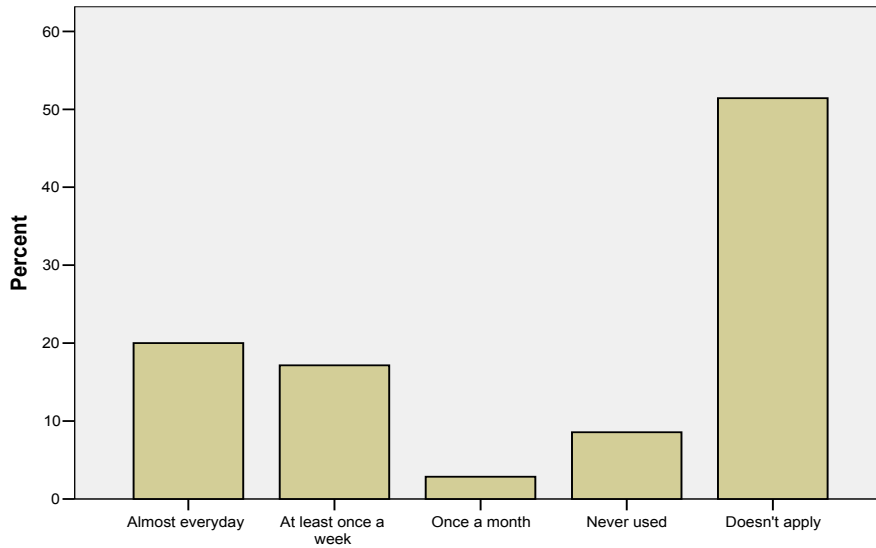
3e. How often do you use PROW -To visit friends or family



3f. How often do you use PROW -For getting to local attractions



3g. How often do you use PROW -Other reason



Question 3g. Other responses received

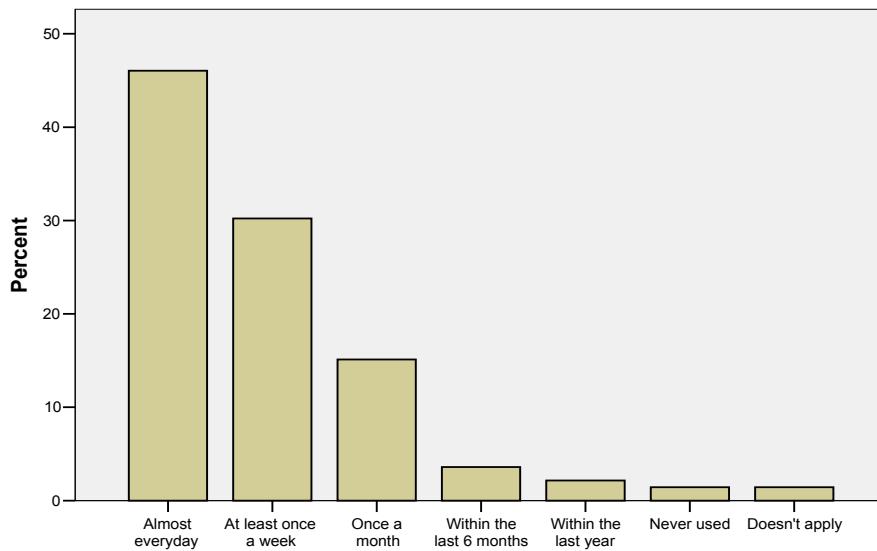
- Dog walking
- I live next to right of way
- As a cut through between busy roads
- horse riding dog walking cycling
- I have my daughter helps me a lot
- Health walks in the borough
- shops
- Horse riding and dog walking
- Safe routes to avoid traffic
- Walking dog
- Walsall Walk On walk leader up to 5 days each week
- Shopping
- Through work
- To litter pick daily To sweep away and remove wet leaves on tarmac monthly
- Shopping
- my job is to take a disabled gentleman to a park every day
- doctors
- walking the dog viewing local sites

Question 3. Summary of frequency of the following types of journeys along public rights of way in the borough of Walsall

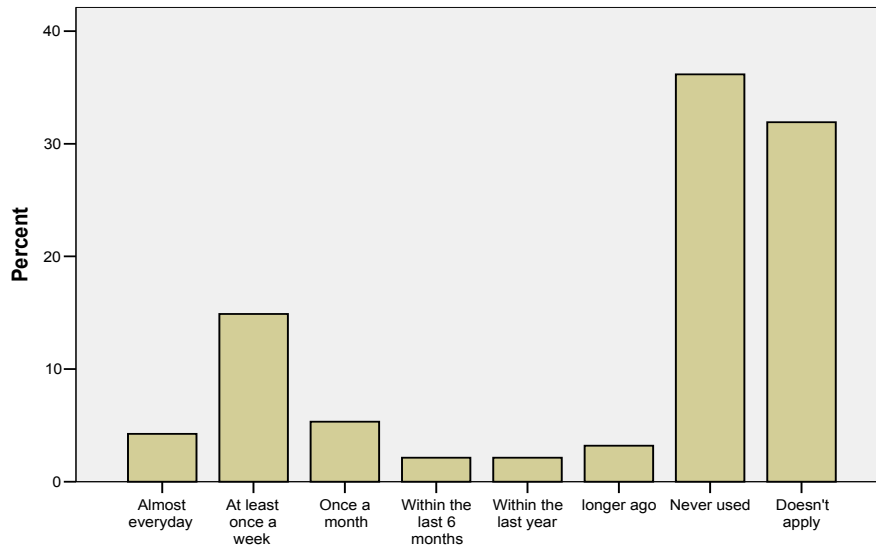
	Almost every day	At least once a week	About once a month	Within the last 6 Months	Within the last Year	Longer ago	Never Used	Does not apply
a) To get to work	28.6	7.1	3.1	4.1	2.0	2.0	20.4	32.7
b) To get to place of study or take the children to school	10.5	3.5	0	2.3	2.3	5.8	27.9	47.7
c) As links to bus stops / railway stations	14.5	18.2	18.2	10.9	2.7	1.8	15.5	18.2
d) For leisure, recreation or exercise	26.7	38.2	21.4	3.1	3.1	0.8	4.6	2.3
e) To visit friends or family	6.8	30.5	11.9	13.6	5.1	1.7	15.3	15.3
f) For getting to local attractions or facilities	8.0	29.2	23.9	14.2	8.8	0.9	7.1	8.0
g) Other reason	20.0	17.1	2.9	0	0	0	8.6	51.4

Question 4 – Please tell us how often, if at all, you travel along public rights of way using the following methods

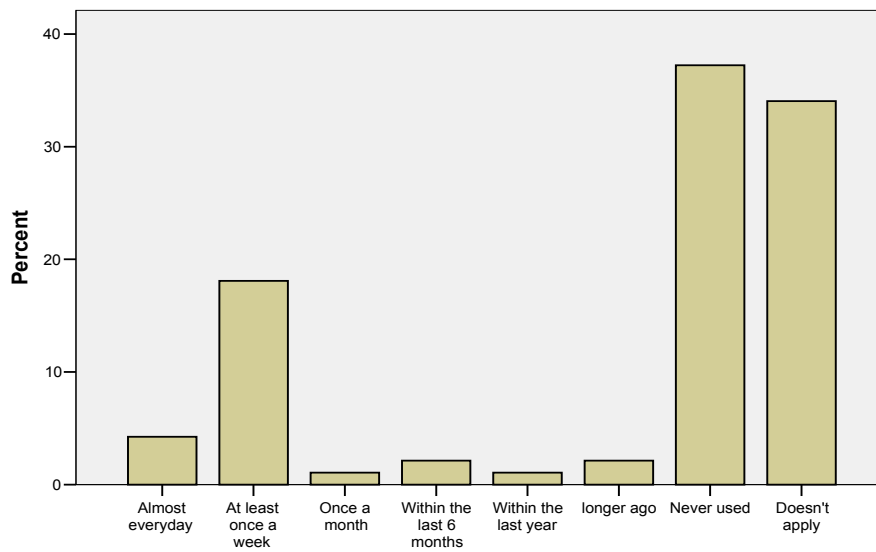
4a. How often do you travel along PROW by -Walking



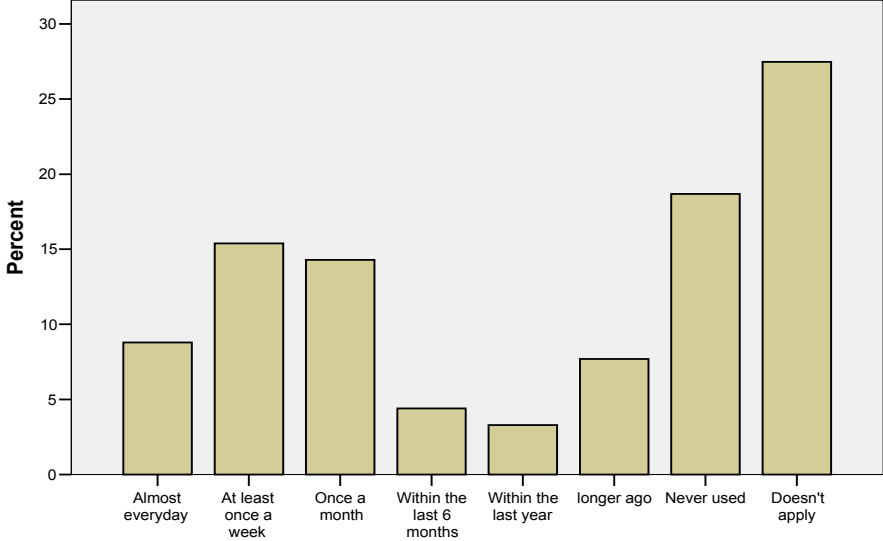
4b. How often do you travel along PROW by -Jogging or running



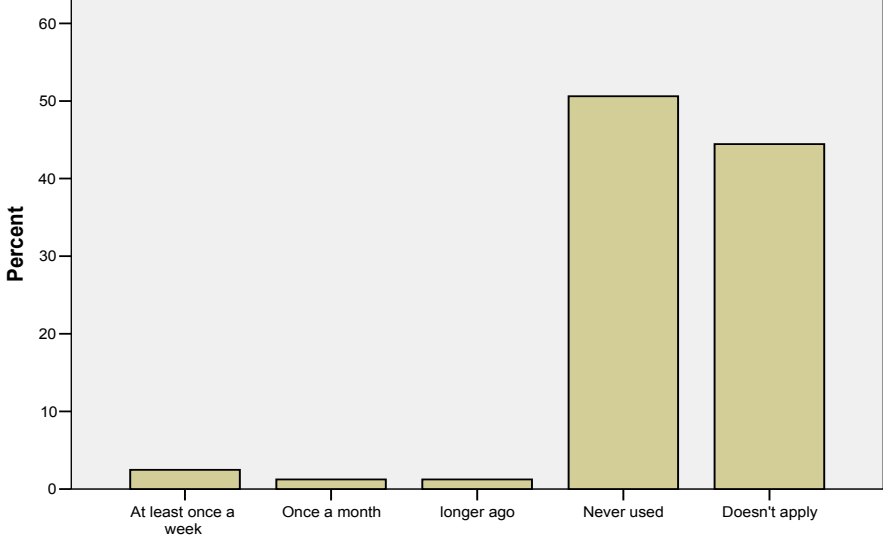
4c. How often do you travel along PROW by -Horse riding



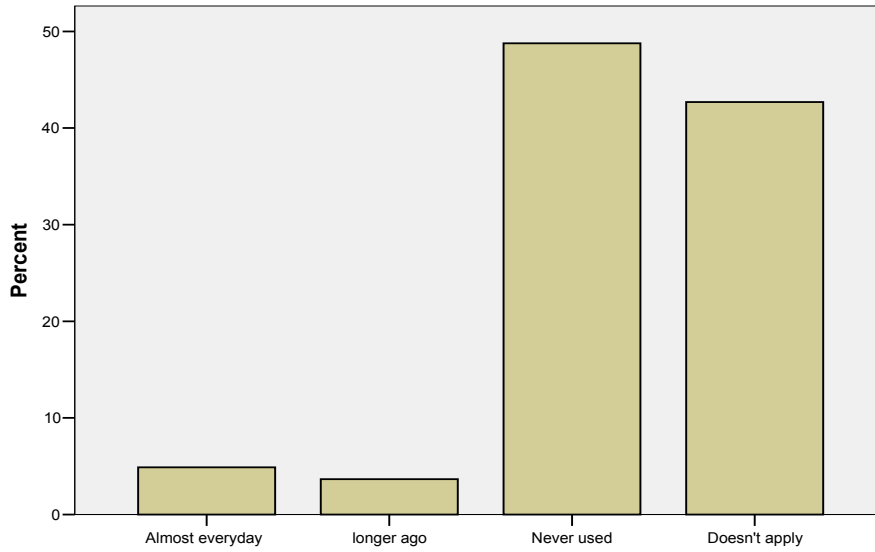
4d. How often do you travel along PROW by -Cycling



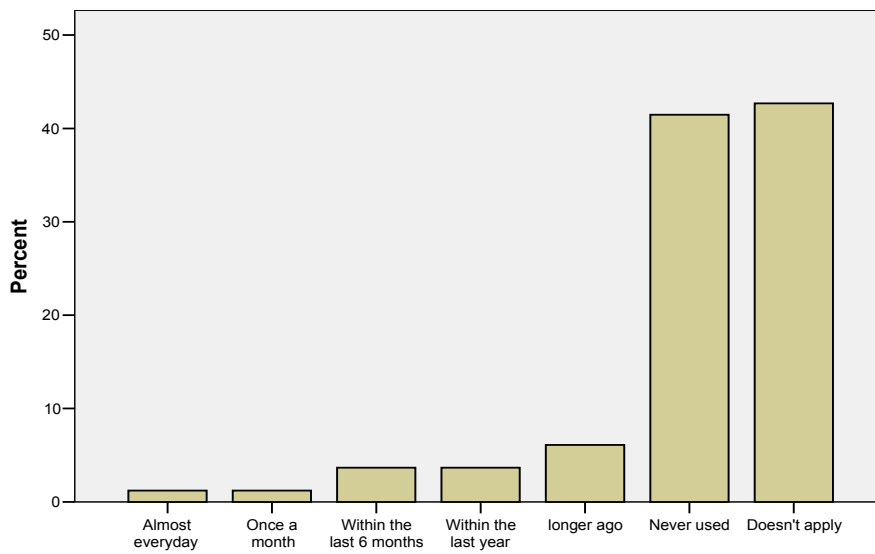
4e. How often do you travel along PROW by -Using a trotting cart



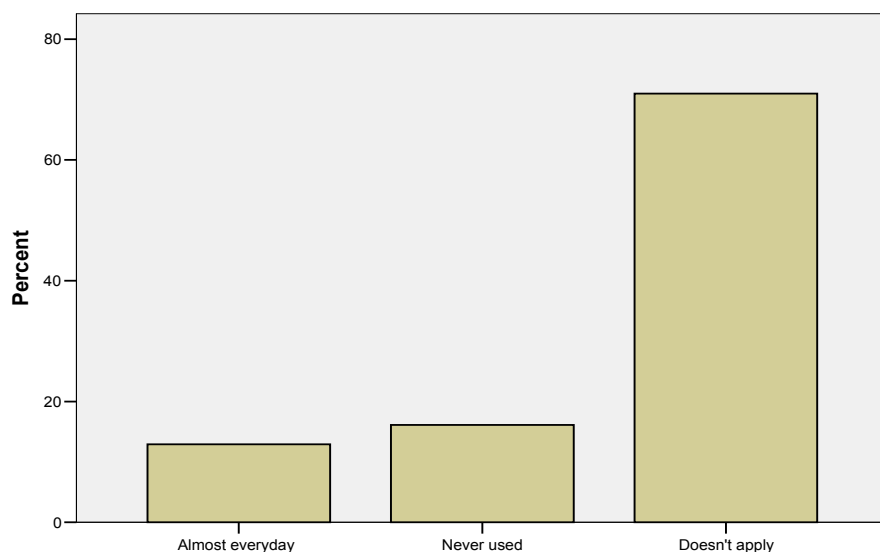
4f. How often do you travel along PROW by -Using a motor propelled vehicle



4g. How often do you travel along PROW by -With a wheelcahir or pushchair



4h. How often do you travel along PROW by -Other reason



Question 4h Other responses received

- in a car
- No access for me to ride my horse along public rights of way
- dog walking
- my daughter takes me most times shopping
- Exercise keeping fit
- Small park near Junction Street Palfrey
- No public Bridleways in South Walsall
- Need locations not sure where they are B Beacon area Aldridge
- walking the dog

Question 4. Summary of the frequency of use of public rights of way in the borough of Walsall using the following modes of travel

	Almost every day	At least once a Week	About once a month	Within the last 6 months	Within the last Year	Longer ago	Never used	Does not apply
a) Walking	46.0	30.2	15.1	3.6	2.2	0	1.4	1.4
b) Jogging or running	4.3	14.9	5.3	2.1	2.1	3.2	36.2	31.9
c) Horse riding	4.3	18.1	1.1	2.1	1.1	2.1	37.2	34
d) Cycling	8.8	15.4	14.3	4.4	3.3	7.7	18.7	27.5
e) Using a trotting cart	2.5	1.2	0	0	0	1.2	50.6	44.4
f) Using a motor propelled vehicle e.g. a motorbike	4.9	0	0	0	0	3.7	48.8	42.7
g) With a wheelchair or pushchair	1.2	0	1.2	3.7	3.7	6.1	41.5	42.7
h) Other reason	12.9	0	0	0	0	0	16.1	71.0

Question 5 – Please describe one off road route (footpath, bridle path, cycle route or byway) you use most frequently in the borough of Walsall. Please write in details below including a starting point, destination and a description of the general area.

Analysis of Question Five

The following categories were raised in relation to this question. They are showed as number of responses category.

Method of Travel

Walking	89
Jog/run	5
Cycle	20
Horse ride	12
Car	2
Mobility scooter	1
Bus	2

Positive Aspects(1)

Nice view	6
Generally good	4
Cleanliness	13
Good surfacing	20
Recently repaved	1
Well maintained verges	1
Well maintained path	6
Street lighting	4
Countryside	1
Fairly quiet	7
Canal towpath good	6
Grass areas well kept	1
Not much litter	2
Disabled key system has been removed	1
Direct route/short cut	5
Fresh air	3
Away from Traffic	9
Green space / outlook onto fields	4
Good signs/waymarking	20
Wild Life/Nature	8
Solitude	3
Good path	3
Paths/land recently improved	5
Trees	1
Good visual distance for safety	1
Path wide & straight	1
Pleasant rural walk	3
Horse riding	1
Variety of plant life	1
Shared Use	1
Accessible	1

Positive Aspects (2)

Quiet	1
Signage	1
Lighting at night	1
Trees	1
Wild flowers	1
Wild life	2
Nice Scenery	1
Clear paths	1
Car free route	1
Meeting with other walkers	1
Useful short cut	1
Nice Environment	1
Nice ride	1

Positive Aspects (3)

Clear path	1
Aquatic plants	1
Pleasant open space	1
Nice place to run	1
Variety of countryside	1
Benches and resting places	1
Bridges high enough to cycle under	1
Sign posted	2
Wildlife	1
Directions and distances	1

Negative Aspects (1)

No Bins	3
Flytipping	12
Litter	33
Poor maintenance of surfaces	19
Popular places for Youths to hang out	2
Antisocial behaviour	4
Dog mess	6
Flooding on right of way	2
Traffic	2
Overgrown	13
Motorbikes	6
Tracks poor surface	1
Muddy	5
Barriers	22
Stiles	6
Dogwalkers	2
Cyclists	2
Dangerous bridge	2
Accessibility issues for wheelchair users	4
Obstructions	6
Graffiti & Vandalism	1
Over hanging trees	1
Unclean	3
Signage not good	3
Maintenance	1
Fear of crime	2

Motor cycle barrier	1
Steps	2
Broken Glass	1
Negative Aspects (2)	
Muddy	6
Motorcycles	6
Drug paraphernalia	1
Litter	6
Overgrown	7
Poor Surface	10
Puddles	1
No bridleway facility	2
No lighting	2
No crossing point on over roads	2
Broken Glass	3
Vandalism	3
Poor signage	6
Dogs	1
Youths hanging around	1
Cycles	1
Crime	1
Parked car vehicles	1
Cleanliness	2
Maintenance of footpaths	1
Flytipping	3
Barriers	1
Stiles	1
Negative Aspects (3)	
Dog mess	2
Lack of rows	1
Trees obstructing path	1
Overhanging bushes & trees	3
Litter	4
Poor paths	1
Poor surface	2
Motorbikes	1
Underage drinking and antisocial behaviour	4
Muddy	1
Dogs not on leads	2
Industrial dereliction	1
Graffiti	2
Pooling of water	2
Obstruction	1
Unclean	1
Fear of crime	1
Graffiti & Vandalism	1
Over hanging trees	1
Unclean	3
Signage not good	3
Maintenance	1
Fear of crime	2
Motor cycle barrier	1
Steps	2
Broken Glass	1

Negative Aspects (2)

Muddy	6
Motorcycles	6
Drug paraphernalia	1
Litter	6
Overgrown	7
Poor Surface	10
Puddles	1
No bridleway facility	2
No lighting	2
No crossing point on over roads	2
Broken Glass	3
Vandalism	3
Poor signage	6
Dogs	1
Youths hanging around	1
Cycles	1
Crime	1
Parked car vehicles	1
Cleanliness	2
Maintenance of footpaths	1
Flytipping	3
Barriers	1
Stiles	1

Negative Aspects (3)

Dog mess	2
Lack of rows	1
Trees obstructing path	1
Overhanging bushes & trees	3
Litter	4
Poor paths	1
Poor surface	2
Motorbikes	1
Underage drinking and antisocial behaviour	4
Muddy	1
Dogs not on leads	2
Industrial dereliction	1
Graffiti	2
Pooling of water	2
Obstruction	1
Unclean	1
Fear of crime	1

Question 5 Summary

During our analysis we discovered that the preferred method of travel on public rights of way is walking with eighty nine responses. Second preferred method is cycling with twenty responses. Third preferred method of travel on public rights of way is horse riding at twelve responses and fourthly the preferred method of travel was jogging and running. We also received a response from a mobility scooter user who uses public rights of way to get from one point to another.

Positive Aspects

In our analysis the top four most positive choices selected by our respondents were good surfacing, good signs/way marking and the presence of wildlife. The second positive choice was the cleanliness on public right of ways and the third choice were routes away from traffic and the last positive choice received was that our paths are generally well maintained and some routes have nice views.

Other positive choices which people commented on which ranked lower than above include: direct routes and short cuts; grassed areas are kept well; street lighting; fresh air; good visual distance for safety; paths wide and straight; pleasant rural walks; shared use paths; fairly quiet; accessible; trees variety of plant life; recently improved; nice environment and able to meet with other walkers.

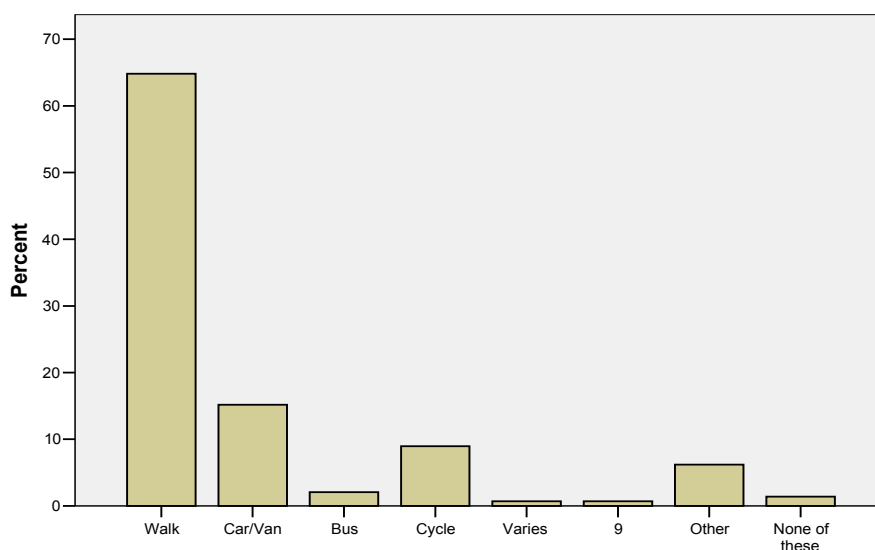
Negative Aspects

Also in our analysis the top four negative aspects selected by our respondents were litter, poor maintenance of surfaces, over hanging trees and brushes and dog mess. The second negative aspects were the barriers and stiles, mud and motorcycles and third negative aspects were anti-social behaviour and the last negative choice received was our paths are fly tipping, broken glass, graffiti and vandalism.

Other negative aspects which people commented on which ranked lower than above include: accessibility issues for wheelchair users; flooding on public rights of way; no bridleway facility: crime and fear of crime; no crossing points on or over roads; obstructions; poor signage; no bins; dogs not on leads; no lighting and dangerous bridges.

Question 6 – How do you usually travel to the start of the route you have described in question 4 above?

6. How do you usually travel to the starting point of the route

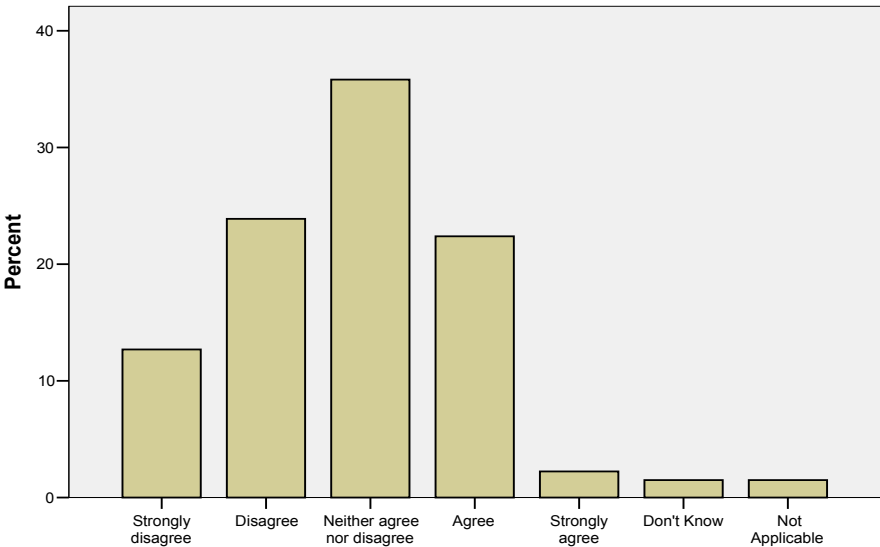


Question 6 Other responses received

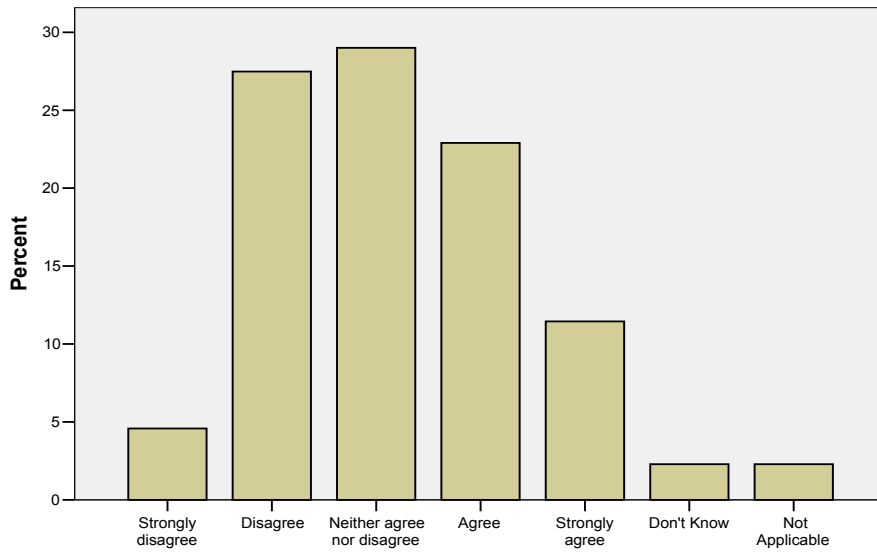
- live at start
- Horse
- Horse
- my daughter takes me out if i want to go anywhere
- Horse rider
- motability scooter
- Horse ride
- On horse back
- Horse ride
- Horse ridge
- By car to my field in Crook Lane
- Horse back
- Horse
- Ride to it on horseback

Question 7 – To what extent do you agree or disagree with each of the following statements concerning breaks in public rights of way in the borough of Walsall? A break in a public right of way is where you have to cross or walk alongside a road.

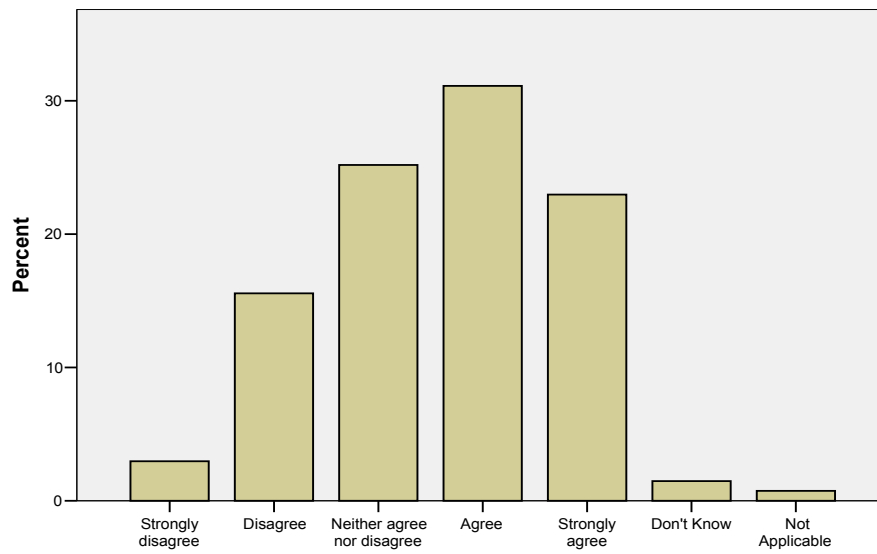
7a. Breaks in the PROW make the route more interesting



7b. Breaks in the PROW discourage me from using them

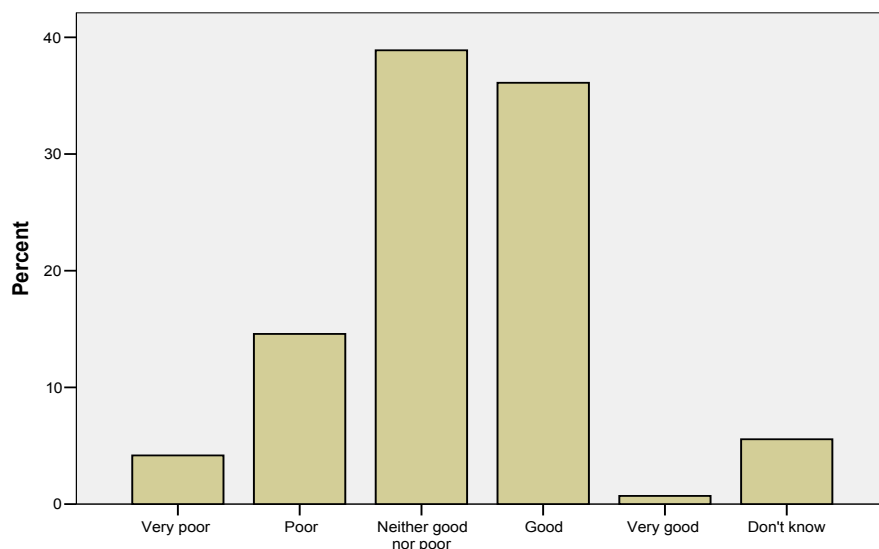


7c. Breaks in the PROW are dangerous



Question 8 - Overall how would you rate the general condition of public rights of way in the borough of Walsall?

8. Overall condition



Question 9 – What if anything prevents, limits or puts you off using public rights of way in the borough of Walsall?

Prevents/limits use	Number of responses in percentages
Litter / Fly tipping	36.4
Anti-social behaviour	27.8
Dog fouling	25.0
Paths obstructed	17.0
Presence of motorised vehicles	14.8
Busy roads to cross	14.2
Poor lighting	13.6
Lack of information on where to go	13.1
Poor / unsuitable surface condition	12.5
Do not have enough time	11.9
Lack of circular routes	10.2
No paths near home	9.7
Does not feel safe	9.7
Nothing prevents / limits / put me off	9.1
Poor signposting	9.1
Too much road walking	5.7
Health problems	5.1
Prefer to visit areas outside Walsall	5.1
Not interested	3.4
Other reason	3.4
Worried about getting lost / trespassing	2.3
Stiles or gates	1.7
Lack of disabled access	1.1
None of these	1.1
Don't know	0.6
No one to go with	0.6

Question 9. Other comments:

- No bridleways or routes available in local area
- No access for horses
- No access for horses
- Dogs that are in garden that scares horses
- Do not want public right of way open as it attracts anti social behaviour
- I am 87 yrs old so I don't go out much
- Lack of secure parking when routes are further from home
- Loose dogs gangs of youths sometimes throwing bricks
- Don't know the town very well not lived here long
- Generally drive to all places door to door
- No bridleway in this borough of any length
- I have not lived in the borough long and have no idea where any PROW are
- No public bridle ways in South Walsall
- Some stiles in for example Cuckoos Nook too high much prefer the so called Sweethearts Gate
- No information on paths to horse ride on

Question 10A – Thinking generally about public rights of way in the borough of Walsall, which of the following things would you say are most important? (Please tick up to five boxes only in the left column below)

Question 10B – Thinking generally about public rights of way in the borough of Walsall, which of the following things would you say most need improving? (Please tick up to five boxes only in the right column below)

	10a) Important	10b) Needs
Keep existing paths clear of litter, fly tipping and dog mess	76.1	53.4
Prevent or deter anti-social activity	59.7	46.0
Clearance of vegetation and obstructions	42.6	32.4
Clear signs and route way markers	36.4	27.8
Prevent or deter crime	31.8	26.7
Surface on existing public rights of way	27.8	26.1
Information provision e.g. maps, leaflets, website	22.2	20.5
Safe crossing points between paths	21.0	16.5
Disabled access e.g. handrails, access for wheelchairs, tactile paving	18.8	15.3
Routes for horse riding	18.8	14.8
Circular routes	17.0	16.5
Lighting	14.2	12.5
New public rights of way	14.2	20.5
Cycle paths	10.8	13.1
Themed paths	10.2	13.1
Facilities at the start of routes	10.2	15.9
Car parking	9.7	8.0
Links from public transport to public rights of way	7.4	9.1
Linear paths	5.7	6.3
Other most important / needs issue	2.3	1.7

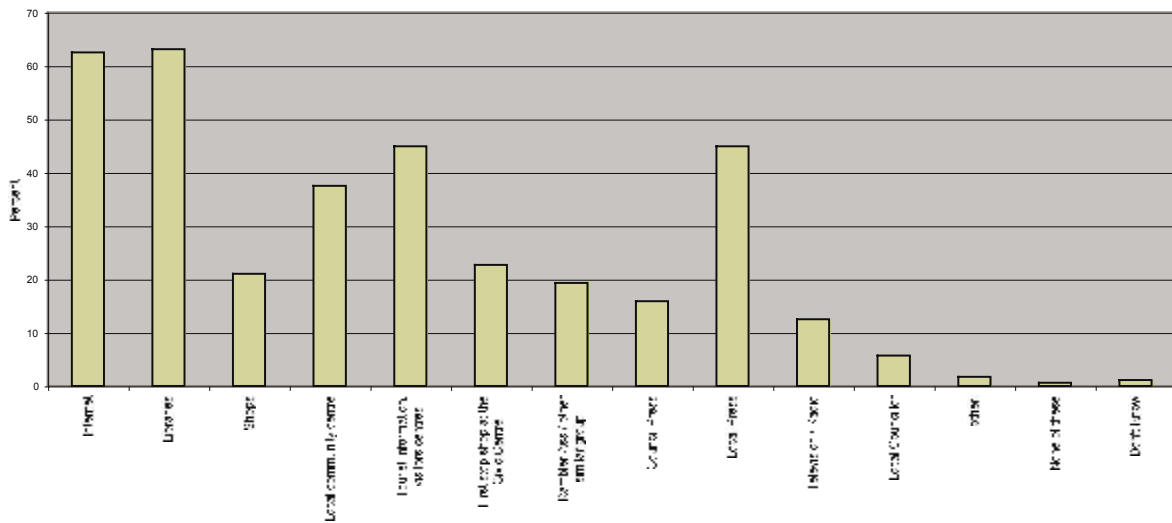
10a) Other comments

- Close down alleyways in Aldridge, Woodside Way
- I do not go out much so i cannot say much
- Mend broken stiles steps and bridges over small streams
- More routes for horse riding it is very dangerous on roads now with horses
- Obstruction of footpaths by parked vehicles
- To be able to explain exactly where you are in case of emergency
- Advertising
- Restoration of any original features eg traditional stiles signposts etc wooden finger posts or iron ones
- The walk into the estate should be closed on New Forest Road WS3 1TR
- Promote how healthy walking is and make areas family friendly
- Paths and access points free of vegetation obstructions
- The need to feel safe though I recognise this is difficult to do
- If lighting were installed I think it would encourage more anti social behaviour
- Facilities ie as proposed at Barr Beacon get vandalised Expensive maintain
- Way marking and access education
- Traffic calming on country lanes between rights of way
- People using the canal have been seen to throw canal rubbish onto the towpaths

10B) Other comments

- Happy with the routes I use
- Stop housing being broken into through easy access
- I think myself the crossing for the bus stops should be better
- Control of dogs linked to 1 above
- Bollards should be installed widely to prevent obstruction of footpaths by vehicles
- To be able to explain exactly where you are in case of emergency
- advertising
- The look of the whole environment so you feel your in a green place with nice old buildings around you or nice Victorian style railings not those awful aluminium ones with spikes on top
- Safety
- Keep paths and access points free of vegetation
- The need to feel safe though I recognise this is difficult to do
- Provide signage that is not easily defaced destroyed
- Needs more bridle paths
- People walking dogs should when approaching grazing animals put their dogs on a lead as some dogs do chase

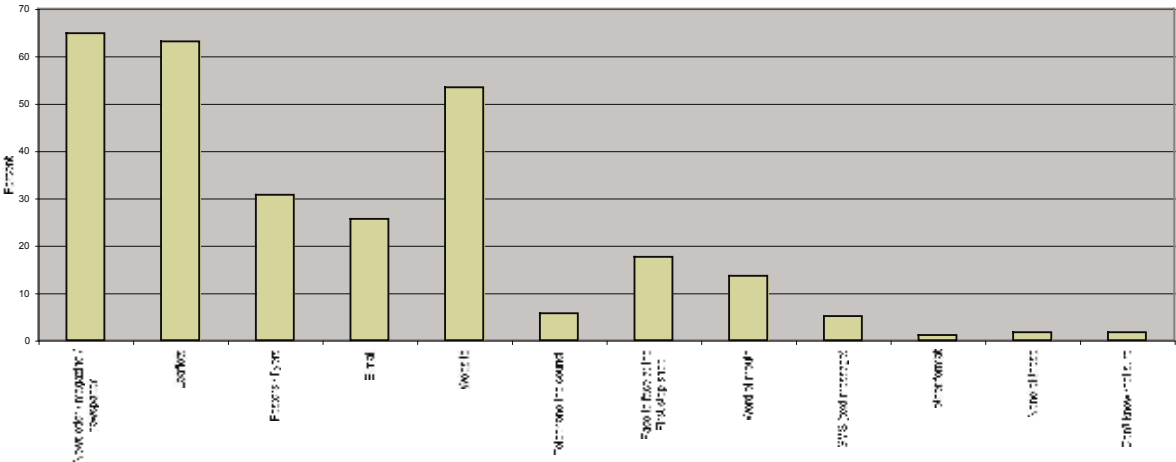
Question 11 – From where would you prefer to find out information (e.g. maintenance, route maps, etc.) about Walsall borough's public rights of way?



Question 11. Other comments received

- no publicity
- newspaper articles
- I don't go out much unless i'm with someone
- Not interested
- I would consult the os 1 25000 map
- notice board in Arboretum perhaps by refreshment chalet
- boards at facilities
- Important that information is kept up to date
- Leisure Services Walk Schemes
- Organised regular walks with countryside ranger Sunday mornings

Question 12 – In what format would you prefer to find out about Walsall borough’s public rights of way?

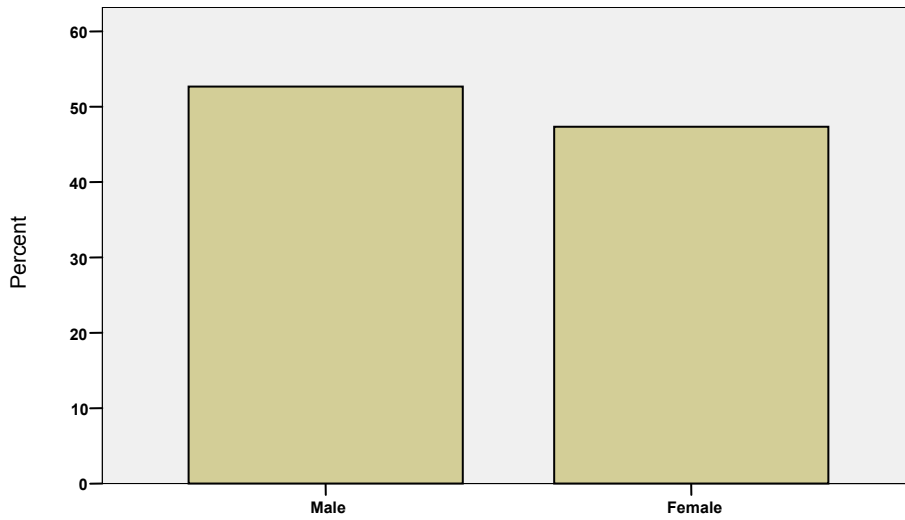


Question 12 Other responses received

- OS maps & street atlas
- map
- map
- audio cassette all leaflets should be available on audio
- C A G meetings at local N P Board
- We need a town centre kiosk for all resident and visitors to have easy access to
- More circular walks ie Pelsall Chasewater via Engine Lane return via Turf A5 and canal towpath

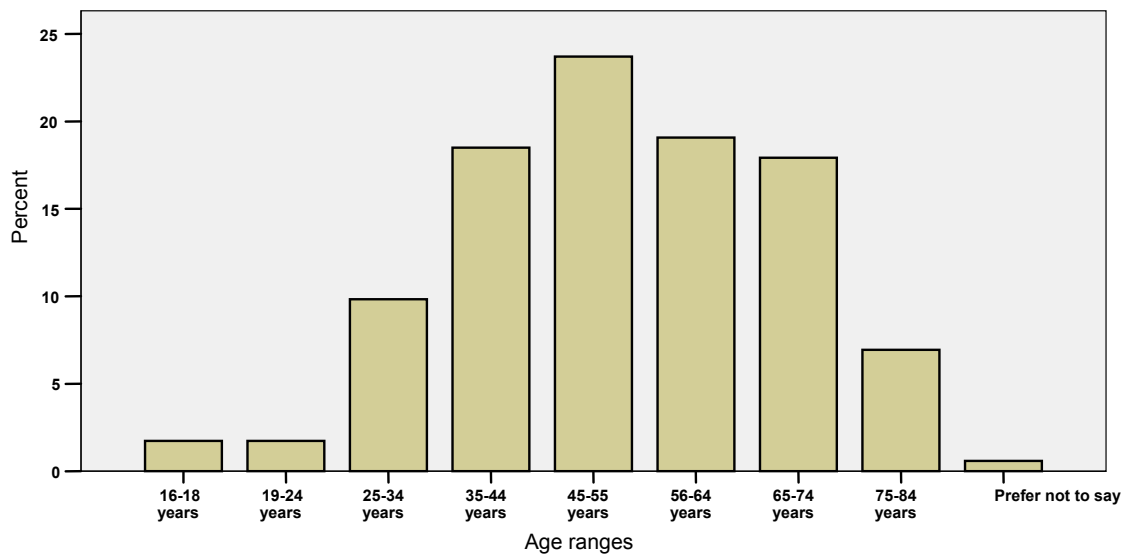
Question 13 – Are you male or female?

13. Gender



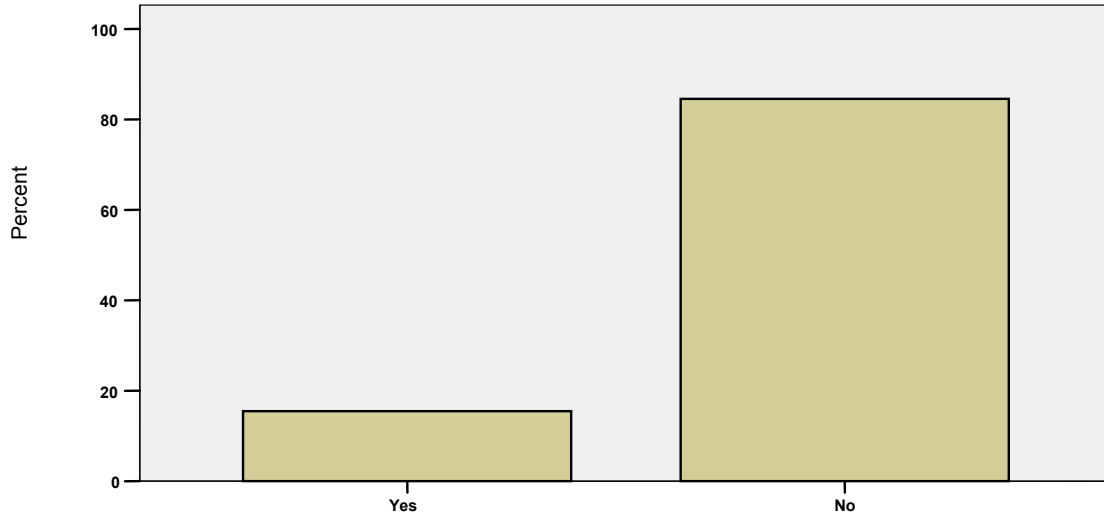
Question 14 – To which of the following age groups do you belong?

14. Age groups



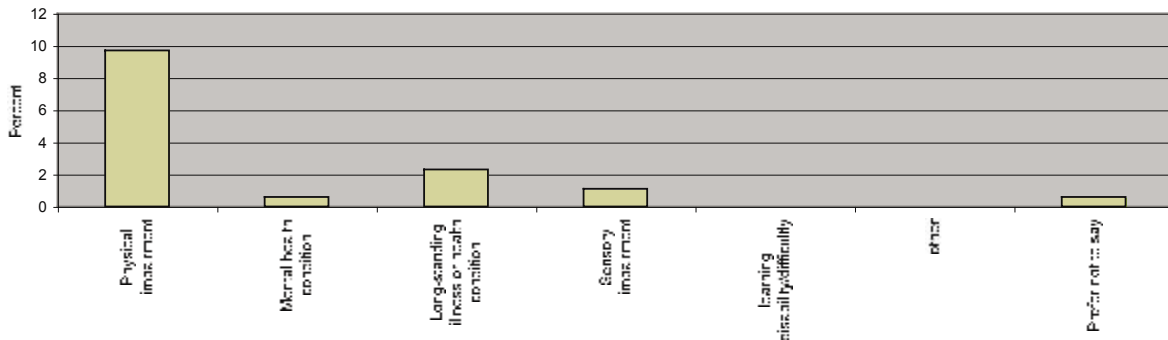
Question 15 – Do you consider yourself to be disabled as set out under the Disability Discrimination Act?

15. Disability



Question 16 – Please state the type of impairment which applies to you. People may experience more than one impairment, in which case you may indicate more than one. If none of the categories apply, please mark 'other' and specify the type of impairment.

16. Please state the type of impairment which applies to you.

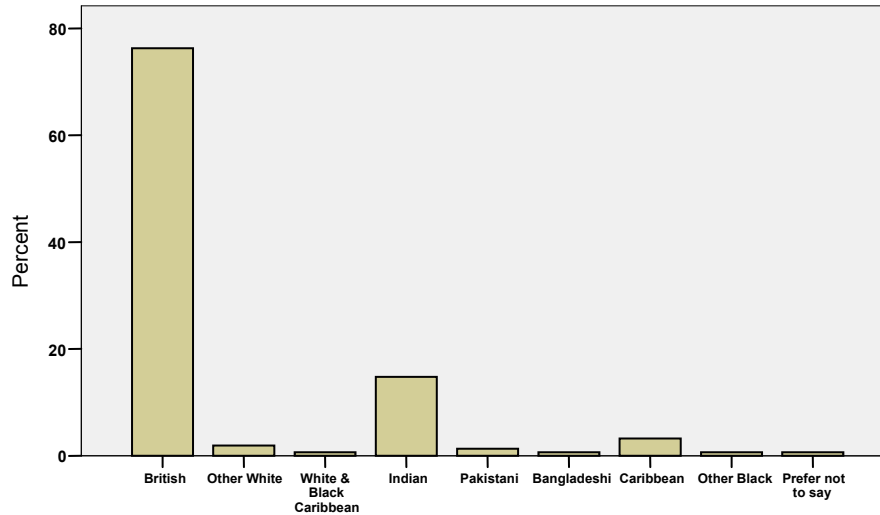


Question 16 – Other responses received

- Osteo Arthritis spondulitus (spine) only walk short distances with 2 sticks with great difficulty
- Osteo Arthritis the most of me Spondulitus spine Asthma Hiatus Hernia
- I'm filling this on behalf of a service user who is male 25 34 years

Question 17 – To which of these groups do you consider you belong?

17. Ethnic groups

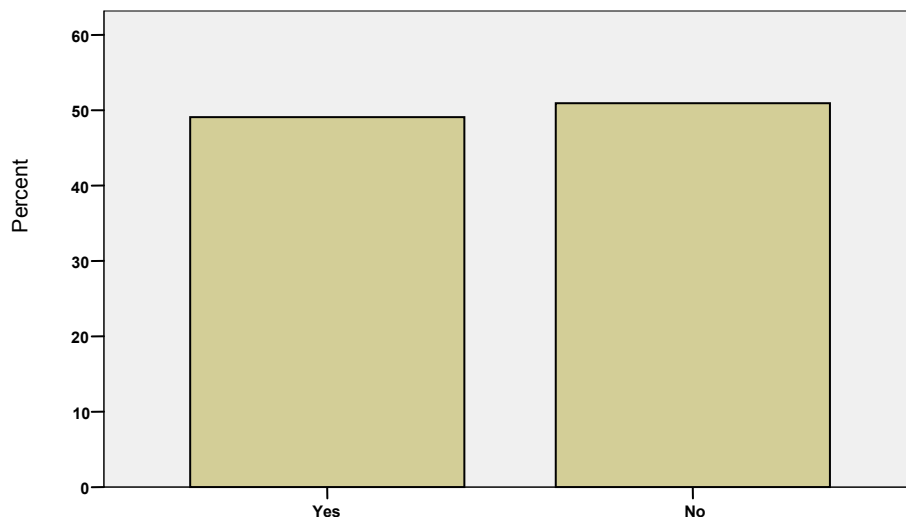


Question 18 – Please tell us the first part of your postcode?

Post code	Area	Number of Responses in Percentages
B42	Birmingham Borough	0.6
B43	Pheasey Park Farm, Birmingham Borough	3.4
B44	Birmingham Borough	1.1
B70	Sandwell Borough	0.6
B71	Sandwell Borough	1.7
B74	Streetly, County of Staffordshire	2.3
B77	Fazeley Tamworth Area, County of Staffordshire	0.6
BG2	Code Not Recognised	0.6
BU3	Code Not Recognised	0.6
DY4	Dudley Borough	0.6
NN8	Northampton Borough	0.6
W34	Code Not Recognised	0.6
WRL2	Weston-Super-Mare Avon Somerset	0.6
WS1	Palfrey, St Matthews, Birchills Leamore, Paddock	11.4
WS2	Birchills Leamore, Bentley, Pleck	8.5
WS3	Bloxwich East, Pelsall, Bloxwich West, Blakenall	13.0
WS4	St Matthews, Rushall -Shelfield	8.0
WS5	Paddock, Palfrey, Sandwell Borough	9.2
WS7	Chase Terrace, County of Staffordshire	1.2
WS8	Brownhills	1.1
WS9	Aldridge Central and South, Aldridge North, Walsall Wood Staffordshire	10.3
WS10	Darlaston, Darlaston South, Wolverhampton Borough	1.7
WS11	Cannock, County of Staffordshire	1.7
WV11	Wolverhampton Borough	2.3
WV12	Short Heath, Willenhall North	4.0
WV13	Willenhall South, Wolverhampton Borough	9.7
WV14	Darlaston South, Wolverhampton Borough	0.6
No code		3.4

Question 19 – Are you a member of any community groups, voluntary organisations, residents associations or forums, etc?

19. Are you a member of any community groups



Question 20– Please write in the name of any community group, or voluntary organisations you belong to in the space below

Belonging to community groups or voluntary organisations	Frequency
Aldridge Local History Society	1
Bangladeshi Community Service Walsall	1
Birchills and Reedswood Agenda 21 Environmental Group	1
Birchills Sure Start	1
Black Country Bid Diversity Partnership	1
British Driving Society	1
British Horse Society	1
Campaign for the Protection of Rural England	1
Cinnamon Trust	1
CCBN	1
Cancer Information and New Invention Local Committee Walsall Hospice Group	1
Citizen Panel	2
Friends of Merrions Wood	1
Friends of Pelsall Common	3
Friends of Willenhall Memorial Park	1
Golden Fifty Five Club	1
Gujarati Hindu Social and Culture Centre	1
Hindu Forum	1
Indian Walkers Association	2
League of Friends	1
Local History Allotments Association	1
Local Access Forum Walsall	6
Local Access Forum Sandwell	1
Local Neighbourhood Partnership	4
Orchard Hills Neighbourhood Watch	1
Naturist Club	1
Neighbourhood Watch Access	3
Neighbourhood Watch Group	1
Neighbourhood Watch Rushall	2
Neighbourhood Watch Delamare Drive Yew Tree Estate	1
Neighbourhood Watch Group Pleck	1
New Invention over 50 Group	1

Palfrey Community Centre	1
Patient Advisory Carer Team Walsall	1
PCT Willenhall Community Forum	1
Pelsall Civic Society	1
Pleck Residents Group	1
Pleck Temple Ford Steet Community Centre	1
PPI Forum for Walsall	2
Ramblers' Association	6
Royal National Institute for the Blind	1
Royal Society of Protection of Birds	1
Rushall Residents Association	2
Rushall Sheffield Health Group	1
Scouts	2
Shaheed Bhagat Singh Asian Welfare Centre	15
Shree Prajapati Association Walsall Branch	1
Shree Ram Mandir Walsall	1
Society of St Vincent De Paul Aldridge	1
Sneyd Stridders Running Club	1
SSHH Breast Feeding Peer Support Group	1
St Giles JMI	1
Staffordshire and Black Country Wildlife Trusts	1
Union of Muslim Organisations	1
Walsall 3A	1
Walsall Arthritis Care	1
Walsall Arthritis Group	1
Walsall Community Transport Group	1
Walsall Civic Society	1
Walsall Countryside Conservation	3
Walsall East Health Action Group	1
Walsall Eyes	1
Walsall Free Open University	1
Walsall Friends of the Earth	4
Walsall Hockley Club	1
Walsall Home Start	1
Walsall Hospice Appeal	1
Walsall Library User Group	1
Walsall Mal-Jones Club	1
Walsall Multi Faith Forum	1
Walsall National Trust Association	3
Walsall Neighbourhood Walk	1
Walsall Over 50 Forum	10
Walsall Over 60 Seniors Mandal	1
Walsall Pensioners Convention	1
Walsall Service Users	1
Walsall Society Blind	1
Walsall Transport Users Forum	1
Walsall Victim Support Walsall Group	1
Walsall Walk On Scheme	4
Walsall Walking for Health Group	3
West Midlands Older People Advisory Group, Better Government for Older People	1
Willenhall Traders	1
Wolverhampton Walking for Health Group	1

Question 21 - Do you have any comments about public rights of way in Walsall Borough?

A wide range of comment have been made, but many of them contain personal information so they have not been included to protect correspondents identity. If you made any specific comments and would like to receive feedback other than that which has been included within the analysis and draft rights of way improvement plan, please contact:

Public Rights of Way

Walsall Council
Civic Centre
Darwall Street
Walsall
WS1 1DG

Tel: 01922 652445

Fax: 01922 653780

E-mail : publicrightsofway@walsall.gov.uk

Appendix 7

Public Rights of Way Survey

June 2007

Walsall Council has a statutory duty to maintain and protect public rights of way within the borough. There are in excess of 85km of public rights of way, including footpaths, bridleways, cycle paths, and byways. These are off road routes such as urban alleyways and rural routes across parks, fields, nature reserves, etc. which provide an important role for access to local services and recreation. For the purpose of this questionnaire those which run adjacent to the road are not included.

All the information you provide will be kept entirely confidential. Your views and opinions will not be passed on to anyone else.

Please read these instructions carefully before completing the questionnaire:

- The questionnaire should be completed by the named individual specified on the accompanying letter or anyone aged over 16 years living at this address.
- Please read each question carefully and tick a box to indicate your answer.
- Please read all instructions carefully as you may not need to answer them all.
- In most cases you will only have to tick one box. However, sometimes you will need to tick more than one box or write in your answer.
- On completion please check you have answered all the questions that you should have answered.
- The questionnaire consists of 8 pages and we hope should take no longer than 15 minutes to complete.
- If you have any queries about the questionnaire please do not hesitate to contact Joanne Whiting on Tel: 01922 652445 who will be very happy to help you or email: publicrightsofway@walsall.gov.uk
- Once you have completed the questionnaire please return in the pre-addressed envelope supplied, by **31st July 2007**.
- You do not need to add a stamp.
- **If you or someone you know would prefer a large print version, or someone to help complete the questionnaire, please call 01922 652445.**



Section 1: Your use of Public Rights of Way in the Borough of Walsall

1. Within the last 12 months have you used any Public Rights of Way in the borough of Walsall?
(Please tick ✓ one box only)

- Yes..... ₁ go to question 2
 No..... ₂ go to question 9
 Don't know /not sure..... ₃ go to question 9

2. How often if at all do you use each of the following types of Public Rights of Way (a-h) in the borough of Walsall? Please answer regardless of how you use these Public Rights of Way.
(Please tick ✓ one box only for each)

	Almost every day	At least once a week	About once a month	Within the last 6 months	Within the last year	Longer ago	Never used	Does not apply
a) Urban routes and alleyways....	<input type="checkbox"/> ₁	<input type="checkbox"/> ₂	<input type="checkbox"/> ₃	<input type="checkbox"/> ₄	<input type="checkbox"/> ₅	<input type="checkbox"/> ₆	<input type="checkbox"/> ₇	<input type="checkbox"/> ₈
b) Cycle routes.....	<input type="checkbox"/> ₁	<input type="checkbox"/> ₂	<input type="checkbox"/> ₃	<input type="checkbox"/> ₄	<input type="checkbox"/> ₅	<input type="checkbox"/> ₆	<input type="checkbox"/> ₇	<input type="checkbox"/> ₈
c) Bridleways.....	<input type="checkbox"/> ₁	<input type="checkbox"/> ₂	<input type="checkbox"/> ₃	<input type="checkbox"/> ₄	<input type="checkbox"/> ₅	<input type="checkbox"/> ₆	<input type="checkbox"/> ₇	<input type="checkbox"/> ₈
d) Canal tow paths.....	<input type="checkbox"/> ₁	<input type="checkbox"/> ₂	<input type="checkbox"/> ₃	<input type="checkbox"/> ₄	<input type="checkbox"/> ₅	<input type="checkbox"/> ₆	<input type="checkbox"/> ₇	<input type="checkbox"/> ₈
e) Routes across public parks and open spaces.....	<input type="checkbox"/> ₁	<input type="checkbox"/> ₂	<input type="checkbox"/> ₃	<input type="checkbox"/> ₄	<input type="checkbox"/> ₅	<input type="checkbox"/> ₆	<input type="checkbox"/> ₇	<input type="checkbox"/> ₈
f) Routes across nature reserves & woodland paths.....	<input type="checkbox"/> ₁	<input type="checkbox"/> ₂	<input type="checkbox"/> ₃	<input type="checkbox"/> ₄	<input type="checkbox"/> ₅	<input type="checkbox"/> ₆	<input type="checkbox"/> ₇	<input type="checkbox"/> ₈
g) Routes across fields.....	<input type="checkbox"/> ₁	<input type="checkbox"/> ₂	<input type="checkbox"/> ₃	<input type="checkbox"/> ₄	<input type="checkbox"/> ₅	<input type="checkbox"/> ₆	<input type="checkbox"/> ₇	<input type="checkbox"/> ₈
h) Other (please tick and write in below).....	<input type="checkbox"/> ₁	<input type="checkbox"/> ₂	<input type="checkbox"/> ₃	<input type="checkbox"/> ₄	<input type="checkbox"/> ₅	<input type="checkbox"/> ₆	<input type="checkbox"/> ₇	<input type="checkbox"/> ₈

3. For each of the following reasons (a-g), how often if at all, do you use Public Rights of Way in the borough of Walsall? (Please tick ✓ one box only for each)

	Almost every day	At least once a week	About once a month	Within the last 6 months	Within the last year	Longer ago	Never used	Does not apply
a) To get to work.....	<input type="checkbox"/> ₁	<input type="checkbox"/> ₂	<input type="checkbox"/> ₃	<input type="checkbox"/> ₄	<input type="checkbox"/> ₅	<input type="checkbox"/> ₆	<input type="checkbox"/> ₇	<input type="checkbox"/> ₈
b) To get to place of study or take the children to school.....	<input type="checkbox"/> ₁	<input type="checkbox"/> ₂	<input type="checkbox"/> ₃	<input type="checkbox"/> ₄	<input type="checkbox"/> ₅	<input type="checkbox"/> ₆	<input type="checkbox"/> ₇	<input type="checkbox"/> ₈
c) As links to bus stops / railway stations.....	<input type="checkbox"/> ₁	<input type="checkbox"/> ₂	<input type="checkbox"/> ₃	<input type="checkbox"/> ₄	<input type="checkbox"/> ₅	<input type="checkbox"/> ₆	<input type="checkbox"/> ₇	<input type="checkbox"/> ₈
d) For leisure, recreation or exercise.....	<input type="checkbox"/> ₁	<input type="checkbox"/> ₂	<input type="checkbox"/> ₃	<input type="checkbox"/> ₄	<input type="checkbox"/> ₅	<input type="checkbox"/> ₆	<input type="checkbox"/> ₇	<input type="checkbox"/> ₈
e) To visit friends or family.....	<input type="checkbox"/> ₁	<input type="checkbox"/> ₂	<input type="checkbox"/> ₃	<input type="checkbox"/> ₄	<input type="checkbox"/> ₅	<input type="checkbox"/> ₆	<input type="checkbox"/> ₇	<input type="checkbox"/> ₈
f) For getting to local attractions or facilities.....	<input type="checkbox"/> ₁	<input type="checkbox"/> ₂	<input type="checkbox"/> ₃	<input type="checkbox"/> ₄	<input type="checkbox"/> ₅	<input type="checkbox"/> ₆	<input type="checkbox"/> ₇	<input type="checkbox"/> ₈
g) Other reason (please tick and write in below).....	<input type="checkbox"/> ₁	<input type="checkbox"/> ₂	<input type="checkbox"/> ₃	<input type="checkbox"/> ₄	<input type="checkbox"/> ₅	<input type="checkbox"/> ₆	<input type="checkbox"/> ₇	<input type="checkbox"/> ₈

4. Please tell us how often, if at all, you travel along public rights of way using the following methods (a-h) below? (Please tick ✓ one box only for each)

	Almost every day	At least once a week	About once a month	Within the last 6 months	Within the last year	Longer ago	Never used	Does not apply
a) Walking	<input type="checkbox"/> 1	<input type="checkbox"/> 2	<input type="checkbox"/> 3	<input type="checkbox"/> 4	<input type="checkbox"/> 5	<input type="checkbox"/> 6	<input type="checkbox"/> 7	<input type="checkbox"/> 8
b) Jogging or running.....	<input type="checkbox"/> 1	<input type="checkbox"/> 2	<input type="checkbox"/> 3	<input type="checkbox"/> 4	<input type="checkbox"/> 5	<input type="checkbox"/> 6	<input type="checkbox"/> 7	<input type="checkbox"/> 8
c) Horse riding	<input type="checkbox"/> 1	<input type="checkbox"/> 2	<input type="checkbox"/> 3	<input type="checkbox"/> 4	<input type="checkbox"/> 5	<input type="checkbox"/> 6	<input type="checkbox"/> 7	<input type="checkbox"/> 8
d) Cycling	<input type="checkbox"/> 1	<input type="checkbox"/> 2	<input type="checkbox"/> 3	<input type="checkbox"/> 4	<input type="checkbox"/> 5	<input type="checkbox"/> 6	<input type="checkbox"/> 7	<input type="checkbox"/> 8
e) Using a trotting cart.....	<input type="checkbox"/> 1	<input type="checkbox"/> 2	<input type="checkbox"/> 3	<input type="checkbox"/> 4	<input type="checkbox"/> 5	<input type="checkbox"/> 6	<input type="checkbox"/> 7	<input type="checkbox"/> 8
f) Using a motor propelled vehicle e.g. a motorbike	<input type="checkbox"/> 1	<input type="checkbox"/> 2	<input type="checkbox"/> 3	<input type="checkbox"/> 4	<input type="checkbox"/> 5	<input type="checkbox"/> 6	<input type="checkbox"/> 7	<input type="checkbox"/> 8
g) With a wheelchair or pushchair	<input type="checkbox"/> 1	<input type="checkbox"/> 2	<input type="checkbox"/> 3	<input type="checkbox"/> 4	<input type="checkbox"/> 5	<input type="checkbox"/> 6	<input type="checkbox"/> 7	<input type="checkbox"/> 8
h) Other reason (please tick and write in below)	<input type="checkbox"/> 1	<input type="checkbox"/> 2	<input type="checkbox"/> 3	<input type="checkbox"/> 4	<input type="checkbox"/> 5	<input type="checkbox"/> 6	<input type="checkbox"/> 7	<input type="checkbox"/> 8

5. Please describe the ONE off road route (footpath, bridle path, cycle route or byway) you use most frequently in the borough of Walsall. Please write in details below, including a starting point, destination and a description of the general area (e.g. road names, key buildings etc). (Please write in below)

a) Starting point	
b) Please provide a brief description of the route and include distinguishing features and road names where possible, e.g. from West Street, through the alleyway to East Street, turn right along the road, past Bluebell Wood to City Park)	
c) Destination	
d) Main mode of travel along this route e.g. walk, cycle etc	
e) Please list any POSITIVE aspects you encounter on this journey: <i>Examples could include cleanliness, good surfacing, good signs and way marking.</i>	
f) Please list any NEGATIVE aspects you encounter on this journey: <i>Examples may include litter, or barriers to access which are difficult to pass (e.g. stiles or motor-cycle barriers)</i>	

6. How do you usually travel to the starting point of the route you have described in question 4 above? (Please tick ✓ the ONE which makes up the majority of your journey).

- Walk 1 Train..... 4 Motorcycle..... 7
 Car / van..... 2 Cycle..... 5 Varies..... 8
 Bus..... 3 Coach / minibus ... 6 Other **(Please tick and write in below)** . 95

- None of these 96 Don't know 97

7. To what extent do you agree or disagree with each of the following statements (a-c) concerning breaks in Public Rights of Way in the borough of Walsall? A break in a public right of way is where you have to cross or walk alongside a road. (please tick ✓ one box only for each)

	Strongly agree	Agree	Neither agree not disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know	Not applicable
a) Breaks in the Public Rights of Way make the route more interesting..	<input type="checkbox"/> 5	<input type="checkbox"/> 4	<input type="checkbox"/> 3	<input type="checkbox"/> 2	<input type="checkbox"/> 1	<input type="checkbox"/> 6	<input type="checkbox"/> 7
b) Breaks in Public Rights of Way discourage me from using them	<input type="checkbox"/> 5	<input type="checkbox"/> 4	<input type="checkbox"/> 3	<input type="checkbox"/> 2	<input type="checkbox"/> 1	<input type="checkbox"/> 6	<input type="checkbox"/> 7
c) Breaks in the Public Rights of Way are dangerous	<input type="checkbox"/> 5	<input type="checkbox"/> 4	<input type="checkbox"/> 3	<input type="checkbox"/> 2	<input type="checkbox"/> 1	<input type="checkbox"/> 6	<input type="checkbox"/> 7

8. Overall, how would you rate the general condition of Public Rights of Way in the borough of Walsall? (Please tick ✓ one box only)

Very good	Good	Neither good nor poor	Poor	Very poor	Don't know
<input type="checkbox"/> 5	<input type="checkbox"/> 4	<input type="checkbox"/> 3	<input type="checkbox"/> 2	<input type="checkbox"/> 1	<input type="checkbox"/> 6

**Section 2:
Improving Public Rights of Way in Walsall Borough**

ALL PLEASE ANSWER

9. What, if anything, prevents, limits, or puts you off using Public Rights of Way in the borough of Walsall? (Please tick ✓ your THREE top priorities)

Do not have enough time	<input type="checkbox"/> 1	Presence of motorised vehicles (e.g. motorcycles).....	<input type="checkbox"/> 12
Not interested	<input type="checkbox"/> 2	Lack of information on where to go / how to get there	<input type="checkbox"/> 13
Health problems	<input type="checkbox"/> 3	Lack of disabled access	<input type="checkbox"/> 14
No paths near home.....	<input type="checkbox"/> 4	Stiles or gates (too many/poor condition)	<input type="checkbox"/> 15
Litter / fly tipping.....	<input type="checkbox"/> 5	Poor/unsuitable surface condition	<input type="checkbox"/> 16
Poor lighting	<input type="checkbox"/> 6	Worried about getting lost/trespassing	<input type="checkbox"/> 17
Busy roads to cross.....	<input type="checkbox"/> 7	Paths obstructed (e.g. fences, gates & overgrown by vegetation).....	<input type="checkbox"/> 18
Too much road walking	<input type="checkbox"/> 8	Anti-social behaviour (e.g. people hanging around, vandalism & graffiti).....	<input type="checkbox"/> 19
Dog fouling.....	<input type="checkbox"/> 9	Does not feel safe	<input type="checkbox"/> 20
Poor signposting.....	<input type="checkbox"/> 10	Prefer to visit others areas outside the borough of Walsall.....	<input type="checkbox"/> 21
Lack of circular routes (e.g. start and end in the same place)	<input type="checkbox"/> 11	No one to go with.....	<input type="checkbox"/> 22
Other reason (Please tick and write in below)	<input type="checkbox"/> 95	Nothing prevents, limits of puts me off.....	<input type="checkbox"/> 23
Don't know / not sure.....	<input type="checkbox"/> 96	None of these.....	<input type="checkbox"/> 97

10a. Thinking generally about Public Rights of Way in the borough of Walsall, which of the following things would you say are most important?

(Please tick ✓ up to FIVE boxes only in the left column below)

10b. And thinking about Public Rights of Way in the borough of Walsall, which of the following things would you say most need improving?

(Please tick ✓ up to FIVE boxes only in the right column below)

	10a. Most important (please tick up to 5)	10b. Most needs improving (please tick up to 5)
Keep existing paths clear of litter, fly tipping and dog mess.....	<input type="checkbox"/> 1	<input type="checkbox"/> 1
Surface on existing public rights of way	<input type="checkbox"/> 2	<input type="checkbox"/> 2
Disabled access e.g. handrails, access for wheelchairs, tactile paving	<input type="checkbox"/> 3	<input type="checkbox"/> 3
Prevent or deter crime	<input type="checkbox"/> 4	<input type="checkbox"/> 4
Prevent or deter anti-social activity or inappropriate use of public rights of way (Examples could include groups of youths, use of motor-bikes on paths, etc.).....	<input type="checkbox"/> 5	<input type="checkbox"/> 5
Lighting.....	<input type="checkbox"/> 6	<input type="checkbox"/> 6
Clearance of vegetation and obstructions.....	<input type="checkbox"/> 7	<input type="checkbox"/> 7
New public rights of way.....	<input type="checkbox"/> 8	<input type="checkbox"/> 8
Clear signs and route way markers	<input type="checkbox"/> 9	<input type="checkbox"/> 9
Information provision e.g. maps, leaflets, website	<input type="checkbox"/> 10	<input type="checkbox"/> 10
Routes for horse riding.....	<input type="checkbox"/> 11	<input type="checkbox"/> 11
Car parking	<input type="checkbox"/> 12	<input type="checkbox"/> 12
Cycle paths.....	<input type="checkbox"/> 13	<input type="checkbox"/> 13
Links from public transport to Public Rights of Way.....	<input type="checkbox"/> 14	<input type="checkbox"/> 14
Circular routes (public rights of way which start and end at the same point).....	<input type="checkbox"/> 15	<input type="checkbox"/> 15
Linear paths (those which provide a through route from a start point to a different end point).....	<input type="checkbox"/> 16	<input type="checkbox"/> 16
Safe crossing points between paths.....	<input type="checkbox"/> 17	<input type="checkbox"/> 17
Themed paths e.g. nature, art, local history and other attractions .	<input type="checkbox"/> 18	<input type="checkbox"/> 18
Facilities at the start of routes (Examples could include, tourist information, shops, toilets, cycle storage, etc).	<input type="checkbox"/> 19	<input type="checkbox"/> 19
Other most important issue <i>(please tick and write in below)</i>	<input type="checkbox"/> 20	

Other most needs improving *(please tick and write in below)* 20

**Section 3:
Information about Public Rights of Way in Walsall Borough**

11. From where would you prefer to find out information (e.g. route maps, maintenance, etc) about Walsall Borough’s Public Rights of Way? (Please tick ✓ all those that apply)

- Internet..... 1 First Stop Shop in the Walsall Council Civic Centre 6
- Libraries..... 2 Ramblers Association / other similar group..... 7
- Shops..... 3 Council press..... 8
- Local community centres..... 4 Local press..... 9
- Tourist information, visitors centres .. 5 Television / radio..... 10
- Other (*please tick and write in below*) 95 From your local Councillor..... 11

- None of these..... 96 Don't know / not sure..... 97

12. In what format would you prefer to find out information about Walsall Borough’s Public Rights of Way? (Please tick ✓ all those that apply)

- Newsletter / magazine / newspaper 1 Telephone the council..... 6
- Leaflets..... 2 Face to face at the First Stop Shop in the Walsall Council Civic Centre..... 7
- Posters / flyers..... 3 Word of Mouth (e.g. family or friends)..... 8
- E-mail..... 4 SMS (text message)..... 9
- Website..... 5 Other format (*Please tick and write in below*) 95

- None of these..... 96 Don't know / not sure..... 97

Section 4: About You

Please provide us with some details about you. Your answers here will enable us to analyse the results in more detail. The information you provide will only be used for the rights of way improvement plan and will not contain any information that could identify you.

13. Are you male or female? (Please tick ✓ one box only)

Male ₁ Female ₂

14. To which of the following age groups do you belong? (Please tick ✓ one box only)

Under 16 years ₁ 25 - 34 years ₄ 56 - 64 years ₇
 16 - 18 years ₂ 35 - 44 years ₅ 65 - 74 years ₈
 19 - 24 years ₃ 45 - 55 years ₆ 75 - 84 years ₉
 Prefer not to say ₁₀

The Disability Discrimination Act considers a person disabled if:

You have a longstanding physical or mental condition or disability that has lasted or is likely to last at least 12 months, and this condition or disability has a substantial adverse effect on your ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities.

15. Do you consider yourself to be disabled as set out under the Disability Discrimination Act? (Please tick ✓ one box only)

Yes ₁ continue to question 16
 No ₂ go to question 17

16. Please state the type of impairment which applies to you. People may experience more than one type of impairment, in which case you may indicate more than one. If none of the categories apply, please mark 'Other' and specify the type of impairment. (Please tick ✓ all that apply)

Physical impairment ₁ Sensory impairment ₄
 Mental health condition ₂ Learning disability/difficulty ₅
 Long-standing illness or health condition ₃ Other **(Please write in below)** ₉₅

Prefer not to say ₉₈

17. To which of these groups do you consider you belong? (Please tick ✓ one box only)

White

- British 1
- Irish 2
- Other White background 3

Black or Black British

- Caribbean 12
- African... 13
- Other black background 14

Mixed

- White and Black Caribbean 4
- White and Black African 5
- White and Asian 6
- Other Mixed background 7
- Asian or Asian British 8
- Indian 9
- Pakistani 10
- Bangladeshi 11
- Other Asian background 11

Chinese / other ethnic background

- Chinese 15
- Any other ethnic background 95

Prefer not to say 98

18. Please tell us the first part of your postcode (e.g. WS1, WV12, B21 etc). We will only use this information to help analyse the results geographically. (Please enter your postcode in the spaces provided below)

19. Are you a member of any community groups, voluntary organisations, residents associations or forums, etc? (Please tick ✓ one box only)

- Yes 1 go to question 20
- No 2 go to question 21

20. Please write in the names of any community group(s) or voluntary organisation(s) you belong to in the space provided below.

21. Do you have any other comments about Public rights of Way in Walsall Borough? Please write in your comments below. If you would like us to respond to you directly, please include your name and address so that we can contact you.

Thank you for completing this questionnaire.

**Please return in the pre-paid envelope provided to;
Joanne Whiting, Senior Rights of Way Officer,
Walsall Council, The Civic Centre,
Darwall Street, Walsall, WS1 1TP**

By Tuesday 31st July 2007

Appendix 8



The Rights of Way Improvement Plan is being produced in three stages.

- Stage 1:** Information gathering and Assessment (We are currently at this stage)
- This looks at:
 - The extent to which local rights of way meet present and future needs;
 - The opportunities provided for local rights of way for exercise and other forms of outdoor recreation and the enjoyment of the land;
 - The accessibility of local rights of way to blind or partially sighted persons and others with mobility problems;
 - The above issues should be addressed in the action plan.
- Stage 2:** Publication and Consultation of the draft Rights of Way Improvement Plan
- The plan will include proposed actions, costs and timescales
- Stage 3:** Production of the final copy of the Rights of Way Improvement Plan and Implementation
- Implementation of actions, monitoring and review

How can you help?

In order to assess whether the local rights of way network is meeting your present and future needs, we want your help. All you have to do is fill in the following survey. The information you provide about your experiences will offer valuable insight into how we can improve the local network. Your feedback will be used to help draw up our Rights of Way Improvement Plan.



The survey should only take about 15 minutes to complete. When completed, please return to the Public Rights of Way Team at the address below by 31st July 2007. So don't delay. Have your say and play a part in shaping the future of Walsall's paths.

Thank you for your time. We look forward to receiving your reply.

If you or someone you know would prefer a large print version, or someone to help complete the questionnaire, please call 01922 652445.

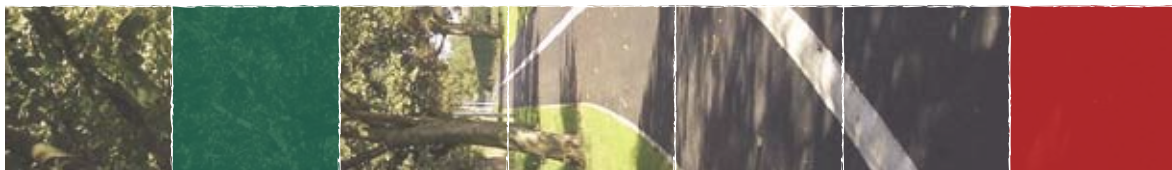
Useful links

- www.walsall.gov.uk/transport_and_streets/public_rights_of_way (for local public rights of way)
- www.defra.gov.uk (for public rights of way nationally)
- www.countryside.gov.uk
- www.ramblers.org.uk
- www.english-nature.org.uk

Contact Details

Public Rights of Way Team, Engineering and Transportation Services,
Walsall Council, Civic Centre, Darwall Street, Walsall WS1 1DG
Tel: 01922 652445 Email: publicrightsofway@walsall.gov.uk





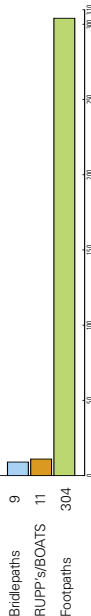
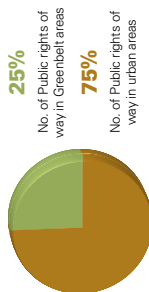
What is a Public Right of Way and who can use it?

A public right of way is a route over which the public may pass at any time of the day. Dependent upon the classification of the public right of way, you may use them to walk, cycle or horse ride, and may stop to admire the view or rest for a while, provided you remain on the route of the path. Public rights of way form through routes, taking you from one distinct point to another along a defined route. They are located away from the road network and may include urban alleyways or rural routes across fields and parks. All public rights of way are legally protected in status. Walsall Metropolitan Borough Council, as Highway Authority, has a duty to maintain and protect them for public use. Whether urban alleyways or rural trails, public rights of way are important off-road routes, which play a vital role in providing access to recreational facilities or local amenities for residents and visitors alike.

How many Public Rights of Way are there in Walsall?

There are over 300 public rights of way recorded on the definitive map, totalling about 85.5 kilometres or 53 miles. The vast majority of these are footpaths.

Not all Walsall's public rights of way are in the countryside or recreational areas. In fact, the majority are alleyways which are concentrated in urban areas of the Borough.



Categories of Public Rights of Way

There are several types of public rights of way determined by the nature of the right, recorded on the definitive map:

- A footpath** a way over which the public have a right of way on foot only.
- A bridleway** a way over which the public have a right of way on foot and on horseback or leading a horse. Cyclists may use a bridleway but must give way to horse riders and walkers.
- A byway open to all traffic (BOAT)** a carriageway, thus a right of way for vehicles, but one which is mainly used by the public for the purposes for which footpaths or bridleways are used.
- A road under public path (RUPP), soon to be reclassified as a restricted byway** a way over which the public will have a right of way on foot, on horseback or leading a horse, and a right of way for non – mechanically propelled vehicles ie cyclists and horse drawn vehicles.
- A cycle route** although cycle routes are not recorded on the definitive map, they still form an important part of the Borough of Walsall's rights of way network. National Cycle Network Route 5 passes through the Borough and there are many other local off-road routes.

Where are the public rights of way recorded?

The Council has a duty to keep and update a definitive map and statement of public rights of way in the Borough. These can be inspected at the Civic Centre during normal office hours. The inclusion of a way shown on this map is conclusive evidence of the public right of way. However, non inclusion does not mean that a public right of way does not exist. There can be several reasons for this, not least the dedication of a way after the last review of the map.



Why are Public Rights of Way Important?

Local public rights of way, including footpaths, cycle paths, bridleways are a significant part of our heritage and important for recreation. They enable people to get away from busy roads and enjoy the tranquility of the countryside and other public open spaces. They can also provide a convenient means of travelling particularly for short journeys in both rural and urban areas. They are important in the daily lives of many people for fresh air and exercise on bicycle, on foot to walk a dog, on horse back to improve their fitness, to visit local shops and other facilities.

What are the problems?

Whilst the majority of Walsall's public rights of way are easy to use and well defined some can have problems associated with them. For instance:-

- Unlawful obstructions, like fences, buildings etc.
- Overgrown vegetation
- Poor surfaces
- Broken and missing signposts, waymarkers and stiles etc
- Litter and fly tipping
- Crime and anti-social behaviour
- Unsuitability for persons with disabilities
- Lack of a joined up network



How do we improve our Public Rights of Way network? Rights of Way Improvement Plan

Section 60 of the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000 requires local highway authorities to prepare and produce improvement plans for Rights of Way (footpaths, bridleways, byways and cycle tracks) by November 2007. It is not designed to provide detailed solutions to access problems in every place, but to take a strategic approach to managing access.

The Rights of Way Improvement Plan aims to secure improvements to the local network and alter it where necessary to meet the public need. There is particular emphasis in:

- increasing access to the countryside for all users and abilities;
- routes from towns with links to public amenities and facilities;
- community safety;
- and links which create circular tours for leisure and health.

The plan will look at many users, including walkers, cyclists, horse riders and people with mobility problems regarding what provisions can be made to improve their journey. This means the whole network of non-motorised routes will be considered and not just definitive rights of way. The Rights of Way Improvement Plan will be integrated into the Local Transport Plan, which will offer opportunities to maximise the contribution of local rights of way especially in the development of walking and cycling networks.

Cabinet Meeting 19 March, 2008

Walsall Borough's Rights of Way Improvement Plan – Addendum

Walsall Borough's Draft Rights of Way Improvement Plan and this addendum have been placed in each of the Political Party rooms for inspection, as detailed within the report for the Cabinet Meeting on 19 March.

This addendum provides a summary of responses to consultation undertaken on Walsall Borough's Draft Rights of Way Improvement Plan and details of amendments which are to be made during production of the final version in consideration of these comments. The final version will be produced by Print and Design Services after the Cabinet decision has been made. It has not been possible to incorporate the below details into the final version prior to the Cabinet meeting due to the current restructure of Print and Design Services. The final version of the document will incorporate the points detailed within this Addendum. Minor changes are detailed which includes mainly alterations to the format or clarity of information. There will be no significant amendments to content or proposed actions, so there are no further resource implications anticipated as a result of these amendments.

For further Information, please contact Joanne Whiting, Senior Rights of Way Officer, (01922 65) 2445.

Summary of amendments to be made:

1. Foreword to be included

Councillor Anthony Harris, Portfolio holder for transportation, has provided support for the document and will be presenting the report at the Cabinet Meeting on 19 March 2008. He has also agreed to inclusion of the Foreword in his name.

2. Comments were received in relation to no clear timescales (start and finish dates) and no specific local actions

These issues will be resolved through inclusion of "quick wins" - projects for which implementation will commence and improvements will be seen on the ground within the first 12 months:

- Investigate and commence development of improved Geographical Information Systems on Plan Web
- Introduce audit criteria and a programme of accessibility audits, commence audit process
- Introduction of improved planned maintenance and inspections
- Development of Enforcement procedures
- Review Situational Interventions (Alley Gating) Policy to include Gating Orders

A service plan target has been set to prioritise further actions outlined within 12 months of endorsement of the document as approved council policy by Council (scheduled for April). Development of individual improvements at a local level will commence as part of this process. Further consultation on these actions will be undertaken wherever applicable, Walsall's Local Access Forum will be asked to comment.

3. Comments were made that links to Countryside Services sites and their development needs to be improved

A meeting held between officers in public rights of way and countryside services on 19 February 2008 confirmed initial countryside services support. Further meetings are to be held to pursue specific improvements and actions in line with the rights of way improvement plan and Green Spaces Strategy. Details are already included within the rights of way improvement plan about links to open spaces and the green spaces strategy but the document will be amended accordingly to ensure this information is clear.

4. Comments were received on phrasing, grammar, spelling, abbreviations and use of legal or other jargon

A definitions page is to be added into appendices and any other relevant amendments to improve this will be undertaken during production of the final version through print and design services. Specific comments in relation to particular phrases or wording which would be more appropriate will be incorporated wherever that is deemed appropriate.

5. Suggestions for use of grant funding sources were received, particularly Access Grant Management Scheme

Funding will be bid for to support some of the specific actions outlined from internal Council funds or external sources. Some actions will only be possible with additional funding. This will be investigated during implementation of specific actions outlined and bids for funding will be made at appropriate stages to support delivery of actions. This is already detailed, but the rights of way improvement plan may require minor amendment for clarification purposes.

6. It was suggested that urban and rural footpaths will require different types of maintenance and inspections due to their distinct characteristics

Improvement to current maintenance and inspection programmes is already included within the action plan. Investigation is ongoing, but it is envisaged that rural footpaths could be included within Countryside Services maintenance programmes urban footpaths could be included within the Highways Procurement Strategy. There will be minimal amendment to the improvement plan to reflect this as it will be picked up and resolved during development of improved procedures.

7. New enforcement procedures need to be developed to ensure that robust processes are in place for dealing with this in accordance with statutory duties.

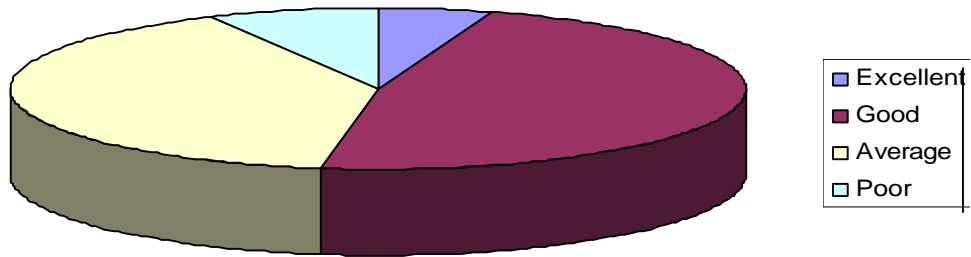
Comments received in relation to a specific site and an understanding of the extent of the problem of obstructions in the borough, has lead to identification of the need to strengthen procedures for taking enforcement action. Our responsibilities in terms of enforcement are already detailed within the document, but clarification of steps that will be taken to improve current practices will be included within action theme 9 – improvements to existing public rights of way.

8. It is a statutory requirement that Natural England is consulted and receives a copy of the draft rights of way improvement plan. No comments have been received.

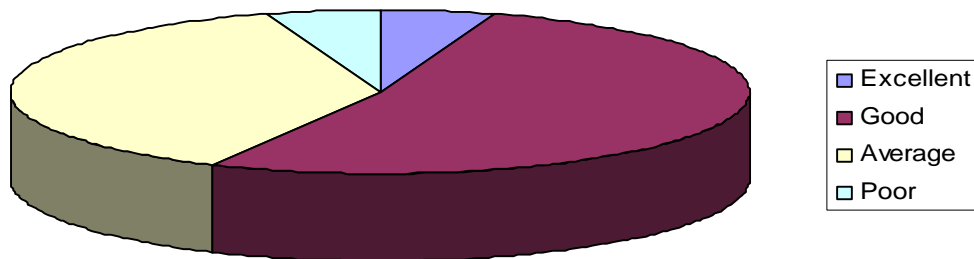
9. It will be necessary to amend section 5 - consultation and survey responses, to reflect the above information.

10. Ratings received from monitoring undertaken during consultation:

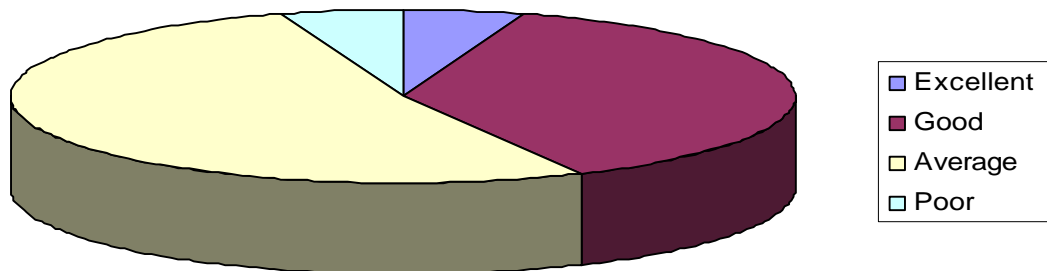
Content of the document



Layout of the document



Ease of understanding



The overall document

