

Stage 1 Equalities Impact Assessment

Rights of Way Improvement Plan 2023 - 2033

What is the proposed decision that you are asking the Executive to make:	Adoption of a replacement and updated Rights of Way Improvement Plan (ROWIP) 2023 - 2033
Summary of relevant legislation	Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000
Does the proposed decision conflict with any of the Council's key strategy priorities?	No
Name of assessor:	Elaine Cox
Date of assessment:	19 July 2023

Is this a:		Is this:	
Policy	Yes	New or proposed	No
Strategy	Yes	Already exists and is being reviewed	Yes
Function	No	Is changing	Yes
Service	No		

1 What are the main aims, objectives and intended outcomes of the proposed decision and who is likely to benefit from it?	
Aims:	<p>Every local authority which is responsible for public rights of way must produce a Rights of Way Improvement Plan (ROWIP). It sets out the council's strategic goals and priorities for public rights of way. Rights of Way Improvement Plans must be reviewed every ten years and this is West Berkshire's second ROWIP.</p> <p>Rights of Way Improvement Plans must carry out a full assessment of the needs of the public in using public rights of way, now and in the future. The ROWIP must assess how well the public rights of way network meets these needs and</p>



	<p>set out a statement of action.</p> <p>Public rights of way are an important asset for West Berkshire and provide many public benefits. They enable people to access and enjoy the outstanding countryside and natural areas of the district, as well as being important to health, mental wellbeing, travel and the economy. West Berkshire Council has the aim that public rights of way to be available for everyone.</p>
Objectives:	<p>The ROWIP has four themes which reflect the priorities for public rights of way in West Berkshire, now and in the future. These are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Looking after the network • An evolving network • Health and prosperous communities • Effective delivery
Outcomes:	<p>The ROWIP has the following over-arching objectives:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increase levels of physical activity • Improving quality of life • Supporting health and mental health and tackling health inequalities and improving health outcomes • Increasing active travel • Climate change mitigation and adaptation • Improving West Berkshire's environment and green infrastructure • A strong economy, respecting the environment and improving outcomes for all • Involving and empowering local people • Effective and efficient delivery of council services
Benefits:	<p>See 'Outcomes' above.</p>



2 Note which groups may be affected by the proposed decision. Consider how they may be affected, whether it is positively or negatively and what sources of information have been used to determine this.

(Please demonstrate consideration of all strands – Age, Disability, Gender Reassignment, Marriage and Civil Partnership, Pregnancy and Maternity, Race, Religion or Belief, Sex and Sexual Orientation.)

Group Affected	What might be the effect?	Information to support this.
Age	<p>No adverse impacts on any people in particular age groups have been identified as likely to result from the ROWIP.</p> <p>The ROWIP actively seeks to break down barriers for under-represented age groups and increase use through:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improving promotion and awareness, using new media and different promotional channels, including increased use of social media • Improve maintenance of the PROW network, targeting places close to where people live so that barriers, such as lack of transport, do not stop people from using the PROW network. • Stiles will continue to be removed from the network, and other accessibility improvements will be made, which will assist those with physical and other impairments, which are more prevalent in the older age groups. • There was engagement with community groups which work with older people during the formulation of the ROWIP which led to the inclusion of specific actions, and continuing to work with those with specialist knowledge is an action within the ROWIP 	<p>The Public Rights of Way (PROW) network is used by a variety of age groups which vary from parents with children and babies to elderly walking groups.</p> <p>Under-represented groups that are less likely to visit the countryside, are the younger and older age range groups. Monitor of Engagement into the Natural Environment research shows that those aged between 19 and 25 and those over the age of 65 were least likely to have visited the outdoors in the previous 7 days. The public survey carried out for the Rights of Way Improvement Plan (ROWIP) that those aged under 35 were less represented amongst users of PROW than in the population of West Berkshire.</p> <p>To encourage these under-represented groups to visit the countryside and use the PROW network we must address the barriers preventing use. The ROWIP sets out how barriers to access will be overcome.</p>



<p>Disability</p>	<p>No adverse impacts on people living with disabilities have been identified as likely to result from the ROWIP.</p> <p>The ROWIP actively seeks to break down barriers for people living with a range of disabilities through:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The creation of a new accessible route using public rights of way, each year during the delivery of the ROWIP • Improving promotion and awareness, with new media and different promotional channels • Improving the information available for people on the levels of accessibility of routes and suitability for those with disabilities, including in promotional material and in the online mapping service • Improve maintenance of the PROW network, targeting places close to where people live so that barriers, such as lack of transport, do not stop people from using the PROW network. • Stiles will continue to be removed from the network, and other accessibility improvements will be made, which will assist those with physical and other impairments, which are more prevalent in the older age groups. • There was extensive engagement with community groups and charities which work with people living with physical, visual and neurological disabilities during the formulation of the ROWIP which led to the inclusion of specific actions, and continuing to work with those with specialist knowledge is an action within the ROWIP 	<p>The research carried out for the ROWIP shows that many people living with disabilities wish to use public rights of way. However, there are barriers which deter them, or prevent them, from doing this. The main barriers are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Physical – stiles, steps, lack of handrails and other physical aspects of PROW can make it difficult, or impossible for people living with disabilities to access the PROW network. • Information – there is a lack of on where to go and whether the route will be suitable for them. • Lack of dedicated accessible routes – there is a lack of accessible routes
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Gender Reassignment	No adverse or positive impacts on any people affected by gender reassignment have been identified as likely to result from the ROWIP.	It is not considered that the impacts of the ROWIP on persons with this protected characteristic will differ in any way from other interested parties.
Marriage & Civil Partnership	No adverse or positive impacts on any people who are married or in a civil partnership have been identified as likely to result from the ROWIP.	It is not considered that the impacts of the ROWIP on persons with this protected characteristic will differ in any way from other interested parties.
Pregnancy & Maternity	<p>No adverse impacts on people who are pregnant or have young children have been identified as likely to result from the ROWIP.</p> <p>Actions in the ROWIP will help to support use of public rights of way by this group:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The creation of a new accessible route using public rights of way, each year during the delivery of the ROWIP, which will also be suitable for use by those with pushchairs and buggies. • Improving promotion and awareness, using new media and different promotional channels, including social media • Improving the information available for people on the levels of accessibility of routes including in promotional material and in the online mapping service • Improve maintenance of the PROW network, targeting places close to where people live so that barriers, such as lack of transport, do not stop people from using the PROW network. • Stiles will continue to be removed from the network, and other accessibility improvements will be made, which will assist those with young children, and those with pushchairs and buggies. 	<p>Those with younger children, including those with prams, pushchairs and buggies, will sometimes face accessibility issues and physical barriers on routes. Those with young children on cycles need safe, traffic-free routes. The ROWIP contains actions which will improve access to the PROW network for this group of persons.</p>



	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Links with policies and projects to improve Active Travel will help to create traffic-free urban routes which are safer for younger children, including routes to schools 	
Race	<p>No adverse impacts on people due to race have been identified as likely to result from the ROWIP.</p> <p>The ROWIP aims to raise awareness of public rights of way to a wider audience. Promotion and awareness-raising activities will be inclusive and aim to increase levels of knowledge and confidence in accessing the countryside by this group.</p>	<p>In West Berkshire there is a lower than the South East average of residents of non-White ethnicity. Organisations representing minority ethnic groups were consulted during the information-gathering phase of the ROWIP and the findings included in the actions around increasing awareness of public rights of way.</p>
Religion or Belief	<p>No adverse or positive impacts on any people who hold a particular religion or belief have been identified as likely to result from the ROWIP.</p>	<p>It is not considered that the impacts of the ROWIP on persons with this protected characteristic will differ in any way from other interested parties.</p>
Sex	<p>No adverse or positive impacts on people due to sex have been identified as likely to result from the ROWIP.</p>	<p>In the public survey carried out for the ROWIP, the proportion of people who identified as male and female was very similar (male 51%, female 47%). Therefore, it is considered that both male and females use the PROW network to a similar degree. It is not considered that the impacts of the ROWIP on persons with this protected characteristic will differ in any way from other interested parties.</p>
Sexual Orientation	<p>No adverse or positive impacts on any people of a particular sexual orientation have been identified as likely to result from the ROWIP.</p>	<p>It is not considered that the impacts of the ROWIP on persons with this protected characteristic will differ in any way from other interested parties.</p>



Further Comments relating to the item:

It is not considered that the ROWIP will have an adverse impact on persons with any of the nine protected characteristics. The ROWIP is likely to have a positive impact on persons in some of the protected characteristics – age, disability, race, sex and pregnancy and maternity.

3 Result

Are there any aspects of the proposed decision, including how it is delivered or accessed, that could contribute to inequality?

No

Please provide an explanation for your answer:

It is not considered that the ROWIP will have an adverse impact on persons with any of the nine protected characteristics. The ROWIP is likely to have a positive impact on persons in some of the protected characteristics – age, disability, race, sex and pregnancy and maternity.



Will the proposed decision have an adverse impact upon the lives of people, including employees and service users?	No
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Please provide an explanation for your answer:

It is not considered that the ROWIP will have an adverse impact on persons with any of the nine protected characteristics. The ROWIP is likely to have a positive impact on persons in some of the protected characteristics – age, disability, race, sex and pregnancy and maternity.

If your answers to question 2 have identified potential adverse impacts and you have answered ‘yes’ to either of the sections at question 3, or you are unsure about the impact, then you must carry out a Stage 2 Equality Impact Assessment.

If a Stage 2 Equality Impact Assessment is required, before proceeding you should discuss the scope of the Assessment with service managers in your area. You will also need to refer to the Equality Impact Assessment guidance and Stage 2 template.

4 Identify next steps as appropriate:	
Stage Two required	No
Owner of Stage Two assessment:	N/a
Timescale for Stage Two assessment:	N/a

Signed: Elaine Cox	Date: 19 July 2023
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