



In Step with Suffolk

Rights of Way Improvement Plan 2006 - 2016

Foreword



I am pleased to introduce “In Step with Suffolk”, the Rights of Way Improvement Plan for Suffolk 2006 – 2016. It represents a thorough review of the use, demand and management of the rights of way network in Suffolk.

The production of the report over the last two years has had a high level of support from many land managers, parishes, district councils, user groups and the public. This is a clear indication of how much the people of Suffolk value their rights of way and see the need for and the benefits of the footpaths, bridleways and byways in the county.

The 3,400 mile (5,400 km) network is both an economic asset and important part of the highway infrastructure. The benefits of rights of way include opportunity for quiet recreation, improving health, providing access to services, safe routes for pedestrians, cyclists and horse riders, economic improvement to communities, routes between communities and access from urban areas to green spaces. All of these issues show the need for a more integrated approach to sustainable transport, tourism, land management and the management of rights of way, themes that are highlighted throughout the plan.

This ten year plan shows Suffolk County Council’s commitment to the network through a targeted maintenance and improvement programme that provides substantial benefits across the county.

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Guy McGregor".

Cllr. Guy McGregor,
Portfolio Holder for Roads and Transport,
Suffolk County Council

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1 | Public Rights of Way

There are approximately 3,400 miles (5,400 kms) of public right of way (PRoW) in Suffolk, one of the highest densities of network in the country. These routes form an integral part of the county's transport network allowing residents and visitors to move around the county on foot, bicycle, horse and vehicle away from busy roads. The network provides vital access to services, links between settlements, access from towns and villages into our beautiful countryside and opportunities for healthy exercise. Rights of Way are a major recreational resource and asset to the rural economy attracting both regular users and tourists to the countryside.

Access to the countryside is also provided in a variety of other ways such as permissive paths (part of an agri-environment scheme), Open Access land, recreation sites, Forestry Commission land and nature reserves.

Production of the Suffolk Rights of Way Improvement Plan (ROWIP).

Through the Countryside and Rights of Way Act (2000) the Government recognises the value of PRoW and requires each Highways Authority to produce a Rights of Way Improvement Plan (ROWIP) in order to identify changes that will 'improve provision for walkers, cyclists, horse riders and those with mobility problems.'

In order to develop a ROWIP Highways Authorities are required to assess:

- The extent to which local rights of way meet present and future needs of the public.
- The opportunities provided by local rights of way and in particular by footpaths, cycle-tracks, bridleways and restricted byways for exercise and other forms of open-air recreation and the enjoyment of their area.
- The accessibility of local rights of way to blind or partially sighted persons and others with mobility problems.

A ROWIP Assessment was undertaken following widespread consultation and includes information on the extent, condition and use of the PRoW network. The Assessment highlighted the key role that PRoW play in maintaining and improving quality of life in the county and the links to issues such as sustainable transport, local economy, recreation, tourism and health. The full report can be found at www.suffolk.gov.uk/Environment/PublicRightsOfWay/RightsOfWayImprovementPlanAssessmentReport.htm, or a copy can be obtained by telephone on 01473 264752.

This ROWIP consists of a summary of the Assessment as well as a Statement of Action. The Statement of Action sets out how Suffolk County Council will work with others to address the demands identified in the Assessment to secure an improved network. This plan will be integrated into the county Local Transport Plan, 2006 – 11, where the actions will contribute to its four shared priorities of congestion, accessibility, air quality and safety. The ROWIP will be supported by detailed work programmes, which will be used in working with others and to bid for resources, especially through the Local Transport Plan.

Development of the ROWIP is explained more fully in Figure 1.

Figure 1 | Production of Suffolk's Rights of Way Improvement Plan

1 >>>>>>

2004 / 2005

Development of the Assessment through

- a. An analysis of the extent and condition of the network and the current state of the Definitive Map.
- b. An assessment of the links to relevant strategies such as planning, health, transport and Community Strategies.
- c. Regular reference to the Suffolk Local Access Forum.
- d. Widespread consultation (see Annex 1) to gain a better understanding of the use of the network and the main issues of concern.
- e. Issues identified through analysis and consultation were used to develop over 50 'Considerations for the Statement of Action'.

2 >>>>

April 2005

Publication of the Assessment

3 >>>>>>

April – July 2005

Consultation period for the Assessment

Extensive consultation was undertaken with a large number of organisations. A number of workshops and focus groups were held. A summary leaflet was widely distributed and published on the Suffolk County Council web site.

4 >>>>>>

July – December 2005

ROWIP drafted and discussed with key organisations and individuals

Actions were drafted based on the 'considerations for the statement of action' set out in the Assessment. The Statement of Action has six objectives and related actions based on the findings in the Assessment report. Further consultation was carried out with District Councils, Broads Authority, countryside management projects, user groups, Suffolk Local Access Forum and other County Council departments. The draft Assessment and Statement of Action was then integrated into the Local Transport Plan 2, 2006 – 2011.

5 >>>>>>

February 2006

Draft ROWIP agreed for consultation by Suffolk County Council

6 >>>>>>

June – August 2006

Formal consultation for Draft Suffolk ROWIP

7 >>>>>>

January 2007

Publish ROWIP following amendments to the draft and agreement by Suffolk County Council in October 2006.

8 >>>>>>

2006 - 2016

Delivery of the ROWIP actions

Monitoring of the ROWIP

The ROWIP is a ten-year plan (2006 – 2016) that will be revised after five years in line with revisions of the Local Transport Plan. Work will be developed through annual work plans monitored by Suffolk County Council, the Suffolk Local Access Forum and the Broads Local Access Forum.

Where can you find further copies of the plan?

Copies of this plan are available on Suffolk County Council web site (www.suffolk.gov.uk), at all libraries and all Local Authority offices. A copy has been sent to all organisations and individuals listed in Annex 2.

The Plan is available in large print / other languages from Customer Services Direct by calling 08456 066 067.

How to comment on the plan

If you have any comments on this plan please write to:

Countryside Access (ROWIP)
Suffolk County Council
Endeavour House
8 Russell Road
Ipswich
Suffolk IP1 2BX

or e-mail: peter.tilley@et.suffolkcc.gov.uk

2 | Assessment Report Summary

The Assessment report was developed following widespread consultation (using questionnaire surveys and focus groups) in order to establish the demand for, and use of the network, as well as priority issues.

Consultees included the public, land managers, parish councils, district councils, Broads Authority Local Access Forums and user groups. Details of the consultation and consultees are given in Annexes 1 and 2. A detailed analysis of the current condition of the network, and of the Definitive Map and Statement, was also carried out.

The findings of the Assessment are summarised below. More detail on specific issues is also given in Section 3.



2.1 | Extent of the network

Suffolk has 3,400 miles (5,400kms) of PRow as shown in figure 2 and has one of the highest densities of PRow in the country. The network, however, has many interruptions such as dead-end paths or routes that change status (for example, a route changing from bridleway to footpath). Footpaths represent a higher than average proportion of the network. Many parishes either lack a bridleway network or lack a continuous network, forcing both cyclists and horse-riders onto roads. Given that there are over 10,500 horses in Suffolk this is a major issue.

Figure 2 - Composition of Suffolk's PRow network

- Footpaths – 83% (2,813 miles or 4,527 kms)
- Bridleways – 11% (357 miles or 574 kms)
- Byways – 3.4% (118 miles or 190 kms)
- Roads Used as Public Paths – 2.6% (86 miles or 139 kms)

There is a further 67 miles (73 km) of cycle tracks, 20 miles (32.5 kms) of on-road cycle lanes and 407 miles of waymarked cycling leisure routes. In addition 12,500 acres of Open Access land, 12,500 acres of Forestry land with dedicated access and more than 125 miles / 200 kms of permissive paths that allow a range of opportunities for recreation.

2.2 | Condition of the network

Highways Authorities must assess the condition of a minimum of 5% of the network each year in order to be able to report to Government on a Best Value Performance Indicator (BV178). This indicator measures ease of use of the network and is taken as a yardstick of the condition of PRoW across England. Suffolk's BV178 results over the last five years are shown in Figure 3 below.

Figure 3 - Routes easy to use (%)

	% passed
2001	48
2002	57.4
2003	60.5
2004	59
2005	66

These results are on a par with other counties in the East of England.

The Assessment report includes detailed information on the condition of the network from the 2004 survey. Problems include missing and inadequate bridges, poor surfacing, summer clearance of paths, poor way marking and unnecessary, unauthorised or illegal barriers. A summary of these issues is set out in section 3:A.

2.3 | User needs

PRoW allow people to move around the county on foot, bicycle, horse and vehicle away from busy roads. People use PRoW for a range of purposes including short journeys, accessing local services and recreation including walking, jogging, horse riding, cycling and bird watching.

73% of respondents to a postal consultation use PRoW at least weekly. Most respondents (94%) walk the network whilst 30% use it at some point for cycling. 4% use motorised vehicles and 11% carry out equine pursuits.

8% of respondents use the PRoW network to travel to work, 5% to travel to school and 22% to access services such as shops.

In a recent Suffolk County Council Highways survey (LTP 2005), the second most important measure to helping people get out and about in rural areas is considered to be the improvement of the rights of way network. The development of the rights of way network is also seen as the second most important measure that could improve peoples' quality of life.

Urban and rural

Suffolk's population in 2001 was just over 668,000. Approximately 45% of the population lives in urban areas (defined as population greater than 10,000). The remainder live in small towns, villages and dispersed settlements. Given this population distribution Suffolk's PRoW need to provide safe sustainable access for people in both urban and rural areas, between towns and villages and into the countryside.

Younger people

24% of Suffolk's population is under 20. Young people should be encouraged to make better use of the network for recreation (cycling, running, and horse riding) as well as for accessing services.

The retired

18% of Suffolk's population is currently retired and 5% is over 80. As this sector continues to grow there are likely to be more people using the network. Many older people have some degree of impaired mobility, restricting them to barrier free routes. Easy access to a well-maintained network is important for exercise and access to services, especially for those who no longer drive.

Disabled people

One in six of the population has a disability that falls within the definition laid down in the Disability Discrimination Act. In Suffolk there are 14,200 wheelchair users and 1,665 people registered as blind, of which 69% are over 75. Disability access groups in Suffolk feel that relatively few PRoW are open for use by those with mobility problems. Restrictions due to barriers, poor maintenance and lack of promotion of accessible routes are an issue. These groups see improvement of paths for access to services and recreation on the urban fringe or within urban areas as of the greatest benefit.

Ethnic minorities

Ethnic groups make up 2.76% of Suffolk's population. The largest minority ethnic group is Mixed White and Black Caribbean. Consultation with diversity groups during 2004 and evidence from the Black and Ethnic Network organisation suggests that ethnic minority groups do not participate in the countryside in proportion to their numbers in society. Suffolk County Council wishes to encourage all parts of our community to enjoy the rights of way network and this should be recognised through actions in this ROWIP.

Tourism and the local economy

Suffolk Tourism Partnership recognises that the high quality natural and built environment of Suffolk is a valuable tourism asset and that a high number of visitors come to Suffolk for quiet recreation, specifically walking and cycling. A survey of 661 visitors carried out on the coast in August 2004 indicated that the most popular activities undertaken were walking and cycling with 60% of respondents saying these were their main activities. The 2002/3 Day Visits Survey carried out by the Countryside Agency showed that in England 16% of leisure day visits involved walking or rambling and that this resulted in expenditure of over £6 billion. Research in Suffolk has shown that in 2004 the average walker or cyclist on a day visit spent around £15 and those that stayed over-night spent £33.62 excluding accommodation. The economic benefits and importance of access to the countryside on local businesses was highlighted in the Foot and Mouth outbreak of 2001/02.

The county has one National Trail, (which starts in Suffolk), and a number of regionally important routes that provide income to the local economy. These include The Peddars Way, The Icknield Way, The Angles Way (largely within the Broads Authority), The Suffolk Coastal Path and the Stour Valley Path.

Information

The Assessment showed that all users would appreciate more widely available and up to date information about routes. There are a large number of leaflets and guidebooks and an increasing number of websites that provide information on routes in Suffolk. Much of this material, however, has been produced on an ad-hoc basis by a range of organisations (Local Authorities, Countryside Management Projects, Parishes and Commercial organisations) and individuals. There is a need for better co-ordination of the production of this material.

2.4 | The Definitive Map

The Definitive Map and Statement is the legal basis on which Suffolk County Council protects, maintains and changes PRow. The Definitive Map shows all known PRow whilst the Statement includes a written description of each route. Suffolk's Definitive Map and Statement is in need of substantial investment if it is to both form the basis for modernising the network and be a management tool for staff and public which can be used with confidence. User groups and planning authorities see the production of an up to date Definitive Map as important for the management, development and protection of the network. 64% of parishes believe that it is important for them to have an up to date electronically available digital map.

There is no Definitive Map for Ipswich. Consultation with the Borough of Ipswich, the user groups and neighbouring local authorities shows this to be a serious impediment to protecting, maintaining and developing sustainable access in and around the town. This issue has been complicated by more recent boundary changes where parishes have become part of surrounding districts and a relevant map has not been created or updated. More detail is set out in section 3:E.

2.5 | Contribution to other public agendas

Government guidance requires the ROWIP to be developed within the context of other relevant public plans and strategies. ROWIPs should in turn influence and be supported by these strategies and plans. A summary of current relevant strategies and plans (national, regional and local) is given in Figure 4 (see page 12). A key to the success of Suffolk's ROWIP will be recognition of the contribution that PRow can make to public priorities such as health, quality of life, citizenship, sustainable transport and economic development. This recognition should lead to greater public support and also open up access to 'new' funding streams.

Suffolk County Council Policy

A Better Way for Suffolk (SCC, 2006) sets out Suffolk County Council's commitment to the delivery of key local public services. Within this document the County Council gives a commitment to the provision and management of PRow. Implementation of the ROWIP will contribute to meeting other commitments in A Better Way for Suffolk, including promoting a healthy lifestyle, safe cycle routes to school, strengthening community involvement, improving public transport and tackling congestion.

Local Transport Plan

As a Highways Authority, Suffolk County Council is required to integrate the ROWIP into the Local Transport Plan (2). Actions within this ROWIP will contribute to meeting the four Local Transport Plan priorities (congestion, accessibility, air quality and safety) as well as the quality of life indicator. The ROWIP will contribute to accessibility through improving access to work, shops, services, transport links and the countryside via PRow. Improved and well promoted PRow will encourage people to walk and cycle and provide an alternative to using cars thereby reducing congestion and improving safety and air quality. Safety issues are specifically addressed in section 3:C of this ROWIP.

Healthy Exercise

The need to encourage more people to exercise is currently a high priority within the health agenda. A range of strategies focus on the benefits of walking and cycling which are easy, relatively cheap and can counteract problems such as obesity, coronary heart disease and type-II diabetes as well as improving mental well being. PRow have an important role to play in ensuring that people have opportunities to exercise safely as well as having access to the natural environment.

At a national level the Government's recent White Paper on health includes proposals to develop 'whole town' approaches to cycling and walking. At the County level the need to encourage walking and cycling has been recognised in Suffolk's Community Strategy which includes actions to promote healthy ways to travel to school and health walks. The promotion of active lifestyles is also a priority in the five Local Community Strategies in Suffolk. Suffolk's Local Area Agreement includes a range of health outcomes, including a target to halt the rise in obesity.

Green space strategies

There are strong links between green space strategies and the ROWIP. Suffolk's Community Strategy includes a target for increasing accessible natural green space and the draft Regional Spatial Strategy includes policies relating to the provision of green infrastructure. At a national level the government is promoting the importance of networks of open spaces in urban areas through its Sustainable Communities agenda. Planning Policy Guidance 17 (Planning for Open Space, Sport and Recreation) requires Local Authorities to map and assess open spaces. The recommended typology of open spaces includes green corridors, the prime purpose of which is 'walking, cycling or horse riding whether for leisure purposes or travel.'

Planning policy

Planning Policy Statement 7 (Sustainable Development in Rural Areas) states that access to the countryside on the edge of urban areas should be improved and that development in rural areas should, where possible, give people the greatest opportunity to access the countryside by public transport, walking and cycling. Planning Policy Guidance 13 (transport) emphasises the importance of walking and cycling. This encourages more use of public rights of way for local journeys and the promotion of missing links in rights of way networks. Planning Policy Statement 6 (Planning for town centres) and Planning Policy Guidance 3 (housing) promote more sustainable patterns of development and advise Local Authorities to plan town centres to give priority to pedestrians and cyclists.

The draft East of England Regional Spatial Strategy recommends that Local Development Documents include policies which will seek to maximise the development of regional recreational assets such as trails, bridleways and cycleways.

At the local level the majority of current Local Plans include policies that require new development to include provision for pedestrians and cyclists. Three also include policies relating to the promotion of cycle networks. Only four of the seven local plans include policies relating to safeguarding and where possible improving the PRow network. It is important to ensure that Local Development Frameworks include policies that support the objectives within this ROWIP.



Photo courtesy of Cameo Photography

Figure 4 | Summary of relevant strategies and plans (specific projects highlighted in italics)

Health

- Choosing health – White Paper (DH, 2004)
- Regional Health Strategy (to be prepared by EERA and partners)
- Local Delivery Plans (Primary Care Trusts) (Stepping out in Suffolk – Walking the Way to health initiative)
- targets within Suffolk Community Strategy and Local Area Agreement

Planning

- Draft East of England Spatial Strategy (EERA, 2004)
- The Broads Plan, 2004
- Suffolk Minerals Local Plan (1999)
- Suffolk Waste Plan (draft, 2004)
- 7 Local District/Borough Plans (Local Development Frameworks)
- Parish Plans

National Planning Policy

- PPS7 – Sustainable development in rural areas
- PPG17 – Planning for open space, sport and recreation
- PPG13 – transport
- PPS12 – Local Development Frameworks
- PPS11 – Regional Spatial Strategies
- PPG21 – tourism
- Living Places - Cleaner, Safer, Greener (ODPM October 2002)
- Sustainable communities: building for the future (ODPM, 2003)

Crow Act 2000

- Open access, Section 16 dedicated open land, access to coastal land

Recreation

The Diversity Review, CA (ongoing)

Walking and cycling

Walking & Cycling, an action plan (DfT, 2004) (*national walking website*)

National cycling strategy (1996) (DfT's Bike It initiative + cycling portal + Cycling Projects Fund, Walking and Cycling Fund toolkit)

Horse riding

Ride-it. The national bridle route network (BHS)

Access to wildlife / open space

- Woodland for Life, East England Woodland Strategy (EERA & FC, 2003)
- Suffolk Biodiversity Action Plan
- English Nature standards for accessible natural green space in towns and cities (2003)
- Space for people, Targeting action for woodland access (Woodland Trust, 2004)

Strategies with broader remits

Sustainable development

- A Better Quality of Life, UK strategy for sustainable development (1999)
- Sustainable Development Framework for East England (EERA & EE Sustainable Round Table, 2001)
- Local Agenda 21

Rural development

- Our Countryside: The Future. A Fair deal for rural England. (DETR & MAFF, 2000)
- Common Agricultural Policy:
- Pillar I (*Cross compliance*)
- Pillar II, East of England Chapter of the England Rural Development Programme (*Environmental Stewardship, Farm Environment Plans*)
- Suffolk Rural Action Plan (Suffolk Rural Partnership, 2006)

Community strategies

- Altogether a Better Suffolk, Suffolk Community Strategy (SSP, 2004)
- 7 Local Community Strategies

Suffolk County Council

- Suffolk County Council's Policy and Performance Plan
- A Better Way for Suffolk (SCC, 2006)

AONBs

- Dedham Vale AONB & Stour Valley Management Plan
- Suffolk Coasts and Heaths Management strategy

Transport

- A new deal for transport: Better for everyone (DfT, 1998)
- Transport 2010: The Ten Year Transport Plan (DfT, 2000) (*travel plans*)
- Tomorrow's roads – safer for everyone (DfT, 2000) (*Highways Agency non-motorised user crossing programme*)
- Child Road Safety - Achieving the 2010 Target (2002)
- Transport in tomorrow's countryside (CA, 2003) (*CA's Rural Transport Partnership Scheme, Quiet Lanes*)
- Regional transport strategy
- Suffolk Local Transport Plan 2 , 2006-2011 (SCC)
- 35 Local Transport Action Plans

Economic Development / Tourism

- Tomorrow's tourism (DCMS, 1999)
- The economic and social value of walking in England (Ramblers Association, 2003)
- Regional tourism strategy (East of England Tourist Board)
- Local tourism strategies e.g. Forest Heath, Brecks.
- A shared vision: The regional economic strategy for the East of England (EEDA)

3 | The Statement of Action

This Statement of Action forms the heart of the ROWIP and forms the basis of a long-term management strategy for the Rights of Way network.

It is based on six objectives (see below) which were developed from the findings of the Assessment report and it sets out how Suffolk County Council will work with others to meet these objectives through actions to secure an improved network suitable to meet the needs of today's users.

The ROWIP will be supported by detailed work programmes which will be used in working with others and to bid for resources.

The six objectives identified for Suffolk based on the findings of the Assessment are:

- Objective A:** Provide a better signed, maintained and accessible network
- Objective B:** Provide and protect a more continuous network that provides for the requirements of all users
- Objective C:** Develop a safer network
- Objective D:** Increase community involvement in improving and managing the network
- Objective E:** Provide an up to date and publicly available digitised Definitive Map for the whole of Suffolk
- Objective F:** Improve promotion, understanding and use of the network

Implementation of the ROWIP

Implementation of the ROWIP will conform with Suffolk County Council's commitment for PRoW as set out in 'A Better Way for Suffolk' (SCC, 2006),

- Provide a better signed and maintained network
- Greater community involvement in managing Rights of Way
- Work closely with landowners and users on maintenance, protection and improvement
- Improve provision for cyclists and equestrians
- Make the Definitive Map process more responsive to the needs of stakeholders

Priorities for implementation will be significantly influenced by available funding through Local Transport Plan 2, Transport Asset Management Plan (TAMP) as well as the review of network prioritisation. Within this framework work on PRoW will be prioritised according to three key principles:

- Resolving health and safety issues
- Maximising public benefit
- Meeting statutory requirements

Prioritisation of ROWIP actions will be made against the extent to which they:

- Meet Suffolk public policy objectives as set out in a Better Way for Suffolk, ROWIP, Local Transport Plan 2, Suffolk's Local Area Agreement and Suffolk Community Strategy.
- Increase the level of use.
- Address the needs and demands of specific groups i.e. those with limited mobility or sight, people from different cultural and ethnic backgrounds.
- Remove barriers to access, i.e. improve surfacing, remove structures such as stiles or make them more access friendly.
- Resolve missing links in the network to enable the creation of a circular route or complete a linear route.



This Statement of Action takes each of the six objectives in turn and gives:

- Detailed information on the issues behind each objective.
- Current projects which are contributing to meeting the objective.
- An action plan for each objective which includes:
 - Aims and detail of actions
 - An indication of resources required.



actions that can be carried out within current staffing and budget resource (base 2005 – 2006)



actions which require Suffolk County Council resources to be reprioritised



actions requiring planned investment. This funding may be wholly through external sources or require support from Suffolk County Council.

Potential sources of funding include, Local Transport Plan, Local Authorities, East of England Development Agency, Local Strategic Partnerships, Suffolk Development Agency, AONB Sustainable Development Fund, Central Government, Sustrans, Lottery, Sport England, s106 planning gain.

- Key organisations which will work with Suffolk County Council to carry out the actions.
- Performance measures set to a baseline of 2006 / 2007.

Objective A | Provide a better signed, maintained and accessible network

The actions in this section will provide a more useable, better managed network of footpaths, bridleways, byways and cycle tracks encouraging greater public use.

Issues arising from the Assessment

Improvement and maintenance of the current network was the greatest priority for all groups consulted.

Bridges:

- 19% of bridges in Suffolk failed the 2004 PRoW condition survey indicating that currently across the county 510 bridges need attention, 860 are missing or need replacing, and 40 need urgent replacement.

Obstructions

- Users would like to see structures such as gates and stiles only where they are essential.
- Disability groups see the removal of obstacles as the greatest benefit for the less able.
- 12% of paths surveyed for the 2004 condition survey were obstructed.
- 48% of parishes see Suffolk County Council's reinstatement of illegally blocked paths as being less than satisfactory.

Surfacing

- 11.5% of PRoW in 2004 were affected by poor or dangerous surfacing.
- 43% of parishes rated improving surfacing on selected routes as the best measure to aid people with mobility problems.
- 745 miles, (1,200 kms) of the 3,400 miles (5,400kms) of paths in Suffolk are currently mown one to three times a year. 1,708 miles (2,750 kms) are estimated to need some surface management. When asked to suggest a specific improvement in their parish, 25% highlighted the need for improved maintenance including mowing and clearance. This was supported by 30% of land managers who considered the network needed better mowing, cutting and maintenance to improve public access. Of those land managers surveyed, 59% would consider contract managing the maintenance of rights of way.

Cross-field routes:

- In 2004, 54% of cross-field routes were not properly reinstated following ploughing and sowing.

Signing / way marking

- Poorly signed and way marked routes were the most common problem experienced by the public. 38% of land managers thought that better signage and way marking could improve the network. 27% of parishes felt that if resources were available more should be spent on sign posting and way marking. (Note that the consultation was carried out in 2004, prior to initiation of the roadside signing project).

Current projects

Development of funding bids within the Local Transport Plan 2 (LTP2) process

As part of the integration of the ROWIP into LTP2, opportunities for rights of way improvements have been collated and scoped under the four main LTP2 themes (congestion, accessibility, road safety and air quality). The best of these have been put forward as funding bids. A local indicator, 'Usage of high priority PRoW routes in Suffolk' has been included in the LTP2. Improvements to PRoW will be measured against a local target for the first time. The target will be a 10% increase of use on improved routes.

Asset Management Plan

Suffolk County Council has included Rights of Way in its Transport Asset Management Plan (TAMP). This plan will identify the current condition and management of the county council's transport and highways asset, their life span and the cost of maintaining or replacing them. It will ensure that works to enhance the safety of the network are considered alongside and co-ordinated with works necessary to safeguard the condition and value of the asset. The plan will be completed early in 2007 and will identify different levels of asset management and costs for consideration for the financial years 2007 / 08 and on.

Review of network prioritisation for maintenance and improvement

A review of the current prioritisation of the network is underway. This will identify which PRoW should receive a basic level of management and which (high priority routes) will receive a higher level of management. The review is essential to best manage scarce resources for mowing, cutting and annual maintenance of the network. The review will also highlight those routes that bring added value and opportunities to the rest of the highways network both in the urban and rural environment.

Land manager and user group

A group consisting of officers from Country Landowners and Business Association, National Farmers Union, Suffolk Agricultural Association, Suffolk Association of Local Councils, Suffolk Association of Local Councils, The Ramblers Association, British Horse Society and Suffolk County Council has been formed to consider improved maintenance of the network, raising awareness of management responsibilities and enforcement procedures.

PRoW signing from the highway

Suffolk County Council is now in the third phase of a three-phase project to renew the county's path signage from the highway. This project provides more visible, durable and longer lasting signs across the network.

Objective A | Provide a better signed, maintained and accessible network

Aims	Actions	Resource required to complete action	Key Organisations lead partner in bold	Performance Measure
A.1 To improve investment in PRoW	Identify investment needs through the Traffic Asset Management Plan and agree an appropriate level of service for PRoW that balances investment needs with resources. Bid for funding through appropriate processes such as Local Transport Plan and capital programmes.	✓ ✓	SCC	Amount of increased investment over life of ROWIP.
A.2 To effectively allocate maintenance resources	Review the current network priority system for footpaths, bridleways, byways and cyclepaths. This should look at criteria such as current use and greatest public benefit.	✓✓	SCC User groups, Districts, Parishes, countryside management projects, Suffolk Local Access Forum	Introduction of revised hierarchy by Spring 2007.
A.3 To improve (off road) way marking	Increase the level of way-marking. (see A7).	✓✓	SCC Volunteers, Districts, Parishes, land managers, user groups, countryside management projects, Broads Authority	% routes adequately waymarked (BV 178).
A.4 New roadside signing programme.	Complete roadside signing project by 2008.	✓✓✓	SCC	100% completed by 2008.

Aims	Actions	Resource required to complete action	Key Organisations lead partner in bold	Performance Measure
A.5 To keep paths mown to the appropriate standard	<p>Review the mowing maintenance carried out across the network based on the priority system.</p> <p>Implement a new mowing regime which, where possible involves land managers and parishes (see A7).</p> <p>Option 1, Continue current level of mowing. Option 2, Increase mowing</p>	<p>✓</p> <p>✓</p> <p>✓✓✓</p>	<p>SCC Land managers, Districts, Parishes, Broads Authority, countryside management projects</p>	<p>Review completed early 2007.</p> <p>Extent and frequency of cuts.</p>
A.6 Remove unnecessary barriers	<p>Work with land managers to reduce the number of stiles and unnecessary barriers to increase access (see A7).</p>	<p>✓</p>	<p>SCC Land managers, Districts, Parishes, user groups, countryside management projects Broads Authority</p>	<p>Number of unnecessary barriers removed per year.</p>
A7 To increase the involvement and understanding of land managers in the management of PRoW.	<p>Maintain the land manager / user group in order to help meet aims A.3, A.5, A.6, A.8.</p> <p>Raise awareness with land managers and their contractors of PRoW management responsibilities and cross compliance. Develop clear enforcement policy.</p> <p>Work with the Rural Development Service and DEFRA to ensure that those drawing up Farm Plans (e.g. Farm Environment Plans) understand and are encouraged to promote access.</p>	<p>✓</p> <p>✓</p> <p>✓</p>	<p>SCC , Broads Authority Land managers, countryside management projects. FWAG, DEFRA, NFU, CLA , Suffolk Agricultural Association and Suffolk Local Access Forum Suffolk Association of Local Councils</p>	<p>Launch awareness campaign by June 2006.</p> <p>Input into training with Rural Development Service + FWAG</p>

Objective A | Provide a better signed, maintained and accessible network

Aims	Actions	Resource required to complete action	Key Organisations lead partner in bold	Performance Measure
A8 To improve the re-instatement of cross-field paths	Work with land managers to raise awareness of PRoW responsibilities for cross field paths and implement agreed enforcement policy . (See A7)	✓	SCC Land managers, Parishes, DEFRA, user groups, countryside management projects, NFU, CLA , Suffolk Agricultural Association and Suffolk Local Access Forum	Reduction in offences as measured by BV178 sample survey. Enforcement policy produced by April 2006 and brought into action by November 2007.



Objective B | Provide and protect a more continuous network that provides for the requirements of all users

The actions in this section aim to provide a joined up and useable network that will support public needs and provide transport, economic, health and social benefits to local communities.

Issues arising from the Assessment

The Assessment showed that:

- A high priority for parishes is to create a more continuous network through making links in the PRoW network. In 2004/05 Suffolk had 426 dead end paths and a large number of paths which changed status (e.g. from a bridleway to footpath) for no obvious reason.
- 11 settlements do not have direct access to the countryside via PRoW.
- There are large areas of the county that lack any routes above footpath status. 385 parishes have no bridleways. 43% of parishes stated that there are not enough bridleways available for use. This limits opportunities for cycling and horse riding
- Access to and from the countryside via PRoW in the urban fringe needs to be improved and promoted. Local disability groups saw the urban fringe as the most important area for improving PRoW to high accessibility and British Safety Standards.
- 53 inter community links (many connecting small communities to service centres) have been identified for improvement.
- Circular routes are popular for local people and visitors and should be developed and promoted.
- 36% of parishes feel that planning authorities take less than adequate consideration of rights of way when considering planning applications. Local planning authorities felt that there is a need for greater consultation between Development Control and Rights of Way Officers.
- There should be better access via PRoW for walking, cycling and riding to recreation sites, through Open Access areas and within Forestry Commission access dedicated land.
- Coastal and estuarine paths are some of the most popular walking routes for residents and visitors providing substantial benefits to the local economy, but in places they are already lost or subject to coastal erosion and are likely to be under serious threat in the future. These routes need to be protected or alternatives found as part of the coastal defence management process.

Current projects

Planning seminars

Planning seminars are held to raise the profile of Rights of Way issues and develop more joined up working with planning authorities.

Coastal Access

Suffolk County Council and the Suffolk Local Access Forum have been in regular dialogue with the Environment Agency in respect of the current estuarine / coastal strategies for the Suffolk Coast. As part of the consultation process Suffolk County Council has asked that all rights of way either be maintained on their current lines or full mitigation of any loss be made. Suffolk County Council is also working with the Environment Agency to review the local economic impact of changes in coastal access in Suffolk.

Open Access

Access to almost 25,000 acres of heathland, common land and forestry on 200 sites in Suffolk was granted under the CROW ACT (2000) from October 31 2005. As access authority Suffolk County Council has worked with conservation bodies and land managers to improve access to these sites and protect wildlife interests. This work will continue through 2006/07. The Government intends to publicly consult on open access for coastal areas by March 2007 and Suffolk County Council will maintain its leading role in local management of these rights.

Tourist Bus Services include:

- **Halesworth Pathfinder**

The Discover Suffolk Project secured funding to trial a new and innovative bus service throughout 2007. A demand responsive service operating Tuesday to Sunday 7.00 to 19.00 helps get people to services and the countryside around Halesworth and the Saints.

- **New Brecks Bus from May 2005**

A demand-responsive service operates from Monday to Friday between 09.00 and 16.00. The Bus will help people get out in the countryside around Brandon and Thetford to access leisure attractions or one of the many walking routes. The bus takes up to 5 passengers at any one time and is designed to carry passengers who need to travel in their wheelchairs.

New Peddars Wayfarer Bus runs twice daily between Thetford bus and rail stations and Swaffham market place, calling at villages and major access points along the Peddars Way. The bus tows a specially built trailer that can carry up to 8 bicycles.

Objective B | Provide and protect a more continuous network that provides for the requirements of all users

Aims	Actions	Resource required to complete action	Key Organisations lead partner in bold	Performance Measure
B.1 Provide a more user focused and integrated approach to highways and PRow management	Integrate PRow activity into: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Local Transport Plan (LTP2) • Suffolk Transport Strategy • Ipswich Transport Strategy • Bury St Edmunds Transport Strategy • Accessibility Strategy • Transport Asset Management Plan 	✓	SCC, Districts , Go -East	Schemes identified in strategies and plans.
B.2 Promote the key role that PRow play in maintaining Suffolk's high quality of life within other strategies.	Integrate PRow policies and targets into associated strategies such as Community Strategies, Local Area Agreements, Suffolk Rural Action Plan and AONB Management Plans.	✓	SCC , Districts, countryside management projects, Local Strategic Partnerships, Suffolk Rural Partnership, Suffolk Strategic Partnership	Policies / Targets included in strategies and acknowledgement of contribution PRow make to broader targets.

Objective B | Provide and protect a more continuous network that provides for the requirements of all users

Aims	Actions	Resource required to complete action	Key Organisations lead partner in bold	Performance Measure
B.5 Improve access to and from Open Access land, recreation sites, and other public open spaces.	<p>Work with Local Authorities and the Haven Gateway Partnership to develop green space strategies and ensure that these link with and help to implement ROWIP aims.</p> <p>Work with site managers to improve public access to, within and from sites.</p>	<p>✓</p> <p>✓✓✓</p>	SCC , Districts, Broads Authority, land managers, Parishes, countryside management projects, nature conservation organisations	<p>Appropriate access to all Countryside Agency Open Access Priority 1 sites by 2007.</p> <p>Number of improved rights of way to countryside sites.</p> <p>% increase in use of improved routes.</p>
B.6 Improve access to shops and other services.	<p>Identify PRoW that could be better managed / promoted to provide safe routes to services.</p> <p>Improve and create new routes that provide safe routes to services.</p>	<p>✓</p> <p>✓✓✓</p>	SCC , Districts, Parishes, developers, countryside management projects, ACRE	Number of LTP schemes successfully completed.
B.7 Increase the number and promotion of easy access routes, including access for wheelchair users.	<p>Identify routes already suitable for those with limited mobility (easy access routes). Work with partners to ensure effective promotion.</p> <p>Develop and promote a series of easy access routes across the county.</p>	<p>✓✓</p> <p>✓✓✓</p>	SCC, Disability groups , user groups, land managers, Parishes, Districts, countryside management projects, NGOs, Broads Authority, health walks steering group	<p>Number of routes promoted per year.</p> <p>Number of routes created.</p>

Aims	Actions	Resource required to complete action	Key Organisations lead partner in bold	Performance Measure
B.8 Improve routes between urban areas and the countryside	<p>Identify and improve urban-countryside links through Local Authority green space and other strategies such as Local Development Frameworks, Ipswich, Bury and Lowestoft Transport Strategies, green travel plans.</p> <p>Provide a good standard of access (including access for those with limited mobility) for all new building developments through legal agreements such as s106.</p>	<p>✓✓✓</p> <p>✓✓✓</p>	SCC, Broads Authority, Districts , developers, Parishes, user groups, countryside management projects	<p>Number of improved / created routes.</p> <p>Improvement in LTP cycling to work indicator.</p>
B.9 Provide access to the surrounding countryside via PRow for settlements where there is a need.	<p>Identify settlements with no access to the countryside. Discuss with parishes and create routes where appropriate.</p>	✓✓✓	SCC , Districts, Parishes land managers, user groups, countryside management projects, ACRE, Suffolk Association of Local Councils	Number of settlements provided with access to the countryside.
B.10 Develop off – road bridle and cycle routes with suitable surfacing to link to existing network	<p>Complete National Cycle Routes 13 and 51 and improve National Cycle Route 1 using PRow where possible.</p> <p>Improve, upgrade or create bridleways and cycle tracks where there is a demand.</p>	<p>✓✓✓</p> <p>✓✓✓</p>	SCC, user groups, Broads Authority, Sustrans , Districts, Parishes, land managers, countryside management projects, riding stables and Forestry Commission	<p>Increase in the length of bridleway network.</p> <p>Increase in length of cycling / riding routes.</p> <p>% increase in use of improved routes.</p>

Objective B | Provide and protect a more continuous network that provides for the requirements of all users

Aims	Actions	Resource required to complete action	Key Organisations lead partner in bold	Performance Measure
B.11 Protect and enhance PRoW along the coast and estuaries.	<p>Work with appropriate authorities to improve coastal access and mitigate loss of PRoW through flooding and erosion or abandonment of erosion control management. This may be achieved through path orders, creation agreements or permissive paths.</p> <p>Integrate access issues into 'Shoreline Management Plan'</p> <p>Improve management of Suffolk Coastal Path and Stour and Orwell Path.</p> <p>Monitor any changes in legislation relating to coastal open access.</p> <p>Implement changes in legislation</p>	<p>✓✓✓</p> <p>✓✓</p> <p>✓</p> <p>✓✓✓</p>	<p>SCC, SCDC, Districts, Parishes, countryside management projects, Environment Agency, Natural England and land managers</p>	<p>No loss of access.</p> <p>Length of paths improved.</p>
B.12 Increase opportunities to use public transport to access the countryside	<p>Develop innovative pilot projects to improve access to the PRoW network via public transport.</p>	<p>✓✓✓</p>	<p>SCC, countryside management projects, ACRE, Parishes, Suffolk Tourism Partnership, East of England Tourism Board</p>	<p>Number of projects developed.</p>
B.13 Improve the provision of areas for horse box parking.	<p>Improve safe parking for horse boxes on / near bridleways.</p>	<p>✓✓✓</p>	<p>Horse riding groups, SCC, Forestry Commission</p>	<p>Number of new / improved parking areas.</p>

Photo courtesy of the Upper Waveney Valley project



Photo courtesy of the Brecks Partnership



Objective C | Develop a safer network

The actions in this section will improve safety for walking, cycling and riding.

Issues arising from the Assessment

The Assessment showed that:

On the A14, A12, A140 there are at least 51 PRow crossings at road level, most of which have safety implications or are very difficult to use. There are also 37 paths that stop at these roads, forcing users either onto busy roads or to turn back. User groups have campaigned for many years for improvements to these crossings. Local Authorities and parish councils have highlighted over 70 further locations where improvements can be made to road safety, safe routes to schools and work.

Current projects

A14

Suffolk County Council is currently in negotiations with the Highways Agency to safeguard, protect and improve rights of way as part the proposed development of Haughley Bends on the A14.

Kersey “Safe Route to School”

A safe off-road link, avoiding a dangerous bend on a narrow road, was recently created to join the village to the school using rights of way.

New bridge at Felixstowe

A new bridge has been built at Felixstowe dock spur road to carry cyclists and pedestrians across the A14 for commuting and recreation.

Trimley rail crossings

The improvement of the Felixstowe to Ipswich railway line requires changes to the public crossing points along the length of the line. Negotiations are on going to produce safer crossings and improvements in the local rights of way as part of this development.



Objective C | Develop a safer network

Aims	Actions	Resource required to complete action	Key Organisations lead partner in bold	Performance Measure
C.1 Provide safe links between PRow along roads.	<p>Identify well used routes along busy roads and develop solutions for improved links between PRow for walking, cycling and riding. This can be achieved by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • creation orders • permissive routes • improvement of road verges 	✓✓✓	SCC , Districts, Parishes, user groups, Highways Agency, countryside management projects	Number of improvements
C.2 Improve safety of road and rail crossings.	<p>Work with the Highways Agency on the Newmarket – Felixstowe A14 Strategy to improve PRow crossings.</p> <p>Identify and prioritise poor road and rail crossings where well used paths cross and improve where appropriate.</p>	<p>✓✓✓</p> <p>✓✓✓</p>	SCC, Highways Agency , Districts, Parishes, user groups	Number of PRow improvements of road crossings.
C.3 Support the development of safe routes to schools using PRow to increase cycling and walking for students and their parents.	<p>Highlight opportunities for using school travel plans to promote walking and cycling using PRow. Review schools with travel plans and carry out bi-annual reviews of schools signed up to developing travel plans.</p>	✓✓	SCC , Districts, Parishes, schools , community groups	% increase in use of improved routes.

Aims	Actions	Resource required to complete action	Key Organisations lead partner in bold	Performance Measure
C.4 Ensure coastal and estuarine routes are safe to use.	Identify routes subject to coastal erosion and flooding. Provide solutions such as re-alignment / boardwalks etc.	✓✓✓	SCC, Broads Authority, EA, countryside management projects , Parishes, land managers and Districts	Number of improvements.
C.5 Ensure the safety of all bridges on PRoW	Continue current level of bridge replacement and maintenance. Develop a programme for replacing or improving all unsafe and missing bridges through TAMP.	✓ ✓✓✓	SCC, land managers , user groups , Parishes , Districts	Number of bridges refurbished or replaced.
C.6 Reduce conflict between cyclists, walkers and riders on multi – use routes.	Identify specific problem areas and develop improvements such as surfacing and segregation. Identify ways to ensure better understanding between users.	✓✓✓ ✓✓✓	SCC, user groups , Districts, Parishes, countryside management projects and land managers	Number of improvements.
C.7 Reduce the illegal use of PRoW (e.g. illegal motorbikes, vehicles, and inappropriate use of byways.)	Ensure that the design of routes in new developments limits opportunities for anti social behaviour. Management and enforcement of improper use of PRoW Use Traffic Regulation Orders and other legal options where necessary to limit damaging vehicular use.	✓ ✓ ✓✓	SCC, Districts, Parishes, police , Broads Authority, user groups, EA, land managers	Number of conflicts resolved.
C.8 Reduce the impact of fly tipping on PRoW.	Ensure a clear means of reporting fly tipping to District Councils.	✓	Districts , land managers, SCC	Reduction in impact of fly tipping on PRoW.

Objective D | Increase community involvement in improving and managing the network

This objective will increase public involvement in the protection and maintenance of the network.

Issues arising from the Assessment

The Assessment showed that:

- 56% of all parishes would be interested in some level of rights of way management such as reporting problems to Suffolk County Council.
- 21% of all parishes (~100) in Suffolk would like to be involved in a greater level of network management such as promotion, mowing and maintenance.

Funding for the current Parish Path Partnership scheme was withdrawn by the Countryside Agency in 2002.

Current projects

Parish Community Scheme

There are 59 parishes currently participating in Parish Path Partnership Scheme. A small number of these have independent volunteer groups which enable parishes to undertake parish path surveys and minor works. The majority monitor and report on network condition. Work is now being undertaken to establish a new parish community scheme for the local management and promotion of rights of way and access land in the county.

Land manager / user group

A group consisting of officers from Country Landowners and Business Association, National Farmers Union, Suffolk Agricultural Association, Suffolk Association of Local Councils, The Ramblers Association, British Horse Society and Suffolk County Council has been formed to consider improved promotion, maintenance of the network and enforcement procedures.

Volunteers

Five countryside management projects in Suffolk have regular volunteer groups which are involved in improving access to the countryside.



Objective D | Increase community involvement in improving and managing the network

Aims	Actions	Resource required to complete action	Key Organisations lead partner in bold	Performance Measure
D.1 Greater parish involvement in management of access	<p>Develop a new parish community scheme to encourage more parishes to be involved in managing and promoting PRow.</p> <p>Ensure parishes consider PRow development in parish plans.</p>	<p>✓✓✓</p> <p>✓</p>	<p>SCC, Districts, Parishes, countryside management projects, SALC</p>	<p>Number of parishes involved in community scheme.</p>
D.2 To increase the involvement and understanding of land managers in the management of PRow.	<p>Implement a new mowing regime which, where possible involves land managers and parishes (see A5).</p> <p>Raise awareness with land managers and their contractors of PRow management responsibilities and cross compliance. Develop clear enforcement policy. (see A7)</p> <p>Work with Natural England and DEFRA to ensure that those drawing up Farm Plans (e.g. Farm Environment Plans) understand and are encouraged to promote access. (see A7)</p>	<p>✓✓</p> <p>✓</p> <p>✓</p>	<p>SCC, Broads Authority, land managers, countryside management projects. FWAG, DEFRA, NFU, CLA, Suffolk Agricultural Association, Suffolk Local Access Forum and Natural England</p>	<p>Launch awareness campaign by November 2006.</p> <p>Input into training with Natural England.</p>
D.3 Greater user group involvement in management of access.	<p>Work with user groups in identifying ways in which they can contribute to the future development of access</p>	<p>✓✓</p>	<p>User groups, SCC, countryside management projects, Suffolk Local Access Forum</p>	

Aims	Actions	Resource required to complete action	Key Organisations lead partner in bold	Performance Measure
D.4 Greater volunteer involvement in management of access.	<p>Work with a range of partners to increase the number of volunteers engaged in the management of PRow, guiding walks, events, and open access.</p> <p>Work with “Stepping Out in Suffolk” healthy walks steering group to increase the number of volunteer walk leaders and a healthy walks coordinators.</p>	<p>✓✓✓</p> <p>✓✓✓</p>	Countryside management projects, SCC, Broads Authority, Health Walks steering group, Districts, Parishes, user groups, community groups, schools, probation and prison training services	Number of volunteer days per year.

Objective E | Produce an up to date and publicly available digitised Definitive Map for the whole of Suffolk

These actions will provide Suffolk with an up to date Definitive Map that will provide a network giving the greatest public benefit.

Issues arising from the Assessment

Consolidation and digitisation of the Definitive Map:

The Definitive Map shows all known PRoW in Suffolk. Suffolk's Definitive Map should be periodically updated to show changes made to the PRoW network through 'legal events'. This updating process is known as 'consolidation'. In Suffolk the last consolidation of the Definitive Map and Statement took place in 1993 and there are two Rural Districts that have not been consolidated since 1961. User groups, land managers and planning authorities see the production of an up to date Definitive Map as important for the management, development and protection of the network. It is estimated that consolidation of the map for the whole of Suffolk will take 3 years or more at current rates.

The current paper maps are subject to damage and are incompatible with modern digital mapping. Digital mapping allows for easier access by the public, planners and commercial organisations. It also allows for the speedy transfer of information to other users and can be combined with other computer applications to provide data bases for maintenance and management of the network. 64% of parishes believe that it is important for them to have an up to date electronically available digital map. Suffolk County Council is in the process of digitising the Definitive Map and is running this process alongside the consolidation of the map.

Claims

In Suffolk there are a large number of PRoW which may exist but are not shown on the Definitive Map and Statement. There are currently approximately 80 formal and 500 informal outstanding claims to add rights of way to the map. Suffolk County Council has a duty to investigate any evidence that the Definitive Map and Statement is in error and when necessary to make an Order to amend the PRoW on the Definitive Map. The Definitive Map Review Project was set up in 2001 to deal with a large backlog of around 900 claims. Whilst the number of claims has been reduced, this has been at a high cost and some of the routes created are of limited value to the network. The Assessment showed that there is widespread concern over whether the process is of significant public benefit. There is a need to prioritise changes to the network in favour of those that give the greatest public benefit.

Anomalies

There are 756 cases where routes drawn on the Definitive Map are believed to be incorrect. Reasons include poor drafting, poor order making procedures and discrepancies between the map and statement.

Public path orders

These Orders relate to issues such as long standing obstructions, dead end routes and residential obstructions. In January 2005 there were approximately 220 outstanding cases where an order may be needed.

Definitive Map for Ipswich

Ipswich currently does not have a Definitive Map and Statement. This is widely acknowledged to be a serious impediment to protecting, maintaining and developing sustainable access in and around the town.

Current projects

Digitisation and consolidation

The Definitive Map team have commenced digital consolidation of the former rural district of Sampford. This will be the first completed section of the county and will be the basis for future work.

Ipswich Definitive Map

Suffolk County Council is currently working with Ipswich Borough Council to survey the use, condition and management of routes that are considered potential rights of way. The County Council will adopt the most cost effective means to acknowledge these unrecorded ways as public, which is likely to mean adding them to the Definitive Map by Definitive Map Modification Orders.



Objective E | Produce an up to date and publicly available digitised Definitive Map for the whole of Suffolk

Aims	Actions	Resource required to complete action	Key Organisations lead partner in bold	Performance Measure
E.1 Produce a consolidated definitive digital map	Consolidate a pilot area onto a digital base by mid 2006. Use this process to develop a programme of digital consolidation for the rest of the county.	✓✓	SCC	Number of parishes consolidated digitally per year.
E.2 Produce a digital Definitive Map for Ipswich	Survey and map possible Rights of Way Research legal status of these routes Make legal orders Consolidate and publish a Definitive Map and Statement	✓✓✓	SCC, Ipswich Borough	Completed survey by Spring 2006. Completed legal status research by 2008/09. Number of orders made.
E.3 Develop a public path and claims process that provides routes of public benefit.	Review and adopt procedures for prioritising claims and Public Path Orders to provide a consistent and integrated approach to anomalies and path order making across the county. Work with land managers and users to promote public path orders which provide routes of public benefit.	✓✓ ✓✓	SCC, land managers, user groups, Parishes, Districts	Adoption of a clear prioritised order making work programme by mid 2006. Number of public routes created with public benefit per year.



Photo courtesy of Cameo Photography

Objective F | Improve promotion, understanding and use of the network

These actions will address the need for better co-ordinated, branded and targeted promotion of the network, increasing public use and economic benefits to rural areas.

Issues arising from the Assessment

Promotion of routes

Residents cited lack of information about where to go as the third most important problem experienced when using PRoW. 36% of visitors said that more widely available information about routes would improve their enjoyment of the countryside. Parishes and users alike want information to be more accessible and 'visible' to both current users and potential users. 23% of parishes wanted improved promotion and communication through a single countywide web site.

There are currently no campaigns, which aim to engage the public (especially the young through schools or clubs), in active use and understanding of the countryside. User groups and land managers saw the improved promotion of the network as key to improving the public's knowledge of PRoW and the countryside. Generic promotion of the network providing information about health, cycling and walking is seen as a key factor in boosting the confidence and knowledge of non-users. Promotion of PRoW will also increase the economic benefits to the rural economy.

A lack of knowledge about the location of easily accessible routes is seen as a problem. 25% of parishes saw the promotion of existing 'easy access' paths as important for helping people with mobility difficulties to access the countryside. Currently only one area, the Brecks, has an up to date publication on easily accessible routes.

Consultation with diversity groups during 2004 revealed that ethnic groups participate less in countryside activities than other groups within society. Only 57% visited the countryside in the last year of which 16% visit the countryside on a weekly or greater basis.

Information on certain types of access, such as DEFRA funded Countryside Access Schemes, is difficult to find and under promoted.

There are huge opportunities in the county for the promotion of Suffolk as a place to enjoy quiet recreation, especially cycling, riding and walking. Distinct branding and marketing needs to be developed.

Ipswich currently does not have a Definitive Map. This is widely acknowledged to be a serious impediment to protecting, maintaining and developing sustainable access in and around the town.

Current projects

The Brecks Tourism Partnership

This project brings together businesses and communities committed to developing and promoting sustainable tourism in the area.

Members of the Partnership include award winning accommodation providers such as bed and breakfasts, hotels, camping and caravan sites and self catering cottages, a range of attractions including nature reserves and country parks, historic houses, bike hire and walking and cycling groups. The needs of disabled communities and visitors are also represented.

In 2002 a three year project was developed by the Brecks Tourism Partnership which received £0.5M of European funding from the European Regional Development Fund. This was match funded by EEDA/Keystone Development Trust Single Regeneration Budget, Suffolk and Norfolk County Councils, Breckland Council and the Brecks Countryside Project. The key aims of the project were to promote and market the area as a leading sustainable visitor destination, raise an awareness of the local distinctiveness of the area and encourage non-car exploration

Health walks – ‘Stepping out in Suffolk’

A pilot health walks project has been running in Suffolk since early 2004. This is a local programme of short walks of between one to three miles led by trained local volunteer walk leaders. Planning, promotion and delivery of the project has been led by members of a multi agency steering group. During the first year 93 walks were organised across Suffolk and 1000 people took part. The aim is to now find funding to employ a dedicated project officer to take forward health walks, and other countryside health and activity projects.

Discover Suffolk

Discover Suffolk is a project being developed by Suffolk County Council to link heritage, tourism and recreation in the Rural Mid and East Suffolk. It will co-ordinate and add value to existing projects, promoting them as a single package. Discover Suffolk will provide a web site, countywide branding and long term management of the projects undertaken. It will produce recreation, transport and tourism opportunities for participating communities, providing new inputs into the local economy.



Objective F | Improve promotion, understanding and use of the network

Aims	Actions	Resource required to complete action	Key Organisations lead partner in bold	Performance Measure
F.1 Better co-ordinated and higher quality promotion of countryside access	<p>Promote countryside access and long distance recreational routes in Suffolk</p> <p>Develop a 'one stop' access website initially through the 'Discover Suffolk' project.</p> <p>Role out 'Discover Suffolk' across the county.</p>	<p>✓✓</p> <p>✓✓✓</p> <p>✓✓✓</p>	<p>SCC, Broads Authority, Go-East, Suffolk Development Agency, countryside management projects, Local Strategic Partnerships, Parishes, Suffolk Tourism Partnership, local businesses. East of England Tourist Board, user groups, land managers, Forestry Commission</p>	<p>Discover Suffolk commenced in Mid Suffolk by March 2006.</p> <p>County wide website developed by 2008.</p>
F.2 Brand Suffolk as a prime destination for walking, cycling and riding.	<p>Investigate marketing opportunities and develop campaign with Suffolk Tourism Partnership and others, particularly T.V. the radio and the internet.</p>	<p>✓✓✓</p>	<p>Suffolk Tourism Partnership, SCC, Broads Authority, East of England Tourist Board, countryside management projects, private sector</p>	<p>Establish branding.</p> <p>Develop campaign.</p>

Aims	Actions	Resource required to complete action	Key Organisations lead partner in bold	Performance Measure
F.3 Increase the number and promotion of easy access routes, including access for wheelchair users. (see B7)	<p>Identify routes already suitable for those with limited mobility. Work with partners to ensure effective promotion.</p> <p>Develop and promote a series of easy access routes across the county.</p>	<p>✓✓</p> <p>✓✓✓</p>	<p>SCC, disability groups, user groups, land managers, Parishes, Districts, countryside management projects, NGOs, Broads Authority. Health walks steering group</p>	<p>Number of routes promoted per year.</p> <p>Number of routes created.</p>
F.4 Better public understanding of their responsibilities when using ProW and Open Access land	Promote the countryside code and responsible use of ProW and Access Land including wildlife trails.	✓✓✓	SCC, Broads Authority, schools, community groups, Countryside Agency, Parishes, land managers, Districts, countryside management projects	Number of events held.
F.5 Identify areas of greatest potential to improve health	<p>Work with health sector to increase opportunities for people to participate in regular exercise.</p> <p>Support “Stepping Out in Suffolk” Health Walks Steering Group in bid for full time healthy walks co-ordinator for Suffolk and then the continuing project</p>	<p>✓✓✓</p> <p>✓✓✓</p>	SCC, Broads Authority, PCTs, Health Walks steering group, NGO’s, Districts, Parishes volunteers, Forestry Commission	<p>Health walks created.</p> <p>Healthy walks co-ordinator employed.</p>
F.6 Publish Definitive Map to the web.	Place Definitive Map on to SCC web site.	✓✓✓	SCC	Publication of Definitive Maps to web.

Annex One | Consultation Process for Assessment

Research was carried out with a range of groups throughout the county. Existing information and surveys gathered from other authorities and management projects to confirm, complement or oppose these views.

The following surveys were carried out and focus groups held specifically for the production of the Assessment:

Residents survey

County wide postal survey through “Suffolk Speaks” of 2200 residents across the county that achieved 700 responses, a 33% response rate.

Equestrian Survey

Postal survey to 75 equestrian businesses across the county was distributed to ascertain their use of the network.

Parish Survey

A detailed postal survey to 485 parishes received 244 responses. This was produced to quantify the value, use and demand for PRoW within their communities.

Visitor Survey

Carried out jointly with Suffolk Coast and Heaths AONB during August 2004, 661 visitors were interviewed to discover their use of the network. This survey also provided important economic information.

Land Manager Survey

Postal (100) and e-mail (500) surveys to land managers/owners produced 111 responses. These helped Suffolk County Council review the use, condition, economics and land management of the network.

Diversity Group Survey

One to one surveys and group discussions were carried out across Suffolk to ascertain the views of ethnic groups.

Disability Groups

A range of disability groups was contacted through post and e-mail. The response was very low, therefore one to one discussions were carried out with individuals.

Focus Groups

Focus Groups were held across the county with land managers. User group's, Local Authorities and countryside management projects including the AONB's.

Following the publication of the Assessment further consultation was undertaken between April and October 2005. This involved the distribution of the Assessment to user groups, local authorities, parishes, non- –government and government organisations across Suffolk and neighbouring counties. 5,000 leaflets where also distributed through Tourism Information centres, District Council Offices and at events including the Suffolk Show. There were also a series of meetings with District Councils, User Groups, Countryside management projects and the Broads Authority to look in detail at the findings of the Assessment. All these views were taken into account when producing the Statement of Action.

Suffolk Local Access Forum and the Broads Local Access Forum.

The ROWIP has been taken to the Suffolk Local Access Forum on seven occasions in the last two years for advice and comment. The Broads Authority, Cambridgeshire and Norfolk Local Access Forums have also been consulted at the Assessment Report and draft stages.



Annex Two | Consultees

Local Authorities

Cambridgeshire County Council
Essex County Council
Norfolk County Council
Babergh District Council
Forest Heath District Council
Ipswich Borough Council
Mid Suffolk District Council
St Edmundsbury District Council
Suffolk Coastal District Council
Waveney District Council
Broads Authority

Tourism

East of England Tourist Board
Suffolk Tourism Partnership

Other organisations

Suffolk ACRE
Age Concern
Anglian Water
Suffolk Coast & Heaths Project
Dedham Vale ANOB & Stour Valley Project
Bangladesh Support Centre
Brecks Countryside Management Project
British Association for Shooting & Conservation

The British Driving Society
British Horse Society
British Trust for Ornithology
British Trust for Conservation Volunteers
Broads Local Access Forum
Business Link
Cambridgeshire Local Access Forum
Central Suffolk PCT
Countryside Landowners Association
Defence Estates
DEFRA
EEDA
Essex Local Access Forum
English Heritage
Environment Agency
Essex & Suffolk Water
Forestry Commission
Friends of the Earth
Go – East
Green Light Trust
Greenways Project
Gipping Valley Project
Inland Waterways Association
Ipswich PCT
MENCAP
National Farmers Union
National Trust
Natural England
Norfolk Local Access Forum

Ramblers Association
Rethink Disability
Riding for the Disabled
Royal Society for the Protection of Birds
Sport England
Suffolk Agricultural Association
Suffolk Association of Local Councils
Suffolk Association of Voluntary Organisation
Suffolk Chamber of Commerce
Suffolk Coastal PCT
Suffolk Development Agency
Suffolk FWAG
Suffolk West PCT
Suffolk Wildlife Trust
Woodland Trust
Waveney PCT
Upper Waveney Valley Project



Annex Three | Glossary

ACRE	Action with Communities in Rural England
CLA	Countryside Landowners Association
DEFRA	Department of Environment, Food and Rural Affairs
DFT	Department for Transport
EA	Environment Agency
EEDA	East of England Development Agency
EERA	East of England Regional Assembly
FWAG	Farming and Wildlife Advisory Group
Go – East	Government Offices East of England
NFU	National Farmers Union
NGO	Non Government Organisation
PCT	Primary Care Trust
ProW	Public Rights of Way
SCC	Suffolk County Council



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