

Public Rights of Way Improvement Plan





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Essex Rights Of Way Improvement Plan objectives

The objectives for the plan have been derived from two sources - the problems, issues and opportunities identified in the questionnaire and workshop evidence base for the plan, and a review of related policy and strategy documents and their objectives. These were discussed amongst the project Steering Group and public rights of way officers, to develop this agreed list of objectives:

Environment

- 1 To re-use and recycle, where feasible, and promote sustainable measures

Improved accessibility

- 2 To incorporate approved pathways into the public rights of way network
- 3 To better integrate rights of way with other access provision, initiatives and facilities
- 4 To reduce fragmentation in the public rights of way network
- 5 To improve accessibility on the public rights of way network

Safety

- 6 To assist in providing 'safer routes to schools'
- 7 To promote safety

Quality of life and good health

- 8 To promote improved health and quality of life through the use of the public rights of way network

Tourism and economy

- 9 To stimulate tourism and the local economy

Communities and partnership

- 10 To increase community involvement in the management of the public rights of way network

Theme E: Provide an accessible network that meets the requirements of all users

The interventions in this theme will aim to provide a continuous network that is accessible to all, increasing public use and economic benefits to rural areas.

Issues arising from the Assessment

The assessment highlighted the following issues:

- Lack of, or discontinuous, suitable waymarking for users with visual impairments
- **Poor gate design**, both for those with physical impairments and certain user groups such as equestrians
- Lack of cheap accommodation en route such as barns and campsites
- No alternative paths offered
- Dangerous road crossings
- **Steps instead of slopes and overly steep steps**
- Steep and high steps on stiles
- Blocked paths from crops and weeds, roadside verges not kept clear
- Low branches
- Uneven surfaces from ploughing and paths not re-instated

Existing schemes

The following interventions relating to providing a network accessible to all users are already being implemented or are already in place.

- Accessibility improvements
- Access groups
- Use of Natural England guidance contained in 'By All Reasonable Means'
- Harlow Greenways Scheme
- Headland Management Scheme providing £12 per 100m of well maintained headland
- Use of BT 'Countryside for All' standards
- Rolling 5 year inspection and maintenance programme
- ECC P3 scheme coordination of maintenance by voluntary groups
- The existing verge cutting programme which targets specific routes on the network for two cuts a year of one metre on each side of the road and verges on one side of the road cut right back alternate years.
- The use of the Highways Act 1980, s71 for provision of an accessible network such as the provision of margins within verges for horses and pedestrians where no footway currently exists



This booklet is issued by

Essex County Council Public Rights of Way Team

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Published July 2009.

DS09_1875

