



## JLAF04: Agenda item 8

### DRAFT Rights of Way Improvement Plan Framework

**Rights of Way Improvement Plan Framework DRAFT 23JUN04. NOT A JLAF DOCUMENT**  
**Bath & North East Somerset, Bristol City, North Somerset, and South Gloucestershire**  
(to be amended following LTP guidance publication)

#### Introduction

The Local Authorities of Bath & North East Somerset, Bristol City, North Somerset, and South Gloucestershire are working to produce Rights of Way Improvement Plans (ROWIPs) by November 2007. These plans will be reviewed by November 2017. The ROWIPs will therefore be strategic documents that identify improvements over the life of each ROWIP.

These ROWIPs will be documents that will enable future improvement to the local rights of way network through, for example, policy, management or physical improvements. Rather than identify specific projects and sites for enhancement, the ROWIPs are likely to identify (in a statement of action) the priorities and issues that such future projects should address. The ROWIPs will contain:

- An assessment of:
  - (a) the extent to which local rights of way meet the present and likely future needs of the public,
  - (b) the opportunities provided by local rights of way for exercise and other forms of open-air recreation and the enjoyment of the authority's area,
  - (c) the accessibility of local rights of way to blind or partially sighted persons and others with mobility problems, as well as other matters, and
- A statement of the action they propose to take for the management of local rights of way, and for securing an improved network of local rights of way.

(See sections 60-63 of the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000.)

"Rights of Way Improvement Plans are intended to be the prime means by which local highway authorities will identify changes to be made, in respect of the managements and improvements, to their local rights of way network in order to meet the Government's aim of better provision for walkers, cyclists, equestrians and people with mobility problems."

(Statutory Guidance to Local Highway Authorities in England, Defra, November 2002.)

Local rights of way are: all public footpaths, cycle tracks, public bridleways and restricted byways within the area. This includes all routes shown as public rights of way on definitive maps and statements (the legal record of public rights of way) as well as those routes that are public rights of way but are not shown on definitive maps.

(This is defined at section 60(5) of the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000.)

The ROWIPs produced by the authorities may differ as the needs of the public and the nature of the local rights of way network in each area will be different. However, the authorities have produced this ROWIP Framework, addressing common objectives and areas where there is an opportunity to work collaboratively. This ROWIP Framework is intended to facilitate and assist in the production of ROWIPs, rather than dictate the content of the ROWIPs themselves.

This ROWIP Framework forms part of the Joint Local Transport Plan (LTP) for the area as it is recognised that both this ROWIP Framework and the ROWIPs themselves will contribute to the aims of the LTP. As such, it is recognised that the improvement of the local rights of way network is an important means to deliver sustainable transport. The improvement of the local rights of way network also contributes to further national and local objectives, such as health improvement. In this respect, the delivery of this ROWIP Framework and the ROWIPs will support further objectives, such as those of the community strategies of the area and the national walking and cycling plan.

## **The Framework**

### **Overarching Vision:**

A network of public routes providing a variety of safe and attractive sustainable transport and recreation opportunities that meet the public's needs.

### **Headline Objective:**

To increase the use of the local rights of way network by:

- introducing new users to the local rights of way network;
- improving the accessibility and availability of the network;
- improving the safety and attractiveness of the network; and
- improving the effectiveness and efficiency of the network.

### **Principal Benefits:**

The authorities recognise that increased use of the local rights of way network provides multiple benefits for sustainable transport and recreational use, by:

- improving accessibility and enabling social inclusion;
- reducing traffic congestion and reducing the need to travel by car;
- reducing traffic pollution and improving air quality;
- improving road safety and reducing personal injury;
- enhancing quality of life, improving personal health and well-being;
- improving social cohesion and community links;
- providing for sustainable development; and
- supporting economic development, and sustaining local commerce.

### **Principal Constraints:**

There are a number of factors that inhibit increased use of the local rights of way network, including:

- personal inhibitions of users and potential users, such as limits to confidence (a "fear to explore"), unfamiliarity with access rights and responsibilities, a lack of knowledge of the network, and time and motivational barriers;
- limited public access to information regarding where to go and rights of access, journey planning, and links to other services and facilities;
- limited professional awareness and appreciation of the network and its value, and the legal obligations that apply through the status of the routes, that can lead to enforcement issues and encroachment of the network;
- limited management information on the use of the network and the condition of the network;
- reactive management of the network and the reactive application of resources;
- limited current resources and limited identification of potential resources;
- limited integration of the network with other resources, services and planning;
- the unresolved status of local rights of way not recorded on definitive maps and statements that are wholly unrecorded, or currently recorded elsewhere; and
- the deficient condition of some routes through insufficient maintenance and enforcement issues.

### **Potential ROWIP themes:**

These are themes that each ROWIP might develop further, and are considered areas that contribute towards the deliver of the Local Transport Plan:

- assessment of network and network management;
- user and potential user access to information;
- targeted physical improvements to and adjacent to existing network; and
- targeted provision of new access.

## Potential ROWIP Improvements:

These improvements have been identified as potential areas of work for each ROWIP, that would lead to increased use of the local rights of way network:

- improvements to the information available to users and potential users;
- improvements to management information, including targeted surveying of the extent and state of the network, of users and potential users and of access provision;
- improved establishment of the value of the network and the benefits of increased use of the network
- strategic multi-user local routes within and between towns and villages with green corridors and gateway sites connecting settlements to each other, to facilities and attractions and to the countryside; these, for example, could make use of disused railway lines;
- improved safe routes to schools and transport links to local services and facilities;
- development and promotion of new and existing strategic trails, for example following the coast, rivers, circumnavigating urban areas and linking existing national and regional routes;
- improvement of the accessibility of the network, and improvements to the accessibility both to and from public transport;
- improvements to support the objectives of the access strategies of other organisations where they support the needs and potential needs of the public;

## The ROWIP process:

The next stage in the production of ROWIPs for each authority is the ROWIP assessment. This will be led by this ROWIP Framework: the vision, headline objective, and principal benefits and constraints as identified above. Such assessments will reflect the needs of the public that relate to the local rights of way in their respective areas.

In carrying out those assessments, there may be an opportunity for collaborative working, where, for example the views of the residents of one authority are the users, or potential users of local rights of way in another authority. This will ensure the effective evaluation of assessment information and data against the balanced approach to both strategic aims and recognised local needs. A range of assessment objectives and methodologies will be required to produce the following ROWIPs action statements, which will reflect the priorities for improvements in each authority area.

## Summary or Conclusion, or, how improvements to the Local Rights of Way network can contribute to delivery of the LTP (to be prepared with LTP, following guidance publication)

Targets and document links as necessary for LTP.

### *Anticipated themes of Local Transport Plan*

- *Congestion*
- *Environmental Impacts including air quality*
- *Accessibility* (– thought to be most effective link)
- *Road Safety*

*The headline objective of this ROWIPF, to increase use of the Local Rights of Way network, will contribute to the aims of the Joint LTP, for example, increased use of the Local Rights of Way network can improve access to facilities, including public transport. Local Rights of Way also can provide a safer alternative to, or decrease the need to use, forms of transport that contribute to congestion and a reduction in air quality.*