

The following notes are provided by Natural England to supplement a presentation at the IPROW Conference in Oxford on 24th September, 2007. It is a work in progress as we collate information to support ROWIP implementation and share it. The notes will be added to as further data is gathered.

SECURING RESOURCES FOR ROWIP IMPLEMENTATION

“Whatever you do now in rights of way, its about looking wider than the line on the ground. You must develop linkage between other strategies and policies to effectively develop the funding” Peter Tilley, Suffolk County Council.

Introduction

This advice is our start in collating information about funding and other resources that deliver ROWIP implementation. We aim to keep this updated via the GPG and continue to seek case studies to illustrate successful implementation schemes. We will also insert a reference to this into the LAF information pack. This paper is targeted at LAFs as well as LHAs, as some are well placed to help you by making the connection between funding sources and the community.

The advice is split into three parts:

1. Some general advice for securing resources, achieving success and explaining about the changing emphasis in government policy to putting people first and enabling them to become the drivers in securing schemes that meet local needs.
2. Current available funding programmes, illustrated with examples that will be appropriate to look at for ROWIP implementation schemes.
3. Other resources that help deliver ROWIP implementation

1. The process of securing resources

Seeking and securing funds and other resources for ROWIP implementation is only part of a staged approach to securing sustainable improvements to ROW networks. The ROWIP development process itself will have been the first stage in identifying projects based on user needs. Any successful funding bid will rely on a number of elements being in place that convince the funder that you have identified the project based on real needs, that communities, user groups, businesses and other stakeholders affected by the project are supportive and that you can deliver the project to budget, meeting any requirements the funder might put upon you, e.g. meeting environmental standards, sustainable long term management and maintenance, community ownership and participation.

Key stages to consider:

- Consider all funding models and examples of successful schemes
- Learn how to work effectively with communities and politicians to make a case for ROW

- Consider how ROW can be prioritised within other strategic documents other than the ROWIP and also within Local Area Agreements (LAAs)

General hints and tips

(taken from proceedings of the CRN conference “The Changing Funding Environment for Outdoor Recreation” May 2007)

- Funding is in fixed or reducing supply
- Demand has never been higher
- The “bar is being raised”
- Professionalism in bid writing is high
- Tailor projects to fit funders’ objectives/criteria – necessary to satisfy their needs too
- Funders will check there is majority support for the project
- Bids with supporting evidence tend to be better received
- More robust evidence will be required
- Build up contacts and a good working relationship with funder.
- Partnership working – this is expected and shows cooperation and using the strengths of a number of partners
- Liaise with Regional Development Agencies, do not underestimate personal contacts in RDAs and assess projects that may fit with RDA objectives.
- RDAs have different priorities so it is worth finding out what is the regional agenda. The North East and North West RDAs have larger funding pots for outdoor recreation to contribute to projects
- Strongly recommend economic evaluation using Government standards- the HM Treasury Green Book which explains how to justify actions (investments) rationally and the DCMS White Book which focuses on demonstrating “additionality” and is consistent with the Green Book.
- BIG Lottery, Defra, DH, DCLG are very keen on economic appraisal and it’s important to set aside an appropriate amount for the economic evaluation of a scheme with output apt to the intended audience.

In addition we would add:-

- Be on track with latest government agenda on local decision making and empowerment, e.g. Gordon Brown's vision for a 'reinvention of the way we govern', promoting 'the active citizen, the empowered community, open enabling government'. (Local Government White Paper on “Strong and Prosperous Communities”).
- The long term sustainability of a project that ensures ongoing management and maintenance should be considered and built into any funding application.

2. Potential ROWIP Funding Sources

The following list of potential sources is by no means exhaustive but gives an indication of where funding might be sought.

EU PROGRAMMES

European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development (EAFRD), European Regional Development Fund (ERDF) and LIFE+ are all applicable to the whole of the UK and represent a marked change in policy to Objective 1 and 2 funding during the past programme 2000-2006.

We will welcome examples of how you engage with RDAs in future and examples of successful funding for ROW under these programmes.

EAFRD –There are current opportunities for influencing Regional Development Agencies on how to operate this funding as it is at an early stage and may be appropriate for ROW projects

- Aim is diversification of rural economies
- In practice will focus on environmental management activities
- Approx £3.9bn
- England Rural Development Programme structured around 3 themes:
 - Enhancing the environment and countryside, linking to environmental stewardship commitments
 - Making farming and forestry more competitive and sustainable
 - Enhancing opportunity in rural areas
- Greater engagement of RDAs
- Regional Implementation Plans (RIPs) currently being drafted for each region and strong opportunities for appropriate outdoor recreation. Eligibility for ROW will depend on what is in each regional plan.

ERDF

- Less money, spread more thinly
- Tendency not to fund under ERDF if funding possible under EAFRD
- At least two –thirds of any award must be spent on a limited range of employment actions:
 - promoting innovation and knowledge transfer
 - stimulating enterprise and supporting successful businesses
 - ensuring sustainable development, production and consumption
 - building sustainable communities

EXAMPLE

Suffolk County Council was awarded £80,200 from ERDF with additional funding from other sources for the creation of the “Discover Suffolk” website which helped deliver a number of targets in their Rights of Way Improvement Plan. This provides opportunities for rural enterprises to promote themselves, promotes circular and long distance walks as well as improvements to the rights of way network and transport links. For more information: www.discoversuffolk.org.uk

LIFE+

- Popular well established EU programme
- 3 key strands:
 - Nature and biodiversity

- Implementation and governance
- Information and communication
- $\frac{3}{4}$ of LIFE+ under control of national authorities although projects will require EU approval
- Approx E70m for 1st 4 yrs
- UK co-ordinating body to be appointed
- 1st calls – late 2007

EXAMPLE

A previous successful project was the Parrett Trail in S. Somerset, a 42 mile footpath route from the source of the R. Parrett to its mouth. The weblink can be found at <http://ec.europa.eu/environment/life..>

Hints and tips- Talk to colleagues who have had some success. EU looks at track record of organisations and uses a scoring system for assessment. If an application is not successful there will be no funding for any feasibility studies done up to point of application but if a scheme is successful, the EU will cover the costs of prior meetings and studies.

UK PROGRAMMES

THIS DOESN'T COVER EVERYTHING – WE KNOW THERE ARE GAPS & ITS IN NO PARTICULAR ORDER

Department for Communities and Local Government (DCLG)

PARTICIPATORY BUDGETING PILOTS – A DCLG initiative that might provide opportunities for ROWIP funding

Government's devolution agenda is driving local decision making by putting funding in the hands of those who will benefit from it. On July 5th, Hazel Blears, Secretary for Communities and Local Government announced funding for ten pilot projects which have been developed in Birmingham, Merseyside, Lewisham, Bradford, Salford, Sunderland, Newcastle, Southampton, Nottinghamshire (Manton) and St Helens. These will contribute to radical new plans to give local people a chance to examine and decide on how public budgets of up to more than £20 million are spent.

This can enable local people to form an informed view, trigger action and direct resources at:

- Funding extra Community Safety Wardens to patrol the streets and tackle anti-social behaviour;
- Providing new play areas, greening public spaces, and **improving the local environment;**
- **Calming traffic to improve road safety;** and
- Funding extra police or CCTV.

She also announced £400,000 funding for projects in 20 areas where local authorities are working with communities to give them a chance to take ownership of assets in line with the recommendations of the Quirk Review May 2007
www.communities.gov.uk/pub/517/

USING “CULTURE” AS A DRIVER FOR ACCESSING FUNDS

The report “Regeneration Through Culture, Sport and Tourism” commissioned for ODPM 2006 states that local authorities “will need to demonstrate that they have developed an integrated and strategic approach to economic and social regeneration that is based on a sound understanding of the needs and aspirations of local communities.” Weblink:www.communities.gov.uk/pub/555/

Councils are encouraged to adopt the more inclusive term culture, rather than leisure in the strategic planning for regeneration. Culture includes: arts, media, sports, libraries, museums, parks, play, countryside, built heritage, tourism and the creative industries. Funding comes from a variety of sources – lottery, millennium, EU programme Single Regeneration Budget and DCMS. There are many opportunities for councils to create innovative funding packages to lever resources via culture.

RAISING THE PROFILE OF PROW/ACCESS WITHIN YOUR LOCAL STRATEGIC PARTNERSHIPS (LSPs)

Local Strategic Partnerships are non-statutory, multi-agency partnerships, which match local authority boundaries. LSPs bring together at a local level the different parts of the public, private, community and voluntary sectors; allowing different initiatives and services to support one another so they can work together effectively. Local Area Agreements (LAAs) are an important initiative for LSPs which are instrumental in their development.

If you are not already engaged with your LSP then you need to work out a strategy that enables you to become engaged. This will involve understanding the linkages they have to your work area e.g. health, education, culture etc.

NEIGHBOURHOOD RENEWAL FUND

This is a non ring fenced grant available to England's most deprived local authorities to enable them with their Local Strategic Partnership to improve services.

- An allocation of £1.05 billion is available 2006/2008
- 86 local authorities are eligible for based on the more detailed and precise Indices of Deprivation 2004.
- From 2007/2008 NRF will operate in the context of Local Area Agreements.
- LAAs must include mandatory outcomes with a neighbourhood renewal focus

Further details from <http://www.neighbourhood.gov.uk>

LOCAL AREA AGREEMENTS

LAAs set out the priorities for a local area agreed between central government and a local area (the local authority and Local Strategic Partnership (LSP) and other key partners at the local level). LAAs simplify some central funding, help join up public services more effectively and allow greater flexibility for local solutions to local circumstances. LAAs give an opportunity to deliver national outcomes in a way that reflects local priorities, particularly those identified in Community Strategies. Through these means LAAs are helping to devolve decision-making, move away from a “Whitehall knows best” philosophy and reduce bureaucracy.

The LAA will be the only context within which central government will agree targets with local government. Local Area Agreements are acting as catalysts for change, particularly in strengthening and improving partnership working. This will work best where authorities already have strong corporate support for transport and offers them the potential to deliver cross-service solutions. The role of formal assessment and reward funding associated with LTPs is likely to diminish under the move to LAAs.

2008 sees the launch of the LAA regime under which local authorities will monitor performance against 200 indicators and set targets for 35 of them. We are expecting an indicator that reflects the condition of the local environment and people’s satisfaction with it. This will be measured through a Citizen’s Perspective Survey providing both a baseline of environmental indicators and ongoing monitoring. Improvements to rights of way/access to the countryside could be one of these improvement targets/indicators and below are examples taken from 2nd round LAAs including reward targets

EXAMPLES

SW Region: (S Gloucestershire)

Indicator: Improve access to and increase the sustainable use of the local environment and open space for informal recreation. Learning and enjoyment for all”

W. Midlands (Herefordshire)

Indicator: Percentage of people who use parks, open spaces, play areas and other recreational facilities including public rights of way, country parks and commons and wider countryside at least once a month. (Outcome: enhance well being and community cohesion through engagement in cultural activities)

NE Region (Darlington)

Indicator: Area of publicly accessible quality countryside within easy reach of people’s homes (Outcomes: to have cleaner, safer and greener public places)

NW Region (Blackpool)

Indicator: number of people from reassurance areas involved in organised walks with green and coastal areas (Outcomes: to have cleaner, greener and safer public spaces)

Lincolnshire CC is at the early stages of implementing their ROWIP adopted in April 2007. One scheme has gained 25K from the Local Strategic Partnership to develop a “cultural tourism “trail linking Lincoln and Sleaford working with North Kesteven District Council. This includes funding for leaflet /website link and public art initiatives along the route.

S106 AGREEMENTS

Section 106 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 enables a planning authority and an applicant for planning permission to reach an agreement about various conditions as part of a development proposal. S 106 agreements provide an opportunity to improve access on or adjacent to development sites..

A great advantage of S106 funding is that it is considered as “clean” money able to be used for matched funding with government monies and together these can be match funded with European funds.

ROWIP schemes that are outside the direct effect of any development cannot be funded by S106 however. Further advice on the Planning Obligations Practice Guide is available via the Department for Communities and Local Government website at: <http://www.communities.gov.uk/publications/planningandbuilding/planningobligationspractice>

EXAMPLE

Swindon BC example of developer contributions for off-site environmental gain- Great Western Community Forest. Set out in their Strategic Development Plan. Gt Western Community Forest administers money to deliver on biodiversity, access, landscape etc anywhere within the borough. In addition to on-site contributions. May be worth exploring with planning through the Local Development Framework process.

Department for Transport (DfT)

LOCAL TRANSPORT PLANS

You will already have worked with your LTP colleagues to influence content so that improvements to the rights of way network have a good chance of funding through the LTP. All Local Transport Plans contain four core objectives: to improve accessibility, road safety, congestion and quality of life and there are many opportunities for partnership working to improve access through this means.

EXAMPLES are numerous:

Durham CC – produced a flyer for all parish councils asking for ideas for path improvements that could be funded through the LTP process. They achieved success by emphasising the importance of rights of way as a mechanism for travel, not just for recreation and the ROWIP reaches out to other funders, partners for joint projects – tourism, sport, health, travel.

Cheshire CC has £275K over 5 years from the capital programme for PROW improvements and a Macclesfield area programme for quiet lanes/PROW improvements; Leicestershire has £560K over 5 years for asset management; Nottingham has £250K over 2 years for ROWIP implementation.

The Countryside Access team at Suffolk reviewed the criteria under each objective and identified potential links between their work on ROWIPs and the LTP. The objective that provided the best fit was “accessibility”.

The team worked closely with LTP colleagues to ensure thorough involvement in the LTP development, which included reviewing schemes that related to access to:

- schools,
- recreation,
- links between communities
- urban fringe.

The team took on responsibility for management of cycling on right of way which proved a positive trade-off with LTP colleagues. There was also a need to input into the LTP bidding process and a key success within that was the creation of “Local Indicator (LI) targets. The target was for “Usage of high priority rights of way routes in Suffolk- 10% increase in use on improved routes”. This ensured funding so the target could be successfully delivered.

- Year 1 the countryside access team received £200,000 for 14 schemes, seeing a significant increase in the use of the rights of way network.
- Current year 2, 22 schemes are being developed with a budget of £460,000
- Year 3 budget rising to £500,000.

HM Revenue and Customs

LANDFILL TAX CREDIT SCHEME

Through the landfill tax credit scheme, landfill operators can contribute 20% of their landfill tax liability to environmental bodies in return for a tax credit. The landfill tax credits can then be spent on a range of environmental and community projects amongst which is a category for “provision and maintenance of public amenities and parks”. Qualifying contributions under the Landfill Tax Credit Scheme may be held on charitable trusts, which means that an organisation set up to receive payments under the scheme may be charitable for approved objects.

www.charitycommission.gov.uk/supportcharities/ogs/g055b001.asp

Oxfordshire CC in partnership with a local charity, “Trust for Oxford shire’s Environment” (TOE) has set up such a scheme called “Places for People” to fund improvements to the rights of way network. The total amount available for 07/08 is £50,000. Any local group such as parish/ town councils can apply for a grant not normally more than £5000. Eligible projects include new circular routes, works to existing routes to make them more accessible to the less mobile and new routes that connect communities. They must meet the aims of the ROWIP.

Benefits:

- It promotes community ownership of projects because proposals are identified at grass routes level by the community, must demonstrate local commitment to complete work, ongoing maintenance and use some volunteering
- Administration burden and application handling is dealt with by the charity, calling on Oxfordshire CC’ staff resource only to assess schemes for ROWIP aims and award of grant
- Awards are small scale and represent quick wins

Department for Health

PRIMARY CARE TRUSTS

Partnership working with primary care trusts may help realise some implementation projects by linking into:

- Walking your Way to Health schemes
- Green exercise schemes
- Greenstart (outdoor activity for pre-school children with Surestart)
- Local school partnerships

EXAMPLES

Staffordshire where in 2006 five Walking your Way to Health groups were formed as part of a County-wide scheme to encourage everyone to use their public open space in and around their local area.

<http://www.whi.org.uk/details.asp?key=AX909|0|12186714065|R|18|2041141422006367980929>

In Sheffield where health walk leaders and training have been paid for by the primary care trust and equipment such as motor scooters to access green space.

LOTTERY FUNDING (HLF, BIG,)

A great advantage of Lottery funding is that it is considered as “clean” money able to be used for matched funding with government monies and together these can be match funded with European funds.

Heritage Lottery Fund (Parks for People, Landscape Partnerships, Heritage Grants, Your Heritage, Young Roots).

HLF funds heritage, NOT the general outdoors but there are hooks within heritage for ROWIP projects

PARKS FOR PEOPLE

This is a joint scheme between HLF and BIG providing £90m. Only suitable for ROW improvements where the ROW is within the park/greenspace or is integral to access to it from a target community.

<http://www.hlf.org.uk/English/HowToApply/OurGrantGivingProgrammes/Parks+for+People>

LANDSCAPE PARTNERSHIP

For schemes which provide long term social, economic and environmental benefits for rural areas by:

1. Conserving or restoring the built and natural features that create the historic character of the landscape
2. Conserving and celebrating the cultural associations and activities of the landscape area
3. Encouraging more people to access, learn about, become involved in and make decisions about their heritage
4. Improving understanding of local craft and other skills by providing training opportunities
 - Partnership led projects include local regional and national interests
 - Grants between £250,000 and £2mill
 - Partnership funding requirements:-
 - 10% for grants up to £1 million
 - 25% for grants over £1 million

EXAMPLE

The Medway Gap “Valley of Vision” bid for £1.8m, led by the Kent Downs AONB has been successful at Stage 1, involving detailed public consultation and involvement and will provide new celebration activities, record memories and conserve elements of the important industrial heritage, all including an access element and PROW. www.kentdowns.org.uk/hlf.html

HERITAGE GRANTS

Projects must either or both:

1. Conserve and enhance our diverse heritage
2. Encourage more people to be involved in their heritage

And

3. Make sure that everyone can learn about, have access to and enjoy their heritage

- Activity and/or capital projects
- Grant request over £50,000
- Partnership funding requirements
 - 10% for grants up to and over £1m
 - 25% for grants over £1m
- Single stage of Two stage process

EXAMPLE

Mosaic Partnership – a single stage grant of £660,000 for an activity project to make sure that everyone can learn about, have access to and enjoy their heritage of National Parks. weblink:www.hlf.org.uk/English/GrantsDatabase

YOUR HERITAGE

- Grants £5000-£50,000
- Projects with a heritage focus
- Decision in 3 months
- No minimum contribution requirement
- Any organisation can apply
- Payment of 50% of grant up front
- Learning and access

www.hlf.org.uk/HowToApply/OurGrantGivingProgrammes/YourHeritage

YOUNG ROOTS

- Grants of £5,000 to £25,000
- Young people 13-20 years old
- Aimed at youth and community organisations
- Delivered through partnerships (youth and heritage partnerships)
- Decision in 3 months

EXAMPLE

“Wild about Lorton” is a successful bid by Dorset Wildlife Trust for £19K to develop a nature trail and provide a range of activities for young people at Lorton Meadows Nature Reserve.

www.hlf.org.uk/HowToApply/OurGrantGivingProgrammes/YoungRoots

Hints and tips

In all regions there is a HLF pre application advice service. This should be used to sound out the project and get a steer if only in outline before committing resources. Ensure the guidance notes and checklists are read thoroughly. HLF prefer officers who are going to be involved in the project to put the bid together rather than consultants. Up to 20% of HLF grant funds can be used for overheads so staff and office costs can be included in a bid.

Examples of what HLF doesn't fund:-

- Organisations without a constitution or a bank account
- Projects without a heritage focus and/or access and learning activities
- Work which is another agency's responsibility
- Core running costs or work that is part of core business and current staff
- Routine repairs and maintenance in public buildings and spaces
- General improvements to public areas (e.g. highways)

Common project pitfalls:-

- The project has no heritage focus
- No evidence of demand or support
- Insufficient access and learning plans and benefits
- Ownership of the heritage resource unclear
- High cost of maintaining project after completion
- Project starts before grant awarded
- Project too ambitious for the organisation

BIG LOTTERY FUND (Parks for People, Reaching Communities, Awards for All, Changing Spaces plus a number of schemes to be announced)

- Annual budget of £600 million
- BIG's remit covers health, education, outdoor recreation, environment
- No match funding requirements
- Some programmes still being agreed but will hopefully include Community Spaces and Access to Nature.

Hints and tips:

- Applications to BIG put together by consultants are judged more harshly than those by officers
- Outcomes based funding so important to emphasise the difference the project would make

PARKS FOR PEOPLE

A joint programme with HLF (see above)

REACHING COMMUNITIES

- Available to communities directly
- Minimum grant £10K, maximum £500K, will fund for up to 5years
- Can apply if a charity, community, voluntary or statutory body
- Funds :
 - physical improvements to local green spaces, country parks, allotments, footpaths and nature reserves;
 - access to natural environment through better information and signposting;
 - education projects which raise awareness of local environments and wider environmental issues

Hints and tips:

- A very popular and highly competitive programme. May well need to consider whether a project is not better suited to another programme.
- In essence it funds projects that respond to needs identified by communities and actively involves them.
- Wants project funding to bring the following changes:
 - people having better chances in life, including better access to training and development to improve their life skills
 - strong communities, more active citizens, working together to tackle problems
 - improved rural and urban environments which communities are better able to access and enjoy
 - healthier and more active people and communities.

www.biglotteryfund.org.uk/prog_reaching_communities.htm

AWARDS FOR ALL

- Easily accessible small grants programme from £300 -£10,000 for sport, education, environment and health in the local community
- Available to communities directly

EXAMPLE

The Tale Valley, E.Devon is a natural wetland but disabled people and families with pushchairs could not access the swampy areas. So the idea of a “Splashwalk” was formed and funded through “Awards for All”

http://www.biglotteryfund.org.uk/case_tale_valley_trust

FAIR SHARE TRUST

- £50 m targeted at 77 areas across the UK that have missed out in other lottery bids
- Grants from £5000 that improve liveability – including environment of communities

CHANGING SPACES

£100 million environment led programme focusing on three priorities:

- Community spaces
- Local community enterprise
- Access to the natural environment

The programme will be delivered in partnership – through organisations delivering large strategic portfolios and those delivering grant schemes on behalf of BIG

Two award partners have been announced – Groundwork UK and the Royal Society of Wildlife Trusts (RSWT). Further award partners to be announced. The overall aim of this programme is for:

- Improved local environments, open spaces and countryside, accessible to all and relevant to people’s needs
- A greater sense of community ownership of the local environment, better collaboration between communities and the voluntary and statutory sector
- Improved social, economic and environmental sustainability.

To achieve these aims the programme is focusing on three priority areas, two of which are directly relevant to rights of way:-

- **community spaces**
- local community enterprise
- **access to natural environment**

Projects this programme will support:

- Physical improvements to local green spaces, community gardens, allotments, footpaths and nature reserves
- Local food growing and retailing, farmers markets and composting

- Access to the natural environment through better information and signposting
- Educational projects which raise awareness of local environments and wider environmental issues

Award partners will launch their schemes early 2008. There will be considerable opportunity for individual projects to apply for funding.

Further details at www.biglotteryfund.org.uk

Natural England

AGGREGATES LEVY SUSTAINABILITY FUND: 2007/08

Administered by Natural England on behalf of Defra the ALSF Grant Scheme aims to support projects that reduce the effects of aggregate extraction on local communities and the natural environment. Grants can be awarded for access and informal recreation.

The budget for 2007/08 is £5 million, already allocated but it is hoped the scheme will continue.

Priorities for this year's scheme for access and informal recreation are to provide and improve people's access to the natural environment on or near sites affected by aggregates extraction that may fulfil objectives such as:

- Improvements to the utility of a site for the purpose of public health and well-being
- Provision/improvement of disabled access in line with recognised standards
- Delivery of the objectives of recognised strategies/plans/programmes
- Encouraging diverse access to, and enjoyment of, the outdoors

Projects typically include:

- Footpaths
- Multi-use paths
- Non-motorised links to other transport routes and trails
- Boardwalks, gates/stiles, bridges, steps/ramps, seating/benches
- Viewing platforms and associated equipment
- Signage including waymarkers, interpretation panels,
- Safety barriers (including fencing)
- Water transport on waterways. e.g. lakes for access, visitors, education
- Land purchase where there is no other method of securing a site for public use
- Sustainable plans for ongoing site management and/or improvement

The main criteria that needs to be fulfilled is the link with the effects of extraction eg. new route to separate people from quarry traffic, encouraging access to an old quarry site, restoring access lost through quarrying.

EXAMPLE

Stanwick Lakes in Northamptonshire was an active site until recently and is now a new country park. ASLF has given 3 grants to provide a basic infrastructure of paths around the site

AGRI-ENVIRONMENT SCHEME ACCESS PAYMENTS

These are available to land managers under the higher level tier of the Environmental Stewardship Scheme (ESS) ESS is a whole farm conservation incentive scheme aimed at protecting and enhancing landscape, wildlife, historical and natural features. Payments for new permissive access are available, usually as part of a package of farm environmental improvements. At present the scheme is prioritising the conservation of Sites of Special Scientific Interest and although funding is available for new access this is more limited than it has been in the past.

Payments are available for permissive footpaths and bridleways, for open access, for routes for the disabled and for hosting school or group visits.

The scheme targets certain priority areas and does take full account of ROWIPs when deciding where to target new access locally. Access authorities should therefore speak to Natural England scheme advisers to ensure they are aware of your priorities. Scheme targets will also consider where people live, where they like to visit and where there is existing access. They will aim to provide new access to interesting features of the countryside and to provide links between existing routes, including PRoWs, CRoW open land and long distance routes including the coast.

In order to help with the implementation of a ROWIP it would be necessary for someone to persuade the land manager or managers along the route of a proposed new route to apply for ESS, to include an application for new permissive access and for that application to be accepted. This is only likely to happen if the farm has considerable wildlife interest that is under threat.

The payments available for new access are detailed in the scheme handbook. See: <http://www.defra.gov.uk/erdp/schemes/hls/handbook/default.htm>

and details of existing sites are available at:

<http://countrywalks.defra.gov.uk/>.

Agreements last ten years. They can be renewed after this time if deemed to have been successful (and providing the scheme is still in existence when they come due for renewal). They are not therefore a substitute for the creation of new permanent rights of way.

FORESTRY COMMISSION AND ENVIRONMENT AGENCY

Do not underestimate opportunities for collaboration with FC and EA and pooled funding for projects. Access and recreation compete alongside environment, health, education and economic growth agendas for an ever- diminishing resource. However, rights of way improvements can do much to deliver for those agendas, providing high profile wins for both funders and their beneficiaries. The partnerships that these projects forge develop their own momentum and have the capacity to transform the role of rights of way improvements to improve community health, regeneration, green infrastructure and general community well-being.

The FC and EA often have adjacent landholdings and assets with local authority and other landowners. In these situations there is much to be gained by projects that pool resources to develop a joint “offer” that brings greater focus to rights of way improvement projects.

SPONSORSHIP AND LOCAL CHARITABLE TRUSTS

Some larger companies offer community grant schemes to groups undertaking environmental or sustainability work as part of their community development strategy or distribute grants through a third party :

- Supergrounds scheme (Royal Bank of Scotland and NatWest with Learning Through Landscapes)
- Tesco charitable trust community awards (Tesco)
- You can do it community awards (B&Q)

FunderFinder is a charity producing software for grant seekers specialising in information and advice about charitable trusts and foundations. Payment may be necessary for software that includes a directory of local charities funding community groups or voluntary organisations. However it is often available in public libraries.

Further information is at www.funderfinder.org.uk

3. Other resources that help deliver ROWIP implementation

The new voluntary dedication power in the Commons Act 2006

(info to be added following confirmation with Defra advice)

ROWIP CALL-OFF CONTRACT

NE has currently suspended the grant aid scheme to LHAs, previously given by the Countryside Agency and it is unclear whether it will be reinstated. However, we are just letting a contract to provide targeted and relevant training and support to local authority officers and local access forums on the implementation of Rights of Way Improvement Plans and conduct an evaluation of ROWIPs. The training part of the contract will:

- Run relevant, facilitated regional workshops on particular issues, all illustrated with case studies and examples of good practice e.g. local area agreements; funding opportunities with input from regional funding specialists; the health agenda; defining standards of network adequacy; quality control measures for LAFs; difficult issues such as multi-purpose vehicles; monitoring by LAFs on issues such as under-use of ROW; the Defra Diversity Review “Outdoors for All”
- Bring together relevant NE staff, LAF, HA, ROW staff, HLS access leads and County Sports Partnerships to work together on landowner cross-compliance, LAAs and recreation.
- Training events run jointly with government office, DfT and Defra staff on LTP integration, LAAs, transport asset management plans and accessibility strategies.
- LAF “empowering training events, pursuant to S94.4 of CROW Act 2000

The ROWIP evaluation part will:

- evaluate and inform NE on the ROWIP development process and implementation in England;
- advise NE of lessons learnt through the ROWIP process;
- pull together a national and regional assessments of final ROWIPs;
- Identify and develop further advice with NE to share with Highway Authorities and other partners in the future.

Some concluding thoughts

- Unlikely that Natural England will award grants for PROW in the same way that the Countryside Agency was able to do in the past. Has this stopped you getting started on implementation schemes or does it help you forge more sustainable local partnerships for funding schemes.- we will welcome your views of this and any other points you wish to raise?

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