

4. Review of Other Documents and Information

4.1 In line with DEFRA advice we have also looked in detail as part of our assessment at a range of plans, documents and other information. Looking at these has helped us set potential PROW use and demand in the context of other plans and initiatives and draw conclusions about problems and future opportunities. Below we summarise documents that have been especially influential.

National picture

4.2 As well as the documents and information published by DEFRA, DfT and Department for Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS) we have been guided by the DCLG Planning Policy Guidance Note 17 on 'Planning for Open Space, Sport and Recreation' and by the publications and initiatives of Natural England and its predecessor organisations. These include:

- Discovering Lost Ways - research project into rights of way not shown on the definitive map;
- Coastal Access - how best to improve access to coastal land;
- Diversity Review - tackling the needs and perceptions of under represented groups;
- Millennium Greens Initiative to provide new areas of public open space;
- Capturing Richness - countryside visits by black and ethnic minority communities;
- All Reasonable Means - inclusive access to the outdoors for disabled people;
- Walking the Way to Health - initiative to get more people walking in their own communities;
- National Trails - the Cotswold Way starts at Bath;

- Greenway Handbook - guidance on planning and creating traffic-free, off-road routes to meet the needs of walkers, cyclists and/ or horse riders.

4.3 We realise that research and initiatives will continue and we aim to keep abreast of publications as they become available, for example the Natural England's 'Outdoor Recreation Strategy -study on promoting and marketing the outdoors' which is expected this year. Similarly we are aware that as work progresses on ROWIPs a body of best practice will develop and we will use this in our own PROW work.

Regional picture

4.4 The key regional document that we have used in our assessment is the South West RSS, soon to be the subject of an Examination In Public. This envisages significant growth in housing and employment in the area in the next 20 years, part of the Government's Sustainable Communities Plan, and this growth will put pressure on the PROW network but also throw up opportunities.

4.5 The South West Regional Woodland and Forestry Framework 2005 aims to improve access and provide better information about recreational opportunities.

Community and corporate strategies and the JLTP

4.6 Our three community strategies include objectives for promoting recreation and leisure, tourism and healthy living. These in turn have influenced our Council corporate strategies, particularly our JLTP. The JLTP has a series of action plans: particularly important in our ROWIP assessment have been those summarised in Box 4A.

4.7 Our LPs and emerging LDFs set the local land use framework and we recognise that new developments offer opportunities for the PROW network as well as challenges. We have identified the following policies as of special interest to the ROWIP:

Joint Rights of Way Improvement Plan

- Policy SR.9 of the Bath & North East Somerset Local Plan (due for adoption September 2007) safeguards all public rights of way and other publicly accessible routes for walking, cycling and riding from development which would adversely affect its recreational and amenity value.
- Policy L3 of the Bristol Local Plan (adopted 1997) safeguards a network of Greenways within the city;
- Policies T6 and T12 of the South Gloucestershire Local Plan (adopted January 2006) safeguard a series of cycle/ pedestrian routes. Policy LC12 offers special protection to promoted and aspirational routes.

4A - JLTP - Action Plans Linking with ROWIP

- **walking and cycling**, including safer routes to school;
- **influencing travel behaviour** including working with schools, communities, employers and leisure venues, tourist attractions and retailers;
- **managing demand**, including efficient use of the highway network, carrying out duties of Traffic Management Act 2004, travel plans and working with planners and developers;
- **accessibility**, including access to health facilities, further education and work;
- **road safety**, including child road safety measures, packages of measures for built up and non-built up areas and tackling pedestrian and cyclist accidents;
- **air quality** through the promotion and provision of alternatives to the car for short journeys;
- **asset management**, outlining current work on the Transport Asset Management Plan (TAMP) and on highway maintenance programmes.

- 4.8 Our LDFs are at different stages but the provision of open space, outdoors recreation and access will be issues to be faced in our respective core strategies and other Local Development Documents. We will take into account these documents as they become available; in turn the ROWIP will inform their preparation.

AONB management plans

- 4.9 The Mendip Hills AONB Management Plan 2004-2009 provides a wealth of information and sets out a range of policies to protect the AONB's unique assets. Policies 6.3.1 to 6.3.3 look to the Local Access Forums and ROWIPs to devise, promote and maintain 'a workable recreational network'. The AONB Partnership draws attention to the Mendip Way and the Limestone Link and aims to support the work of the Mendip Cross Trails Trust. Opportunities will be sought to assist in implementation of Local Health Improvement Plans and to meet the needs of all sectors of the community. Priority routes have been identified for facilities such as seating and kissing gates.
- 4.10 The Cotswolds AONB Management Plan (March 2004) sees the need to 'achieve integration, co-ordination and promotion of the rights of way network across the AONB, so that users can make best use of it in conjunction with the new access rights'. In policy TOK5 the Cotswold Conservation Board envisages ROWIPs





- Register of Historic Battlefields/ English Heritage information on historic landscapes/ DCMS information on ancient monuments
- Parish Plans.

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treating rights of way as part of a broader network of access opportunities and promoting walking that links with public transport as well as more facilities for cyclists and horse riders.

Forest of Avon plan

- 4.11 The Forest of Avon Plan (January 2002) highlights the rights of way network as a key recreational asset and the well publicised routes that pass through the Forest area such as the Community Forest Path, Frome Valley Walkway, River Avon Trail, the Dramway, Severn Way, Jubilee Way and the 2 Rivers Way. In Chapter 11 the plan aims to improve access to woodlands, open spaces and the countryside and promote it to all sections of the community. A series of proposals are put forward with these objectives in mind focusing on key access routes for walkers, cyclist and horse riders, working with farmers and landowners on local rights of way projects, circular walks, promotion of 'green' tourism, information and interpretation.

Other documents and information

- 4.12 Other documents that have guided us in our assessment include:
- Avon Biodiversity Action Plan (2004, Table 4.9);
 - Bath World Heritage Management Plan;
 - Bristol Green Spaces Strategy;