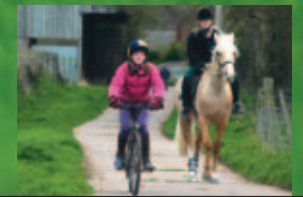




DEVON COUNTY COUNCIL

# Devon *on the move*



## Improving Devon's Environment: **Rights of Way Improvement Plan 2005**

July 2005

The RoWIP includes appendices and supporting information which is available on [www.devon.gov.uk/rowip](http://www.devon.gov.uk/rowip). The County Council appreciates that not everyone will have access to the internet, and so a paper copy of the appendices is available on request. If you would like a copy of any appendices or would like to discuss the RoWIP, please contact the Rights of Way Improvement Plan Officer at:

Public Rights of Way, Environment Directorate,  
Devon County Council, County Hall, Exeter EX2 4QW  
Telephone 01392 382250 e-mail [rowip@devon.gov.uk](mailto:rowip@devon.gov.uk)

If you would like to discuss the Dartmoor National Park section, please contact the Access & Rights of Way Officer at:

Dartmoor National Park Authority,  
Parke, Bovey Tracey, Newton Abbot TQ13 9JQ  
Telephone 01626 832093 e-mail [rowip@dartmoor-npa.gov.uk](mailto:rowip@dartmoor-npa.gov.uk)

If you would like to discuss the Exmoor National Park section, please contact the Access Officer at:

Exmoor National Park Authority,  
Exmoor House, Dulverton, Somerset TA22 9HL  
Telephone 01398 323665 e-mail [access@exmoor-nationalpark.gov.uk](mailto:access@exmoor-nationalpark.gov.uk)

Published by:

Edward Chorlton  
County Environment Director  
Devon County Council  
County Hall  
Exeter EX2 4QW  
Tel: Exeter (01392) 382250

# Devon *on the move*



## Improving Devon's Environment: **Rights of Way Improvement Plan 2005**

July 2005



If you would like this document in another language or format, or if you require the services of an interpreter, please contact us. Please see inside front cover for details.

Arabic

إذا أردت هذه الوثيقة بلغة أخرى أو بطريقة أخرى، أو إذا كنت بحاجة إلى خدمات مترجم، فنرجو أن تقوم بالاتصال بنا.

Bengali

যদি আপনি এই ডকুমেন্ট অন্য ভাষায় বা ফরমেটে চান অথবা যদি আপনার একজন ইন্টারপ্রিটারের প্রয়োজন হয়, তাহলে দয়া করে আমাদের সাথে যোগাযোগ করুন।

Cantonese

本文件可以翻譯為另一語文版本，或製作成另一格式，如有此需要，或需要傳譯員的協助，請與我們聯絡。

Gujarati

જો તમને આ દસ્તાવેજ બીજી ભાષા અથવા રચનામાં જોઈતી હોય, અથવા જો તમને ઇન્ટરપ્રિટરની સેવાઓ જોઈતી હોય તો, કૃપા કરી અમારો સંપર્ક સાધો.

Turkish

Bu belgenin Türkçe'sini edinmek ya da Türkçe bilen birisinin size yardımcı olmasını istiyorsanız, bize başvurabilirsiniz.

Urdu

یہ دستاویز اگر آپ کو کسی دیگر زبان یا دیگر شکل میں درکار ہو، یا اگر آپ کو ترجمان کی خدمات چاہئیں تو برائے مہربانی ہم سے رابطہ کیجئے۔

## Foreword

Devon is a large, diverse county having distinctive market and coastal towns, remote rural communities and extensive rural areas containing landscapes and coastlines of national importance. The County Council has long recognised the importance of the public rights of way network to visitors and locals alike. It allows people to enjoy the beautiful countryside as well as enabling them to travel from place to place without having to use the car. The Devon Rights of Way Improvement Plan provides a unique opportunity to integrate this network with the delivery of wider social, economic and environmental goals, for example, transport, health, tourism, local economy, social inclusion and education.



The County Council has worked in partnership with both Dartmoor and Exmoor National Park Authorities in the delivery of this Plan. Widespread consultation has been undertaken with the public, user groups, local councils, farming and landowner organisations and relevant professionals in the Plan's development. The County Council is very grateful for the important contributions that have been made.

Devon County Council entered into a Public Service Agreement (PSA) with central government in 2002 to improve access to the countryside by undertaking that 90 percent of the network was easy to use by April 2005. This has been successfully delivered and, as a result, procedures are now in place to ensure that this standard is maintained and improved upon. This demonstrates a clear commitment to fulfilling the relevant statutory duties. A second PSA is being developed which seeks to increase physical activity and improve economic well-being through improved access to the countryside.

It is my aspiration that the county will fully implement the Rights of Way Improvement Plan and hope that you will become a partner in this to help the County Council to improve public rights of way and access for all.

**Councillor Margaret Rogers**  
*Executive Member for Environment*

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## Summary

Devon County Council's Rights of Way Improvement Plan (RoWIP) has been drawn up in accordance with the requirements of the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000 (the CRoW Act) and takes account of the guidance issued by the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (DEFRA) in 2002. It includes sections by the Dartmoor and Exmoor National Park Authorities. A draft RoWIP underwent consultation in 2004-2005 and the final Plan has taken account of comments received, as well as current guidance and research. The RoWIP forms a strand of the Devon Local Transport Plan 2006-2011, which has been submitted in provisional form to the Government Office for the South West and Department for Transport in July 2005. Individual schemes will be set out in Annual Business Plans. Although the legal requirement is for a review of the RoWIP within 10 years it is intended that it will be reviewed after 5 years.

### Chapter 1

Sets out the background to the RoWIP, a summary of public rights of way and access in Devon and information on how the Plan was developed.

### Chapter 2

Summarises the links between the RoWIP and other Plans and Strategies.

### Chapter 3

Explains how the RoWIP will be implemented through Annual Business Plans. It also explains resources for implementation, how improvements will be prioritised and progress reviewed.

### Chapter 4

Provides a statement of objectives, policies and actions that the County Council will take to deliver improvements.

### Chapter 5

Dartmoor National Park Authority's section of the RoWIP.

### Chapter 6

Exmoor National Park Authority's section of the RoWIP.

A glossary of terms used is provided at the end of the RoWIP.





# ChapterOne

## Introduction

This chapter sets out the main objective of the Rights of Way Improvement Plan (referred to as the RoWIP). It explains why and how the Plan has been produced and sets the context of public rights of way and access in Devon.

## 1.1 Main Objective

The main objective of the Rights of Way Improvement Plan is to improve public rights of way and access for all.

## 1.2 Background

Devon County Council is the highway authority for Devon (excluding Plymouth and Torbay). Section 60 of the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000 (the CRoW Act) requires the County Council to develop a RoWIP. This is a new duty for highway authorities aimed at modernising the rights of way network to meet current and future needs.

The County Council has worked with both Dartmoor and Exmoor National Park Authorities to produce the RoWIP. Each has contributed its own section detailing the work it would like to carry out to improve public access in its area. The County Council will continue to work closely with the National Park Authorities to help with delivery of the aims they have identified.

The CRoW Act requires the County Council to assess:






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

The statutory guidance published by the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (DEFRA) has been followed in the production of this Plan. According to the DEFRA guidance, the RoWIP should build upon the existing statutory duties of the County Council to maintain the public rights of way network, ensuring that it is signposted, maintained and free from obstruction, and to keep the Definitive Map and Statement (the legal record for footpaths, bridleways, byways open to all traffic and restricted byways where applicable) under review. A list of duties and powers relating to public rights of way and access can be found in Appendix 4 at [www.devon.gov.uk/rowip](http://www.devon.gov.uk/rowip).

The County Council also has a wider role in improving the health of people in Devon, supporting the economy and looking after the environment. It needs to encourage people to travel other than in their cars and encourage a respect for others and for the environment. All of these desires can be delivered to some extent through the RoWIP.

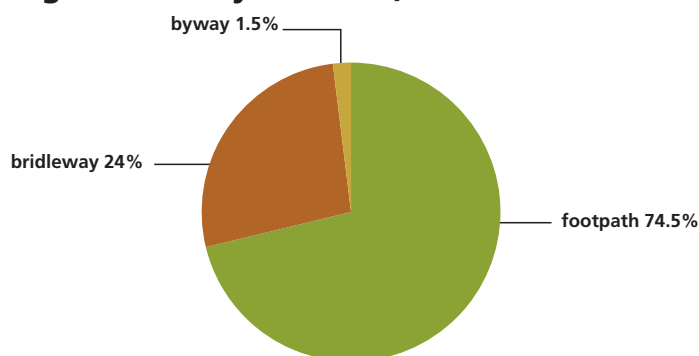
## 1.3 Public Rights of Way and Access in Devon

**Figure 1. Legal users on public rights of way**

Access Route	Legal Users	Length in Devon
Footpath		3651km
Bridleway		1175km
Restricted Byway		0km
Byway Open to all Traffic		72km
Unsurfaced Unclassified County Road		728km

The public rights of way network provides access to the countryside, whereby different types of user have the legal right to use different types of route. This is summarised in Figure 1 above. There are 4898km of public rights of way in Devon (as at summer 2005, excluding Plymouth and Torbay). In addition there are approximately 730km of unsurfaced Unclassified County Roads (uUCRs) and approximately 250km of off-road cycle tracks. More detailed information about Devon's public rights of way network can be found in Appendix 2 at [www.devon.gov.uk/rowip](http://www.devon.gov.uk/rowip). This includes information about Devon, the distribution of the network across the County, comparisons with neighbouring counties and an assessment of the Devon users.

**Figure 2. Relative lengths of Public Rights of Way in Devon (not including uUCRs or cycle tracks)**



Public rights of way provide the main means of accessing the countryside. However, there are many other routes and sites used by the general public for informal countryside access, for example, Access Land and permissive access. This is recognised in the statutory guidance and, as a result, RoWIPs can and should consider the whole network of off-road routes and public open spaces, both rural and urban.

A limitation of the available information concerning levels of use of the network is that it is not possible to cover 100 percent of the users. Therefore, information from a variety of sources has been used to build a picture of the use of the network. The County Council accepts that this will not be perfect, and has committed in the



**Map 1. Strategic Route Network for Walking and Cycling**



RoWIP to instigate or continue with research to investigate the use of the public rights of way and access network. Nevertheless, the available research shows that:

**Walkers**

- walking is the most popular countryside activity;
- 62 percent of cycle track use in Devon was by walkers (2003-2004);
- a minimum of 64 percent of walkers appear to make use of public rights of way;

**Horse-riders**

- horse-riding is more popular in Devon than the national average;
- participation in horse-riding is predominantly by women and girls;
- a minimum of 68 percent of horse-riders appear to make use of public rights of way;



**Cyclists**

- cycling is the fifth most popular countryside activity;
- it appears that about one fifth of cyclists in Devon are mountain-bikers;
- a minimum of 25 percent of cyclists appear to make use of public rights of way;

**Carriage-drivers**

- an estimated 20-25,000 people in Britain drive horses;
- there may be a higher participation in Devon than the national average;

**Motorised users**

- motor vehicle use of byways open to all traffic is predominantly for land management (42 percent), recreation (38 percent) and dwelling access (20 percent);
- motorcycle use represents 21 percent of motor vehicle use on byways open to all traffic and is mainly at weekends;

**Users with limited mobility**

- over 17,000 people living in Devon are registered as disabled; and
- many of Devon's users will have limited mobility, or will experience limited mobility at some stage of their lives.

The most heavily used public rights of way tend to be those close to urban areas and coastal towns. A strategic network of recreational routes for walking has been developed based on the long distance recreational route, the South West Coast Path National Trail, and regional routes, like the Two Moors Way and Templer Way (see Map 1). These are promoted for leisure and recreational use. The network links these routes to each other and to centres of population, public transport and tourist attractions.

## 1.4 How the Rights of Way Improvement Plan was Developed

The County Council has drawn on a variety of sources in the production of the RoWIP, including statutory guidance, Countryside Agency advice, public consultation, officer discussion and national research.

In order to identify the issues that were likely to shape the RoWIP, the County Council began by consulting with the three Local Access Forums (LAFs) which have been set up under the CRoW Act. These are the Devon LAF, Dartmoor LAF and Exmoor LAF and each is composed of a number of users of the network and a roughly equal number of farmers, landowners and land managers in the area. The LAFs are relied upon to identify and discuss issues, providing advice as to how the County Council should move forward to improve countryside access for everyone. The County Council has a Public Rights of Way Committee composed of County Councillors with particular interest and expertise in rights of way. The Chair and Vice-chair of this Committee are the County Council representatives on the Devon LAF.

The Devon Local Access Forum Vision states that:

“

The Devon Rights of Way Improvement Plan (RoWIP) should build on the historic network of rights of way in the County by responding to the needs of local residents, visitors and land managers. It needs to provide for a sustainable programme of development and maintenance which, subject to availability of the necessary funding at the relevant time, will:

- be informed by an open system for establishing priorities;
- respect good land management and protect the natural and historic environment; and
- take account of the needs and demands of recreational, leisure and travel users including those with diverse needs and abilities.

It will promote:

- a flexible approach which will facilitate diversion, creation and extinguishment agreements and orders which contribute to an overall improvement in the rights of way network;
- increases in the opportunities for circular routes and promote multi-use where appropriate and beneficial;
- clear identification of the different routes and types of rights of way and other routes, such as Unclassified County Roads, from maps and on the ground;
- better provision of information on rights of way and access and greater understanding of rights and responsibilities;
- integration with transport systems and development of other access opportunities such as permissive paths, Environmental Stewardship Schemes, Access Land and strategic long distance routes for all users; and
- opportunities which may become available under the revised Common Agricultural Policy for increasing access and appreciation of the countryside.

As a statutory adviser the Devon LAF will seek to ensure that effective systems to monitor and audit RoWIP achievements are in place.

*Devon Local Access Forum, 2005.*

”

From the outset officers from various Directorates of the County Council and other lead organisations have been used to identify issues and cross-cutting themes, allowing the various groups to work in unison to achieve their goals. This reference group includes:

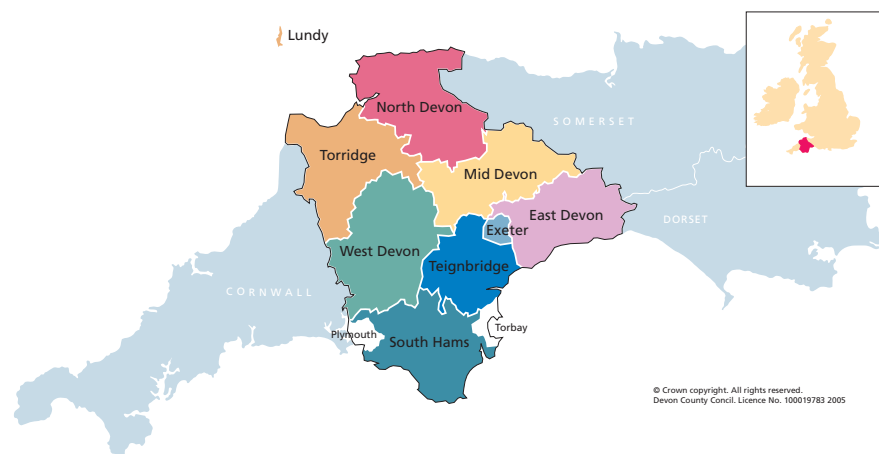
- AONB Services
- Countryside and Landscape Officers
- Cycling Officers
- Dartmoor and Exmoor National Park Authorities
- Devon Sensory Team
- Local Transport Planners
- Outdoor Education Officers
- Social Services
- Tourism Officers

A scoping questionnaire was undertaken in summer 2003 through the local agricultural shows, libraries, tourist information centres, National Parks, AONB Services and Country Parks Services, as well as on-line through the County Council's

public rights of way web-site. There were nearly 900 responses to this questionnaire and these were used to identify the main issues.

Later in 2003 a consultation questionnaire was sent to the 420 Parish and Town Councils and Meetings asking for their input, with a response rate of 43 percent. Additionally we identified 345 interested groups, for example, user groups, landowner representatives and nature conservation interests, of whom 28 percent responded. Formal consultation was carried out with the district councils - East Devon, Mid Devon, North Devon, South Hams, Teignbridge, Torridge, West Devon, Exeter City Council - and neighbouring authorities - Torbay, Plymouth, Cornwall, Somerset and Dorset. (See Map 2 for Administrative Boundaries in Devon)

## Map 2. Administrative Boundaries within Devon

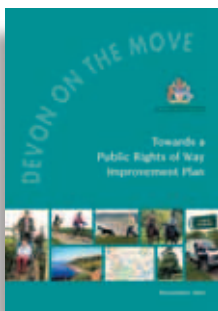


The results of existing consultations have been used, such as the Devon Citizens Panel, Rights of Way Best Value Review 2001, Joint User Group Meetings, Parish Plans, Devon LAF, hearing panels and the Devon Local Transport Plan consultations. In addition, the national information arising from the Countryside Agency RoWIP Exemplar projects and the Integrated Access Development Projects have been used.

In November 2004 all of this information was drawn together to form a draft RoWIP (Devon on the Move: Towards a Public Rights of Way Improvement Plan 2004). In undertaking the production of the draft Plan it became clear that there were two aspects which required consideration:

- Access - the physical resource which already exists or will be needed for people to enjoy their recreation, or get to work, and
- Ease of access - the psychological comfort and confidence of the public to use a route, including the comfort of the landowners whose land the route crosses, which requires information and education.

There were over 150 consultee replies to the draft Plan. A summary of these responses can be found in Appendix 1 at [www.devon.gov.uk/rowip](http://www.devon.gov.uk/rowip). The draft Plan has been amended and refined in the light of the comments that have been received, whilst also considering research and advice that has arisen, to produce this document. The County Council is aware that public rights of way can be an adversarial topic with many opposing views. It has tried to reflect the range of views and take a balanced approach towards the outcome, taking account of local people, visitors and organisations whilst reflecting the legal context and national policy framework.



# ChapterTwo

## The Strategic Context

### Introduction

The RoWIP provides a strategic overview of public rights of way in Devon and sets out objectives, policies and actions to improve access for the public and landowners. This chapter summarises the links between the RoWIP and other Plans and Strategies, including the Devon Local Transport Plan 2006-2011. Further information on these Plans and Strategies can be found at [www.devon.gov.uk/rowip](http://www.devon.gov.uk/rowip).

### 2.1 The Devon County Council Structure Plan 2001 - 2016

The Devon Structure Plan 2001-2016 sets out the strategic planning framework for the development and use of land within Devon.

**Policy TR5** identifies a hierarchy of modes for transport in terms of the most sustainable and environmentally acceptable modes of travel:

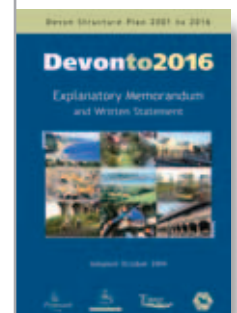
1. Walking;
2. Cycling;
3. Public Transport;
4. Private Vehicles.

**Policy TR7** states that walking and cycling will be improved by:

1. identifying a network of strategic routes within towns and urban areas which provides a safe and convenient means of pedestrian and cycle access to facilities;
2. improving pedestrian and cycle links between settlements and adjacent rural areas; and
3. ensuring that all development proposals make provision for pedestrians and cyclists, and that, wherever possible, such provision is well related to the defined network of pedestrian and cycle routes referred to in (1) above.

**Policy TO6** proposes the maintenance and extension of the long distance footpath, cycleway and bridleway networks, stating that the networks should be maintained and extended, and proposals that would affect these routes should only be permitted where the integrity of the network can be maintained. In maintaining and developing the footpath, cycleway and bridleway networks, advantage should be taken, wherever practicable, of redundant canals and railways.

The RoWIP ties in directly with the delivery of these policies.





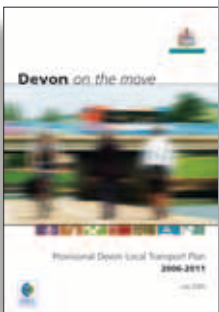
## 2.2 The Devon County Council Strategic Plan 2003-2008

The RoWIP is guided by Devon County Council's Strategic Plan 2003 - 2008 **Working for a Better Devon**, which has seven primary goals. These are:

- achieving a prosperous Devon;
- creating safer and stronger communities in Devon;
- promoting a healthy and caring Devon;
- promoting achievement through learning in Devon;
- improving travel and communication in Devon;
- looking after Devon's environment, culture & heritage; and
- ensuring the County Council is a well managed local authority.

In addition, the County Council has identified three priority issues for change. These are:

- improving life opportunities for younger and older people in Devon;
- regenerating Devon wards among the 25% most disadvantaged in the country; and
- improving access (to services) for people in Devon.



## 2.3 The Devon Local Transport Plan 2006-2011

The RoWIP forms a strand of the Devon Local Transport Plan 2006-2011 and will help deliver its objectives of:



**Objective 1** Tackling Traffic Congestion



**Objective 2** Delivering Accessibility



**Objective 3** Making Roads Safer



**Objective 4** Improving Air Quality



**Objective 5** Improving Leisure and Tourism



**Objective 6** Promoting Health and Well-being



**Objective 7** Improving Public Spaces

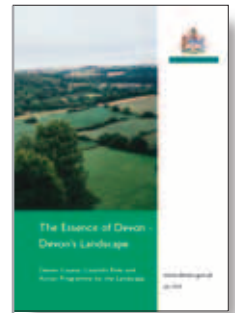
The Department for Transport's 2004 guidance on Local Transport Plans (LTPs) states that appropriate initiatives through the LTP may include **"...ensuring, where possible, that people can access jobs and services by walking and cycling - by improving routes and facilities, maintaining them in a more useable condition, improving Rights of Way in both urban and rural areas, and making routes safer, more secure and more attractive."** Of particular importance is that transport should be set in a wider context. Where the RoWIP can help to develop and deliver a Transport Plan objective this is indicated at the head of each objective in chapter 4 using the above symbols.



## 2.4 Devon County Council Role and Action Programmes

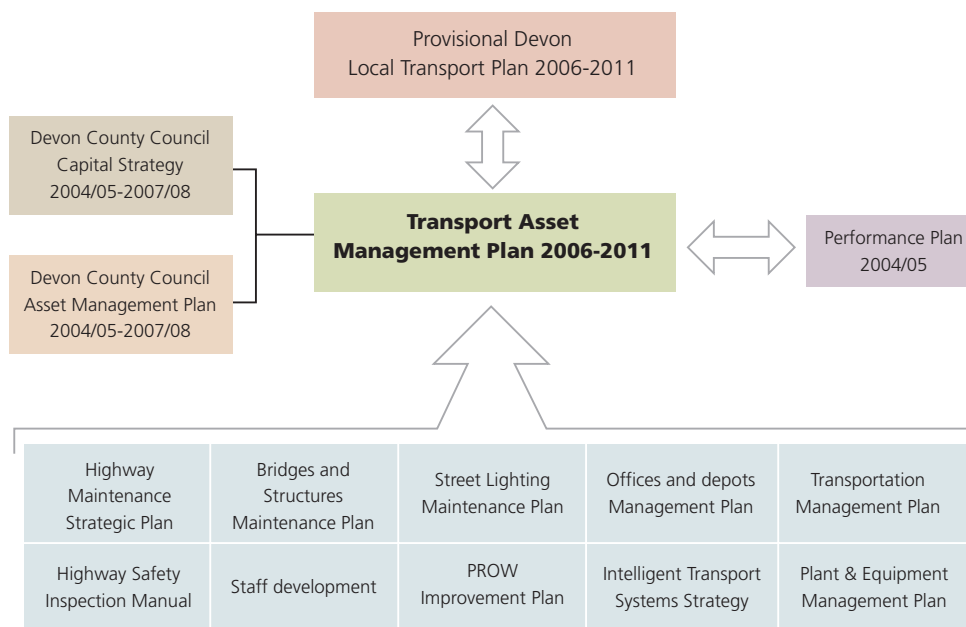
The County Council has published a number of Role and Action Programmes (RAPs) which help with planning and prioritising work within specific areas. The RoWIP replaces the Milestones Statement (1998) and forms the RAP for rights of way, complementing the existing RAPs. These include:

- Our Coast - Our Common Asset: Maritime Role and Action Programme (March 2003)
- Tourism: Everybody's Business (March 2003)
- A Better Future for Biodiversity (July 2003)
- The Human Habitat: Devon's Historic Environment (July 2003)
- The Essence of Devon - Devon's Landscape (July 2004)



## 2.5 Devon County Council Transport Asset Management Plan

Devon County Council is compiling a Transport Asset Management Plan (TAMP), in accordance with the County Surveyors' Society Framework, which will bring together the strategic, tactical and operational plans illustrated in the diagram below.



The TAMP will provide the Authority with a tool to:

- support the corporate provision of detailed information on the assets held by the whole authority, enabling better definition of longer-term corporate need and continual challenge to asset holding / use;
- establish and communicate a clear relationship between the programme set out by the TAMP and the Devon Local Transport Plan 2006-2011 objectives, and ensure existing assets are in a condition compatible with the delivery of the provisional programme in the LTP;

- obtain and organise information to support the forthcoming (2006) requirement for Whole Government Accounting; and
- enable the value for money of local highway maintenance, including public rights of way, to be considered more effectively against other local transport spending, and eventually assist local transport strategy and plan production.

The RoWIP will be integrated with the TAMP and highway plans such as the Highway Maintenance Strategic Plan. These and other business plans will identify and link with working practice documents such as the public rights of way preventive inspection regime, maintenance enforcement protocols and maintenance works contracts.

## 2.6 National Park Management Plans

The National Parks arose from the National Parks and Access to the Countryside Act 1949. They have joint statutory roles for **“the promotion of enjoyment and understanding by the public”** and **“the conservation and enhancement of the natural beauty, wildlife and cultural heritage.”** The County Council has worked with both Dartmoor and Exmoor National Park Authorities to produce the RoWIP. The National Park Authorities have contributed their own sections detailing the work they would like to carry out to improve public access in their areas. These have arisen within their own existing plans and policies, such as the National Parks Management Plans. The County Council will continue to work closely with the National Park Authorities to help with delivery of the aims they have identified.

## 2.7 Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty Management Plans

The CRoW Act required Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONBs) to produce Management Plans. In Devon there are five AONBs, two of which cross into neighbouring authorities:

- Blackdown Hills (includes parts of Somerset)
- East Devon
- North Devon
- South Devon
- Tamar Valley (includes parts of Cornwall)

AONB Services in Devon undertook local consultation in the development of their Management Plans and recreational access arose as an issue for all. Recreation and the promotion of opportunities for public understanding and enjoyment do not form part of the statutory purpose of AONBs. Nonetheless, these are an essential element of most AONB Management Plans and something that many AONB services focus on. The County Council will continue to work through existing partnership arrangements in the delivery of joint objectives for improved public access.

## 2.8 Community Strategy for Devon

The Community Strategy for Devon, produced by the Devon Strategic Partnership in 2004, has a vision for Devon as **“A County with safe, healthy and inclusive communities, a strong and diverse economy and a cherished environment.”** The County Council believes that policies and actions identified in the RoWIP can help to deliver this vision.

# Chapter Three

## Implementation and Review

### Introduction

This chapter explains how the RoWIP will be implemented and reviewed. It includes an explanation of the limited resources available for implementation.

### 3.1 Implementation Resources and Priorities

The County Council and the National Park Authorities are responsible for the implementation of the RoWIP in their respective areas. The County Council will seek to implement proposals in partnership with them and also other appropriate organisations (such as district and parish councils, private and state land owners and managers including Government departments, the National Trust and the Forestry Commission).

Production of the RoWIP is a statutory duty and Government funding has been provided to undertake the work necessary for this. However, implementation of the RoWIP is not a statutory duty, and no additional Government funding has been provided to carry out any of the improvements identified. Furthermore, the RoWIP should build upon the existing duties and not conflict with these or reduce the effectiveness with which they are carried out. The County Council will need to seek additional sources of funding to fully implement the policies and actions of the RoWIP. It is clear that a number of policies and actions could be delivered through partnership work or through funding bids as stand-alone projects. Section 2.4.7 of the DEFRA Guidance to Local Authorities on RoWIPs states that:



Both capital and revenue funding will be required to put improvements into practice and to ensure long-term maintenance. Highway authorities are encouraged to be innovative in sourcing funds to support improvements. Highway authorities should consider seeking funds from lottery bodies, local transport plans, European schemes, agri-environment schemes and some charitable trusts. To be successful the right funding partnerships will normally need to demonstrate that they are making improvements to the public rights of way network for reasons which link into broader policy objectives, such as health, reducing dependence on motor cars, tourism, safe routes to schools/work and accessibility for those with limited or restricted mobility or for those who are socially excluded...



It is hoped that many people will come forward with suggestions for specific improvements that could be made to the public rights of way network. The County Council will also be actively seeking suggestions for improvements from groups such as parish councils, landowners, user groups and members of the public. However, it is clear that within existing resources, not all suggestions will be able to be implemented. Furthermore, not all of the suggestions will contribute to achieving the objectives of the RoWIP. Therefore, **priority systems** will be developed with input from the Local Access Forums.

The policies and actions of the RoWIP will be delivered through **Annual Business Plans** (ABPs). These will set out targets on individual schemes for the year ahead. The County Council will have regard to small-scale improvements that can be implemented relatively quickly, and larger-scale projects that may take longer to realise. In addition, internal working practices will be developed to support the delivery of the RoWIP's objectives.

## 3.2 Review

The County Council will establish monitoring procedures as the ABPs are developed and review performance in order to ensure best value is being delivered. The ABPs will be used to report on the previous targets. They will be available on the RoWIP website: [www.devon.gov.uk/rowip](http://www.devon.gov.uk/rowip). More frequent progress reports, updates and further information will also be posted on this site.

Although the CRoW Act requires a review of the RoWIP within 10 years it is intended that it will be reviewed every 5 years, in line with the Devon Local Transport Plan 2006-2011.

# ChapterFour

## Statement of Objectives, Policies and Actions

### Introduction

This chapter provides a statement of objectives, policies and actions to be taken by the County Council to improve public rights of way and access for all. These have been grouped into three main areas shown below. However, this should not be read as a prioritised list, since there are many links and relationships between the separate sections. For example, in consultations leading up to the production of this Plan, the environment was identified as a very important factor in the management of public rights of way and access. The objective of the chapter concerning the environment (to ensure that the management of public rights of way and access respects Devon's environment) affects elements of most of the other chapters, even though it appears towards the end of the document.

### 4.1 Management of the Access Network

- A. Legal - Definitive Map and Statement
- B. Legal - Public Path Orders
- C. Maintenance
- D. Signing and Waymarking
- E. Information and Communication
- F. Road Safety
- G. Planning
- H. Access Land
- I. Permissive Access

### 4.2 Provision for Users

- A. Users with Limited Mobility
- B. Walkers
- C. Horse-riders and Carriage-drivers
- D. Cyclists
- E. Motorised Users
- F. Dog walkers

### 4.3 The Wider Context

- A. Environment
- B. Tourism and Economic Development
- C. Health
- D. Agriculture
- E. Partnerships



*The X53 Coastlinx Jurassic Coast bus service, which runs from Exeter to Bournemouth, won the National Transport Award for Rural Transport in 2005*



Many policies and actions are interrelated and the management of the access network can contribute to other County Council objectives. For example, leisure related travel is the fastest growing component of traffic on the highway. The County Council recognises that travel for the purpose of getting to the access network is an important contributor to leisure traffic. It is therefore working on existing and new public transport schemes (such as DevonBus and Car Free Days Out - part of Discover Devon Naturally) to improve the integration of the access network and public transport. Policies and actions which may help to deliver a reduction in the volume of leisure-related traffic can be found in chapters covering Health, Partnerships, Public Path Orders, Information and Communication, Road Safety and Provision for Users (for example, referring to the development of circular walks and rides or the promotion of routes in and around communities).

## 4.1 Management of the Access Network

This section provides objectives, policies and actions which cover management of the access network. The term access network is used to describe public rights of way and other means of public access, for example, unsurfaced Unclassified County Roads (uUCRs), Access Land and permissive access.

## 4.1A Legal - Definitive Map and Statement



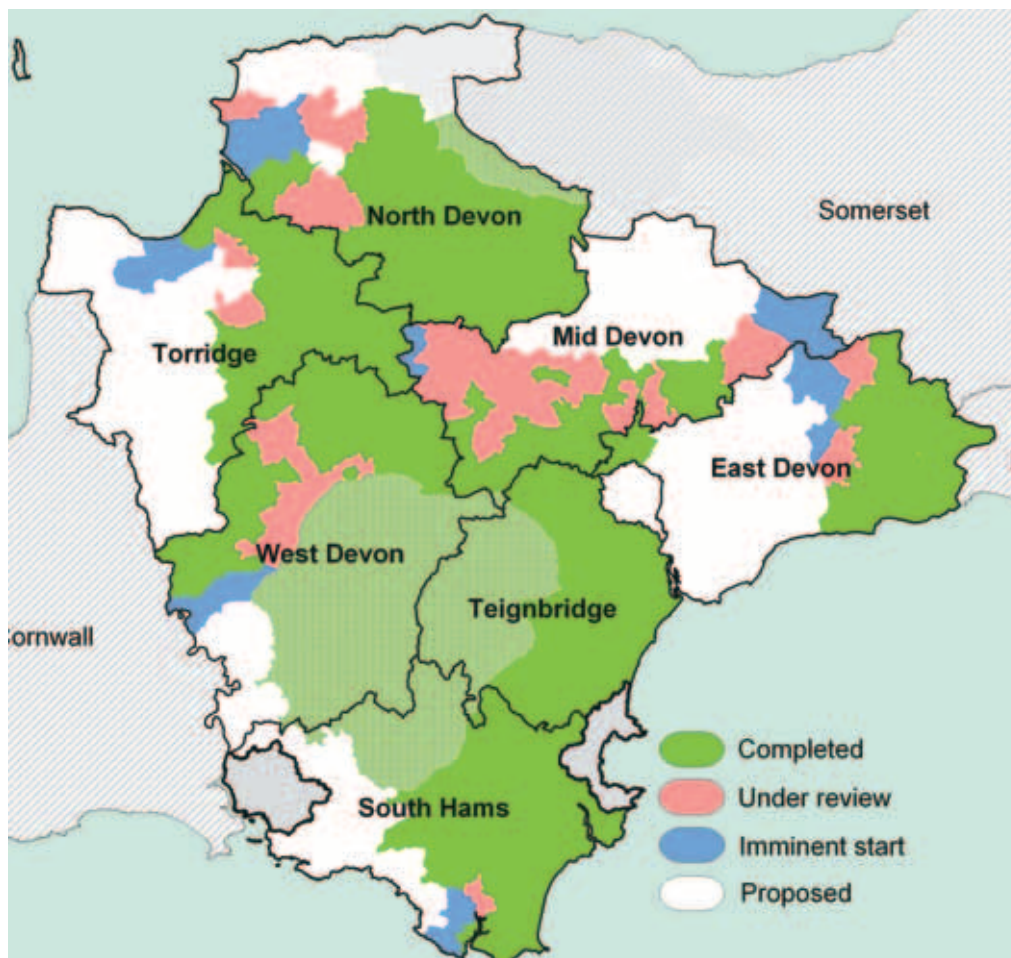
### Objective

To ensure that the Definitive Map and Statement provide an accurate record of public rights of way

The Definitive Map and Statement is the legal record of public rights of way (public footpaths, bridleways, byways open to all traffic and restricted byways where applicable). If a way is shown on the Map, then that is conclusive evidence that the public had those rights along the way at the relevant date of the Map, and has them still, unless there has been a legally authorised change. However, rights may exist over a way not shown on the Map at all, or additional rights may exist over an already recorded route. Where such rights are alleged to exist, there are procedures to enable the allegations to be tested. These are set out in the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (the 1981 Act), and allow for surveying authorities (the County Council) to make a Definitive Map Modification Order to amend the Map and Statement to ensure that it is a correct record of the public's rights.

Definitive Map Modification Orders can be made to add a route not previously recorded; upgrade a route already shown on the Map (for example, from a public footpath to a public bridleway); downgrade a route already shown on the Map; or delete a route from the Map. Such Orders are based entirely on documentary evidence and evidence of use. Issues such as desirability, suitability or need of the route are not factors that can be taken into account under the 1981 Act.

### Map 3. Progress of the Definitive Map Review (see Appendix 3A at [www.devon.gov.uk/rowip](http://www.devon.gov.uk/rowip) for a larger version).



Since 1989 Devon County Council has undertaken a parish-by-parish Definitive Map Review to ensure that existing public rights of way in each parish are correctly recorded in terms of status and location. By Spring 2005 246 parishes (58%) had been reviewed, whilst 52 (12%) are currently in progress. Map 3 indicates the parishes completed (green), currently under review (red) and those that will be reviewed next (blue).

In addition to the parish-by-parish review there is a process whereby the public can make a formal application to the County Council to make a change to the Definitive Map. These are generally dealt with as part of the parish-by-parish process, although sometimes it is considered necessary to deal with them out of turn. There are currently just over 100 such applications awaiting determination.

The **Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000** has placed a time limit on the legal recording of routes. If a route is not recorded, or is incorrectly recorded, on the cut-off date of 1st January 2026, then it will not be possible to modify the Definitive Map purely on historical evidence. The Countryside Agency has instigated the Discovering Lost Ways project which aims to supply surveying authorities with evidence relating to historical rights of way. The **Natural Environment and Rural Communities Bill** proposes changes to the law regarding the recording of vehicular highways on the Definitive Map, whereby the use of a route in the past by horse-drawn vehicles will not establish rights for motor-vehicles today.

Further information on the Definitive Map Review and on the Modification Order process can be found in Appendix 3A at [www.devon.gov.uk/rowip](http://www.devon.gov.uk/rowip).

## Policies and Actions

### Definitive Map Review

- DM1A** Completion of the parish-by-parish Definitive Map Review will be sought before 1st January 2015.
- DM1B** Schedule 14 applications and other such claims will be dealt with as part of the parish-by-parish Definitive Map Review.
- DM1C** New claims which may arise in a parish where the review has been completed will be deferred until the whole of the relevant District has been completed. However, exceptions will be made particularly for contentious or urgent claims, for example, for routes which are likely to be lost through development, well-used routes where access has been denied and where no nearby alternative is available, or routes where there are significant road safety implications. Negotiation with the landowner(s) to establish whether a quicker solution is available, for example, by express dedication of public rights, will be the first option.
- DM1D** Any necessary legal event modification orders will be made and the several Definitive Maps and Statements will be consolidated to form a single Definitive Map and Statement for the whole county on completion of the parish-by-parish Definitive Map Review.

**General**

**DM2A** Where routes have been added to the Definitive Map by Modification Order on purely historical evidential grounds and require significant works for them to be re-opened, or would have an unacceptable environmental impact, consideration will be given to the use of Public Path Orders to divert the routes onto a more appropriate alignment.

**DM2B** On-line information on the progress of the Definitive Map Review will be kept up-to-date.

**Order processing**

**DM3A** Priority in the Definitive Map Review will be given to offers to create routes through landowner Creation Agreements.

**DM3B** Orders will normally be made within 6 months of the relevant Committee decision.

**DM3C** Opposed Orders will normally be sent to the Secretary of State within 6 months of the end of the objection period.

**DM3D** Witnesses will be advised to make statutory declarations where claims may not be dealt with for some years.

## 4.1B Legal - Public Path Orders

### Objective

To work within the existing legislative framework to improve the network of public rights of way for all

Public rights of way can be legally diverted, created and extinguished through the Public Path Order process. Further information on Public Path Orders can be found in Appendix 3A at [www.devon.gov.uk/rowip](http://www.devon.gov.uk/rowip). Creations can be by agreement with the landowner, or by Order (even if against the wishes of the landowner).

Section 1.1.6 of the DEFRA Guidance to Local Authorities on RoWIPs states that:



**...the creation of new routes in carefully chosen locations would make a significant difference to people who use, or who would like to use, footpaths, bridleways and byways. In areas where rights of way are fragmented, new, short links between existing routes would provide a substantially wider local network than exists at present...**



Section 2.4.8 states that:



**Local highway authorities are encouraged to use voluntary means to secure improvements to their rights of way networks wherever possible. Thus they would seek to negotiate the creation of routes or the addition of higher rights to existing routes by agreement with landowners using their powers under section 25 of the Highways Act 1980. Local highway authorities should approach such negotiations constructively and be prepared to consider changes to the network that landowners might seek as corollaries to agreements, provided they meet the criteria set out in sections 118 and 119 of the Highways Act 1980. They should, however, set a reasonable time limit within which agreement should be reached.**



The County Council must have regard to any material provision of the RoWIP in determining whether to confirm orders as unopposed orders made under section 26 (creation), section 118 (stopping up) or section 119 (diversion) of the 1980 Act. Also, the Secretary of State must have regard to any material provisions of the RoWIP in determining whether to confirm orders made under these sections or to make orders under section 26 (in accordance with the CROW Act, schedule 6, paragraphs 1, 6 and 9).

### Policies and Actions

#### Diversion Orders

**LP1A** The making of diversion orders which are in the interests of the users and/or landowners will be supported. Examples of diversions in the interest of the public are those which achieve:

- i. a direct improvement in road safety for users; or
- ii. a direct improvement in provision of a circular route, or provide access to a national route, regional route, attraction or viewpoint.

**LP1B** Applications will be supported which seek to divert paths away from:

- i. residential buildings to improve privacy; and
- ii. working farmyards and farm buildings for safety reasons.

**LP1C** The sharing or defraying of costs will be considered where a diversion would be of benefit to the public.

**LP1D** Concurrent creation and extinguishment orders will be used where diversion orders are not legally possible.



### Creation Agreements and Orders

- LP2A** Enhancements to the network will generally be supported through the use of creation agreements and orders where there is a public need or benefit, and in particular in relation to:
- i. road safety;
  - ii. providing a direct improvement in provision of a circular route, or access to a national route, regional route, attraction or viewpoint;
  - iii. development of the strategic recreational route network;
  - iv. providing links or improved access to Access Land; or
  - v. increasing the range of users on a route.
- LP2B** Priority will be given to the replacement of routes which are lost through natural erosion, using powers to allow routes to continue with the new lie of the land.
- LP2C** Anomalies, culs-de-sac routes and routes which change status along their length, including those crossing the county boundary, will be investigated and resolution sought as part of the parish-by-parish Definitive Map Review.
- LP2D** Neighbouring authorities will be encouraged and supported in the creation of appropriate links where it falls to them to resolve a route anomaly.

### Extinguishment

- LP3** Extinguishment of a public right of way will be considered where the requisite legal tests are met. However, this will not be a high priority, and it may be dependent upon:
- i. the applicant meeting monitoring costs to show that the route is not needed for public use; and
  - ii. the route being physically available to the public, signposted and/or waymarked throughout the monitoring period.





## 4.1C Maintenance

### Objective

To ensure that the public rights of way network is maintained at an appropriate level

Maintenance of the public rights of way network was identified as a top priority during the consultation exercise. It is carried out by the County Council, which is also responsible for other routes used by the public, such as off-road cycle tracks and national and regional routes. In addition, Dartmoor and Exmoor National Park Authorities maintain the network in their areas under an agency agreement. The County Council also has partnerships with many town and parish councils through the Parish Paths Partnership scheme (P3), where it gives an annual budget to help maintain and improve the routes in their parishes.

Landowners also play an important part in the maintenance of the network, being responsible for the condition of any gates and stiles on rights of way crossing their land. They are also responsible for reinstatement of paths after ploughing, for the control of crops and cutting back overhanging vegetation. The National Trust undertakes work on behalf of the County Council where the South West Coast Path runs through land in their ownership.

Substantial improvements in the condition of the public rights of way network were accelerated over a three year period between 2002 and 2005 under a Local Public Service Agreement (LPSA) sponsored by DEFRA. As a result of this process, over 90 percent of the network was made easy to use and procedures are in place to ensure that this standard is maintained through regular and programmed inspections.

The maintenance standards for the network are based upon the national Best Value Performance Indicator (BVPI 178) which allows some measure of comparison between all Highway Authorities in England and Wales. The BVPI describes public rights of way that are easy to use as:

1. being signposted or waymarked where public rights of way leave the road in accordance with the authority's duty under Section 27 of the Countryside Act 1968 and to the extent necessary to allow users to follow the path;
2. being free from unlawful obstructions and other interference (including overhanging vegetation) to the public's right of passage; and
3. having surface and lawful barriers (e.g. stiles, gates) in good repair and to a standard necessary to enable the public to use the way without undue inconvenience.

This standard is open to interpretation as there are no nationally accepted criteria. Accordingly, the County Council has developed its own criteria to ensure consistent standards of survey and maintenance across its rights of way network. As part of this exercise the opportunity was taken to classify routes to determine appropriate standards of maintenance. Other benefits of such a classification may extend to informing the public about the nature of certain routes and the standards they can expect.

There are also specific maintenance implications for the promoted strategic recreational networks. Their maintenance has to be to a very high standard as the promotion effectively invites visitors to use the routes. These routes will require special maintenance arrangements.

## Contact map

as shown in the County Council Public Rights of Way leaflets "Advice for Users" and "Advice for Landowners" available from Devon County Council.



## Policies and Actions

### Maintenance

- M1A** Maintenance will be carried out to established standards with due regard to statutory responsibilities, relevant strategies and objectives, including responsibilities to users, the environment and wildlife. Special arrangements will be made where necessary to ensure the high standard of the recreational walking route network.
- M1B** Management of the rights of way network will be achieved through a proactive approach based on the classification of routes, regular inspections and implementation of the work programmes.
- M1C** Maintenance standards will be reviewed periodically, including benchmarking with relevant authorities, to take account of best working practice and innovations in technology.
- M1D** Enforcement procedures will be used to assert and protect the rights of the public where goodwill and cooperation have failed.
- M1E** The least restrictive option (gap, then gate, then stile) will be encouraged, to improve ease of access, in consultation with the landowner(s) in accordance with British Standard 5709:2001 Gaps, gates and stiles - Specification.
- M1F** The feasibility of improving and maintaining uCRs will be investigated and supported, within the available resources, where they contribute to other strategic objectives and plans.

## 4.1D Signing and Waymarking



### Objective

To ensure that all public rights of way are signed and waymarked appropriately

*Rights of Way  
Warden checking  
a signpost*



Signing and waymarking have been identified as a top priority during the consultation exercise. Lack of waymarks was the number one cause for complaint in the period January 1995 - February 2004, with missing and damaged signs being the second most common complaint.

During the Best Value review of the Public Rights of Way Service in 2001 signing and waymarking was also identified as an important issue and a signing programme was undertaken covering 100 percent of the network. Through the PSA Inspections it was found that the level of signing had reduced to 83 percent, but work is ongoing to maintain a very high level of signing.

Waymarking is undertaken to ensure that people can find their way along routes using a 1:25000 scale map once they have left the road. This helps to ensure that users feel confident that they are on the correct path and that farmers and landowners know that people are not trespassing.

Most of the routes comprising the recreational walking route network have an identifiable logo which is used in conjunction with the statutory signing and waymarking. This is particularly important to engender a feeling of confidence to users who are using the routes for the first time.

### Policies and Actions

#### Signing

- SW1A** Public rights of way will be signed where they leave the metalled road, except in those urban areas where such signing is deemed unnecessary.
- SW1B** Green and white polycarbonate pointers will be used on all signposts but in exceptional circumstances the use of wooden signs will be considered (for example, in National Parks).

- SW1C** The feasibility of, and demand for, adding route-specific information (for example, distance and destination) at selected sites using separate plates attached to the post will be assessed.
- SW1D** Additional funding sources will be investigated to improve signpost information, particularly in tourist areas (for example, nationally and regionally promoted routes and in the World Heritage Site).
- SW1E** Improvements to signing of the uUCRs will be sought within the available resources under the following priority:
- i. those providing direct access to and from existing rights of way;
  - ii. those forming circular links with existing rights of way or where they serve as the primary unsurfaced route in the area; and
  - iii. all other uUCRs.

### Waymarking

- SW2A** Waymarking will continue to be improved to help users find their way and to avoid inadvertent trespass onto private land.
- SW2B** Parish Paths Partnership groups will be encouraged to liaise with landowners to help identify appropriate locations for waymarks.

### Misleading signs

- SW3A** Misleading signs and unauthorised waymarks will be removed from public rights of way and appropriate enforcement action will be taken.

### Branding and promoting routes

- SW4A** AONBs may add their logo to signposts to assist with branding.
- SW4B** Consistent signing and waymarking of promoted routes will be encouraged, taking account of permissive and on-road sections.
- SW4C** The indication of promoted and/or branded routes on Ordnance Survey mapping will be supported only where the highway authority has approved the promotion and branding in advance.
- SW4D** Individuals and organisations planning to promote routes will be encouraged to consult the County Council beforehand.



*Signpost in the Devon countryside*

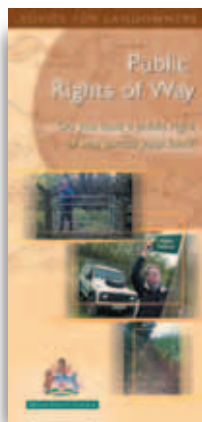
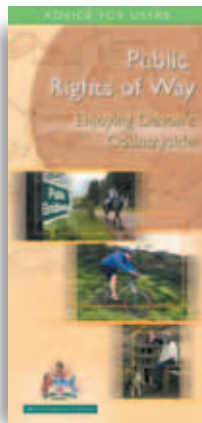




## 4.1E Information and Communication

### Objective

To improve the quality of information and communication



The provision of effective information and communication is a key way to improve people's enjoyment of the countryside. Examples of the types of information which can be helpful for both local residents and tourists include:

- the locations of routes and circuits;
- users rights and responsibilities;
- the availability of public transport links, car-parks, toilets and accommodation; and
- information about the landscape, history and culture.



Additionally, landowners need information about their rights and responsibilities so that they are clear about who can and cannot use the routes over their land and what help they can expect from the County Council for maintenance.

Wider issues include sharing of information across local authority boundaries, sharing with other authorities such as the Local Planning Authorities, contingency planning and sharing information from other access providers.

The County Council is developing a second Local Public Service Agreement 2005-2008 (LPSA2) with a priority to improve access to the countryside. LPSA2 is an agreement aimed at increasing physical activity and improving economic well-being through improved access to the countryside. Performance will be measured against:

1. increased satisfaction with information regarding access to the countryside;
2. increased participation in walking, cycling and horse riding at named locations;
3. increased participation in Walking for Health schemes and a measurement of increased activity levels resulting from this participation; and
4. increased economic benefit accruing from promoting access to the countryside.

Improving information and promotional material is one way of making a significant difference to the people that are using the network.

### Policies and Actions

#### Quality

- IC1** Continuous improvements to the quality and availability of information (including on-line information) and communication will be sought, including:
- i. rights and responsibilities of landowners and users;
  - ii. legal matters;
  - iii. countryside access and tourism;
  - iv. countryside access and public transport;
  - v. local facilities, including refreshments, car-parks and toilets;
  - vi. other means of access including Access Land, cycle tracks, uUCRs and permissive access;
  - vii. strategic routes;

- viii. routes identified as being particularly suitable for limited mobility users, to include information on the presence or absence of gates or stiles, the nature of the terrain and the surface type; and
- ix. temporary closures or restrictions.

### On-line information

- IC2A** The development of an on-line hierarchical map allowing people to select information relevant to their planned activity will be investigated.
- IC2B** Parish Paths Partnership groups will continue to be supported in their production of local route leaflets and these will continue to be made available on-line.
- IC2C** The feasibility of providing down-loadable access guides on-line will be investigated.

### Printed information

- IC3A** Paper based promotional information will continue to be available for the national and regional routes.
- IC3B** The development and provision of parish maps and notice-boards in consultation with parish councils will be supported, and sponsorship will be sought to support production costs.

### Monitoring and research

- IC4A** Research will continue into the use of public rights of way and permissive routes to understand any physical and psychological barriers to use in order to plan future improvements. Other access providers will be encouraged to monitor and share information that may assist this research.
- IC4B** Research will be undertaken to determine areas which are particularly suitable for specific activities (for example, horse-riding or mountain-biking). Targeted information will be considered for appropriate areas.
- IC4C** An ongoing process of public consultation will be undertaken to identify common issues and current trends.
- IC4D** Existing information will continue to be used for the development of management regimes, for example, an annual review of the complaints database to identify the most common issues and target resources.
- IC4E** Consideration will be given to trialling access promotion on a specific geographic area and to assess the effect on use levels seeking additional funding to support this, for example, through the Market and Coastal Town Initiative.



*A range of information leaflets are available from the County Council (many are available on the County Council website [www.devon.gov.uk](http://www.devon.gov.uk))*





## 4.1F Road Safety

### Objective

To improve safety for non-vehicular users on and crossing roads



*TravelWise raises awareness of more sustainable travel*

In consultations leading to the publication of the RoWIP every type of user mentioned road safety as a significant issue .

From 1991 to 2001 there was a 30 percent increase in car ownership in Devon (from 285,000 to 370,000 cars). The reduction in car use is on the national agenda and has been identified as an aim of the County Council through the Devon Strategic Partnership. Encouraging people to walk, cycle and even ride for short journeys helps reduce congestion in the first instance, making the roads a more pleasant environment.

People will generally have to make use of the road network in order to access rights of way. Helping people to avoid busy roads is a challenge and the County Council will seek to provide, promote and maintain links between rights of way where possible. Where people have to use roads, the County Council will aim to ensure that the interactions between vehicular and non-vehicular users are made safer for everyone, particularly considering the number of children who walk, cycle and ride the lanes of Devon.

### Policies and Actions

#### Road safety education

- RS1A** Educational information which encourages responsible, safe and courteous road use by all users will be developed, working closely with the Road Safety Unit.
- RS1B** The development of a multi-user road safety publicity campaign using appropriate media and covering utility and recreational use will be investigated.
- RS1C** The provision of information (such as vehicular flow data, permissive access and highway verge usability) will be investigated to enable users to make an informed decision about safe use of the road network.
- RS1D** The outcome of initiatives such as the Safe Lanes scheme in the Blackdown Hills AONB will be monitored to inform whether similar initiatives could be effective across Devon.

#### Physical road safety improvements

- RS2A** Work will continue with the Highways Agency to identify and implement improvements for vulnerable road users on and crossing the trunk roads, for example, raised parapets for horses.
- RS2B** A safety analysis of the rights of way that join A roads will be undertaken in conjunction with the Route Management Strategies and will be extended to B roads in the future.

Examples of the types of improvements that might be identified can be found in Appendix 3B at [www.devon.gov.uk/rowip](http://www.devon.gov.uk/rowip).



*Be safe, be seen  
and pass wide  
and slow*

#### **Development of new off-road links**

- RS3A** The development of off-road links that provide a safer environment for all users will be pursued.
- RS3B** Priority will be given to the development of off-road links for travel to shops, schools and workplaces in the key congestion areas of Barnstaple, Exeter, Kingskerswell, Newton Abbot and Totnes.
- RS3C** The development of off-road links between communities, in particular the market and coastal towns, will be encouraged.



## 4.1G Planning

### Objective

To ensure that the planning process pays due regard to existing public rights of way and, where possible, leads to improvements

Rights of way can be affected by planning applications and development. Planning applications are generally dealt with by the relevant District or Borough Council in their role as the Local Planning Authority (LPA). LPAs have a specific remit with regard to existing public rights of way and powers with respect to the creation of new ones.

The impact of a proposal on a public right of way is a material consideration when a planning application is being decided. The granting of planning permission does not legally alter any existing rights of way crossing the land. The LPA should determine whether:

- the proposal would require a public right of way to be extinguished or diverted;
- the necessary diversion is an acceptable alternative to the existing route, bearing in mind the convenience of people using it;
- the proposal would affect the setting or amenity of a public right of way. If a path needs to be moved or extinguished for development to take place, a legal order must be made by the appropriate Planning Authority under section 257 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990, at the same time that the planning application is determined.

Agricultural buildings are sometimes erected under permitted development rights. That is, the landowner does not have to apply for permission to erect the building. However, the landowner must ascertain from the LPA whether prior approval is required, with regard to position and appearance. Permitted development rights do not allow a right of way to be blocked or diverted, as is the case with planning applications. It is the responsibility of the landowner to ensure that the necessary procedures have been followed.

Over 300 of Devon's rights of way are affected by buildings, although generally users have found an alternative route. These existing obstructions and unofficial diversions will need to be addressed over time either by formally diverting the routes or seeking the removal of the obstructions.

Planning obligation, through Section 106 agreements, provides an opportunity to improve access on or adjacent to development sites.

### Policies and Actions

#### Local Planning Authorities (LPAs) and development

- PL1A** Working with LPAs and parish councils, ways will be sought to improve the recognition, protection and promotion of public rights of way in the planning process.
- PL1B** A holding objection will be made against any planning application which fails to take account of an existing public right of way until the matter is resolved.
- PL1C** Working closely with LPAs, opportunities will be sought for improvements to the rights of way network through planning obligations where new developments are occurring.

**PL1D** LPAs will be encouraged to take account of the RoWIP in the development of their local planning policies, including the Local Development Framework and Supplementary Planning Guidance

### **Responsibilities of landowners and developers**

**PL2A** Advice will continue to be provided to landowners and developers in relation to developments affecting public rights of way.

**PL2B** When a public right of way is obstructed by development, the recovery of all costs associated with making the route available to the public will be sought where appropriate.

### **Mineral development**

**PL3A** Proposals for mineral development which affect rights of way will not be permitted unless provision can be made for an appropriate alternative route.

**PL3B** In considering applications for mineral development the County Council will encourage the provision of new rights of way and access to the countryside.



*Planning obligation led to the creation of a cycle track to the new Met Office buildings in Exeter (Apex/Jim Wileman)*



## 4.1H Access Land



### Objective

To develop opportunities for Access Land and to integrate this with the rights of way network



*When the new rights commence, this symbol will be used at access points onto land that may be open for public access on foot (rights for other types of activities may also apply, such as riding a horse on an existing bridleway)*

The Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000 (the CRoW Act) introduces a new right of access on foot to land designated as Access Land comprising open country (mountain, moor, heath and down) and registered common land. People often refer to this by the misnomer right to roam. It appears that some members of the public and landowners are unsure what the new rights of access actually mean to them.

The mapping of Access Land has been a three stage process with maps going through a draft and provisional stage before the production of the conclusive map. Following this process, Access Land in Devon becomes available to the public on 28th August 2005. Access Land will be shown on Ordnance Survey Outdoor Leisure maps. For further information on the mapping process in Devon see the RoWIP webpage.

In Devon 59,200 hectares have been identified as Access Land, the majority falling within the National Parks. More detail is provided in Table 1 below. The area outside the National Parks totals 6,945 hectares, of which 4,843 hectares is registered common and 2,102 hectares is open country.

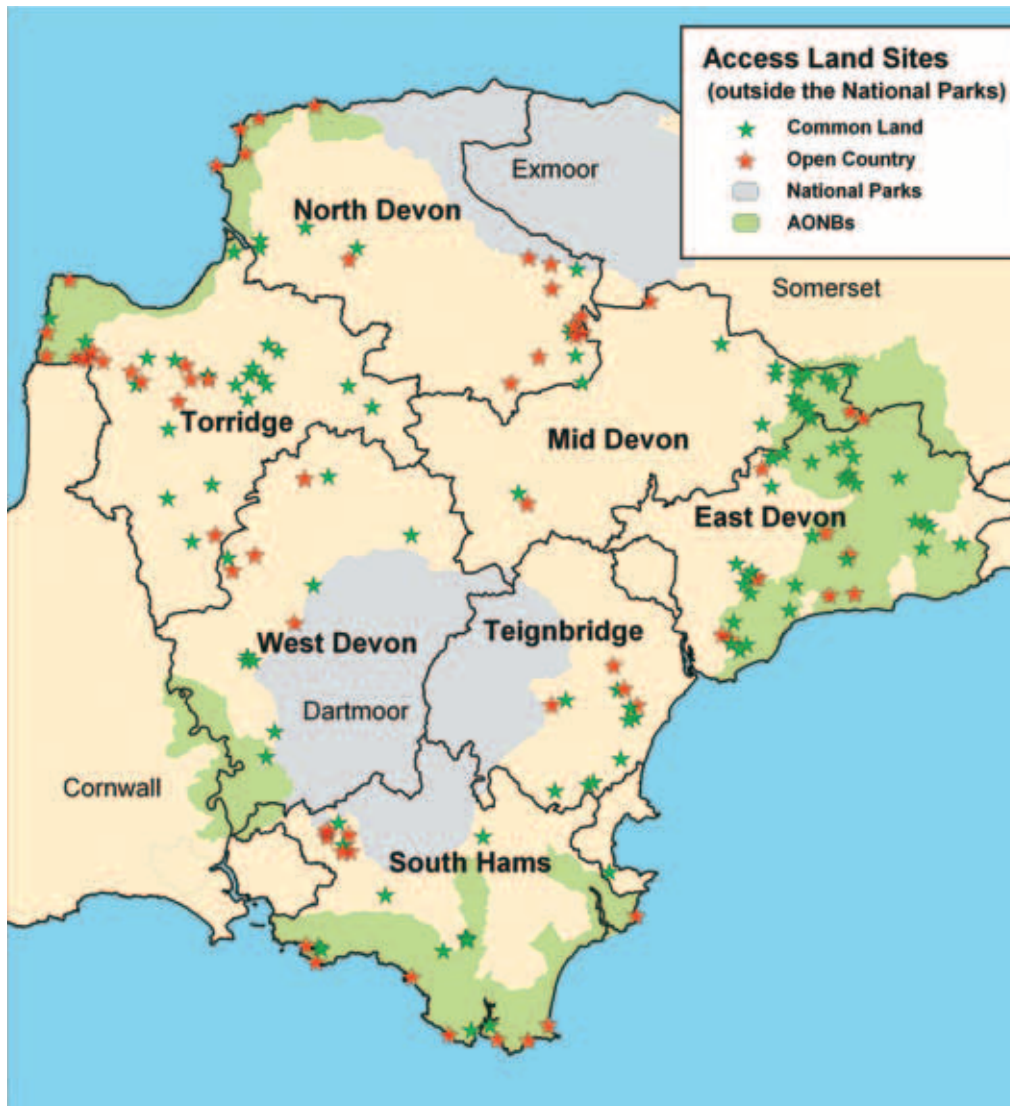
An Access Land Officer has been appointed by the County Council and funded by the Countryside Agency to prepare an Access Management Plan for Devon. A survey is being undertaken of Access Land outside the National Park Authority areas in order to determine infrastructure needs and possible use levels. Areas which are considered especially vulnerable to an increase in use (for example, those with fragile ecosystems or heritage features) will be identified and monitored.

**Table 1. Access Land in Devon (Conclusive Map, August 2005)**

	Registered Common Area		Open Country Area		Total Area
Devon (excluding National Parks)	116 No.	4,843 ha	265 parcels	2,102 ha	6,945 ha
National Parks	89 No.	37,723 ha	1,085 parcels	14,532 ha	52,255 ha
Total	205 No.	42,566 ha	1,350 parcels	16,634 ha	59,200 ha



*Photo courtesy of the Countryside Agency*

**Map 4. Summary of Access Land sites outside the National Parks**

## Policies and Actions

### Access Management Plan

**AL1** An Access Management Plan will be produced.

### Access to land

**AL2A** Landowners will be encouraged to consider the dedication of horse-riding and cycling rights on Access Land, or along a particular route across such land.

**AL2B** Landowners will be encouraged to dedicate additional Access Land (under Section 16 of the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000).





## 4.11 Permissive Access

### Objective

To improve opportunities through permissive access agreements

In the development of access the County Council would always prefer to work with landowners to gain routes which all users can enjoy. One way in which routes can be provided is through the development of permissive access, although there are limitations, for example:

- it can be withdrawn at any time;
- it can have different rules of use, for example, dogs not allowed or on leads at all times;
- it is generally not shown on Ordnance Survey maps; and
- arrangements for maintenance can be difficult to implement.

Permissive access has been useful in securing routes on the recreational walking route network where public rights of way do not exist or cannot be easily achieved. Further information on types and providers of permissive access can be found in Appendix 3C at [www.devon.gov.uk/rowip](http://www.devon.gov.uk/rowip). The County Council would like to make the most of the opportunities provided by permissive access in Devon.

### Policies and Actions

#### Encourage permissive access

**PA1A** The County Council will encourage permissive access, especially where such access is unlikely to be achieved through a legal process.

**PA1B** Work will continue with DEFRA in the development of their targeting statements relating to public access provision through the agri-environment schemes.

**PA1C** Closer working arrangements will be sought with major landowners, for example, the Forestry Commission, in the development of public access provision.

**PA1D** The inclusion of walkers, riders and cyclists will be encouraged on all appropriate permissive access.

**PA1E** Equality issues in permissive access provision will be taken into account, and the least restrictive option (gap, then gate, then stile) will be encouraged.



DEFRA Countryside Stewardship permissive access locations in Devon (further information from <http://countrywalks.defra.gov.uk>)

## 4.2 Provision for Users

This section provides objectives, policies and actions which cover provision for users of the access network.

### 4.2A Users with Limited Mobility

#### Objective

To improve rights of way and access for blind or partially sighted persons and others with mobility problems

Over 17,000 people living in Devon are registered as disabled (see table 2 below), some of whom may find access to the countryside a challenge. The disabled may include walkers, cyclists, horse-riders, carriage-drivers and vehicular users. A high percentage of Devon's population is elderly. An elderly person may be perfectly capable of walking but may, for example, have difficulty negotiating a stile. Limited mobility applies to an even broader section of the population. For example, a person with a pushchair could experience limited mobility. The disabled, young people and the elderly are particular sectors for whom the County Council would like to make access improvements.

**Table 2 Residents in Devon registered as disabled, 2004**

Primary Care Group	Age band			Total
	<18	18-64	65+	
East Devon PCG	152	716	1,908	2,776
Exeter PCG	282	933	1,582	2,797
Mid Devon PCG	156	439	851	1,446
North Devon PCG	421	1,076	1,863	3,360
South Hams and West Devon PCG	178	741	1,594	2,513
Teignbridge PCG	317	799	2,397	3,513
Unknown	125	333	422	880
<b>Total</b>	<b>1,631</b>	<b>5,037</b>	<b>10,617</b>	<b>17,285</b>

The DEFRA statutory guidance for RoWIPs includes the need to assess the accessibility of local rights of way to blind or partially sighted persons and others with mobility problems. The Disability Discrimination Act 1995 gives specific duties to consider the needs of people with disabilities and to improve access to services. It is not clear at this time whether rights of way are legally defined as a service. However, the improvement of access to the countryside for the wider public should be part of the overall aim of the County Council.

In developing and maintaining access for any of these users the County Council must be inclusive and encourage the least restrictive option on public rights of way and access. British Standard BS5709:2001 Gaps, gates and stiles - Specification takes into account the provisions of the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000 and the Disability Discrimination Act 1995. It states that:



“the United Kingdom is noted for the variety of stiles and other devices which enable crossings to be made of boundaries where animals need to be contained. Whilst local traditional forms of gates and stiles should not be lightly discarded for a standard design, it should be borne in mind that the main objective is for gates and stiles to be adequately stockproof while providing good access for all legitimate users”

*Permission to reproduce extracts of BS5709:2001 is granted by BSI.*

## Policies and Actions

### Improved understanding

- LM1A** Links will continue to be developed with representatives of persons that are blind, partially sighted or have mobility problems, to understand clearly any specific needs and how best to meet them.
- LM1B** Findings from partner organisations will be monitored to inform improvements in the Devon-wide network, for example, the improvements in accessibility trialled by the East Devon AONB Service.

### Encourage the least restrictive option

**LM2A** The least restrictive option will be encouraged (gap, then gate, then stile) in accordance with policy and action M1E. Priority will be given to minimising restrictive structures on routes around towns and villages linking destinations such as shops, places of worship, schools and recreational areas.

**LM2B** Information on the location of gates and stiles gathered during the Public Service Agreement, and information from parish councils and users, will be used to identify unnecessary structures and to seek their removal, in consultation with landowners. This will be extended to encourage the least restrictive option on cycle tracks and all other forms of access.

**LM2C** Inappropriate new structures that are put in place without authorisation will be removed.



*Public Rights of Way staff providing information at the Honiton Show. The County Council attends many of the local agricultural shows to meet farmers, landowners and users*

## 4.2B Walkers

Objective To improve opportunities for walkers

The RoWIP amplifies the policies within the Devon Structure Plan 2001-2016 with regard to walking (see chapter 2 on page 13).

Walkers are generally well catered for - they can use the whole of the rights of way network and the uUCRs and will also have access to open country and common land under the CRoW Act from August 2005. However, the network is patchy and there are some parishes with no off-road provision for walkers.

The motive for walking varies, from daily dog-walkers to organised rambling groups, from walking to work to walking for health. There are thus differing requirements and expectations. Walking is the cheapest and easiest form of transport and recreation and it should be supported and developed wherever possible, encouraging people to get out of their cars and onto their feet.

The South West Coast Path, a 640 mile National Trail, runs through the county on both the north and south coasts, including through the Jurassic Coast World Heritage Site in East Devon. In addition, a strategic walking route network runs across the county, as shown on Map 1 (see page 9). These routes are primarily comprised of public rights of way, but have been augmented where necessary by the use of uUCRs and permissive access. These routes have been developed to encourage tourism. Marketing is undertaken both in and out of the county to encourage awareness and use of such routes. It is also desirable to link these routes to neighbouring settlements and attractions, as has already been done at certain locations.



*Out for a family walk in Devon*

**Policies and Actions****Utility use**

- W1** The development of walking in urban areas will continue to be supported:
- i. for utility use, to encourage people to switch from car use to sustainable transport;
  - ii. for health benefits; and
  - iii. for the economic benefits accruing from tourism,
- by improving off-road links between destinations such as shops, schools and work places. This can be achieved through creation agreements and orders.

**Recreational use**

- W2A** Priority will be given to the development of:
- i. short routes and circular links of 3km and 8km;
  - ii. routes linking towns, villages and attractions and providing a true off-road network for utility and leisure; and
  - iii. appropriate links to and from the recreational walking route network.
- W2B** Improvements will continue to be sought in the line of the National Trail and the recreational walking route network, using diversion orders and creation agreements and orders.
- W2C** The least restrictive option will be encouraged (gap, then gate, then stile) in accordance with policy and action M1E.



## 4.2C Horse-Riders and Carriage-Drivers

### Objective

To improve opportunities for horse-riders and carriage-drivers



*Horse riding in Devon*



Horse activity is a significant part of rural life in Devon, not just for recreation but also for business, for example, farriers and feed-merchants. Several of Devon's schools have riding clubs, such as Uffculme in Mid Devon and Ivybridge Community College in the South Hams, and the Western Morning News has a weekly horse section reflecting the economic value of the horse industry to the county.

Horse-riders can use bridleways, restricted byways, byways open to all traffic and uUCRs, as well as common land on Dartmoor. However, the routes are generally fragmented, requiring riding on the road. Carriage-drivers can use restricted byways, byways open to all traffic and uUCRs.

There are no long-distance horse-riding routes in the county. However, representations have been made by the British Horse Society and South West Riders to develop a strategic bridleway network which is currently under investigation. This is intended to link with similar proposals in the neighbouring counties of Cornwall, Dorset and Somerset and would support the British Horse Society Ride UK project. At the same time the County Council is investigating the establishment of short links to form more localised circuits between 4km and 11km.

### Policies and Actions

#### Development of the bridleway and restricted byway network

**HC1A** The County Council will seek to develop a strategic bridleway network and appropriate facilities.

**HC1B** The County Council will seek to develop short routes and circuits for horse-riders of between 4km and 11km;



**HC1C** Opportunities to develop off-road links for horse-riders to reach areas with better riding facilities, for example, on Dartmoor and Exmoor will be investigated.

**HC1D** Upgrading of existing routes to public bridleway or restricted byway status will be supported where this would meet the objectives of the RoWIP.

**HC1E** Opportunities will be sought to develop disused canals and railway lines for equestrian use and multi-use where appropriate.

#### **Development of horse tourism**

**HC2A** Recreational use for health benefits will continue to be supported, and opportunities sought to build upon the existing economic benefits accruing from horse tourism.

**HC2B** The promotion of horse-riding to tourists will continue to be explored, with due regard to the environment, as part of increasing Devon's potential as an outdoor activity destination, particularly the Discover Devon Naturally initiative.

#### **Multi-use**

**HC3** Multi-use will be encouraged in accordance with policy and action CY3A, B and C.

## 4.2D Cyclists

### Objective

To improve provision for cyclists

The RoWIP amplifies the policies within the Devon Structure Plan 2001-1016 in regard to cycling (see chapter 2 on page 13).

Cyclists can use bridleways, restricted byways, byways open to all traffic and uUCRs. Additionally the County Council has been proactive in developing off-road cycle tracks. Map 1 (see page 9) shows the main cycle routes in Devon. An example is the Tarka Trail in North Devon which has been developed along a disused railway line. Such routes have the advantage that they are relatively flat, safe and easy to use. The gradient and surfacing means that the routes are also suitable for walkers and those with limited mobility. The first-ever National Cycling Assessment ranked Devon as one of the best performing cycling counties in the country.

One of the routes currently under development has come about through a successful funding bid under Paths to Prosperity, a project to improve the National Cycle Network in rural Devon. This identified cycle-tourism as one way to bring extra money into Devon following the effects of Foot and Mouth on the rural economy. The route is already open in part and is due to be completed by 2008.



Cycle route  
in Devon

These cycle tracks are being developed to encourage cycle tourism and local cycling for utility purposes, for example, cycling to the local shop rather than using the car. However, the majority of use of the cycle tracks on the disused railway lines is inevitably recreational rather than utility in terms of numbers of users. The exceptions are along those sections of track in town centres, such as in Barnstaple, where utility numbers may prevail at certain times of the day. Cyclists getting to work are likely to be regular users and may account for more use in terms of distance travelled.

Existing footpaths and bridleways are sometimes used in the development of improved cycling facilities in and around towns. Where routes are being developed specifically for cyclists the County Council is often asked by local horse-riders whether they can use them to link with other off-road riding routes. Research has shown that there is very little evidence of actual or perceived conflict on such routes.

Approximately one-fifth of cyclists in Devon identify themselves as mountain-bikers, so there is a need to ensure appropriate provision for this. The County Council wishes to encourage young people to lead an active lifestyle, and mountain biking is often, though not exclusively, undertaken by the young. Mountain-biking offers further opportunity for tourism development, which has not been fully explored in this county to date. Mountain-bikers can legally use bridleways and are generally happy to use the soft-surface routes preferred by horse-riders. There are opportunities to develop routes which will suit both horse-riders and cyclists, as well as being available for walkers.



## Policies and Actions

### Utility cycling

- CY1** The development of cycling in urban areas will continue to be supported:
- i. for utility use, to encourage people to switch from car use to sustainable transport;
  - ii. for health benefits; and
  - iii. for the economic benefits accruing from tourism,
- by improving off-road links between destinations such as shops, schools and work places. This can be achieved through creation agreements and orders.

### Off-road cycle network development

- CY2A** Opportunities will be sought to develop disused railway lines for cycle use and multi-use where appropriate.
- CY2B** Opportunities will be sought to develop circular cycle routes, in addition to the long-distance National Cycle Network already in development.
- CY2C** Public transport links will continue to be developed to help deliver circular routes, for example, using bike-buses.

### Multi-use

- CY3A** Provision for multi-use will be preferred where new routes are developed and the use of restrictive covenants will only be agreed in exceptional circumstances.
- CY3B** A review of existing cycle routes will be undertaken to see if multi-use is appropriate.
- CY3C** Appropriate surfacing of multi-use routes will be undertaken following local consultation with the public and user-groups and taking into account environmental considerations, user needs, costs (including future maintenance) and guidance from the relevant sources, such as the good practice guide Surface Requirements for Shared Use Routes to be published by the Countryside Agency.



Mountain biking  
on a bridleway  
in Devon

**Maximising the rights of way resource**

**CY4** The upgrading of existing public footpaths to public bridleway status will be considered where they are to be used as part of a cycle network. Within an urban setting Cycle Track Orders will be preferred.

**Mountain-biking**

**CY5A** Partnerships with organisations which have a particular interest in mountain-biking will continue to be developed, for example, the existing work with the Forestry Commission in their facility development (which includes mountain-biking).

**CY5B** Opportunities will be sought to develop off-road links for mountain-bikers to reach specialist facilities without the need to drive.

**CY5C** The promotion of mountain-biking to tourists will continue to be explored, with due regard to the environment, as part of increasing Devon's potential as an outdoor activity destination, particularly the Discover Devon Naturally initiative.



## 4.2E Motorised Users

### Objective

To improve opportunities for vehicular users

The County Council encourages the legal and responsible use of routes to which motorised users have access. Licensed motor vehicles may be driven on byways open to all traffic and uUCRs. Drivers must be licensed, insured and fit to drive, and are expected to drive with due care and consideration for other users, as on any other highway. The public rights of way available to motorised users are fragmented. 72 km of the total network is recorded as byway open to all traffic and approximately 730 km as uUCRs. It should be noted that the uUCRs also form an important recreational resource for vulnerable road users (walkers, cyclists and horse-riders/drivers) and the issue of maintenance of these routes affects all users.

As with any group - whether walkers, cyclists, horse-riders or farmers - a minority exists whose actions tarnish public perceptions of the rest of the group. This is particularly the case for vehicular users. There are illegal users who build prejudices against the sector as a whole. Many user groups have developed codes of conduct which promote responsible use of vehicular highways. The County Council will work with user groups, landowners and the Police to combat illegal and irresponsible use.

A research project by DEFRA and the Countryside Agency published in 2005 aimed to quantify the level of motor vehicle use on byways open to all traffic and to assess the implications of use for the network and its management. It suggested that motorised use of the public rights of way network can be broken down into three main categories, as shown in Table 3 below:

**Table 3. Results of research based on 20 byways open to all traffic in England**

	Average daily flow	Percent
<b>Land management use</b>		
For example, by agricultural vehicles and farm machinery	1.7	42%
<b>Recreational use</b>		
Motor vehicles and motor cycles	1.5	38%
<b>Dwelling access</b>	0.8	20%
<b>Total</b>	4.0	100%

(Source: DEFRA and Countryside Agency, 2005, PB10323)

The average daily flow of 4 vehicles per day was weighted to give an estimated average daily flow on byways open to all traffic of between 4.2 and 5.0 vehicles per day, although this masks considerable variations.

Another element of use that was not considered in the research is competitive sport (for example, Classic Reliability Trials and Rallying) under the General Regulations of the Royal Automobile Club Motor Sport Association Limited. This is recognised as the governing body of all motor sport in Great Britain. It ensures that organised events are carried out legally and responsibly, for example, by including consultation with landowners, liaison with the Police and event marshalling.

There is evidence that those who engage in recreational use of byways open to all traffic include people with mobility problems for whom walking, cycling and horse-riding is not possible. The research was not able to estimate the numbers involved, but it is clear that motorised use provides an opportunity for those with mobility problems to access the countryside.





*Motorised users  
in Devon*

## **Policies and Actions**

### **Legal clarity**

**MU1** Work will continue to ensure that the correct legal status of vehicular routes is recorded.

### **Management**

**MU2A** Work will continue with vehicular user groups to educate users, both motorised and non-motorised, about the rights and responsibilities of each to help reduce any actual or perceived conflict.

**MU2B** Work will be undertaken with user groups, landowners and the Police (through the appropriate Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnership) to combat illegal use, such as vehicular use of public footpaths or bridleways without a private right or the permission of the landowner.

**MU2C** Where use is causing physical or environmental damage to a route, the latest Government guidance will be followed with regard to the implementation of Traffic Regulation Orders.

**MU2D** The possibility of improved maintenance and signing of the uUCRs within the available resources will be investigated (in accordance with policy and action M1F and SW1E).

## 4.2F Dog Walkers

### Objective

To balance the need to exercise dogs with the needs of landowners and other users



It is estimated that around 40% of households own a dog. There will therefore be a large number of dog owners who access the countryside to exercise their dogs. People living in rural Devon will do this on a daily basis and those living in more urban areas may travel out into the surrounding countryside on a regular basis to walk somewhere other than the local park. Dogs can bring pleasure and confidence to their owners, as well as providing a motive for accessing the countryside. However, the County Council is keen to promote responsible behaviour by dog owners which respects the needs and opinions of landowners and other users.

When walking dogs, the owners are also getting exercise and this should be encouraged. Some accommodation providers and pubs specifically cater for dog-walkers, providing facilities for dogs and owner, and often market these facilities to tourists.

In a rural county such as Devon, dog-walkers can expect to find animals in fields through which they may be walking. It is important that people act appropriately when they meet other animals, whether those animals are livestock or wildlife.

### Policies and Actions

#### Control of dogs

**D1A** The continued education and reinforcement of the importance of keeping dogs under close control whilst using the countryside will be encouraged, particularly when in the vicinity of livestock and where there is potential disturbance to wildlife, for example, ground nesting birds.



*Dog walking near  
Putsborough Sand,  
North Devon*

- D1B** The making and enforcement of Dog Control Orders by the appropriate authority (district and parish councils) will be supported under the Clean Neighbourhoods and Environment Act 2005.
- D1C** The use of powers under the Road Traffic Act 1988 will be supported in exceptional circumstances to require dogs to be kept on leads, in consultation with the appropriate Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnership.
- D1D** Appropriate enforcement action will be taken where a dog intimidates a person or injures them or their animal(s).

### **Dog gates**

- D2** In order to make access with dogs easier, and to prevent damage and potential injury to dogs and their owners, the provision by landowners of dog gates in existing stiles will be supported where appropriate.



*Negotiating a dog gate next to a stile*

## 4.3 The Wider Context

This section provides objectives, policies and actions which will help to deliver wider benefits relating to the environment, tourism and economic development, health and agriculture, much of which will involve partnership work.

### 4.3A Environment

#### Objective

To ensure that the management of public rights of way and access respects Devon's environment

In the consultation on the draft RoWIP the environment was raised as a key issue. The county's distinctive appearance and character is made up of a complex interplay between its urban areas, rural settlements, countryside, wildlife habitats, geological and historical environment. In order to protect this environment now and in the future it is important to ensure that people appreciate and understand it. The rights of way network forms an important part of the overall landscape, is an historic asset in its own right and can be used to raise environmental awareness. The potential negative effects of recreation should not be over-stated in comparison to other land uses such as forestry, mineral workings and agriculture.

Devon's environment has an importance that extends beyond its local area. Almost half of the area of the county has some form of designation from international and European statutory designations to national, local and other non-statutory designations. Map 5 shows the location of some of these designated areas. More information about designations can be found in Appendix 3D at [www.devon.gov.uk/rowip](http://www.devon.gov.uk/rowip). The Devon Structure Plan 2001-2016 Policy CO1 requires that "the distinctive qualities and features of Devon's landscape...should be sustained and enhanced" and that "policies and proposals within each part of Devon should be informed by and sympathetic to its landscape character and quality". While much of the county has been designated to reflect its high quality and diverse landscape and character, the scale and quality of much of the remaining undesignated landscape makes it important that we should also consider the effect of any proposal on all areas within Devon.

#### Policies and Actions







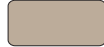

##### Environmentally sensitive management

- E1A** The objectives of the County Council's Role and Action Programmes for Biodiversity, Coast, Historic Environment and Landscape will be considered when managing public rights of way and access.
- E1B** Opportunities will be sought to improve the environment and appreciation of it through works and promotional information, for example, seeking to improve the landscape corridor along national and regional routes.
- E1C** The diversion or creation of public rights of way which afford links to appropriate environmental, geological or historical sites will be supported, in consultation with relevant bodies and with due regard to the relevant legislation.
- E1D** The diversion of public rights of way will be considered where there is evidence that they adversely affect or may adversely affect very sensitive environmental, geological or historical sites, in consultation with relevant bodies and in the light of relevant legislation and protective policies.



**Map 5. Location of designated areas in Devon**



- |   |                                    |   |   |
|---|------------------------------------|---|---|
|  | National Park                      |  | Dorset and East Devon Coast World Heritage Site |
|  | Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty |  | Braunton Burrows Biosphere Reserve              |
|  | Coastal Preservation Area          |  | County Boundary                                 |
|  | Area of Great Landscape Value      |  | District Boundary                               |

**Designated land**

**E2** The integrity, conservation objectives and sustainable use of all Designated Land (International, National and Local Designations including other non-statutory environmental designations) will be promoted in partnership with the relevant land managers in the light of relevant legislation and protective policies.

*"In exercising or performing any functions in relation to, or so as to affect, land in an area of outstanding natural beauty, a relevant authority shall have regard to the purpose of conserving and enhancing the natural beauty of the area of outstanding natural beauty- Section 85 of the CRoW Act".*



**Protected species**

- E3** Proposals which are likely to have an adverse effect on protected species will only be permitted in accordance with the relevant legislation, where there are no practical alternatives and if measures have been taken to:
- i. facilitate the survival of individual members of the species;
  - ii. reduce disturbance to a minimum; and
  - iii. provide adequate alternative habitats to sustain at least the current levels of population in a local context.

**Culture and heritage**

- E4** Account will be taken of cultural and heritage features when managing the public rights of way network.

**Climate change**

- E5** An assessment will be made of the likely impacts of climate change on public rights of way in the short, medium and long term, in particular where they are adjacent to water courses and the coast.

## 4.3B Tourism and Economic Development

### Objective

To ensure that public rights of way and access add to the economic benefits of Devon's tourism

Tourism plays a major role in the economy of the county. The Devon County Council Tourism Role and Action Programme (RAP) Tourism: Everybody's Business makes the point that the coast, countryside and National Park areas of Devon are a major tourism and recreational resource. One of the main ways in which people can access this resource is through the public rights of way network. Tourism is a key sector of Devon's economy and helps to support 13 percent of Devon's workforce, equating to 47,000 jobs (full-time equivalent including Plymouth and Torbay). Appendix 3E at [www.devon.gov.uk/rowip](http://www.devon.gov.uk/rowip) contains further information on Devon's tourism and economy. Headline figures for Devon in 2003 include an estimated:

- 30.3 million staying nights, representing nearly a third of nights spent in the South West by tourists, with an associated spend of £1,343 million<sup>†</sup>;
- 19.3 million day trips with an associated spend of £524 million<sup>†</sup>;
- £64 million annual visitor spend attributable to the South West Coast Path, and a further £60 million from Devon's residents and their visitors or relatives<sup>††</sup>; and
- 23 percent of South West farmers that have diversified into tourism. This was highlighted during the Foot and Mouth outbreak in 2001.

Many opportunities for improvements are identified through the Tourism RAP which tie in with the RoWIP. The County Council will seek to deliver these where possible and appropriate, seeking additional funding as required.

In particular, Devon has a network of strategic recreational walking routes which are widely promoted because of the recreational experience they provide and the economic benefits they bring through visitor use. The network includes part of the South West Coast Path National Trail and also a further fifteen named regional routes (as shown on Map 1 on page 9). The Coast Path is also promoted as the "Walk through Time" along the Dorset and East Devon World Heritage Site.

### Policies and Actions

#### Tourism information

**TED1** Up-to-date information from the tourism industry and our partners will be sought and used to understand the needs and desires of Devon's tourists with respect to countryside access.

#### Tourism development

**TED2A** The objectives of the County Council's Role and Action Programme for Tourism will be considered when managing public rights of way and access.

**TED2B** Green Tourism such as walking, horse-riding and cycling will be promoted by working with tourism providers.

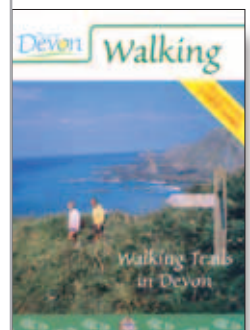
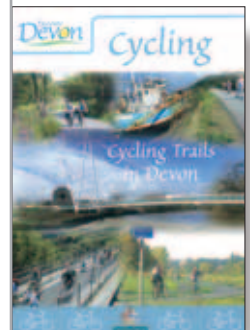
**TED2C** Opportunities to enhance and promote access in areas of little or no current tourism will be encouraged, and existing opportunities to extend Devon's attractiveness to tourists will be developed. Schemes which have added benefit of providing local access for Devon's residents will be particularly supported.

**TED2D** Opportunities will be sought to enhance and develop the recreational route networks for walking, riding and cycling.



<sup>†</sup> South West Region Research Group Value of Tourism 2003

<sup>††</sup> South West Tourism and Tourism Associates (University of Exeter)



Discover Devon's Walking and Cycling booklets

*Looking west from the South West Coast Path at Stoke Point, South Hams*  
© Countryside Agency/Andrew Besley



- TED2E** The development of access and car-free links to/from existing visitor attractions will be supported and developers of new attractions will be encouraged to consider such access from the outset of their business development.
- TED2F** Links to and from popular destinations and national and regional routes will be improved by working with public transport providers, including ferry operators.

### **Visitor understanding**

- TED3A** The provision of information for visitors regarding their rights and responsibilities will be encouraged, making use of Tourist Information Centres and other suitable outlets.
- TED3B** The provision of information in alternative languages and formats (in addition to that which would be provided in response to an individual request) will be considered where supported by an identified tourist profile, working in partnership with South West Tourism.
- TED3C** Appropriate information and advice concerning public rights of way and access will be made available for local tourist providers.
- TED3D** Consideration will be given to the provision of information and interpretation, paying particular attention to the recreational walking, riding and cycling route networks. Business or visitor payback scheme sponsorship will be sought to assist with such work.

## 4.3C Health



### Objective

To ensure that public rights of way and access help to deliver health benefits

Only 37 percent of men and 24 percent of women currently meet the Chief Medical Officer's minimum recommendation for activity in adults and are sufficiently active to benefit their health. Rights of way provide a free resource which can form part of planned or incidental exercise. Whilst known to exist, it is difficult to measure directly the positive effects on both physical and mental health which can accrue from access to the countryside. However, it has long been recognised that outdoor recreation can have a positive effect on well-being and in reducing stress. The term recreation itself arises from the Latin to restore.

The Government recommends that people take an average 30 minutes of moderate exercise 5 times a week. Walking at a reasonable pace is one way to exercise and obtain health benefits. A review by Cheshire County Council established that there are potential health benefits associated with encouraging more people to use public rights of way for walking, cycling and horse riding. Devon County Council is already working to raise awareness of more sustainable travel for health and environmental benefits (for example, encouraging people to walk and cycle rather than using a car) through TravelWise.

The Department of Health's White Paper "Choosing Health" suggests that action will be taken across Government on helping children and young people to lead healthy lifestyles, and promoting healthy and active life amongst older people. In a county where the average age of the population is rising there are clear benefits to encouraging exercise and finding ways for people to continue to keep fit as they get older. In addition, studies have found that two thirds of walkers, riders and cyclists had been involved in their chosen activity since before they were 17 years of age and so it is also important that provision is made for young participants.

A summary of physical activity in England and the full Chief Medical Officer's recommendations can be found in Appendix 3F at [www.devon.gov.uk/rowip](http://www.devon.gov.uk/rowip).



*Enjoying a healthy and refreshing walk at Sidmouth, East Devon*

**Policies and Actions****Encouraging exercise**

- H1A** The County Council will seek to ensure that public rights of way and access contribute to the Department of Health's Choosing Health and Choosing Exercise programmes.
- H1B** The use of routes in and around communities will be promoted and initiatives such as Walking the Way to Health will be supported to encourage people to walk, ride and cycle as part of their daily life.
- H1C** Initiatives that lead to sustainable and healthy changes in travel choice from the car to walking and cycling will be encouraged and supported in partnership with TravelWise and the Primary Care Trusts.

**Social inclusion**

- H2A** Initiatives will be supported that increase participation in physical activity for underrepresented groups, for example, the Forestry Commission's Haldon Forest Park initiative.
- H2B** Best practice guidance arising from the Countryside Agency's Diversity Review will be considered and opportunities will be investigated to implement the findings as appropriate to Devon.



## 4.3D Agriculture



### Objective

To encourage a positive attitude and understanding between both users and landowners

From 2005 a new structure for agricultural support has been introduced which has a bearing on public rights of way and access:

The **Single Payment Scheme (SPS)** replaces most existing crop and livestock payments. The SPS breaks the link between production and support. Instead, land managers will have to keep their land in Good Agricultural and Environmental Condition (GAEC) and comply with a number of specific legal requirements. Meeting these requirements is described in the Common Agricultural Policy legislation as cross compliance. GAEC8 is a cross compliance measure relating to public rights of way and simply reinforces existing legislation under the Highways Act 1980.

**Environmental Stewardship** is a new agri-environment scheme which provides funding to farmers and other land managers in England who deliver effective environmental management of their land. A primary objective of the scheme is to promote public access and understanding of the countryside. Environmental Stewardship has three elements:

**Entry Level Stewardship (ELS)** is a whole farm scheme open to all farmers and land managers who farm their land conventionally. Acceptance will be guaranteed provided that the scheme requirements are met.

**Organic Entry Level Stewardship (OELS)** is a whole farm scheme similar to the ELS, open to farmers who manage all or part of their land organically.

**Higher Level Stewardship (HLS)**, which will be combined with ELS or OELS options, aims to deliver significant environmental benefits in high priority situations and areas.

Environmental Stewardship agreements require land managers to maintain existing public rights of way and abide by the relevant legislation. HLS includes management options for improving access in return for one-off or annual payments. For further information see <http://www.defra.gov.uk>



*Agricultural landscape in East Devon*

74 percent of Devon is under agricultural production. This means that most public rights of way cross farmed land. Devon is a county of relatively small mixed farms and routes therefore cross land which may sometimes be under crops and at other times have livestock present. Part of the role of the RoWIP is to encourage a positive attitude and understanding among both users and landowners, with each being aware of their responsibilities towards the other. The County Council appreciates, and does not underestimate, the important part played by landowners and farmers in rights of way improvements and provision of additional access.

The County Council owns 94 farms (the County Farms Estate) which it lets out to tenants, though this number will reduce through restructuring of the Estate. The 10 year Estate Management Strategy and Plan 2002 - 2012 includes objectives directly relevant to the RoWIP, for example:

- to advise, support and assist individual tenants or collective groups of tenants to pursue new agricultural, economic, educational, environmental and diversification initiatives;
- to promote best practice and provide demonstration farms for diversification ventures, agri-environment schemes, community benefit and public access; and
- to take a lead role and a holistic approach to the development of sustainable community developments with the overall aim of delivering multiple public benefits.

In July 2003 the County Farms Estate Committee agreed to develop opportunities for improving public access, making best use of the its rural estate. As a direct result, two new bridleways (at Slade Farm, Ilfracombe and Higher Weaver Farm, Cullompton) and a new footpath (at Lomans Farm, Broadhempston) have been created on County Farms land (Case Study at Appendix 3G at [www.devon.gov.uk/rowip](http://www.devon.gov.uk/rowip)). The review of the Estate continues as a pilot project for implementing the RoWIP and to set an example of improvements which could be made on agricultural land across the county.

## **Policies and Actions**

### **Improve information regarding rights and responsibilities**

**AG1** Liaison will continue with landowners and their representatives, such as the National Farmers Union and the Country Land and Business Association, to ensure best practice, the sharing of information and practical management advice.

### **Contingency planning**

**AG2** Contingency procedures will continue to be reviewed in liaison with all relevant organisations, ensuring that all partners are aware of their roles.

### **County Farms Estate**

**AG3A** Opportunities to improve access on County Farm Estate land will be identified and assessed.

**AG3B** County Farm Estate initiatives will be used as a blue-print for taking forward access improvements with other large landowners (for example, district councils, the Forestry Commission and the Environment Agency).

### **Cross compliance**

**AG4** Appropriate use of the cross compliance measures in the county in relation to the Single Payment Scheme and Environmental Stewardship will be promoted by working with DEFRA and landowners.

## 4.3E Partnerships

### Objective

To improve public rights of way and access through partnerships

The County Council is working to promote the economic, social and environmental wellbeing of Devon with various partner organisations. Working with partners enables:

- better co-ordination (for example, of projects for the benefit of local communities and access);
- sharing of best practice;
- sharing of both financial and human resources;
- responsiveness to the needs and concerns of local communities;
- delivery of projects in ways that suit the people who depend on them; and
- better understanding of the needs of future generations.

#### Key partners include:

- Local Access Forums
- Natural England (currently English Nature and the Countryside Agency)
- National Park Authorities
- AONB Services
- District Councils and Unitary Authorities
- Parish Paths Partnership (P3)
- National Trust
- User and Landowner Groups
- Sustrans

Further details of these partnerships can be found in Appendix 3H at [www.devon.gov.uk/rowip](http://www.devon.gov.uk/rowip).

### Policies and Actions

#### Local Access Forums

- P1** The Local Access Forums, as statutory advisors to the highway authority, will continue to have a role in setting priorities for implementing plans and commenting on opportunities for strategic access to the countryside.

#### Innovation and Best Value

- P2A** Existing partnerships will continue to be reviewed and new partnerships built to ensure best value.

- P2B** Further partnership working with key partners will be encouraged.

#### Volunteer opportunities

- P3A** The Parish Paths Partnership (P3) scheme will continue to be supported and new parishes will be encouraged to join.

- P3B** Opportunities will be sought for individuals and organisations to become involved in access work at a local level (providing appropriate health and safety and insurance requirements are met).



### Greener Travel

- P4A** Investigation and promotion of opportunities to develop links between public rights of way and public transport, including the carriage of bicycles to allow wider access, will continue. The integration of information relating to this will be sought through initiatives such as DevonBus and Car Free Days Out (part of Discover Devon Naturally).
- P4B** Promotion of safe local options for green travel will be sought in partnership with TravelWise and the Primary Care Trusts.

### Facilities

- P4** Opportunities will be sought to enable the use of existing private facilities by the public and encourage public/private partnerships, for example, the use of public house facilities in return for a small payment or purchase of goods, as already successfully developed in some places in Devon.

### Education

- P5** The educational value of public rights of way and access will be developed in liaison with education partners.

### Police liaison

- P6A** Links will continue to be developed with the Police, supporting them with advice and information relating to public rights of way and access.
- P6B** Data supplied in relation to reported crime and accident statistics will be used to help identify problem areas and solutions in liaison with Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnerships on particular issues.

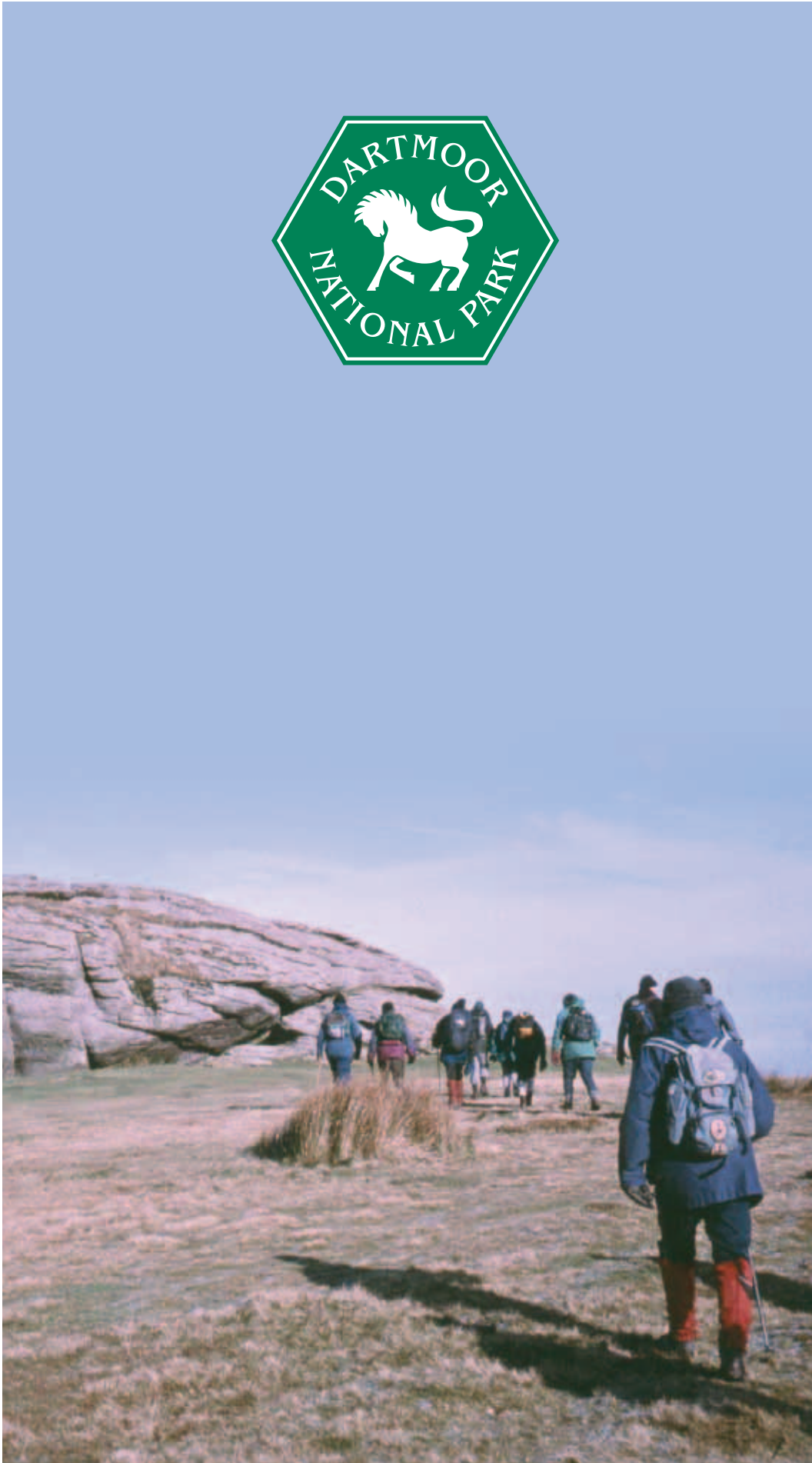
*Millers Crossing on the Exeter Green Circle, a 12 mile walking route around Exeter, developed through a partnership between Devon County Council, Exeter City Council, SUSTRANS and the New Opportunities Fund*





# Dartmoor National Park

Improving Devon's Environment: Rights of Way Improvement Plan







# Dartmoor National Park

## 1. Introduction

This chapter of the Rights of Way Improvement Plan can provide only an initial strategic statement, being prepared within the timeframe for inclusion within the 2005 submission of the Devon Local Transport Plan 2006-2011. Additional ongoing work will refine, review and further develop this strategy and its implementation plan.

### 1.1 Dartmoor National Park Authority

Dartmoor National Park Authority (DNPA) is a free-standing local authority charged with the conservation and enhancement of Dartmoor National Park and the promotion of its understanding and enjoyment by the public (see statutory purposes, below). Devon County Council remains the local highway authority for the whole of the National Park, but DNPA has certain concurrent powers, e.g. for the creation, stopping up and diversion of rights of way. DNPA is both the 'access authority' and the 'relevant authority' in relation to access to open country under the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000 (the CRoW Act), and is also the appointing authority of the Dartmoor Local Access Forum, under the same legislation.

Under an agency agreement, DNPA carries out the maintenance of most of the rights of way within the National Park, on behalf of the local highway authority, and also takes the lead role in areas of concurrent powers. Under this agreement the local highway authority remains the surveying authority for keeping the Definitive Map and Statement under continuous review, for handling applications for modification of this Map, and for maintaining minor county roads and specified surfaced paths. DNPA regularly undertakes improvements to the rights of way network and may also carry out minor works to unclassified county roads (UCRs) to complement the rights of way network.

Though all the 'proposed actions' in this chapter are attributed to DNPA, they will generally be pursued in association with the local highway authority, Devon County Council.

### 1.2 Existing Access Provision

Dartmoor National Park covers an area of 953 sq km. There are approximately 730 km of public rights of way:

Status	Number	Length (km)	Percentage of DNP network	National Average
Footpath	465	353.3	48.3%	78%
Bridleway	270	358	49%	17%
Byway open to all traffic	28	18.9	2.6%	2%

Dartmoor  
Moorland Scene  
copyright Blair  
Scobie



Horseriders and cyclists are well provided for in terms of the relative percentage of the network that is available to them, compared with the national average percentage of bridleways. There are 127 km of permissive footpaths, bridleways and cycle paths which have generally been established by agreement between the Authority and landowners.

*The Dartmoor Commons Act (1985)* gives a right of access on foot and horseback to 35,531 ha of registered common land within the National Park. There is access to further land through agreements negotiated by DNPA, through the open access policies of other landowners and through customary use (or de facto access). The extent of access land in August 2004 was approximately 43,834 ha. When the CRoW Act access rights come into effect (late August 2005), there will be access to an estimated additional 2,500 ha of 'open country' to which there has

not formerly been any access. The existing rights for horseriders to use the Commons will remain unaffected, but the right to use new access areas created under the CRoW Act will be for access on foot only.

*The Dartmoor Commons Act (1985)* does not grant a right to cycle but common land may be legally accessed by cyclists following bridleways. DNPA has sought to supplement cycling opportunities through the use of byways, minor county roads and new permissive routes, the use of which is facilitated by the publication of the Dartmoor For Off-Road Cyclists map produced by DNPA in 2001.

### 1.3 Use of Existing Access Provision

It is extremely difficult to quantify usage of the existing access resource. An estimate may be gauged from the total number of visitors and the percentages enjoying an activity likely to take place on a right of way (or access land). The National Parks Visitor Survey (1994) recorded 3.8 million annual day visits to Dartmoor National Park. 54% of these were holiday based and 46% were day trips from home. A large number of the recorded visits involved an activity using rights of way or other access areas: 37% went for a short stroll, 15% went for a long walk (over 2 hours). The proportions of visitors engaging in outdoor pursuits included: 6% cycling or mountain biking, 3% pony trekking/riding, 2% running and 4% on a guided walk.

More recent data confirm the popularity of rights of way-based activities, with Tourism Trends in Devon 1999, 2000, and 2002 suggesting that 60.9% of Dartmoor visitors engaged in walking.

The rights of way network is used by local people as well as visitors. Such usage is very hard to quantify but some inference may be drawn from the County Council's initial consultations in respect of this Plan. The respondents who used Dartmoor either exclusively, or with one or more other area of Devon, were mostly local people (81.1% were local to Devon). Of this group of predominantly local residents, 32.7% used rights of way daily and a further 43.2% used them at least weekly.

It seems likely that some of the frequent regular use by the local population may be 'functional' rather than recreational use, as an alternative to car use for journeys of a short distance or to walk the dog.

## 2. The Dartmoor National Park Context

### 2.1 Statutory Purposes

Dartmoor was designated a National Park in 1951 for two purposes, redefined in the Environment Act (1995) as:

- To conserve and enhance the natural beauty, wildlife and cultural heritage of Dartmoor, and
- To promote opportunities for the understanding and enjoyment of the special qualities of the area by the public.

The Authority always seeks to accommodate both of these purposes but should an irreconcilable conflict occur between the two purposes, the Authority is required to afford priority to the conservation purpose. In carrying out these purposes the Authority also has a duty:

- To seek to foster the economic and social well being of local communities by working closely with the agencies and local authorities responsible for these matters, but without incurring significant expenditure.

The overall context for the Rights of Way Improvement Plan within Dartmoor National Park therefore comprises:

- The statutory purposes of the National Park
- The existing extensive open access opportunities on foot and horseback under the Dartmoor Commons Act (1985), other existing and proposed statutory, agreement and de facto open access, and an extensive network of existing rights of way
- An apparently increasing use of access opportunities within the National Park, by local people and visitors alike, which needs to be accommodated within Dartmoor's special, and sometimes vulnerable, environment.

### 2.2 Policy Context

*The Dartmoor National Park Management Plan (NPMP)* provides the policy context for the management of the National Park. Through its vision statement, its objectives and priorities for action, the NPMP interprets the statutory purposes and guides the day to day work of DNPA and other bodies engaged in the pursuit of National Park purposes.

Wide consultation was undertaken during the development of the NPMP under the title of *The future for Dartmoor*. This sought to identify the special qualities of Dartmoor particularly valued by the public. Among the most important findings in relation to rights of way were the following:

- a strong feeling that erosion, caused by walkers, riders, bikers and off-road vehicles, is a serious problem and steps should be taken to prevent and repair such damage.

- a high public regard for the access and rights of way network on Dartmoor. When asked to rank their special qualities of the National Park, 'freedom to roam on foot/the footpaths network', 'open access/ready access to the moor' and 'freedom to roam on horse', were all highly placed.
- People suggested that off-road vehicles on the open moor should be restricted, that there should be more circular walks, cycle routes and rides, more access agreements and paths, and more information about access opportunities. Further suggestions were made to prevent and repair erosion, and to reduce the impacts of off-road vehicles and quad bikes.

The NPMP can be accessed through the DNPA's website [[www.dartmoor-npa.gov.uk](http://www.dartmoor-npa.gov.uk)] but the objectives particularly relevant to the Rights of Way Improvement Plan are set out in the box below.

**NPMP overall objectives for Visitor Management:**

- to encourage quiet informal recreational use of the National Park
- to guide visitors to those sites and areas best able to sustain use
- to protect more sensitive areas
- to manage all recreational uses to ensure that their impact on the special qualities of Dartmoor is minimised and their benefits to local communities and the local economy are maximised.

**NPMP overall objectives for Ranger and Volunteer Services include:**

- To monitor and manage visitor use of all access land and to maintain the rights of way network, in order to ensure maximum enjoyment by users and minimum interference with the daily activities of the Dartmoor community.

**NPMP overall objectives for Traffic and Transport include:**

- to promote alternative modes of transport for those without access to their own vehicle and as an alternative to use of the car.

The development planning framework for Dartmoor National Park comprises the *Devon Structure Plan 2001-2016* and the *Dartmoor National Park Local Plan First Review 1995-2011*. Both Plans may be accessed through the DNPA's website but the policies particularly relevant to the Rights of Way Improvement Plan are set out in the boxes opposite.



### **Devon Structure Plan 2001 to 2016**

#### **Policy TO6 Long Distance Recreational Footpaths and Cycle Routes**

The long distance footpath and cycle route networks as identified on the Key Diagram should be maintained and extended, and proposals that would affect those routes should only be permitted where the integrity of the network can be maintained. In maintaining and developing the footpath, cycleway and bridleway networks, advantage should be taken of redundant canals and railways.

#### **Policy TR7 Walking and Cycling**

Walking and cycling will be improved by:

- (1) identifying a network of strategic routes within towns and urban areas which provides a safe and convenient means of pedestrian and cycle access to facilities;
- (2) improving pedestrian and cycle links between settlements and adjacent rural areas; and
- (3) ensuring that all development proposals make provision for pedestrians and cyclists, and that, wherever possible, such provision is well related to the defined network of pedestrian and cycle routes.

### **Dartmoor National Park Local Plan First Review 1995-2011, Adopted Version - October 2004**

#### **Public Rights of Way**

**Policy TF6** Development will not be permitted which would increase vehicular traffic on footpaths, bridleways or byways open to all traffic, to the detriment of their enjoyment by walkers and riders, unless there are overriding social, economic or conservation benefits arising from the proposal.

#### **Alternative Modes of Transport**

**Policy TF8** Planning Permission will be granted for development which

- (i) Facilitates improved public transport or safe cycling opportunities

#### **General access on foot, on horseback, and by pathway**

**Policy RC2** In determining development proposals, full consideration will be given to the need to protect public rights of access. The Authority will not grant permission for development which extinguishes a right of way unless a reasonable alternative route exists

**Policy RC3** Planning permission will be granted for schemes designed to promote the appropriate recreational use of disused railway tracks where this will bring positive benefits to recreation provision and will not damage the wildlife, natural beauty or cultural heritage of the National Park.

## 2.3 Dartmoor Local Access Forum

The Dartmoor Local Access Forum was established by DNPA as an independent forum to provide advice on access and recreation issues to the Authority, to the Countryside Agency (e.g. on matters relating to mapping 'open country') and to the local highway authority, which is required to consult any LAF on the preparation of its Rights of Way Improvement Plan. Consultation with the Dartmoor LAF indicated that it considers the following issues to be priorities for this Plan to address:

- to resolve difficulties between the different users of rights of way, both recreational and farming
- to consider the balance between motorised and non-motorised transport on rights of way and linking rights of way with other quiet highways
- to improve and promote existing poorly used rights of way, where this can relieve pressures on other routes
- to promote rights of way in areas which are not well served, in order to reduce or contain demand at honeypot areas
- to allow access to new CRoW Act 'open country' (but which minimises disturbance)
- to reduce future maintenance demands
- to provide appropriate surfaces for managing heavily used or over-used rights of way
- to encourage the creation of circuits rather than new long-distance paths
- to identify missing strategic links, especially to larger settlements

## 3. Structure of the Dartmoor National Park Chapter

The Devon countywide consultation with users and organisations, carried out prior to the formulation of this Plan, highlighted a number of issues which are addressed in the main body of this publication. The results of this consultation did not sufficiently identify or isolate issues or deficiencies of the rights of way network in relation to Dartmoor National Park. It will be necessary to carry out further detailed consultations for the future review of this Plan to determine which issues are of particular relevance and importance to users.

**DNP1:** DNPA will carry out further assessments and consultations with users and other interested parties for the future review of the Dartmoor chapter of this Rights of Way Improvement Plan.

In this chapter, instead of using the issues highlighted in the general county-wide consultation, an initial attempt has been made to assess the strengths and weaknesses of the rights of way network on Dartmoor.

## 4. Assessment of the Network to Provide Opportunities for Recreation and to Meet the Needs of Different Classes of User

In accordance with DEFRA advice, an attempt has been made to assess the extent to which the rights of way system meets the needs of different classes of user. For the purpose of this assessment, the totality of linear access is to be considered including permissive routes and unclassified county roads. On Dartmoor, the assessment of whether sufficient provision exists to meet needs/demands of users must recognise the availability of considerable open access opportunities.

For each of the recreational user groups, an assessment has been made of the network in terms of the number of routes available, the holistic network in terms of linkages, and the quality of experience for each group. The extent to which current and future needs are being met was addressed by considering issues highlighted in DEFRA's statutory guidance, comments from Devon County Council's public consultation (where results were specific to Dartmoor) and feedback from DNPA recreational user groups.

For each user group an assessment was made and a list of priorities/issues identified.

### 4.1 Walkers

Walkers may use footpaths, bridleways, byways open to all traffic (BOATs), permissive footpaths, permissive bridleways, and unclassified county roads (UCRs). There is open access on foot to all common land on Dartmoor.

#### Needs to be considered (identified in DEFRA guidance)

- Safe routes away from roads
- Access to attractions
- Circular routes
- Opportunities close to home for exercise, dog walking, routes to school or work
- Access to CRoW Act access land

#### Needs to be considered (identified through user consultation)

- Ease of use of path infrastructure (stiles and gates)
- Links to access land
- Off-road circuits
- Links and circuits close to settlements
- Vulnerability of walkers in multi-use settings



*Cyclists on  
bridleway near  
Dunnabridge  
copyright DNPA*

### Summary of assessment

A good footpath network with few areas lacking good general provision of routes. Some existing routes do not have definitive status. There are some anomalies and inadequacies in definitive lines. There is extensive open access provision; some areas could benefit from enhanced links to Dartmoor Commons Act access land and new areas of CRoW Act Open Country. The historical basis of footpath establishment (routes to church etc) means there are some gaps in the modern network. The network could be enhanced to facilitate links into the Park. There is some lack of safe off-road links especially from major settlements. There is potential for new sustainable routes to be opened up. The UCR network is a valuable supplement to the rights of way network but it is not always adequately maintained or promoted.

### Priorities identified

- Inadequacies in existing definitive routes (anomalies and unsuitable or unsustainable lines)
- Links to common land and CRoW Act access land
- Small number of deficiencies or missing links in network
- Features of paths near settlements as off-road alternative links (for example to work or school), for exercise, and short recreational circuits/dog walks
- Need for safe off-road routes in specific places
- Links into the National Park
- Ease of use of infrastructure; surfacing, and maintenance
- Sustainable all-weather routes

## 4.2 Horse-riders

Horse-riders may use bridleways, BOATs, permissive bridleways and UCRs. There is open access on horseback to all common land on Dartmoor.

### Needs to be considered (identified in DEFRA guidance)

- Safe connected network of off-road/lightly trafficked routes
- Easy to open latches on horseback

### Needs to be considered (identified through user consultation)

- Extension of rights to use National Cycle Network
- Suitability of definitive lines (for safety)
- Easy-to-operate field furniture (gates/latches)
- Access links to common land
- Suitable surfacing/maintenance
- Safe off-road links
- Safety at river fording points



*Horse-riding on Dartmoor  
copyright  
DNPA*

### Summary of assessment

A generally good bridleway network with few areas without a good number of routes. Some definitive lines are inadequate in that they are not always on the most suitable line for horse (and cycle) use (especially across open common). There is good open access provision for horse-riders through the Dartmoor Commons Act, but some areas could benefit from enhanced links to common land. UCRs provide a valuable resource but lack maintenance, information and promotion for horse-riders. There are some dangerous road crossings on the edge of the National Park.

### Priorities Identified

- Suitability of definitive lines for safety and prevention of erosion
- Links to common land
- Fulfil full potential of UCR network
- Potential for new opportunities for sustainable routes (e.g. in woodland)
- Create/enhance opportunities for off-road routes (links/circuits)
- Road safety
- Suitability of field furniture
- Suitability of river fording points

## 4.3 Cyclists

Cyclists may use bridleways, BOATs, permissive bridleways, permissive cycle routes, National Cycle Network (NCN) routes and UCRs. The Dartmoor For Off-Road Cyclists Map details existing off-road opportunities including permissive access and UCRs as well as link routes from major settlements on the edge of the National Park.

### Needs to be considered (identified in DEFRA guidance)

- Safe attractive long routes away from busy roads
- Provision for a range of users from family outings to experienced mountain bikers

### Needs to be considered (identified through user consultation)

- New off-road provision

### Summary of assessment

A generally good bridleway/permitted cycle path network with few areas without a good number of routes. There is no access to common land except via bridleways (some of which do not follow the most suitable line across open moor for safety or erosion prevention). There is patchy UCR provision but it is good in some places. Suitable routes are identified in the Dartmoor For Off-Road Cyclists Map. There is variable provision of easy family routes but this is improved by NCN routes.



*Cyclist on byway  
near Black Hill  
copyright DNPA*



**Priorities identified**

- Suitability of definitive routes for user safety and environmental protection (particularly over common land)
- Potential for new opportunities for sustainable hard surfaced routes, particularly in woodland
- Create enhanced opportunities for off-road routes (links/circuits)
- Road safety
- Links into the National Park

## 4.4 Carriage-Drivers

Carriage drivers may use BOATs and UCRs. They will also be able to use the new category of Restricted Byway introduced under the CRoW Act.

**Needs to be considered (identified in DEFRA guidance)**

- Safe connected network of off-road/lightly trafficked routes

**Needs to be considered (identified through user consultation)**

- Suitable routes according to width, gradient, surface, parking for boxes
- Information regarding which legal routes are suitable

**Summary of assessment**

BOATs provision is generally short and fragmented. The network of UCRs has some potential for use. The topography may often be difficult for carriages. Some quiet lanes without cattle grids have the potential for use but there are only a limited number of areas that would be suitable for this activity.

**Priorities identified**

- The assessment indicates that limited provision exists. However, DNPA is not aware of any substantial demand being expressed for off-road routes and the DCC consultation showed limited demand/usage. Latent and expressed demand must be monitored for future review of this Plan

## 4.5 Motorised Users

Drivers of motorised vehicles may use BOATs and UCRs where vehicular rights exist.

**Needs to be considered (identified in DEFRA guidance)**

- The RoWIP should address the need to manage the lawful use of rights of way with vehicular rights

**Needs to be considered (identified through user consultation)**

- Increasing membership of motor sports clubs creating growing demand
- Existing network of BOATs offers very limited scope for motorised users

### Summary of assessment

Most existing motorised use takes place through organised events regulated by motor clubs, on a small number of appropriate routes; all usage must be managed to limit potential physical damage and disturbance and enable the special qualities of Dartmoor to be conserved. At the present time, problems are being resolved by management but as demand rises, a different approach may be necessary. Monitoring of motorised use must continue.

### Priorities identified

- Where vehicular rights exist, consideration must be given to avoiding damage resulting from vehicular use and exercising control wherever required through management measures, voluntary restriction or traffic regulation orders as appropriate
- DNPA will in due course need to consider the arguments for and against reclassifying any existing BOATs as restricted byways

## 4.6 Proposed Actions

The foregoing section has identified a basis for a range of proposed actions. **The extent to which these actions can be pursued will ultimately depend upon the availability of resources for rights of way improvement, and will inevitably necessitate future prioritisation.**

### Actions to facilitate communication with rights of way users

**DNP2:** DNPA will continue to consult formally with user groups. It will formalise a mechanism for users and other interested parties to make suggestions for improvements to the rights of way network as part of the ongoing RoWIP process. DNPA will review and seek to improve its communication with the wider public on rights of way matters.

### Actions to improve the definitive PRow network

**DNP3:** DNPA will seek to divert public rights of way where it is necessary to remedy anomalies in definitive routes or to follow lines which are more acceptable for all users and interested parties. Due regard will be given to the features of interest of the existing route where a diversion is under consideration.

### Actions to improve the definitive PRow network for user safety and to prevent environmental damage

**DNP4:** DNPA will seek to resolve inadequacies in existing definitive routes, to follow lines which are more suitable or sustainable for all users (with a priority for bridleways across open common, and routes where erosion or safety issues are important).

**DNP5:** DNPA will monitor routes susceptible to environmental degradation and will consider use of Traffic Regulation Orders where other management measures have not been successful.

### **Actions to promote use of the PRoW network radiating from settlements within the Park**

**DNP6:** DNPA will seek to enhance the network close to towns and villages to provide short recreational walking routes and functional alternatives to road walking or short car trips. Physical enhancements on paths radiating from settlements will include changes to increase ease of use (e.g. conversion of stiles to gates) and introducing dog-friendly infrastructure when possible.

**DNP7:** DNPA will seek to enhance the opportunities for walkers to take advantage of the network near to settlements through promotion of suitable routes and circuits for recreational or functional use, and through targeting routes suitable for health walks.

### **Actions to close missing links in the network and to provide strategically important linkages within and into the Park**

**DNP8:** DNPA will seek to create new linear routes to existing access land or that created under the CRoW Act where there is a demonstrable need and where it would prove beneficial. Such provision will be prioritised according to predicted usage of those sites and wherever possible access will be for all the groups who have a right of access to the land in question.

**DNP9:** DNPA will seek to expand the network in any area identified as deficient, through agreement with landowners. DNPA will seek to secure new linear access to close demonstrable missing links in the network.

**DNP10:** DNPA will seek to formalise access to extensively used de facto or permitted paths through creation agreements.

**DNP11:** DNPA will seek to facilitate essential links to the existing network from peripheral towns and villages, and from major settlements within the National Park. Emphasis will be on supporting walking and cycling strategies at the national, regional and local level.

### **Actions to increase access opportunities for user groups**

**DNP12:** DNPA will seek to secure new linear access opportunities for each user group where appropriate through provision or creation of new routes or upgrading the status of existing routes.

**DNP13:** DNPA will work with partners to open up and promote the use of unsurfaced unclassified county roads as part of the overall network, where appropriate, for the benefit of cyclists, horse riders and walkers.

**DNP14:** DNPA will seek to provide new opportunities for access in areas where it will provide sustainable all-weather alternatives (e.g. in woodland) for all users as appropriate.

**DNP15:** DNPA will seek to provide new opportunities for cycling on firm tracks both on the moor, where they link with other suitable legal linear routes, and off the moor where opportunities exist to create access to sustainable routes.

**DNP16:** DNPA will support the extension of multi-use rights of NCN routes to include horse-riders.

### **Actions to meet specific needs of user groups (not addressed elsewhere)**

**DNP17:** DNPA will seek to ensure wherever possible that gates on bridleways can be opened from horseback and that latches are suitable for the purpose but do not compromise other users (e.g. wheelchair users) where such usage may occur.

**DNP18:** DNPA will monitor demand from carriage drivers and if demand is demonstrated to exist, will consider making appropriate provision (within the constraints of the topography of the National Park).

### Actions to promote safety of users

**DNP19:** DNPA will monitor safety issues for all users at river fording points. Works will be carried out in response to need as part of ongoing maintenance and annual capital works programmes.

**DNP20:** When possible, DNPA will seek to create off-road alternatives in promoted trails or popular routes/circuits which currently involve sections on unsuitable roads.

## 5. Assessment of the Accessibility of the Network to People with Restricted Mobility and People with Sensory Impairments

The right of access to common land created under the *Dartmoor Commons Act (1985)* also extends to those using wheelchairs, powered wheelchairs and mobility scooters. In both open access areas and on linear routes, Dartmoor's natural terrain and challenging gradients mean that in practice it would be impossible to make all routes and areas accessible to all people with restricted mobility. Ideally the topography and the natural terrain should be the only challenge faced by people with restricted mobility. However, at present a number of other factors restrict the access opportunities for certain groups.

DNPA works closely with Dartmoor For All, a local access group formed to address and advise upon the wide range of restricted mobility and other impairment issues concerning access in the Dartmoor area. Consultations with this group and with others have suggested that the main barriers to access are created by unsuitable and/or poorly maintained field furniture. For instance many stiles create barriers to otherwise accessible paths, whilst poorly hung gates and hard to operate latches also block progress along otherwise suitable routes.

### Needs to be considered (identified through user consultation)

- Removal of barriers (stiles, poor gates/latches)
- Information on a wider range of routes
- Maintenance (undergrowth and overhanging vegetation)

A *DNPA Stiles to Gates* project is focusing on removing field furniture barriers from paths radiating directly from settlements. Under this project, several routes have been made entirely stile-free, for example a section of the Two Moors Way along the River Teign at Chagford.

The publication, *Easy-Going Dartmoor*, produced jointly by DNPA and Dartmoor For All, provides information on a number of sites within the National Park that are suitable for people with special needs. Whilst the guide has been designed to enable users to make their own decisions as to the suitability of a route for their needs, it does tend to focus on the type of shorter route found mainly in forestry or reservoir areas. DNPA is also aware that *Easy-Going Dartmoor* and *Dartmoor For All* tend to focus on issues related to physical mobility and that this bias is reflected in current access projects.

A growing number of requests suggest that there is an unmet demand for longer routes (10-15 miles) which are guaranteed free of restrictive field furniture and thus suitable for people using electric buggies. This clearly highlights the importance of ensuring that a 'least restrictive access option' is enshrined in all work related to public access.

### Priorities identified

- Continue to extend the network with least restrictive field furniture
- Promotion of information about existing routes suitable for users with specific needs
- Address the limited range of advice available (e.g. from people with sensory impairment)
- Particular path conditions or maintenance requirements for users with specific needs



*Walkers near Bonehill Down  
copyright DNPA*

## 5.1 Proposed actions

The foregoing section has identified a basis for a range of proposed actions. **The extent to which these actions can be pursued will ultimately depend upon the availability of resources for rights of way improvement, and will inevitably necessitate future prioritisation.**

**DNP21:** DNPA will continue its 'Stiles to Gates' project.

**DNP22:** DNPA will seek to identify additional key routes in the National Park (linear links and circuits) for improvements to increase accessibility. Such routes will take into account potential demand and the suitability of environmental constraints. DNPA will seek to implement a programme of infrastructure changes along established priority routes and promote these key routes in a suitable manner to provide information to potential users.

**DNP23:** DNPA will formally adopt a policy that the least restrictive path furniture will be used when installing new or replacing existing rights of way and open access field furniture, following the principle established in British Standard 5709:2001 of 'gap, then gate, then kissing gate and then stile' in order of determining acceptability

**DNP24:** DNPA will seek to establish mechanisms and policies to provide a greater positive incentive to landowners to allow the conversion of stiles to gates throughout the National Park. Priority will be given to areas offering the greatest potential benefits. Issues of stock control will be taken into account.

**DNP25:** DNPA will seek to increase the length and range of routes for which specific access information is provided (gates/slopes/surface type etc) to increase the opportunities for use by people with special needs.

**DNP26:** DNPA will work with access group members to identify longer and more challenging routes suitable for people using electric buggies and provide information to promote such routes.

**DNP27:** DNPA will seek to increase consultation with and participation of people and/or groups who are not currently represented on Dartmoor For All, such as those with sensory impairments, and ensure that the information they provide is carefully considered and fully integrated into future access and rights of way policies.

**DNP28:** Through consultation, DNPA will establish the requirements of users with particular needs with regard to path maintenance. As meeting these requirements may require increased monitoring and maintenance, priority will be given to certain target paths where there is likely to be greatest benefit from such action.



## 6. Other Issues

### 6.1 Maintenance

DNPA maintains the rights of way network on Dartmoor on behalf of the Highway Authority (Devon County Council) under an annually-reviewed agency agreement. DNPA's Ranger Service has principal responsibility for maintenance work, routine inspections and surveys. External contractors are sometimes engaged both for routine maintenance and for major repairs.

In the County Council public consultation conducted prior to the draft version of this Plan, 74.6% of people who used rights of way on Dartmoor (either exclusively or with other areas) were either satisfied or very satisfied with maintenance standards. Qualitative results from the DNPA's own consultation with users showed overall satisfaction with DNPA maintenance standards. It is inevitable that problems will occur between the routine monitoring carried out by Rangers and complaints are investigated upon notification. Regular formal meetings with recreational user groups provide the opportunity for liaison and to focus on wider management issues.

Rights of way maintenance records are stored on a computerised Countryside Access Management System database which has been extended to incorporate complaints recording. A reporting mechanism has been established so that problems can be tracked from receipt to resolution.

In acting as agents for the Highway Authority, DNPA seeks to contribute towards consistency across the county in rights of way maintenance standards. DNPA will use the standard Best Value performance indicator methodology for monitoring ease of use of rights of way to ensure consistency within Devon and for national comparison with other local highway authorities. Signage and waymarking of rights of way, particularly within the wilder and remoter areas of open country on Dartmoor, must be carefully designed and modifications to standard solutions will be necessary to ensure that signage is neither inappropriate nor detracts from the special qualities of the landscape.

**DNP29:** DNPA will seek to continually improve standards and effectiveness of rights of way maintenance through updating and reviewing its policies and procedures.

### 6.2 Information

Rights of way and some permissive routes are depicted on the Ordnance Survey maps of Dartmoor. DNPA information centres and Rangers are a front line source of information for both visitors and local people and DNPA also produces a variety of literature to promote and inform about rights of way and access to open country. The *Dartmoor Visitor* newspaper provides information aimed at the general visitor and at those interested in particular activities such as walking, cycling and riding.

The Authority operates a guided walk programme and guide hire service as well as producing literature promoting circular and other routes for walkers and cyclists. Its Sustainable Development Fund is providing support for researching a new publication to assist horseriders on Dartmoor. The Authority is also promoting *walking for health* initiatives and continues to promote access to and within the National Park for those who do not have access to a car through support for and marketing of public transport services. Through the DNPA's social inclusion framework all sections of society will be encouraged to benefit from the rights of way and access opportunities available on Dartmoor.

DNPA is currently refocusing its communication of access information in the light of the changes in access to open country scheduled for August 2005.

### 6.3 Support for Landowners

DNPA Rangers are normally the first point of liaison and contact with landowners on rights of way matters, whether for maintenance or in connection with management issues requiring resolution. Rangers have worked closely with individual landowners and tenants to formulate plans to manage areas mapped as open country under the CRoW Act. DNPA currently provides and maintains field furniture on rights of way within the National Park. This commitment is above the statutory requirement of a local highway authority to contribute 25% of the cost of stiles and gates on rights of way.

### 6.4 Heritage and Nature Conservation

The Authority has established internal consultation mechanisms to ensure that archaeological, historic heritage and nature conservation issues are always considered in routine recreation management, such as assessing proposals for recreational events using rights of way and open country. These issues will always be considered, and afforded priority, in creating new linear (or area) access and in cases of existing rights of way adversely affecting heritage and conservation features or interests, the Authority will always seek to mitigate any problems by appropriate management measures, and where necessary through formal diversion.

## 7. Conclusion

This chapter of the Rights of Way Improvement Plan sets out an initial strategic framework for future improvements to rights of way on Dartmoor. Further development of the strategy will continue to inform and influence DNPA work programmes, budgets and funding proposals.

## 8. Summary of Actions and Links to DLTP 2006-2011 Objectives

Ref No.	Action Point	Link to LTP Objective
DNP 1	DNPA will carry out further assessments and consultations with users and other interested parties for the future review of the Dartmoor chapter of the RoWIP.	
DNP 2	DNPA will continue to consult formally with user groups. It will formalise a mechanism for users and other interested parties to make suggestions for improvements to the rights of way network as part of the ongoing RoWIP process. DNPA will review and seek to improve its communication with the wider public on rights of way matters.	
DNP 3	DNPA will seek to divert public rights of way where it is necessary to remedy anomalies in definitive routes or to follow lines which are more acceptable for all users and interested parties. Due regard will be given to the features of interest of the existing route where a diversion is proposed.	
DNP 4	DNPA will seek to resolve inadequacies in existing definitive routes, to follow lines which are more suitable or sustainable for all users (with a priority for bridleways across open common, and routes where erosion or safety issues are important).	
DNP 5	DNPA will monitor routes susceptible to environmental degradation and will consider use of Traffic Regulation Orders where other management measures have not been successful.	
DNP 6	DNPA will seek to enhance the network close to towns and villages to provide short recreational walking routes and functional alternatives to road walking or short car trips. Physical enhancements on paths radiating from settlements will include changes to increase ease of use (e.g. conversion of stiles to gates) and introducing dog-friendly infrastructure when possible.	<b>Accessibility</b> (improve access to recreation & leisure opportunities) <b>Health &amp; Wellbeing</b> (improve access to countryside leisure opportunities; encourage physical activity)
DNP 7	DNPA will seek to enhance the opportunities for walkers to take advantage of the network near to settlements through promotion of suitable routes and circuits for recreational or functional use, and through targeting routes suitable for health walks.	<b>Health &amp; Wellbeing</b> (improve access to countryside leisure opportunities; encourage physical activity)
DNP 8	DNPA will seek to create new linear routes to existing access land or that created under the CRow Act where there is a demonstrable need and where it would prove beneficial. Such provision will be prioritised according to predicted usage of those sites and wherever possible access will be for all the groups who have a right of access to the land in question.	

<b>DNP 9</b>	DNPA will seek to expand the network in any area identified as deficient, through agreement with landowners. DNPA will seek to secure new linear access to close demonstrable missing links in the network.	
<b>DNP 10</b>	DNPA will seek to formalise access to extensively used de facto or permitted paths through creation agreements.	
<b>DNP 11</b>	DNPA will seek to facilitate essential links to the existing network from peripheral towns and villages, and from major settlements within the National Park. Emphasis will be on supporting walking and cycling strategies at the national, regional and local level.	<b>Health &amp; Wellbeing</b> (improve access to countryside leisure opportunities)
<b>DNP 12</b>	DNPA will seek to secure new linear access opportunities for each user group where appropriate through provision or creation of new routes or upgrading the status of existing routes.	<b>Leisure &amp; Tourism</b>
<b>DNP 13</b>	DNPA will work with partners to open up and promote the use of unsurfaced unclassified county roads as part of the overall network, where appropriate, for the benefit of cyclists, horse riders and walkers	<b>Leisure &amp; Tourism</b>
<b>DNP 14</b>	DNPA will seek to provide new opportunities for access in areas where it will provide sustainable all-weather alternatives (e.g. in woodland) for all users as appropriate.	<b>Leisure &amp; Tourism</b>
<b>DNP 15</b>	DNPA will seek to provide new opportunities for cycling on firm tracks both on the moor, where they link with other suitable legal linear routes, and off the moor where opportunities exist to create access to sustainable routes.	<b>Leisure &amp; Tourism</b>
<b>DNP 16</b>	DNPA will support the extension of multi-use rights of NCN routes to include horse-riders.	
<b>DNP 17</b>	DNPA will seek to ensure wherever possible that gates on bridleways can be opened from horseback and that latches are suitable for the purpose but do not compromise other users (e.g. wheelchair users) where such usage may occur.	
<b>DNP 18</b>	DNPA will monitor demand from carriage drivers and if demand is demonstrated to exist, will consider making appropriate provision (within the constraints of the topography of the National Park).	
<b>DNP 19</b>	DNPA will monitor safety issues for all users at river fording points. Works will be carried out in response to need as part of ongoing maintenance and annual capital works programmes.	

# Dartmoor National Park

Improving Devon's Environment: Rights of Way Improvement Plan

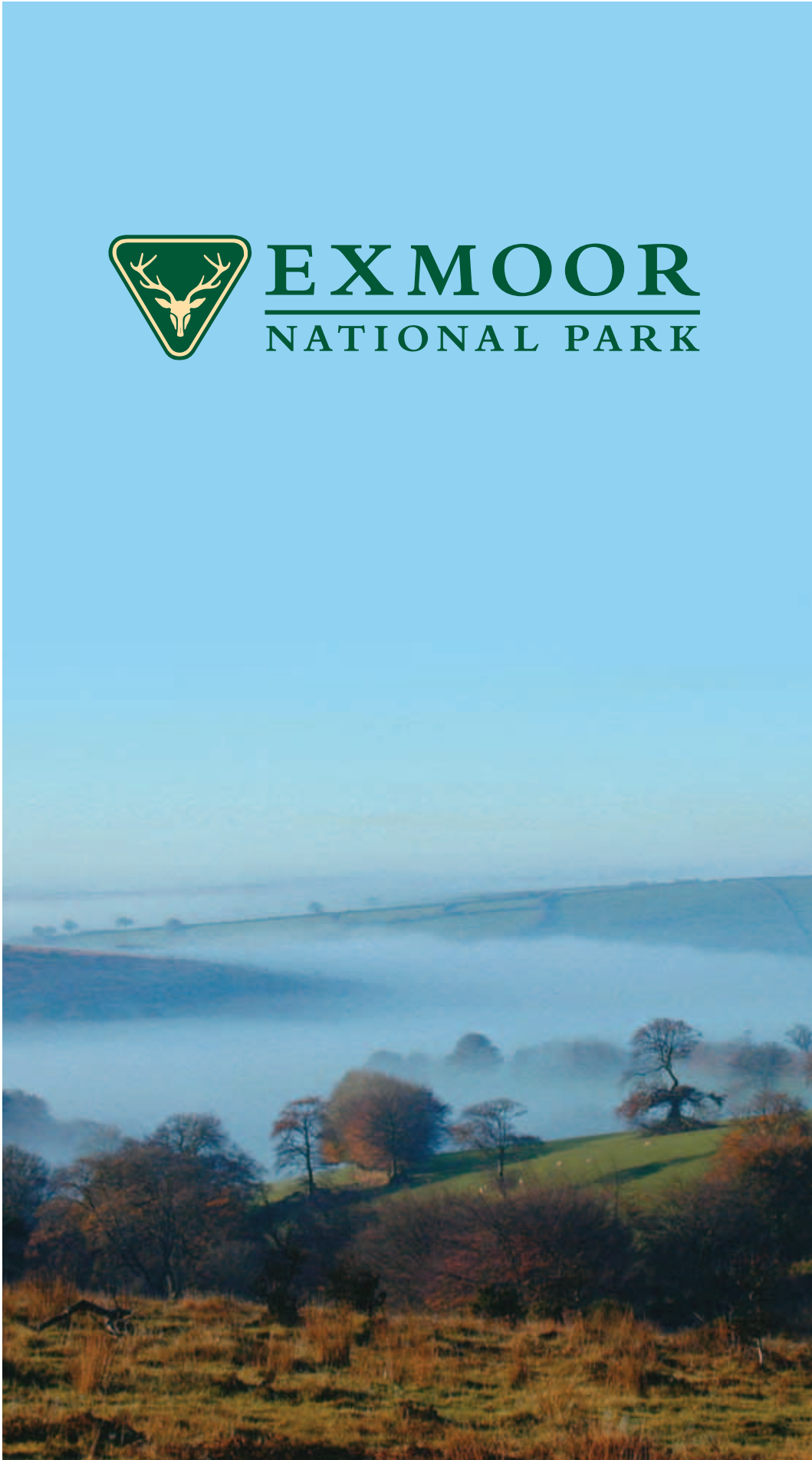
<b>DNP 20</b>	When possible, DNPA will seek to create off-road alternatives in promoted trails or popular routes/circuits which currently involve sections on unsuitable roads.	<b>Road safety</b>
<b>DNP 21</b>	DNPA will continue its 'Stiles to Gates' project.	<b>Accessibility</b> (improve access to recreation & leisure opportunities) <b>Health &amp; Wellbeing</b> (improve access to countryside leisure opportunities)
<b>DNP 22</b>	DNPA will seek to identify additional key routes in the National Park (linear links and circuits) for improvements to increase accessibility. Such routes will take into account potential demand and the suitability of environmental constraints. DNPA will seek to implement a programme of infrastructure changes along established priority routes and promote these key routes in a suitable manner to provide information to potential users.	<b>Accessibility</b> (improve access to recreation & leisure opportunities) <b>Health &amp; Wellbeing</b> (improve access to countryside leisure opportunities)
<b>DNP 23</b>	DNPA will formally adopt a policy that the least restrictive path furniture will be used when installing new or replacing existing rights of way and open access field furniture, following the principle established in British Standard 5709:2001 of 'gap, then gate, then kissing gate and then stile' in order of determining acceptability	<b>Accessibility</b> (improve access to recreation & leisure opportunities)
<b>DNP 24</b>	DNPA will seek to establish mechanisms and policies to provide a greater positive incentive to landowners to allow the conversion of stiles to gates throughout the National Park. Priority will be given to areas offering the greatest potential benefits. Issues of stock control will be taken into account.	<b>Accessibility</b> (improve accessibility to recreation & leisure opportunities)
<b>DNP 25</b>	DNPA will seek to increase the length and range of routes for which specific access information is provided (gates/slopes/surface type etc) to increase the opportunities for use by people with special needs.	<b>Accessibility</b> (improve accessibility to recreation & leisure opportunities)
<b>DNP 26</b>	DNPA will work with access group members to identify longer and more challenging routes suitable for people using electric buggies and provide information to promote such routes.	<b>Accessibility</b> (improve accessibility to recreation & leisure opportunities)
<b>DNP 27</b>	DNPA will seek to increase consultation with and participation of people and/or groups who are not currently represented on Dartmoor For All, such as those with sensory impairments, and ensure that the information they provide is carefully considered and fully integrated into future access and rights of way policies.	<b>Accessibility</b> (improve accessibility to recreation & leisure opportunities)



<b>DNP 28</b>	Through consultation, DNPA will establish the requirements of users with particular needs with regard to path maintenance. As meeting these requirements may require increased monitoring and maintenance, priority will be given to certain target paths where there is likely to be greatest benefit from such action.	<b>Accessibility</b> (improve accessibility to recreation & leisure opportunities)
<b>DNP 29</b>	DNPA will seek to continually improve standards and effectiveness of rights of way maintenance through updating and reviewing its policies and procedures.	

# Exmoor National Park

Improving Devon's Environment: Rights of Way Improvement Plan





# Exmoor National Park

## 1. Introduction

Exmoor National Park covers an area of 693 sq km of mixed landscapes including semi-natural areas of moor and heath, woodland, coast and foreshore. A number of these habitats are of national and international importance. The Park has a resident population of around 10,500 with a further 1.7 million people living within 50km of the National Park boundary. It is estimated that the National Park receives 1.4 million visitor days per year (based on 1994 data). One third of the National Park (201 sq km) is in the county of Devon and the remaining two thirds in Somerset (492 sq km).

The public rights of way network within Exmoor National Park extends to 1006 km with an additional 9000 ha of access land currently available to the public for walking. This figure will double when the new Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000 (the CRoW Act) rights commence in 2005. Approximately 55% of the network is available to equestrian users, reflecting the historic and present importance of horse riding on Exmoor, which now provide attractive recreation opportunities for horse riders, cyclists and walkers.

The rights of way network is managed and maintained by Exmoor National Park Authority which has delegated powers from Devon and Somerset County Councils. This generally means that most maintenance duties such as signing and waymarking are undertaken by Exmoor National Park Authority whilst definitive map issues and other legal duties are undertaken by the relevant Highway Authority.

## 2. Existing Access Provision

### 2.1 Existing Rights of Way

Exmoor has a high density of public rights of way with 1.39km/ sq km. This is above average for National Parks and should be compared with the extremes of the Peak District at 1.86km/ sq km and Brecon Beacons at 0.68 km/ sq km.

The following figures are approximate lengths;

Type	Total Length
Public Footpaths	438 km (272 miles)
Public Bridleways	464 km (288 miles)
Other Public Rights of way (RUPP & BOAT)	64 km (40 miles)
Permitted route agreements with Exmoor National Park Authority	40 km (25 miles)
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>1006 Km (625 miles)</b>

### 2.2 Permitted Access

There are many paths on areas of moorland and woodland owned by Exmoor National Park Authority, The National Trust and Crown Estate. Many more permitted paths exist through agreement with private landowners. However, not all permitted paths/access are recorded and advertised to the public. Only those with

long term agreements are depicted on OS maps and although those negotiated by Exmoor National Park Authority are generally recorded, there are many others which are not.

## 2.3 Common Land

Of the 12 registered commons in the Devon area of the National Park, the following have definitive public rights of access on foot:

- Brendon Common
- Parts of Shilstone Hill and Tippacote Ridge
- Cheriton Ridge
- Furzehill Common
- Malmsmead Hill
- The Valley Of Rocks
- Ilkerton Ridge

Of the 9 registered commons in the Somerset area of the National Park, the following have definitive public rights of access on foot:

- Alcombe Hill
- Dunkery Hill
- Doverhay Down
- Wootton Courtenay
- Dunkery Errish
- Winsford Hill

These areas of common land will be advertised as open access land once CRoW rights commence (some areas are already depicted as open access on OS Maps)



*Cyclists, Dunkery  
Heather Lowther  
(ENPA)*

## 2.4 Open Access

### 1. Existing Open Access & Open Country

The National Park Authority has not made any access orders or agreements through the National Parks and Access to the Countryside Act, 1949. However, through other dedications and agreements with landowners there are currently 9000 ha of open access land available for public recreation on foot.

### 2. CRoW Act 2000 Open Access

Part I of the CRoW Act 2000 will create a public right of access on foot. This right will apply to all areas mapped by the Countryside Agency as registered common land and areas fulfilling the Agency's criteria as 'open country' (mountain, moor, heathland and downland). This means a further 10,000 ha of access land will



become publicly available within the National Park. Whilst use of much of this land is currently tolerated by landowners, there are few legal access rights at present. The exceptions are areas that have existing access rights under acts listed under S15 of the CRoW Act but which are not currently advertised.

The National Park Authority has powers under the CRoW Act to create access to these new areas of access land. This includes powers to make agreements with landowners to open up, improve, repair, maintain, or to protect existing means of access and prevent anything that would impede public access. The National Park Authority also has powers to undertake the work where a landowner fails to abide by any agreements or where agreements cannot be reached. Within Exmoor the creation of routes linking areas of access land will be necessary in some instances and will usually involve creating new access points and upgrading existing access points and furniture.

## 2.5 National and Regional Routes

Exmoor National Park Authority manages 34 miles of the 630 mile long South West Coast Path (SWCP) National Trail. It is the longest of all the National Trails and is highly significant in terms of its economic contribution to the area through tourism. Research released in 2003 indicates that the 630-mile Coast Path generates around £300 million a year for the region's economy - enough to support more than 7,500 jobs. The Exmoor section of the Path was the first to be opened and is highly significant, being seen as the official start of the route. Very few people walk the whole 630 miles but the presence of the Path gives visitors the confidence that if they visit the coast in the South West they will always be able to walk a quality route. A detailed inventory and survey is done every three years and high National Trail standards are applied, with funding being received from the Countryside Agency.

### Issues

1. Loss of the path due to coastal erosion is a serious and regular threat. The loss of the path along Porlock Shingle Ridge has led to a less than perfect solution, with one alternative path being closed from March to June due to nature conservation concerns and the alternative taking the route far inland. Parts of the route currently use minor public roads and this can detract from the experience.

Action 01

The National Park Authority will seek opportunities to route the Coast Path as close to the coast as possible, whilst ensuring it is safe for all to use. Where erosion necessitates a diversion, signing and information in accordance with national trail standards, will ensure that it is easy to follow.

2. Some of the route on Exmoor is not on definitive public rights of way, leaving the route vulnerable to sudden closure or diversion.

Action D1

The National Park Authority will work with landowners to dedicate as definitive public rights of way those sections of the route which are not public rights of way at present.

3. Where the SWCP runs along roads used by motor vehicles.

Two other recognised long distance paths pass through the Park. These are the Two Moors Way (102 miles\164km) and the Tarka Trail (180 miles\290km). In addition, the Macmillan Way West passes through the Park.

Such routes are valued because they bring economic benefits of tourism to otherwise isolated rural areas, attract funding for maintenance and improvements to the rights of way network and help extend the network to provide more routes and access to areas of special quality. Exmoor is fortunate that such routes have not suffered from the over use which has occurred in other areas, particularly from large organised events. However, care needs to be taken to assess the environmental impact of proposals for such routes and to manage them in accordance with agreed plans. Care should also be taken to ensure that such routes do not divert resources away from the remainder of the route network.

## 2.6 Access to the National Park

The National Park Authority promotes public transport to encourage people to access the countryside without the use of a car. The location of the National Park in relation to surrounding centres of population means that public transport is often not the easiest or preferred method of travel into the park by visitors or local people.

A 2003 survey found that:

- 79% of visitors arrive by car
- 13% were on an organised coach tour
- 4% arrive by other coach/bus service
- 3% arrived by train
- 1% walked

One popular service is the number 300 bus which serves the north coast and allows walkers to access the South West Coast Path and other rights of way along the route. There are other bus services and routes within the National Park but these need to be promoted more effectively to encourage their use.

Action R3

The National Park Authority will undertake an audit of existing public transport services and work with Devon and Somerset County Councils to see how these can be improved.

## 3. Existing Use of the Public Rights of Way Network

### 3.1 Recreation

As one of the twin purposes of National Parks, providing for understanding and enjoyment is a vital part of the National Park Authority's function. A wide range of recreational activities are acceptable and should be promoted in Exmoor National Park but almost any activity can have detrimental effects on the environment without careful management. Many activities can be actively encouraged and walking tends to be the most popular activity that receives the greatest promotion. However, horse riding and mountain biking are becoming increasingly popular and receiving more promotion through various initiatives between the National Park Authority and other organisations. A large growth area has been competitive adventure racing involving multiple activities such as orienteering and canoeing.



*Hawkcombe Head  
Heather Lowther  
(ENPA)*

This popularity appears to have been fuelled by the media's coverage and promotion of such multi-discipline events.

Large organised events using the public rights of way network can cause erosion and conflict issues. Exmoor National Park Authority staff work closely with event organisers and publish an 'events guidelines and a code of conduct for organisers' to ensure that any negative effects caused by these events are minimised.

### 3.2 Tourism

Estimates from the 1994 All Parks Visitor Survey (APVS) suggest that day visitors to Exmoor walk a total of 790,000 miles per annum. The APVS also showed that 47% of day trip visitors identified walking as the main purpose of their visit to Exmoor while 33% of holiday visitors were on a 'moderately active visit', including walking. 54% of holiday visitors had walked between 1 and 4 hours and 12% had walked for more than 4 hours. In addition, among visitors as a whole, 7% had taken part in horse riding or pony trekking.

The path closures implemented during the 2001 Foot and Mouth disease outbreak led to a substantial decline in visitor numbers to Exmoor. Businesses that depend on visitors for their income were hard hit and the importance of the rights of way network and access to the countryside to the local economy was highlighted.

### 3.3 Local Use

An approximate estimate from census figures would suggest that about 3,600,000 days are spent in the Park by residents each year.

Nationally 1 in 4 households has a dog or dogs, which means there are likely to be at least 1,200 such households on Exmoor. Assuming the national average of 1.5 miles dog walking per household per day, an estimated 615,000 miles per annum are walked by locals with dogs. Nationally 16% of all walks undertaken are dog walks, 23% for shopping, 21% for walking to work or taking children to school and 20% for leisure. The average a person walks for these purposes is 189 miles per annum or 0.6 miles per walk. In 1991 48.5% of Exmoor workers travelled to work by car, 29.5% worked at home, 13.8 % travelled on foot and 1.7% by public transport (Source: National Census).

## 4. Context

### 4.1 Statutory Duties

The statutory purposes for which Exmoor National Park is designated are:

- To conserve and enhance the natural beauty, wildlife and cultural heritage
- To promote opportunities for the understanding and enjoyment of the special qualities of the National Park by the public

Exmoor National Park Authority has a primary duty to further National Park purposes and, whilst doing so, to:

“

seek to foster the economic and social well-being of the local community, but without incurring significant expenditure in doing so, and shall for those purposes cooperate with local authorities and public bodies whose functions include the promotion of economic and social development within the area of the National Park.

”

### 4.2 The Sandford Principle

Occasionally, conflict between the National Park purposes to conserve the environment and provide recreation becomes irreconcilable. The ‘Sandford Principle’ arose from Lord Sandford’s 1974 review of National Park Policies. The report drew attention to the recreational pressures on the National Parks and suggested that, although the two National Park purposes carried equal weight, where conflict between the two arise the first, conservation, purpose should prevail over the second, recreation, purpose. This principle is now incorporated in the Environment Act 1995.

### 4.3 Existing Management Plan Strategy/Objectives

#### **The Exmoor National Park Management Plan 2001-2006 contains policies regarding public access**

Chapter 13 of the plan contains objectives and policies relating to public access and the ‘Vision for Access’: A network of public rights of way and permitted paths maintained and improved in a way that satisfies walkers, riders, cyclists, farmers, landowners and local people alike, providing links across the farmed landscapes to the wilder landscapes beyond.

Objective

**13/1:** To seek and promote opportunities for access for the enjoyment of Exmoor’s special qualities by the public in a sustainable manner.

Policies

**P13/1** For publications which promote access on Exmoor, priority will be given to those that promote the use of the public rights of way network in a sustainable manner: in particular, those that provide payback towards management of public rights of way; promote the use of public transport; and encourage staying visitors to explore the area local to their accommodation on foot or by bicycle rather than by travelling long distances for sightseeing.

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Improving Devon's Environment: Rights of Way Improvement Plan

	<p><b>P13/2</b> Every effort will be made to ensure that suitable alternative routes are found where there is a loss of access such as through coastal erosion.</p> <p><b>P13/3</b> The promotion of National Trails and Regional Routes will not be in isolation but as part of the overall route network.</p> <p><b>P13/4</b> Proposals for new long distance routes within the National Park will be subject to environmental impact assessment.</p> <p><b>P13/5</b> The waymarking of paths will be in accordance with the Countryside Agency's recommended colour scheme and route classification. The network of Local Walks and Rides will have priority for waymarking and promotion.</p> <p><b>P13/6</b> New permitted paths will be negotiated only as additions to existing access, not as alternatives. Where an alternative route is needed, a formal diversion will be sought.</p> <p><b>P13/7</b> Provision will be made for publicity to be built into all agreements on access. Agreements will not commence until adequate signposting is in place and publicity has been carried out.</p>
Objective	<p><b>13/2:</b> To maintain a public rights of way network that is open, sustainable and convenient for people to use and enjoy and which, where possible, provides opportunities of access for people of all abilities.</p>
Policies	<p><b>P13/8</b> The existing system of signposting and waymarking will be retained and developed as determined by statute and Countryside Agency recommended classification for route priority will be applied.</p> <p><b>P13/9</b> The National Park Authority will work with others to minimise conflicts of use/overuse that may arise, but apply the Sandford Principle to such workings. If such conflicts cannot be resolved by consensus building, available legislation will be used to prevent further damage.</p> <p><b>P13/10</b> Methods of maintaining and improving paths using natural, sustainably-produced and locally-derived materials will continue to be used on Exmoor.</p> <p><b>P13/11</b> Opportunities to improve access to the countryside for less mobile and disabled people will be identified.</p> <p><b>P13/12</b> Partnerships with the local tourism industry will be promoted to secure finance for improvements to public rights of way, recognising the benefits to the industry of a well-maintained rights of way network and of promoting sustainable approaches to tourism.</p>
Objective	<p><b>13/3:</b> To encourage and enable the public to enjoy access to open country for quiet enjoyment (and where possible extend such opportunities), while having due regard to the interests of nature conservation and farming.</p>
Policies	<p><b>P13/13</b> The National Park Authority will work within the Government's legislative framework to manage access provision to unenclosed areas of moor and heath, taking opportunities to increase access where possible.</p>



Objective	<b>13/4:</b> To improve opportunities for access on Exmoor for all people, irrespective of their mobility or other physical abilities.
Policies	<p><b>P13/14</b> Groups representing less mobile people and those with disabilities will be consulted to seek opportunities for improving access to the countryside.</p> <p><b>P13/15</b> Provision will be made for less mobile people in all new access schemes where this is practical and environmentally acceptable.</p>
	<p><b>Local Transport Plan for Somerset 2001-2006</b></p>
	<p><b>9.6 A Statement by Exmoor National Park Authority</b></p>
	<p><b>9.6.9 Walking</b> Promoting opportunities for walking can help to reduce car use. The Authority provides a full range of leaflets and other information on opportunities for walking in the National Park, including walks using public transport. The Authority acts as the Highway Authority for all rights of way in the National Park. This includes maintenance, undertaking legal processes to modify rights of way, and improvements to the network. Expenditure on maintaining the network in 1999/2000 was around £24,000.</p>
	<p><b>9.6.10 Cycling</b> Cycling in the National Park is regarded as a healthy recreational activity and a sustainable mode of transport. The National Park Authority provides and maintains cycling routes, both off and on-road, and supports the County Councils in their work to promote cycling and cycle routes (e.g. extending the North Devon cycle route into Somerset).</p> <p>The National Park Authority publishes leaflets promoting a series of off-road cycling routes in the National Park and is currently working on a proposal to create additional routes and to publish area guides to cycling, centred around National Park Authority visitor centres, promoting both off and on-road routes.</p>
	<p><b>Exmoor National Park Revised Deposit Local Plan - March 2003 - First Alteration</b></p>
	<p><b>Policy TR11</b> The design and layout of development proposals should, where appropriate, accommodate the needs of cyclists, pedestrians and horse riders and encourage cycling, walking and horse riding. In appropriate cases, and in particular where developments are likely to attract significant numbers of visitors, planning obligations will be used to achieve improvements to public transport services and facilities.</p>
	<p><b>Policy TR12</b> Development which will adversely affect existing public rights of way will be required to incorporate measures to protect user's interests.</p>
	<p><b>Best Value Performance Review of Recreation Management - Action Plan</b></p>
	<p><b>Rights of Way Management - Recommended Action</b></p>
	<p><b>1.6.1</b> The National Park Authority should make representations to Government, jointly with other national parks and on its own account, to seek a commitment to provide adequate additional funding to meet the responsibilities imposed by the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000.</p>
	<p><b>1.6.2</b> The underlying objectives of the Exmoor Paths Partnership are sound and should continue to be supported. A comprehensive review of options for delivering this aspect of rights of way management on path erosion, and for developing visitor payback as an effective source of funding, should be</p>

undertaken as a priority. (This should involve all relevant sections of the Authority, including the Rangers, Field services and Recreation and Tourism Team.)

- 1.6.3 Effective systems for monitoring rights of way performance indicators, to assess progress towards achieving targets, must be established by the start of the 2001/2002 financial year.
- 1.6.4 The National Park Authority should carry out surveys of "stakeholders" views on rights of way management at least every three years. Surveys of farmers and landowners and groups representing disabled people should be undertaken within 6 months and the results added to the Best Value report.
- 1.6.5 The National Park Authority should establish a documented system for rights of way inspections in areas prone to increased risk of hazard to path users.
- 1.6.6 Systems should be developed to regularly review path condition and establish routine maintenance requirements.
- 1.6.7 The National Park Authority should ensure that all its operations in respect of rights of way management are carried out with due regard for the impact on the environment by judging them against pre-determined criteria. Such criteria should be adopted as soon as possible and should form part of any tender process for contracted works.
- 1.6.8 A review of alternative ways of delivering services, particularly monitoring rights of way, identifying problems and undertaking management work, should be carried out as a priority. Particular emphasis should be given to greater involvement of parish councils and landowners, and to examining the scope for increasing the responsibility of the Field Services Team for monitoring condition and specifying work.

## 4.4 Exmoor Local Access Forum Vision



The Rights of Way Improvement Plan will aim to provide solutions to existing problems whilst securing, improving and promoting access opportunities for the future so that:

- Good information is available on existing public rights of way including promotion of access opportunities for people of all abilities and those with limited transport options.
- Cross boundary anomalies are resolved in co-operation with adjoining authorities and the existing rights of way network is rationalised where appropriate.
- The needs of landowners are considered as well as all rights of way users.
- Pressure on existing well used rights of way is reduced by improving and promoting less well used routes.
- Access to new areas of CRoW Act 'open country' is established and promoted.
- The creation and promotion of circular routes is encouraged and multi-use is promoted where appropriate.
- Negative impacts of motor vehicles on rights of way are minimised and illegal use tackled.
- Partnerships are developed between stakeholders in monitoring, maintaining and improving the network to suit local needs.

*Exmoor Local Access Forum, 2004.*



## 5. Previous Consultations

There has been relatively little consultation with the public, user groups, Parish Councils etc. in the past in relation to the rights of way network within the National Park. However, due to the close working practices between the National Park Authority, Local Access Forum, user groups and individuals, regular feedback and views on users needs and the condition of the network are provided.

A new All Parks Visitor Survey is being planned and whilst it should provide information about visitor trends, it will not provide specific information in relation to the use of the rights of way network.

The Best Value Performance Review of Recreation Management surveys were undertaken in 2000/2001 and again in 2004. The survey results can be found in Annex 1. The results from these surveys will enable the National Park Authority to improve the management and condition of rights of way within the Park where necessary.

## 6. Structure of Plan Chapter

Devon and Somerset County Councils undertook a series of county wide consultations with user groups, organisations, landowners and the general public. The results provided valuable information on user needs and preferences for both counties, but specific information relating to Exmoor was limited.

However, through other methods of consultation with users the National Park Authority has been able to gather limited information specific to Exmoor. This information has been useful in formulating the first plan chapter. Wider information from all user groups and other users prior to future reviews of the chapter would be beneficial.



*Standing Stone,  
Brendon  
Common  
Heather Lowther  
(ENPA)*

### Action

**R1:** The National Park Authority will undertake future research to gain further information on the specific needs of users on Exmoor for the first Rights of Way Improvement Plan review.

## 6.1 Expected Outcomes

The extensive rights of way network within the National Park means that the needs of those who use the network, whether residents or visitors, will differ significantly from the surrounding areas. Because the National Park has an existing high density of rights of way, a large scale extension of the network is not appropriate or necessary except where strategic links or cul-de-sac routes are identified. The improvement plan chapter will therefore focus primarily on extending access to the network to more types of user group by upgrading existing rights of way where appropriate. Whilst priority will generally be given to the creation of multi-use routes, not all routes will be suitable for such use. This means that some proposed new routes may be developed for single use only (i.e. pedestrian/cycle use only).

The National Park Authority has received many suggestions for physical improvements. All suggestions will be prioritised using criteria agreed with both County Councils and the two County and Exmoor Local Access Forums and will include, amongst other criteria, consideration of :

- Environmental/conservation issues
- Impact on landscape character
- Costs of initial works and ongoing maintenance

Whilst this plan chapter will not detail specific improvements, the National Park Authority is committed to produce annual action plans to implement improvements in subsequent years.

Action

**D2:** The National Park Authority will produce an annual action plan to implement improvements.

## 6.2 Limitations

The nature of most improvements will mean that physical improvements on the ground will need to be negotiated with landowners in the first instance and subsequent legal processes will have to be initiated in the later stages, both of which can take a great deal of time.

No specific funding has been allocated to implement improvements but it is hoped that Rights of Way Improvement Plans will help gain much needed additional funding. The National Park Authority aims to work closely with Devon and Somerset County Councils to draw down additional funding for rights of way in general.

## **7. Assessment of the Ability of the Network to Provide Opportunities for Recreation and Meet the Needs of Users**

### 7.1 Walking

Existing provision for walking is extensive within Exmoor National Park with approximately 1006km of public rights of way available and an additional 9000 ha of access land currently available to the public for walking (this figure will double when the new CRoW Act rights commence in 2005). The National Park Authority has a duty under the CRoW Act to 'ensure reasonable access' to new access land and consultation results suggest that additional links may be needed to access some new areas and to create links between open access areas. However, in most instances this will only mean that new access points and furniture will be required.

Rights of Way Improvement Plan consultations have suggested that the following are of importance for walkers:

- Safe off road routes.
- A clear need for more accessible and circular routes close to settlements.
- Maintenance.
- Replacement of stiles with gates to improve ease of use.

- Reduced damage to surfaces.
- Information available on where to walk.
- Improved car parking provision in certain areas.

## Action

**PW1:** The National Park Authority will work with Parish Councils and Local Authorities to promote circular routes around settlements and improve accessibility and health.

## Action

**Action D3:** When considering suggestions for the creation of new routes, priority will generally be given to multi-user routes where these are appropriate - i.e. creation of restricted byways or bridleways and routes suitable for those with restricted mobility.

## 7.2 Cycling

At present cycling is a growing activity for which increased provision is desired. The National Park Authority supports the aim of the National Cycling Strategy and the cycling strategies of Somerset and Devon County Councils, to maximise the role of cycling as a healthy recreation activity and transport mode and to ensure the needs of cyclists are taken into account in new infrastructure.

Exmoor National Park Authority works with the Highway Authorities and Sustrans to ensure that the National Cycle Network on Exmoor is well maintained and developed where appropriate. Cycling is a sustainable and enjoyable method of transport for visitors to access the National Park. Opportunities for more promoted routes and 'cyclist-friendly' accommodation are developing and should be encouraged by Exmoor National Park Authority. Accommodation suitable for cyclists including such facilities as secure bike storage is in short supply, but providers are starting to develop their facilities in this direction. At present Exmoor National Park Authority is working with Devon County Council on a long distance cycle route linking Torbay to Minehead in Somerset. Road cycling maps are produced for the Exmoor area and in general road cyclists plan their own routes with road maps.

Off-tarmac cycling is extremely popular in Exmoor National Park. The Exmoor Explorer, an annual off-tarmac cycle ride, always fills the 400 places available to members of the public and general opinion from around the National Park is that this activity is enjoyed in most areas. In recent years Exmoor has been the subject of many articles in the national press promoting it for mountain biking.

As with horse riding, the extensive network of bridleways lends itself to this activity. Exmoor's topography and geology appear ideal for off-tarmac cyclists of all abilities. Exmoor National Park Authority has worked in the past with others to develop and promote general routes on Croydon Hill, North Hill and at Wimbleball Lake. Many riders do not ride general public rights of way as they are not sure of the tracks' suitability for cycling, despite being legal routes. Reports of conflict are infrequent and often due to misunderstanding of the law. Conflict with other users does occur with the small sector of the sport who ride down hill solely for speed. This causes obvious conflict with other public rights of way users. In some areas of the National Park near to urban areas cyclists have built their own tracks for down hill riding, sometimes through sensitive sites. This sector of the sport needs provision of suitable facilities to manage this negative impact.



Rights of Way Improvement Plan consultations have suggested that the following are of importance for cyclists:

- Safe routes from settlement to local services, schools etc.
- Improved facilities for transporting cycles by means of public transport.
- Improved perception of cyclists by landowners and other stakeholders.
- Better awareness of cyclists and rights of cyclists by other road users.
- Well publicised and extensive network of on and off road routes.
- Address conflicts between horse riders, walkers and mountain bikers where these exist - need for separate routes in some instances.
- More specific routes and better information for cross country and downhill riders.

**Action** **PW2:** The National Park Authority will work with accommodation providers to create 'cyclist-friendly' accommodation.

**Action** **P1:** The National Park Authority will work with users to produce a graded off-tarmac cycle map of Exmoor allowing users to choose their own routes.

**Action** **Action PW3:** The National Park Authority will encourage the development of one or more sites on Exmoor suitable for the sectors of off-tarmac cycling which cause real conflict.

## 7.3 Horse Riding

Horse riding is one of the traditional recreational activities on Exmoor. The Hobhouse Report of 1947 which recommended that Exmoor should be designated as a National Park highlighted Exmoor's value for riding as being of national importance. Approximately 55% of the network within Exmoor National Park is currently available to equestrian users, reflecting the historic and present importance of horse riding. Compared with areas outside the National Park this proportion is relatively high and provides attractive recreation opportunities for all non-motorised users. Private riders account for about 75% of the activity on Exmoor, the remaining 25% being commercial horse riding.

Exmoor National Park Authority is currently working with the Quantock Hills Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty and the British Horse Society to develop a publication called 'Exmoor and the Quantocks on Horseback'. This will provide horse riders with a variety of different routes based on the existing bridleway network. In the longer term it is hoped that this will be complemented by a long-distance promoted bridleway (The Coleridge Way) safely linking Exmoor and the Quantocks together for horse riding. This is a joint partnership initiative between Exmoor National Park Authority, the Quantock Hills Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty, Somerset County Council and West Somerset District Council. The route was opened in April 2005 initially for walkers only.

Exmoor National Park Authority and West Somerset District Council have financed and supported a new website, [www.equinetourism.com](http://www.equinetourism.com). This website is not just aimed at promoting riding to visitors but is also designed to cater for all businesses

related to horses. Amongst other things it provides users with information on local horse-orientated businesses, events, services, places to visit and ride, etc.

Exmoor National Park Authority is also working closely in partnership with West Somerset District Council supporting the Equine Tourism website to develop a series of equine based business forums. This is an opportunity for all horse related businesses to come together, listen to presentations and begin to network, which in the long run should lead to an increase in partnership working in an industry which relies heavily on others. The website is also looking to secure funding to continue raising awareness of the site, which will ultimately impact on the level of use of Exmoor's bridleways by horses.

Rights of Way Improvement Plan consultations have suggested that the following are of importance for horseriders:

- Safe off road riding.
- Raising awareness of the safety implications of riding on public roads.
- Upgrading existing suitable footpaths for equine use to extend network.
- Maintenance/surface improvements.
- Gates operable on horseback.
- More links between bridleways.
- Address conflicts between horse riders, vehicles and mountain bikers where these exist - need for separate routes in some instances.

#### Action

**D3:** When considering suggestions for the creation of new routes, priority will generally be given to multi-user routes where these are appropriate - i.e. creation of restricted byways or bridleways and routes suitable for those with restricted mobility.

## 7.4 Carriage Drivers

Whilst many existing routes may provide opportunity for carriage driving there is no specific provision or information currently available to users. The National Park Authority therefore needs to consult with local groups to understand the needs and identify suitable routes.

Rights of Way Improvement Plan consultations have suggested that the following are of importance for carriage drivers:

- 2003 survey of members by British Driving Society (Devon Branch) indicated need for more pleasure drives.
- More traffic on country lanes so need for more off road routes.
- More information needed on suitable routes for carriage driving.
- Good signing, improved access (width minimum 1750mm and suitability - steepness/roughness).
- Well maintained routes.
- Parking for carriage/horse transport.

#### Action

**R2:** The National Park Authority will undertake further research with local carriage driving groups to ascertain local need for future provision of suitable routes and physical requirements.

## 7.5 Motorised Users

Exmoor has an extensive network of Unclassified County Roads (UCRs) and Roads Used as Public Paths (RUPPs) currently enjoyed by recreational mechanically propelled vehicles. These routes vary tremendously in their character, from deep sunken lanes to tracks across wide open moorland, and are a great attraction to both four-wheel drive vehicle users and trail bike riders. Mechanically propelled vehicles can give rise to problems which Exmoor National Park Authority needs to address by means of effective management. Because mechanically propelled vehicle use of unsurfaced routes appears to be such an emotive topic, provoking strong responses from other users and locals affected by such use as well as from the vehicle users themselves, a clear and consistent approach to managing these routes is required. Exmoor National Park Authority will seek to minimise the disruption that can arise from this recreational activity within the National Park, within the Government's guidelines.

As with all recreational rights of way use, motorised use of the public rights of way network can be divided into two separate groups; legal and illegal. It is particularly important to draw this distinction when looking at mechanically propelled vehicles due to the strong feelings expressed to Exmoor National Park Authority both for and against legal motorised use of RUPPs, UCRs and Byways Open to All Traffic (BOATs). Legal users obey the law regarding themselves and their vehicle, operate their vehicles with due care and attention to others and only use public rights of way where they have a legal right. Illegal users do not satisfy some or all of these criteria. Motorcycles in particular have become a real issue on footpaths and bridleways, causing an obvious danger and nuisance to legitimate users.

### Legal use

Regular maintenance, drainage and monitoring of road conditions are essential where mechanically propelled vehicle use by the public is legal. Routes should not be 'urbanised' and any physical works should be sensitive to the general appearance and character of the surroundings.

The Department of the Environment (DoE) circular 2/93 (paragraph 13) advocates the use of management measures based on co-operation and agreement and commends the use of Traffic Regulation Orders to prevent inappropriate use and to protect the countryside where all other management measures have failed or are considered inadequate. The DoE practical guide Making the Best of Byways advocates management of routes by means of voluntary restraint agreement.

Action

**O2:** Where the level of use of a route is causing or has caused such damage that it cannot be repaired without heavily changing the character of the track and the surrounding area, Government guidance will be followed looking at voluntary and statutory restrictions on its use.

Action

**O3:** When ground conditions are extremely wet and vulnerable to damage, restrictions on use may be used in line with Government guidance to prevent excessive damage being caused.

Though conflicts often arise from a perception that mechanically propelled vehicle use is not appropriate, these perceptions are often allied to a lack of certainty over the rights that actually exist on the route, both on the part of the aggrieved party and on the part of the motorist. Education as to what rights exist is difficult at present due to the uncertainty surrounding the legality of mechanically propelled vehicles, but local people and users should be kept up to date with developments.

Much of the uncertainty about vehicular rights stems from the classification of many of these routes on the original Definitive Maps as Roads Used as Public Paths (RUPPs). Exmoor has around 60 kilometres of RUPPs in Somerset. A RUPP is defined as "a highway other than a public path, used by the public mainly for the purposes for which footpaths or bridleways are so used" (Section 27 (6) National Parks and Access to the Countryside Act 1949). For the clarification of whether mechanically propelled vehicle rights exist each RUPP needs to be re-classified as either a Byway Open to All Traffic (BOAT), a bridleway or a footpath. At present user groups are applying to upgrade these RUPPs on a case by case basis which will finally clear up the legality of mechanically propelled vehicles on each individual RUPP.

### Illegal use

Exmoor National Park Authority has a policy to deal with illegal motorised use of protected areas, footpaths and bridleways within the National Park. Enforcement is the duty of the Police and National Park Authority staff have no legal powers in this area. Information is the key to ensuring that everyone is aware of where they can and cannot legally use their mechanically propelled vehicles. Leaflets have been produced and circulated in partnership with relevant local and national bodies and information articles placed in the local press. Signing sites where illegal use is occurring makes the perpetrators aware that what they are doing is both illegal and damaging. Prosecution of persistent users of mechanically propelled vehicles in areas where damage or danger is being caused should be carried out by the Police, assisted by any information provided by Exmoor National Park Authority.

#### Action

**P2:** Education should continue to be targeted at users and others as to what rights for mechanically propelled vehicles exist. Signing sites where illegal use is occurring should be followed up by prosecution of persistent illegal users by the Police.

#### Action

**D13:** The National Park Authority will seek to encourage formal areas where motorised recreation can be managed on private land by landowners. There is the potential for private landowners to make a business catering for 4x4s and motorcycles on suitable land, removing pressure from more sensitive areas.

## 7.6 People with Restricted Mobility and Sensory Impairments

Exmoor's terrain means that it would be difficult to make all routes accessible to all with restricted mobility. However, simple measures can be made to ensure that some mobility impaired users can explore more of the National Park. Many stiles create barriers to otherwise accessible paths, poorly hung gates and hard to operate latches also block progress along otherwise suitable routes.

Rights of Way Improvement Plan consultations have suggested that the following are of importance for users:

- Removal of barriers (stiles, poor gates, latches etc).
- Better information on route suitability.
- Maintenance.
- Information on accessible public transport.

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There is existing specific provision for disabled people at a few sites within the National Park, but information on suitable public rights of way is limited and needs development. The Exmoor National Park Authority Accessible Exmoor publication (which lists accommodation, visitor attractions and walking routes suitable for people with disabilities) is currently being reviewed and will be re-published in partnership with user groups and will include information on accessible public transport. The National Park Authority also currently works with people with disabilities from a rambling group who have demonstrated that almost any surface is accessible to 'Tramper' type buggies (a commonly used rough terrain buggy) and only small changes are often needed to open up the network to all.

Action

**D4:** The National Park Authority will adopt a formal policy to ensure that least restrictive path furniture is used when considering changes to the network and when existing furniture needs replacing. The priority should be gap, then gate, then stile if absolutely essential. Latches should also be easy to operate.

Action

**D5:** The National Park Authority will only provide furniture that is the least restrictive option (whilst having due regard to the needs of livestock control). Where a gap or gate is considered adequate but a landowner requests a stile then only 25% contribution will be made by the National Park Authority. Where it is agreed that a stile is the only option then the National Park Authority will undertake all works.

Action

**PW4:** The National Park Authority will work with county councils, parish councils and people with disabilities to progress the creation of all ability routes with an aim to improve and promote at least one per parish.

Action

**PW11:** The National Park Authority will work with groups representing people with disabilities to produce route descriptions (gates/slopes etc) to enable people with disabilities to make their own choices as to what is suitable for their particular needs.

## 8. Other Issues

### 8.1 Maintenance

The public rights of way network within the National Park is managed and maintained by the National Park Authority under agency agreements with Devon and Somerset County Councils. A significant investment is made on signs, vegetation clearance and repairs to maintain a high quality network often above the statutory duty placed on a Highway Authority, e.g. where part of the costs should normally be met by landowners. Renewable resources are used including local timber from sustainably managed Exmoor woodlands. All maintenance is undertaken with due regard to nature conservation, heritage conservation and landscape character issues (e.g. hedge cutting is undertaken outside of the bird nesting season) and advice is sought from National Park Authority officers before improvement work is undertaken.



Network surveys are undertaken each year by the Ranger Service team to identify maintenance that its required. A GIS survey system is being developed which will enable easier surveys and produce more useful information. The National Park Authority also relies heavily on public reports of damage/obstructions to the network.

The Ranger Service currently carries out general maintenance tasks and compiles maintenance programmes for drainage, paring and erosion. The majority of physical work is undertaken by the Field Services Team which carries out routine maintenance including:

- Furniture construction (gates/stiles/bridges) and installation.
- Erosion control.
- Surface repairs, improvements, drainage.
- Vegetation clearance.
- Production and installation of signage.

During particularly busy times of year outside contractors are employed to carry out large scale projects and some maintenance tasks including mechanical hedge trimming. Volunteer labour is currently used for certain maintenance and improvement tasks. This is co-ordinated by the Ranger Service and is a valuable additional resource which assists the National Park Authority in its work.

In order to meet the targets of the Best Value Recreation Management review the National Park Authority is aiming to develop closer working with Parish Councils in relation to monitoring and management of the rights of way network on a local scale.

Whilst the results of the Rights of Way Improvement Plan consultations highlighted maintenance as a concern of users, Exmoor's rights of way network has always been praised as being well maintained. However, informal communications and feedback from the public and user groups has suggested that the quality of the rights of way network within the Park has declined in recent years. This is of concern for the National Park Authority and a review of Recreation Management has recently been completed involving public opinion surveys on the condition of rights of way within the National Park. The results of the surveys will enable the National Park Authority to focus attention on the areas where work and improvements are needed.

A recent audit of the rights of way network within the Devon section of the National Park showed that 85% of the public rights of way was considered easy to use. 13% of the rights of way in the Devon section were surveyed. The target for the Devon County Council Public Service Agreement is to raise this to 90% by 2005. There are no data currently available for the Somerset side of the National Park but this will be available shortly.

Action

**D6:** The National Park Authority will investigate and develop an Exmoor Parish Paths Partnership scheme.

Action

**D7:** The National Park Authority will adopt a route classification scheme for maintenance purposes based on variables such as surface type, location and type of use.

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Action	<p><b>02:</b> Where the level of use of a route is causing or has caused such damage that it cannot be repaired without heavily changing the character of the track and the surrounding area, Government guidance will be followed looking at voluntary and statutory restrictions on its use.</p>
Action	<p><b>03:</b> When ground conditions are extremely wet and vulnerable to damage, restrictions on use may be used in line with Government guidance to prevent excessive damage being caused.</p>
	<p><b>Exmoor Visitor Payback Scheme</b></p> <p>The Exmoor Paths Partnership (EPP) was an innovative environmental scheme dedicated to reversing the effects of path erosion within Exmoor National Park. The 'Partnership' consisted of individuals and tourism businesses that donated directly or generated income via a range of voluntary contribution mechanisms. A small team of specialist path workers undertook a range of practical tasks to improve paths in keeping with the character of the local area. The team developed innovative methods to combat problems leading to erosion. These improvements were in addition to the regular maintenance programme to footpaths undertaken by the National Park Authority.</p> <p>The EPP was set up in September 1997 as a three-year project. It was financed jointly from public and private sources. The key funders of the project were the European Agricultural Guidance and Guarantee Fund (EAGGF), under the auspices of the Objective 5b criteria, Exmoor National Park Authority, the Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food, The National Trust and English Nature. During the three year period of the project, over 225 kilometres of paths were improved, and over 80 businesses signed up to help raise funds or provide sponsorship. Over £15,000 has been generated from voluntary contributions towards this scheme and many businesses still collect funds to improve paths on Exmoor.</p> <p>The project ended in 2001, but the principle of visitors, tourism businesses and others making a financial contribution to the improvement of the paths network (and to other ENPA projects) is still valid and the scheme is being re-launched during 2005. Further information can be found at: <a href="http://www.exmoor-nationalpark.gov.uk">www.exmoor-nationalpark.gov.uk</a></p>
Action	<p><b>D8:</b> The National Park Authority will re-launch and broaden the Visitor Payback Scheme.</p>

## 8.2 Signage and Waymarking

The Highway Authority has a statutory duty to sign rights of way where they leave a metalled road and to place signs at points along a route where it considers it necessary to have a sign or waymark to assist persons unfamiliar with the locality. Clear waymarking is vital to the enjoyment of the rights of way network and the minimisation of any conflicts between path users and landowners. Confident map users will not necessarily like or need waymarking in all locations, particularly open moorland, but for casual users it provides reassurance and assists with navigation.

Although Exmoor National Park Authority Management Plan policy P 13/5 states that waymarking will be carried out in accordance with government advice/guidance there is a need to clarify how this is practically applied to Exmoor's rights of way network.

Action

**D9:** The National Park Authority will ensure waymarking is consistent throughout the National Park, using and improving upon best practice from the Devon County Council Public Service Agreement.

## 8.3 Changes to the Network

Exmoor National Park Authority works closely with the County Councils and landowners when making changes to the network. Legal orders are made by the respective County Council but the initial stages of landowner liaison and consultations are undertaken by the National Park Authority.

Within the National Park there are some rights of way that change at parish/county boundaries from one classification to another, or simply stop. This causes confusion to users and landowners and often results in illegal use. There are also some routes which do not exactly follow the definitive line for various reasons including physical obstruction, seasonal water logging and other unsuitable conditions. Whilst this does not necessarily cause a problem for users it is of concern to the National Park Authority and landowners and needs to be addressed before informal agreements become legally binding.

Action

**D10:** The National Park Authority will address problems where used routes are not on the definitive public right of way and remove obstructions.

Action

**O4:** The National Park Authority will continue to seek dedication of permissive routes to public rights of way and new creations.

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## 8.4 Social Inclusion

National Park Authority members and officers sit on a 'task and finish' group, the purposes of which is to:

- Audit what the Authority undertakes to address the 'social inclusion' agenda.
- Identify what more could or should be done to ensure that programmes and activities are 'inclusive', and
- To develop an action plan to address areas of exclusion.

The National Park Authority considers that there are three main areas that need to be addressed to limit social exclusion to the rights of way network.

**1. Physical:** barriers (stiles etc), surfaces, public transport, signing, specialist 'easy access' trails.

**2. Information:** appropriate formats, languages, events and guided walks. Engage with under-represented groups.

**3. Perceptual:** perceived need for specialist equipment, acceptance in a rural environment, lack of understanding.

Action

**PW5:** The National Park Authority will develop partnership working with other interested organisations to address issues of social exclusion.

## 8.5 Tourism

A rough calculation, using the results of the 1994 National Parks Visitor Survey, updated by more recent survey information, indicates that annual gross expenditure on all types of tourism activities by visitors to Exmoor National Park was at least £20 million in 2004. Exmoor's economy is heavily dependent on tourism, which in turn is reliant to a great extent on a well maintained and easy to use public rights of way network. This was proven beyond reasonable doubt by the correlation between the closure of public rights of way due to the Foot and Mouth epidemic and the sharp fall in visitor numbers and income to the area. There is an increasing understanding of the symbiotic relationship between good environmental management and successful rural tourism. Exmoor's tourism industry relies heavily on a sensitively managed landscape that is accessible to the public.

Ways of maximising the benefit of Exmoor's bridleway network to tourism are being explored by Exmoor National Park Authority, working with the Visit Exmoor partnership. Exmoor's extensive bridleway network provides the local tourism providers with a unique selling point which few, if any, rural tourism providers in other regions can compete with.

It is particularly important that the industry is targeted as many visitors leave decisions about 'what to do' until arrival at their destination. Information provided at this stage of the visitor experience can contribute to an overall 'satisfaction' feeling by the visitor, which can then lead to repeat visits.

Action

**PW9:** The National Park Authority will develop partnership working with tourism organisations to look at improving information and physical links for visitors.

## 8.6 Public Information

Information regarding public rights of way is available from appropriate Ordnance Survey maps. However, not all users are competent map readers or use a map when visiting the countryside. Different users require different types of information. Competent users will create their own routes using a map but casual users often prefer leaflets and self guided circular routes. It is therefore important that the National Park Authority makes available different levels of information for all types of user, including information on how to access the National Park using public transport.

The National Park Authority produces a wide range of walking leaflets and guides and there are also many guides produced by others. The British Horse Society produces guides to riding on Exmoor. However, for cycling there is limited information available. At a local level, information is also important and the National Park Authority is planning to develop parish guides to publicise the local rights of way network in partnership with Parish Councils.

It is also important that users are aware of their rights and responsibilities in relation to rights of way and access land and are considerate to the needs of other users. Information in National Park Information Centres and on the internet helps deliver the message and the launch of the new Country Code and the new access rights will help reaffirm the message. The National Park Authority is also developing a public information and signage strategy in relation to the CRoW Act open access rights.

Action

**P3:** The National Park Authority will make access information more readily available and easily accessible to all potential rights of way users. This will include the development of web based maps and guides and work with Parish Councils.

Action

**P4:** The National Park Authority will continue to inform landowners and the public of their rights and responsibilities in relation to public rights of way.

Action

**P5:** The National Park Authority will record and make publicly available, information regarding permitted routes.

Action

**P6:** All future access information produced by the National Park Authority will provide information on car free transport options where available. This will include contact details of national transport information providers.

## 8.7 Nature Conservation

### Public Rights of Way

In the majority of situations access on foot for quiet enjoyment along public rights of way does not pose problems for nature conservation. Where public rights of way cross protected areas such as Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSIs) or candidate Special Areas of Conservation (SACs) or other locally important areas where birds may be nesting the advice given below should be adopted.

Where maintenance is required within protected areas (SSSIs/SACs), the National Park Authority requires consent from English Nature where works that might have a detrimental effect on the surrounding area such as drainage are needed. No consent is required for works to the actual definitive line provided that they do not extend beyond the defined area except when importing materials into a SSSI. Outside protected areas the Conservation and Land Management Team of the National Park Authority should be consulted on any maintenance works which are likely to affect other sites of local importance such as County Wildlife Sites.

When considering creating new routes on protected sites, the National Park Authority has to consult with English Nature and obtain assent. Where new routes are required outside these areas the National Park Authority will assess the potential environmental impact to determine the likely effects on sites such as County Wildlife Sites. If it is found that a new route would have a detrimental effect on the nature conservation value of the site then an alternative route will be sought.

### Countryside and Rights of Way Act Access Land

English Nature has provided the National Park Authority with advice concerning nature conservation interests on protected sites that qualify as open access land. Under Section 26 of the CROW Act the National Park Authority will be able to close or restrict access to sites for nature conservation reasons. However, in most instances informal management techniques will be used before formal closures are necessary.

Action

**PW6:** The National Park Authority will negotiate a memorandum of understanding with English Nature regarding maintenance of public rights of way which cross SSSIs.

## 8.8 Heritage Conservation & Landscape Character

### Public Rights Of Way

The National Park Authority encourages access to the countryside which enables people to access the historic environment. Generally, the effects of rights of way on archaeological features are limited unless routes cross or abut sites. Where this is the case then the National Park Authority monitors sites to measure any detrimental effects.

When considering the creation of new routes the National Park Authority would not approve any that may have potential detrimental effects and advice would be sought from English Heritage when considering such schemes.



### **Countryside and Rights of Way Act Access Land**

The National Park Authority is assessing the likely impact of open access on all heritage sites. Under Section 26 of the CRoW Act the NPA will be able to close or restrict access to sites for heritage conservation reasons if necessary. However, it is hoped that in most instances informal management techniques will remove the need for formal closures.

### **Landscape Character**

Certain landscape types within Exmoor National Park are better suited to particular recreational activities than others. For example coniferous woodland is particularly good for absorbing large numbers of people and noisy activities. The landscape character of open moorland lends itself to recreational activities requiring peace and solitude. Consideration will be given to the landscape character suitability when assessing proposals for increased public access, promotion of recreational activities and large recreational events.

## 8.9 Contingency Planning

The rights of way closures implemented during the 2001 Foot and Mouth disease outbreak led to a substantial decline in visitor numbers to Exmoor. Businesses that depend on visitors for their income suffered financially and the importance of the rights of way network and access to the countryside to the local economy was highlighted. It is important that Exmoor National Park Authority deals with any future bio-security hazards that may arise with a measured and reasonable reaction, ensuring proper bio-security is achieved without unnecessary recreational and economic loss.

Action

**PW7:** The National Park Authority will look at formally adopting a contingency planning policy in line with neighbouring authorities.

## 8.10 Planning

It is very unlikely that large scale development will be permitted within the National Park. Generally, small scale or more usually conversions or adaptations of existing structures are more acceptable. One of the objectives of Local Development Framework policies is to help ensure that existing public rights of way are not adversely affected by development proposals. The National Park Authority will require proposals to take account of rights of way including arrangements for an acceptable diversion or alternatives where necessary. New developments should also take account of the needs of cyclists, pedestrians and horse riders.

Action

**D11:** The National Park Authority will ensure its policy on public transport, cycling, horse riding and walking will include enhancement of and links to the existing rights of way network when considering applications for new developments.

Action

**D12:** The National Park Authority will, when revising the Local Development Framework, include open access land in policy to protect the interest of users.

## 8.11 Landowners/Managers

Landowners and land managers play a vital role in the management and maintenance of the rights of way network. Public rights of way can cause inconveniences with land management processes and close working with the land managing community is essential.

Rights of Way Improvement Plan consultations have suggested that the following are of importance for landowners and users:

- Better education of both public and landowners needed to minimise conflict.

Action

**P5:** The National Park Authority will continue to inform landowners and the public of their rights and responsibilities in relation to public rights of way.

Action

**PW8:** The National Park Authority will work with landowners to look at ways of integrating public access benefits with environmental benefits and help facilitate access funding through DEFRA environmental schemes.

Action

**PW10:** The National Park Authority will work with landowners to attain funding for priority routes on their land.

## 9. Summary of Action for Improvements

### Research

Action	Resources Required	Department	Completion
R1. The National Park Authority will undertake future research to gain further information on the specific needs of users on Exmoor for the first Rights of Way Improvement Plan review.	Officer time	Recreation & Tourism	Ongoing
R2. The National Park Authority will undertake further research with local carriage driving groups to ascertain local need for future provision of suitable routes and physical requirements.	Officer time	Recreation & Tourism	2005/06
R3. The National Park Authority will undertake an audit of existing public transport services and work with Devon and Somerset County Councils to see how these can be improved.	Officer time	Recreation & Tourism	2006/07

### Development/Improvements

Action	Resources Required	Department	Completion
D1. The National Park Authority will work with landowners to dedicate as definitive public rights of way those sections of the South West Coast Path which are not public rights of way at present	Officer time	Rangers Solicitor	Ongoing
D2. The National Park Authority will produce an annual action plan to implement improvements.	Officer time.	Rangers Recreation & Tourism	April annually
D3. When considering suggestions for the creation of new routes, priority will generally be given to multi-user routes where these are appropriate - i.e. creation of restricted byways or bridleways and routes suitable for those with restricted mobility.	Officer time	Rangers Recreation & Tourism Highway Authority	Ongoing
D4. The National Park Authority will adopt a formal policy to ensure that least restrictive path furniture is used when considering changes to the network and when existing furniture needs replacing. The priority should be gap, then gate then stile if absolutely essential. Latches should also be easy to operate.	Officer time Furniture costs	Rangers	2005/06

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Action	Resources Required	Department	Completion
D5. The National Park Authority will only provide furniture that is the least restrictive option (whilst having due regard to the needs of livestock control). Where a gap or gate is considered adequate but a landowner requests a stile then only 25% contribution will be made by the National Park Authority. Where it is agreed that a stile is only option then the National Park Authority will undertake all works.	Officer time Furniture costs	Rangers	2005 onwards
D6. The National Park Authority will investigate and develop an Exmoor Parish Paths Partnership scheme.	Officer time Development costs	Rangers Recreation & Tourism	2004/05/06
D7. The National Park Authority will adopt a route classification scheme for maintenance purposes based on variables such as surface type location and type of use.	Officer time	Rangers Field Services	2005/06
D8. The National Park Authority will re-launch and broaden the Visitor Payback Scheme.	Officer time Development costs	Recreation & Tourism	2005/06
D9. The National Park Authority will ensure that waymarking is consistent throughout the National Park using best practice from Devon County Council Public Service Agreement.	Officer time Physical costs	Rangers Field Services	Ongoing
D10. The National Park Authority will address problems where used routes are not on the definitive public right of way and remove obstructions.	Officer time Legal costs Physical costs	Rangers	2005/06
D11. The National Park Authority will ensure its policy on public transport, cycling, horse riding and walking will include enhancement of and links to the existing rights of way network when considering applications for new developments.	Officer time	Planning	Ongoing
D12. The National Park Authority will, when revising the Local Development Framework, include open access land in policy to protect the interest of users.	Officer time	Planning	Included in adopted version by 2010
D13. The National Park Authority will seek to encourage formal areas where motorised recreation can be managed on private land by landowners. There is the potential for private landowners to make a business catering for 4x4s and motorcycles on suitable land, removing pressure from more sensitive areas.	Officer time	Recreation & Tourism	2005/06

<b>Partnership Working</b>			
<b>Action</b>	<b>Resources Required</b>	<b>Department</b>	<b>Completion</b>
PW1. The National Park Authority will work with Parish Councils to promote circular routes around settlements and improve accessibility.	Officer time	Rangers Recreation & Tourism	2005/06
PW2. The National Park Authority will work with accommodation providers to create 'cyclist-friendly' accommodation.	Officer time	Recreation & Tourism	2005/06
PW3. The National Park Authority will encourage the development of one or more sites on Exmoor suitable for the sectors of off-tarmac cycling which cause real conflict.	Officer time	Recreation & Tourism	2004/05/06
PW4. The National Park Authority will work with County Councils, Parish Councils and people with disabilities to progress the creation of all ability routes with an aim to improve and promote at least one per parish.	Officer time Physical costs Publication costs	Rangers Recreation & Tourism	2005/06
PW5. The National Park Authority will develop partnership working with other interested organisations to address issues of social exclusion.	Officer time	Education & Interpretation	Ongoing
PW6. The National Park Authority will negotiate a memorandum of understanding with English Nature regarding maintenance of public rights of way which cross SSSIs.	Officer time	Countryside & Land Management Rangers	2005/06
PW7. The National Park Authority will look at formally adopting a contingency planning policy in line with neighbouring authorities.	Officer time	Management Team	2005/06
PW8. The National Park Authority will work with landowners to look at ways of integrating public access benefits with environmental benefits and help facilitate access funding through Defra environmental schemes.	Officer time	Recreation & Tourism Countryside & Land Management	Ongoing
PW9. The National Park Authority will develop partnership working with tourism organisations to look at improving information and physical links for visitors.	Officer time	Recreation & Tourism	2004 onwards
PW10. The National Park Authority will work with landowners to attain funding for priority routes on their land.	Officer time	Recreation & Tourism Countryside & Land Management	2004 onwards

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Action	Resources Required	Department	Completion
PW11. The National Park Authority will work with groups representing people with disabilities to produce route descriptions (gates/slopes etc) to enable people with disabilities to make their own choices as to what is suitable for their particular needs.	Officer time Publication costs	Recreation & Tourism Rangers Education & Interpretation	2006/07 onwards
<b>Ongoing Action</b>			
Action	Resources Required	Department	
O1. The National Park Authority will seek opportunities to route the Coast Path as close to the coast as possible, whilst ensuring it is safe for all to use. Where erosion necessitates a diversion, signing and information in accordance with national trail standards, will ensure that it is easy to follow.	Officer time	Rangers	
O2. Where the level of use of a route is causing or has caused such damage that it cannot be repaired without heavily changing the character of the track and the surrounding area, Government guidance will be followed looking at voluntary and statutory restrictions on its use.	Physical works costs Multi agency User groups	Rangers Recreation & Tourism	
O3. When ground conditions are extremely wet and vulnerable to damage, restrictions on use may be used in line with Government guidance to prevent excessive damage being caused.	Physical works costs Multi agency User groups	Rangers Recreation & Tourism	
O4. The National Park Authority will continue to seek dedication of permitted routes to public rights of way and new creations.	Officer time Legal costs	Rangers	
<b>Public Information</b>			
Action	Resources Required	Department	Completion
P1. The National Park Authority will work with users to produce a graded cycle map of Exmoor allowing users to choose their own routes.	Officer time Volunteers Publication costs	Recreation & Tourism	2006/07
P2. Education should continue to be targeted at users and others as to what rights for mechanically propelled vehicles exist. Signing sites where illegal use is occurring should be followed up by prosecution of persistent illegal users by the Police.	Officer time	Recreation & Tourism Education & Interpretation	Ongoing



Action	Resources Required	Department	Completion
P3. The National Park Authority will make access information more readily available and easily accessible to all potential rights of way users. This will include the development of web based maps and guides and work with Parish Councils.	Officer time Publication costs	Rangers Education & Interpretation Recreation & Tourism	2004 onwards
P4. The National Park Authority will continue to inform landowners and the public of their rights and responsibilities in relation to public rights of way.	Officer time Publication costs	Education & Interpretation Rangers	Ongoing
P5. The National Park Authority will record and make publicly available, information regarding permitted routes.	Officer time Publication costs	Rangers Education & Interpretation Recreation & Tourism	2005/06
P6. All future access information produced by the National Park Authority will provide information on car free transport options where available. This will include contact details of national transport information providers.	Officer time Publication costs	Education & Interpretation	May 2005 Onwards

Tramper Buggies,  
Spangate  
James Maben  
(ENPA)



## Annex 1

### Summary of Consultation Responses on Rights of Way Management 2000/01 & 2004

#### The Public

##### Q: How good are path surfaces in the National Park? (% responses)

Year	Poor	Satisfactory	Good	Don't know	No response
2000/01	2.5	17.3	77.7	1.2	1.2
2004	3	21.2	84.7	0	0

##### Q: How good is the way-marking of paths?

Year	Poor	Satisfactory	Good	Don't know	No response
2000/01	6.2	25.9	65.4	2.5	0
2004	9	15.5	76.1	0	0

#### Parish Councils

##### Q: Is the standard of paths better or worse than 3 years ago? (% responses)

Year	Better	Worse	The same	Don't know	No response	Better/the same
2000/01	13.0	13.0	60.9	13.0	0	73.9
2004	14.8	25.9	51.8	7.4	0	66.6

##### Q: How do Councils rate the current condition of paths?

Year	Poor	Satisfactory	Good	Don't know	No response
2000/01	27.2	63.6	4.5	4.5	0
2004	26.9	50	23	0	0

##### Q: How do Councils rate path signing?

Year	Poor	Satisfactory	Good	Don't know	No response
2000/01	4.2	33.3	58.3	4.2	0
2004	11.1	25.9	62.9	0	0

**Q: How do Councils rate the Authority's speed of response to path maintenance problems?**

Year	Poor	Satisfactory	Good	Don't know	No response
2000/01	4.3	26.1	56.4	13.0	0
2004	3.7	44.4	33.3	18.5	0

**Q: How do Councils rate the quality of the Authority's response (work carried out)?**

Year	Poor	Satisfactory	Good	Don't know	No response
2000/01	4.3	8.7	60.9	17.4	8.7
2004	3.7	25.9	51.8	18.5	

### Recreation User Groups

**Q: Paths open for access. Is the situation better or worse then 3 years ago?**

Year	Better	Worse	The same	Don't know	No response	Better/ the same
2000/01	75	0	25	0	0	100
2004	27.7	0	63.6	9	0	91.3

**Q: How good are all path surfaces generally?**

Year	Poor	Satisfactory	Good	Don't know
2000/01	0	40	50	10
2004	11.3	53.7	26.3	8.5

**Q: How good is path signing generally?**

Year	Poor	Satisfactory	Good	Don't know
2000/01	0	10	80	10
2004	7.8	27.7	36.8	27.7

**Q: Is the standard of path maintenance better, the same or worse than 3 years ago?**

Year	Better	Worse	The same	Don't know	Better/ the same
2000/01	60	0	20	20	80
2004	11.8	0	58.5	29.5	70.3

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## Q: Is the standard of signing better, the same or worse than 3 years ago?

Year	Better	Worse	The same	Don't know	No response	Better/ the same
2000/01	20	0	50	20	10	70
2004	35.3	0	43.9	20.7	0	79.2

## Q: How good is the speed of response by the Authority to a request for action?

Year	Poor	Satisfactory	Good	Don't know
2000/01	0	50	50	0
2004	0	30	20	50

## Q: How good is the quality of the response?

Year	Poor	Satisfactory	Good	Don't know
2000/01	0	25	75	0
2004	0	20	30	50

## Consultation with the Public on information about walking on open land

### Q: Is there enough information about opportunities for walking?

2000/01	Yes (% respondents)	No (% respondents)	Don't know/ no response
Footpaths	95	3	2
Open land	50	28	22
2004	Yes (% respondents)	No (% respondents)	Don't know/ no response
Footpaths	87.5	3.1	9.2
Open land	67.7	16.1	16.1

### Q: What is the quality of information on opportunities for walking?

2000/01	Poor	Satisfactory	Good	Don't know
Footpaths	3	16	76	5
Open land	9	14	36	40
2004	Poor	Satisfactory	Good	Don't know
Footpaths	0	18.1	73	9
Open land	12.4	21.9	50	15.6





## Glossary

A quick guide to many terms used in this Plan.

Name	What is it?
<b>Access Authority</b>	Access authorities are local highway authorities or, inside National Parks, National Park Authorities. Access authorities have a range of powers to enable, and manage, access in their areas. These include powers to put up notices and signs, to improve entrance points to the land and to make new byelaws. They also have powers to appoint wardens to, among other things, secure compliance with byelaws, restrictions and exclusions, and to advise and assist the public and land managers.
<b>Access Land</b>	Land where the public normally have a right of access on foot under the CRoW Act. Access Land includes open country (areas of mountain, moor, heath and down), registered common land and land dedicated for the purpose by its owner. Access rights provided by legislation other than the CRoW Act can be for higher rights. For example, access under the Dartmoor Commons Act also extends to access on horseback.
<b>Access Network</b>	A term used in this Plan to describe public rights of way and other types of public access (for example, unsurfaced Unclassified County Roads, Access Land and Permissive Access).
<b>Annual Business Plan (ABP)</b>	An annual plan setting out targets on individual RoWIP schemes for the year ahead, also referred to as an Annual Action Plan.
<b>Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONBs)</b>	Areas designated by the Countryside Agency under the National Parks and Access to the Countryside Act 1949 as being of national importance for their natural beauty, including flora, fauna, geology and landscape, which should be conserved and enhanced.
<b>Best Value Performance Indicator (BVPI)</b>	A national measure of performance set by central government that allows comparison between authorities. BVPI 178 is a measure of ease of use of public rights of way.
<b>Byway Open to All Traffic (BOAT)</b>	A public right of way used predominantly by walkers, horse-riders and cyclists but which can also be used by motor vehicles.
<b>Creation Agreement</b>	An agreement made between a local authority and any person that has the capacity to dedicate a footpath or bridleway in its area.
<b>Creation Order</b>	An order made by a local authority to create a footpath or bridleway.
<b>Cross Compliance</b>	The conditions that a producer must respect (maintain their land in good agricultural and environmental condition and complying with requirements relating to the environment, public and plant health, and animal health and welfare) in return for support under the Single Payment Scheme.



Name	What is it?
<b>CRoW Act</b>	The Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000.
<b>Cycle Route</b>	A term used to describe a continuous route that is promoted for cyclists. Such a route is likely to be made up of roads, cycle tracks, cycle lanes and shared-use routes.
<b>Cycle Track</b>	A public right of way on pedal cycles with or without a right of way on foot. A cycle track may run alongside a carriageway or it may be off-road.
<b>Cycle Track Order</b>	An order made by a local highway authority to designate a public footpath as a Cycle Track.
<b>Definitive Map</b>	The legal record of public rights of way (footpaths, bridleways, restricted byways and byways open to all traffic).
<b>Definitive Map Modification Order (DMMO)</b>	An order made by a surveying authority to amend the Definitive Map and Statement.
<b>Definitive Map Review</b>	A parish-by-parish review of the Definitive Map and Statement to ensure that existing public rights of way are correctly recorded in terms of status and location.
<b>Definitive Statement</b>	The statement which accompanies the Definitive Map, describing in detail the rights of way.
<b>DEFRA</b>	Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs.
<b>DevonBus</b>	Devon County Council's public transport information service which promotes the entire local bus network, commercial and supported.
<b>Discover Devon Naturally</b>	A Devon County Council led sustainable tourism project which promotes the county as a year-round holiday destination.
<b>Discovering Lost Ways Project</b>	A national project working systematically towards a Definitive Map which reflects existing rights. It is doing this by examining the key historical documents involved and recording evidence of the existence (or in some cases closure) of historical ways, and submitting claims to amend the Definitive Map.
<b>Diversion Order</b>	An order made by a local authority to alter the route of a footpath or bridleway.
<b>DNPA</b>	Dartmoor National Park Authority.
<b>Dog Gate</b>	A device that allows the passage of a dog, whilst preventing the passage of livestock.
<b>ENPA</b>	Exmoor National Park Authority.
<b>Environmental Stewardship</b>	A new agri-environment scheme which provides funding to farmers and other land managers in England who deliver effective environmental management of their land. A primary objective of the scheme is to promote public access and understanding of the countryside. Environmental Stewardship requires land managers to maintain existing public rights of way and abide by the relevant legislation.

Name	What is it?
<b>Extinguishment Order</b>	An order made by a local authority to permanently close a footpath or bridleway.
<b>Hectare</b>	An area of land equal to 10,000 square metres (for example, 100 metres by 100 metres) and equivalent to 2.47 acres.
<b>Highway Authority</b>	The authority responsible for managing the highway network (including public rights of way) in its area.
<b>Local Access Forums (LAFs)</b>	Advisory bodies established by the local highway authority under the CRoW Act to advise on the improvement of public access to land for the purpose of open-air recreation and enjoyment of the area. In Devon there are three LAFs (the Devon, Dartmoor and Exmoor LAFs).
<b>Local Authority</b>	The highway authority and also any district council and National Park authority in its area.
<b>Local Planning Authority (LPA)</b>	The local authority with responsibility for determining planning applications.
<b>Local Transport Plan (LTP)</b>	A plan produced by the local highway authority to co-ordinate and improve local transport provision. This is a requirement of the Transport Act 2000. The RoWIP forms a strand of the LTP and will help to deliver its objectives.
<b>National Cycle Network (NCN)</b>	A promoted network of about 9,500 miles of signed cycle routes across the United Kingdom.
<b>National Park</b>	Extensive areas of countryside designated under the National Parks and Access to the Countryside Act 1949 because of their outstanding features. Each National Park has its own authority which is responsible for conserving and enhancing the natural beauty, wildlife and cultural heritage and promoting opportunities for people to understand and enjoy the special qualities of their areas.
<b>National Trail</b>	A long-distance walking or riding route approved by the Government and developed and supported by the Countryside Agency in conjunction with the local authorities through whose areas the route passes. The South West Coast Path is the only National Trail passing through Devon.
<b>Parish Paths Partnership (P3)</b>	A partnership between Devon County Council and many town and parish councils which receive an annual budget to help maintain and improve routes in their areas.
<b>Permissive Access</b>	A route that is not a public right of way but where the landowner has granted permission to use the way (or does not object to its use). Access could be along a linear route or to an area of land. Also referred to as permitted access.
<b>Planning Obligation</b>	A legal agreement between a planning authority and a developer, or offered unilaterally by a developer, ensuring that certain extra works related to a development are undertaken, usually under Section 106 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990.
<b>Public Bridleway</b>	A public right of way which can be used by walkers and horse-riders. Cyclists also have a right of way, but must give way to walkers and horse-riders.

Name	What is it?
<b>Public Footpath</b>	A public right of way which can be used by walkers.
<b>Public Path Order (PPO)</b>	A collective term for creation, diversion and extinguishment orders.
<b>Public Right of Way</b>	A way over which the public have a right to pass and repass.
<b>Public Service Agreement (PSA)</b>	Local PSAs are a means by which local authorities can build upon best value and commit themselves to delivering even better outcomes for local people than they would otherwise expect to achieve. Each local PSA focuses on about 12 key outcomes which reflect a mix of national and local priorities. In return, central government departments offer to agree freedoms and flexibilities in statutory and administrative processes, and financial rewards for success, which help authorities to deliver these enhanced outcomes.
<b>Regional Route</b>	A long distance route that is promoted for leisure and recreation.
<b>Restricted Byway</b>	A public right of way for walkers, horse-riders and non-mechanically propelled vehicles (such as horse-drawn vehicles). Restricted byways will be created when provisions in the CRoW Act are brought into operation.
<b>Role and Action Programmes (RAPs)</b>	Programmes produced by Devon County Council which help with planning and prioritising work in specific areas, including the coast, tourism, biodiversity, historic environment and landscape.
<b>RoWIP</b>	Rights of Way Improvement Plan. The CRoW Act requires each local highway authority to publish a RoWIP for its area.
<b>Signpost</b>	Signposts are provided where public rights of way leave any metalled highway, and usually consist of a post and a pointer or arrow to direct people along the way.
<b>Single Payment Scheme (SPS)</b>	A scheme which replaces most existing crop and livestock payments requiring land managers to keep their land in Good Agricultural and Environmental Condition (GAEC) and comply with a number of specific legal requirements. Meeting these requirements is known as cross compliance. GAEC8 is a cross compliance measure relating to public rights of way and reinforces existing legislation under the Highways Act 1980.
<b>Stile</b>	Fixed device allowing the passage of pedestrians over or through a fence, wall or hedge, while forming a barrier to livestock or other animals, cycles and vehicles.
<b>Strategic Route Network</b>	A network of routes based on the National Trail and promoted Regional Routes.
<b>Surveying Authority</b>	The local authority which has responsibility for keeping the Definitive Map and Statement up to date.
<b>SUSTRANS</b>	SUSTRANS is a sustainable transport charity that works on practical projects to encourage people to walk, cycle and use public transport in order to reduce motor traffic and its adverse effects.

Name	What is it?
<b>TAMP</b>	Devon County Council's Transport Asset Management Plan.
<b>Traffic Regulation Order (TRO)</b>	An order made by a traffic authority to restrict or regulate traffic on a road. TROs are most commonly used to regulate or restrict motor traffic, for example, through speed limits or waiting restrictions, but can be used to regulate cyclists, horse-riders and walkers. A TRO may be permanent, temporary, seasonal or experimental.
<b>TravelWise</b>	A national partnership including local authorities, the health and academic sectors and passenger transport executives working to promote healthy and accessible transport.
<b>uUCR</b>	Unsurfaced Unclassified County Road. Roads named A, B or C by the highway authority are regarded as classified roads – others are regarded as unclassified. The term Unclassified County Road means an unclassified road that the County Council is liable to maintain.
<b>Waymark</b>	A small round disc used to direct people along a public right of way.
<b>World Heritage Site</b>	A site designated under the 1972 World Heritage Convention, adopted by the United Nations Education, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO) and ratified by the UK Government. The Jurassic Coast (Dorset and East Devon World Heritage Site) runs along the coast of East Devon and Dorset.

*Some of the above definitions are derived from the Countryside Agency publication CA210 Managing Public Access: A Guide for Land Managers (March 2005).*



DEVON COUNTY COUNCIL

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