



‘Rights of Way Improvement Plan’ (ROWIP) Review Initial Consultation Document The Vale of Glamorgan Council

The Vale of Glamorgan Council gives notice of its intention to review its Rights of Way Improvement Plan (ROWIP) and seeks comment on the process and timetable set out below, for the purposes of s61(1) of the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000.

Please find below the background, outline of process, terms of reference and user facing timetable relevant to the review. Any comments should be submitted to Mr Gwyn Teague by 15th August 2017 at the following address:-

Mr Gwyn Teague,
Public Rights of Way Officer,
Vale of Glamorgan Council,
Barry Docks,
Barry,
CF63 4RT

gwteague@valeofglamorgan.gov.uk

This document is available in Welsh / Mae'r ddogfen hon ar gael yn Gymraeg

A. Background

The Vale of Glamorgan Council has a Public Rights of Way Network of approximately 570 km. It comprises ways that can be used on foot (footpaths), horse or bicycle (bridleways) and by non-motorised vehicles (restricted byways). In addition, there is also a host of other sites and routes that provide access opportunities in the county such as permissive paths, lanes, cycle tracks, common land, access land, forestry, country parks and wildlife sites.

In November 2007, the Vale of Glamorgan published its [‘Rights of Way Improvement Plan’](#) (ROWIP).

The purpose of the ROWIP was to provide a 10-year plan outlining how the county would manage and improve its rights of way and access opportunities over the coming years.

Now, almost ten years on from the initial production of the Vale’s ROWIP, local authorities are required to make a new assessment including reviewing their previous ROWIPs and deciding whether or not to amend them. Given the legislative changes in the last 10 years and economic challenges it is expected that all Welsh Authorities will produce new ROWIPs and that these will be published between 2017 and 2019.

This initial consultation document outlines the timetable, the assessment to be made and how the authority will review the existing Rights of Way Improvement Plan.

B. Outline of process

Publication of the previous ROWIP was subject to government guidance available in 2002. This outlined how the ROWIP should be produced and the stages involved. These included widespread consultation with stakeholders (users, landowners and other organisations); a review of relevant strategic documents; a condition assessment of the existing public rights of way network; and review of the Definitive Map. The result was the first detailed publically available assessment of public rights of way and access opportunities in the Vale of Glamorgan including future aspirations and targets for improving.

Review and republication of a new ROWIP is subject to updated [Welsh Government Guidance](#) issued in 2016. Similar to its earlier iteration this outlines the process to be followed providing for:

- *Evaluation of the delivery of the previous ROWIP*
- *Evaluation of the current condition of the network and its legal record*
- *Evaluation of future needs and opportunities*
- *Development of a new statement of actions*
- *Development of delivery plans*
- *Publication of draft and consideration of representations.*

New ROWIPs will differ from earlier ROWIPs in the following ways:

1. **Additional 'Delivery Plans'** – Delivery plans are new annexes to the ROWIP. These will be flexible focused plans that can be reviewed and changed when necessary. The original ROWIP only provided for Statement of Actions which could not be changed without a review of the plan in its entirety.
2. **Assessment of previous ROWIP** – The extent to which actions in last ROWIP have been addressed will be considered and any outstanding actions highlighted to take forward.
3. **Review of limitations & authorised structures** – The guidance includes a direction to review and provide a summary of limitations & authorised structures on public rights of way.
4. **Links to new plans /strategies** – Links to other plans or strategies that have been developed since first ROWIP should be identified. In the Vale of Glamorgan reference to outdoor access; health & well-being; and transport links are referred to in the Corporate Plan 2016-2020, Destination Management Plan 2014, Transport Plan 2015-2030, Local Development Plan 2013 and Active Travel Maps.
5. **Focus on non-participants** – Consideration of the needs of wider public including those who currently do not participate in outdoor recreation regularly.
6. **Focus on blind, partially sighted and mobility users** – A further emphasis on taking into account needs of blind or partially sighted people and those with mobility issues is included.

The following key pieces of legislation have also been enacted since publication of the previous ROWIP and will further assist in shaping the new plan:

1. **Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2013** – focus on Well-being for all those living in Wales and set out 7 key well- being goals: A prosperous Wales, a resilient wales, a healthier Wales, a more equal Wales, a Wales of cohesive communities and a Wales of vibrant culture and thriving welsh.
2. **Active Travel (Wales Act) 2013** – places duty on Local Authority's to secure new active travel routes eg walking, cycling in order to promote active travel journeys eg to school, work. Active Travel Maps have been produced for each LA identifying key new routes to be created.
3. **Equality Act 2010** – this builds on the earlier Disability Discrimination Act 2015 and basically introduces a whole new set of 'protected characteristics' of the public which it is unlawful to discriminate against and places duty on LA's in carrying out its functions to give regard to this.

C. Terms of reference

The Countryside and Rights of Way (CROW) Act 2000 is the legal mechanism for the draft and review of ROWIPs. The review will be carried out by reference to the statutory and supplementary matters contained therein:

Statutory Matters

- The extent to which local rights of way meet the present and future needs of the public.
- The opportunities provided by local rights of way for exercise and other forms of open air recreation and the enjoyment of the authority's area
- The accessibility of rights of way to blind or partially sighted people and others with mobility problems.

Supplementary matters

- The degree to which the previous ROWIP has been delivered.
- The present condition of the network and its record.
- The opportunities to contribute to Active Travel objectives, Well-being objectives and the delivery of other plans and priorities.

D. User facing timetable

The user facing timetable below sets out the different stages to be followed to produce a new up to date revised Rights of Way Improvement Plan for the Vale. It includes target dates by which each stage is to be completed and is broken down into individual tasks.

Inevitably some tasks may change /develop as views are sought and analysed from many organisations, individual and groups. Consequently, target dates are open to review, however consultations have a minimum 12 week period and there is a 12 month time limit to publish a new ROWIP from date a decision is made at Stage 3 below. Once the new ROWIP is complete it is then up to the council how often and how it wishes to monitor to keep the document relevant over the next 10 yrs.

Stages	Task	Target Date
Stage 1	<p><u>Review Planning</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Project Inception • Produce user facing background • Produce outline of process (including differences to previous ROWIP) • Produce draft terms of reference • Produce draft timetable 	March 2017
Stage 2	<p><u>Initial Consultation</u></p> <p><i><u>Issue Documents</u></i></p> <p>Publish background, outline, and draft documents to stakeholders as part of initial consultation addressing structure of the review and what is required.</p> <p>Publish to website and consult the following:-</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Each Highway Authority adjoining Vale of Glamorgan • Every Town/Community Council in Vale of Glamorgan • Local Access Forum • Natural Resources Wales (NRW) • Statutory consultees for Public Path Orders • Internal stakeholders eg highways, health board, tourism, social services, leisure) • Any other local relevant persons/bodies <p>Collect and compile responses</p> <p><i><u>Review Responses</u></i></p> <p>Produce consultation report</p> <p>Amend programme timetable and terms of reference if necessary</p>	July - August 2017

<p>Stage 3</p>	<p><u>Review of Current ROWIP (2007-2017)</u></p> <p><i><u>Evaluation of the delivery of the previous ROWIP</u></i></p> <p>Summarise key matters identified in the previous assessment and ROWIP</p> <p>Summarise previous ROWIP statement of action</p> <p>Assess the extent of delivery of previous ROWIP</p> <p>Itemise outstanding actions</p> <p>Prepare summary report</p>	<p>June 2017 – August 2017</p>
<p>Stage 4</p>	<p><u>New Assessment</u></p> <p><i><u>Evaluation of the current condition of the network and its legal record</u></i></p> <p>Assess the current condition of local rights of way & access</p> <p>Assess accuracy of records</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Volume of outstanding modification and public path orders. • Records of limitation. • Potential for 2026 closure of records. • Processes for Recording, Changing <p>Assess how information & advice is made available</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Processes for Managing • Include network info and responsible use <p>Highlight key issues</p> <p><i><u>Evaluation of future needs and opportunities</u></i></p> <p>Consider relevant studies, assessments & plans that were previously unavailable</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Welsh Outdoor Recreation Survey • Natural Resources Wales' Good for People Toolkit • Active Travel Maps • Local Well-being Assessments and Plans • Area Statements • Development Plans • Vale of Glamorgan objectives <p>Undertake targeted consultation and stakeholder engagement</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consultation event with local communities • Engagement with groups of people who share relevant protected characteristics, or potential partners in delivery. <p>Produce evidence based summary of public need</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identify needs that exist and are not being met. • Consider plans that identify need • Other specific criteria - geographical areas, groups of people, or high value improvements. 	<p>July 2017- Oct 2017</p>

Stage 5	<u>Prepare Draft ROWIP</u> Consider areas of previous ROWIP that require update or amendment	Nov 2017 – May 2018
Stage 6	<u>Publish Final ROWIP</u> Ensure all agreed amendments to draft plan and annexed 'Delivery Plans' made. Place final copy on deposit at principal offices Provide copy of new ROWIP on website Send notice of completion to relevant parties Undertake any other appropriate publicity.	Sept -Oct 2018
Stage 7	<u>Set up on-going monitoring procedure</u> Monitor and update 'Delivery Plans' over life of ROWIP. Review plan again in 10 years.	On-going

Any questions regarding the process should be directed to:

Mr Gwyn Teague,
Rights of Way Officer,
Regeneration and Planning,
Vale of Glamorgan County Council.
Tel: 01446 704810
E-mail gwteague@valeofglamorgan.gov.uk