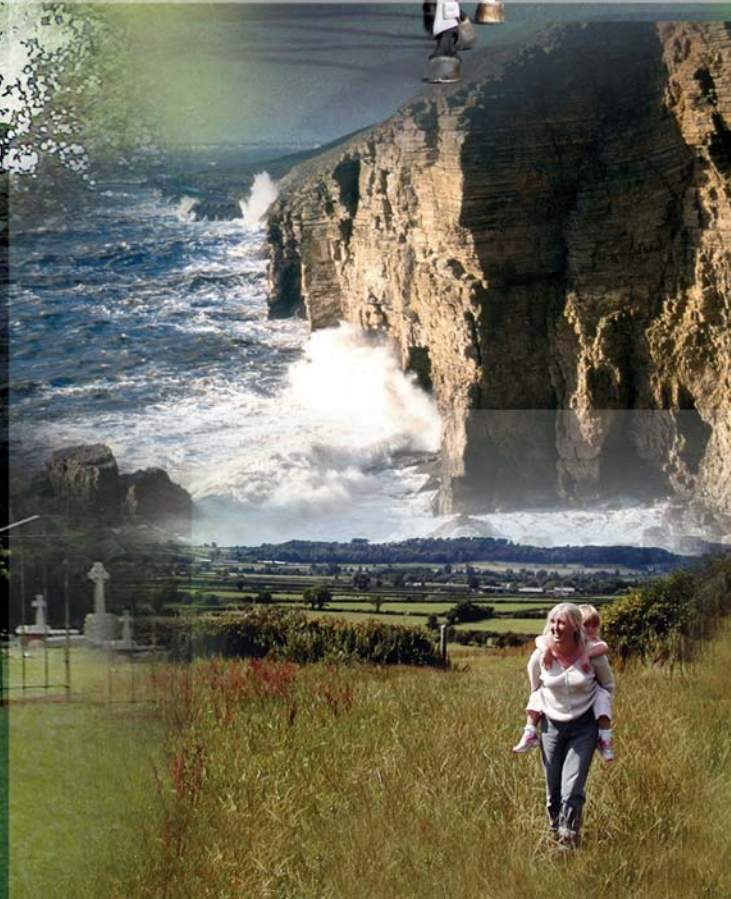
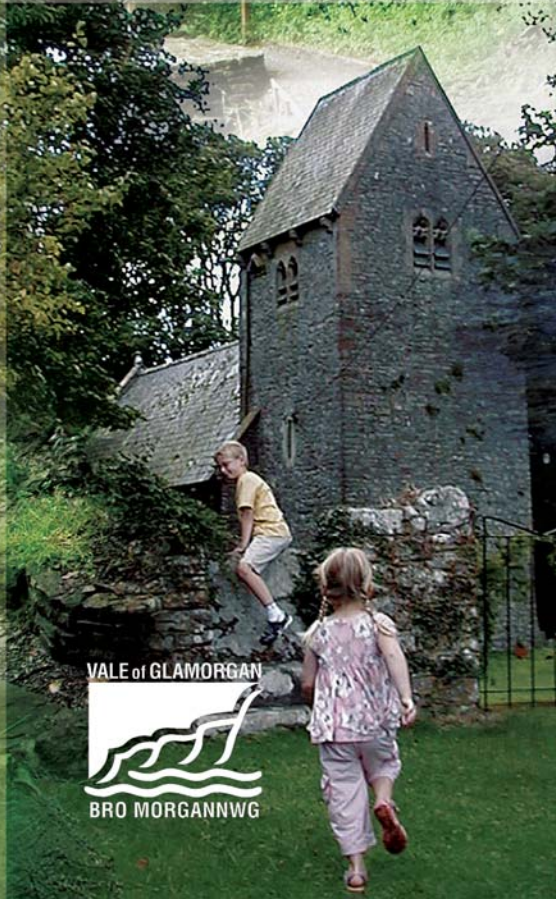
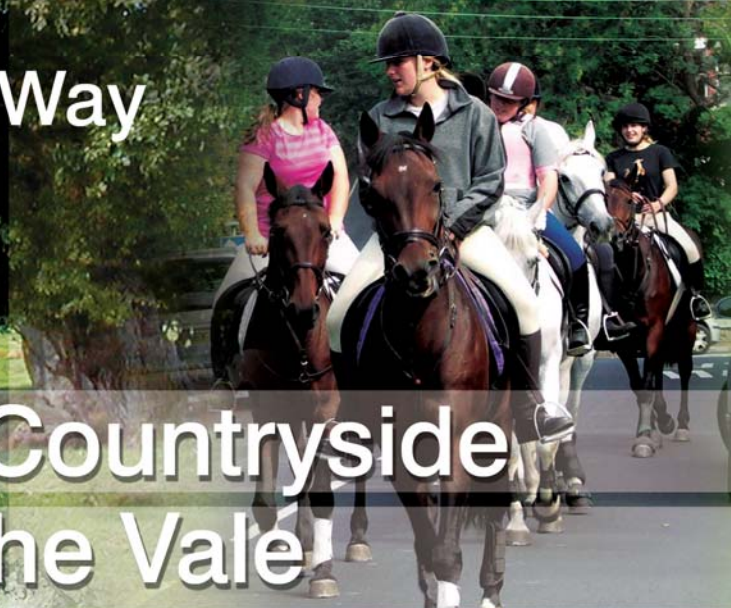
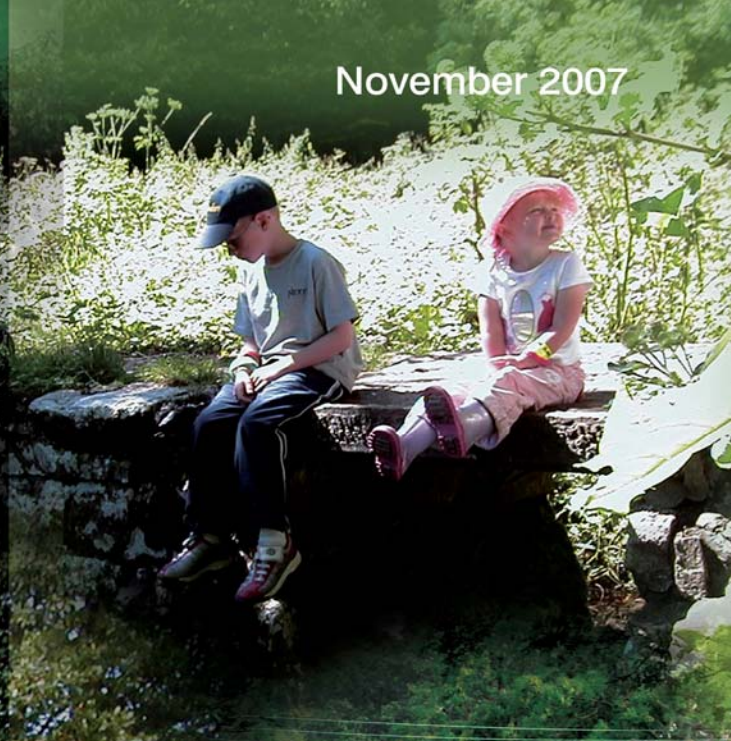


November 2007

The Rights of Way Improvement Plan

Improving Countryside Access in the Vale



FOREWORD

This Rights of Way Improvement Plan outlines the strategies that will form the basis for management of the Vale of Glamorgan's rights of way network over the next 10 years.

The Plan is the result of many months' work, which has included consulting with a wide range of individuals and organisations about the issues that they believed are facing the network and the steps that could be taken to improve it.



Gwyn John
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Mae'r ddogfen hon ar gael hefyd yn y Gymraeg, mewn print bras, ar gwyno-ddisg ac ar wefan Cyngor Bro Morgannwg
This document is also available in Welsh, large print, CD and on the Vale of Glamorgan Council's website

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Vale of Glamorgan Council (VOG) is required to develop and publish a Rights of Way Improvement Plan (ROWIP). The ROWIP is intended as an over-arching framework to guide the Council's work to maintain and improve the rights of way network and to prioritise the work that is done, and provides the basis for annual work-planning. The Rights of Way (ROW) team started to prepare this ROWIP in 2003. The process that has been followed includes: widespread consultation with a variety of stakeholders (users, landowners, public sector organisations etc.); a review of relevant strategy documents; an assessment of the condition of the network; and a review of the Definitive Map.

With the Local Access Forum, the Council has agreed a Vision for the Vale's public rights of way network:

*"To provide, maintain and improve the network of Public Rights of Way and countryside access for everyone
AND
To enable and encourage increasingly convenient and responsible use and enjoyment of the Vale's countryside and coast".*

All of the work will be underlain by six key principles:

1. Access for all
2. Management strategy
3. Sustainable improvements
4. Better information
5. Improved network of routes
6. Wider context

The Vale is a diverse county, including a lengthy shoreline, good agricultural land and urban centres. There are approximately 550 kilometres (km) of public rights of way (PROW) in the Vale of Glamorgan. The network includes:

- 498 km of footpaths
- 27 km of bridleways
- 27 km of restricted byways

In addition, the Glamorgan Heritage Coast and county's two country parks are very popular countryside attractions.

Access and public rights of way in the Vale are managed by the Council's rights of way team. The team is supported by the Local Access Forum, composed of volunteers with a wide variety of interests in the network. They support the officers with ideas and advice to help bring about local access improvements.

The consultation for the preparation of the ROWIP showed a wide spectrum of issues and opportunities. These included: problems with route signage, surfacing, stiles and obstructions; a lack of bridleways and routes for motorised users; the importance of accessibility for the less mobile; the need for information provision (on- and off-site) for all users; issues and options for coastal routes and access; the potential for stakeholder participation in management and improvement of the network.

For the purposes of the ROWIP, three main groupings of work have been identified:

- Management
- Stakeholders
- Information, communication and promotion

Each of these main groupings has been broken down into several themes, as shown below.

Management
Legal work
Maintenance
Resourcing
Volunteer involvement
Stakeholders
The range of users
Landowners and occupiers
Interest bodies
Information, communication and promotion
Off-site
On-site

For each theme, there is an overall Aim or Aims, together with a number of Actions, which we hope will help the Council to achieve these Aims.

A tabular version of the Actions – the Statement of Action, provides information on staffing, costs, priorities and programming.

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ABBREVIATIONS & GLOSSARY

BHS	British Horse Society
BOAT	Byway open to all traffic – a right of way open to all types of users including horse-drawn and motor vehicles
CAMS	Countryside Access Management System – a graphical information system (GIS), designed specifically for public rights of way sections
CCW	Countryside Council for Wales – the Government's statutory advisor on countryside issues
CLBA	Country Land and Business Association
CROW	Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000 – Legislation covering countryside access and protection of the rural environment, and includes the requirement for local authorities to produce a Rights of Way Improvement Plan
DMMO	Definitive Map Modification Order – a legal order that allows changes to be incorporated into the Definitive Map
FUW	Farmers Union of Wales
GIS	Graphical Information System – a computer package that combines mapped data and additional information
Ha	Hectare
Km	Kilometre
LAF	Local Access Forum – consultation body created under the CROW Act, consisting of interested members of the public acting in a voluntary capacity
NFU	National Farmers Union
PROW	Public Right Of Way – a route where the public have 'a right of passage' to travel to and fro over land along a defined route. The Definitive Map and Statement of Public Rights of Way is the legal document that records these routes
ROW	Public Right of Way – as above
ROWIP	Rights of Way Improvement Plan
SEA	Strategic Environmental Assessment Directive
Sewta	South East Wales Transport Alliance
Sustrans	Sustainable Transport
UDP	Unitary Development Plan – Local Authorities development plan
VOG	Vale of Glamorgan Council
WAG	Welsh Assembly Government – The devolved government body that is responsible for most public expenditure in Wales, and has powers to make a wide range of secondary legislation

1 THE RIGHTS OF WAY IMPROVEMENT PLAN (ROWIP)

1.1 Purpose Of Our Rights Of Way Improvement Plan

The Vale of Glamorgan Council, as a Highway Authority, is required (under Section 60 of The Countryside and Rights of Way (CROW) Act 2000) to develop and publish a Rights of Way Improvement Plan (ROWIP). The ROWIP is intended as a strategic document, which will help the Council to manage the rights of way network for residents and visitors. The Welsh Assembly's guidance notes that ROWIPs should be "the prime means by which local highway authorities should identify, prioritise and plan for improvements to their local rights of way network".



The legislative guidance makes it clear that a ROWIP should assess:

- The condition of the existing rights of way network
- The Definitive Map and the legal situation
- Publicity and promotion
- The existing and likely future needs of different sorts of users, including blind or partially sighted people and others with mobility problems
- The strategic context
- The identification of gaps in provision and their scale, now and in the future
- The opportunities and priorities for the improvement of the existing network
- The people's needs for local rights of way

The ROWIP should also include a statement of the actions that the Council proposes to take for the management and improvement of the network of rights of way, based on the results of the assessment which have been made.

In the Vale, we want the ROWIP to provide an over-arching framework to guide the Council's work to maintain and improve the rights of way network, to prioritise what we do, and provide the basis for our annual work-planning. This ROWIP outlines our ideas for our strategic approach to maintaining and improving the Vale's rights of way network.

1.2 Vision

**To provide, maintain and improve the network of Public Rights of Way and countryside access for everyone
AND
To enable and encourage increasingly convenient and responsible use and enjoyment of the Vale's countryside and coast**

1.3 Principles

The Local Access Forum (LAF) and the Council's Rights of Way team have developed a set of principles, which are intended to provide guidance for the development and implementation of the ROWIP.

When policies and action proposals are presented within the ROWIP and in future updates to the Statement of Action, it will be important to ensure that principles are being followed. They will help to establish future work programmes and bids for resourcing.

Principle 1. ACCESS FOR ALL

Any improvements and changes to the rights of way network will be undertaken with regard to current WAG guidance. Guidance that recognises the need to address accessibility in the widest sense, to include people with physical, sensory, intellectual impairments and mental health problems. Availability of parking, access by public transport and on site facilities are important considerations. The benefits of access to the countryside to other interest groups and organisations should be promoted.

Principle 2. MANAGEMENT STRATEGY

The network will be managed with a strategic, long-term view, which underpins annual workplans. Day-to-day management will be based on the best available information. Management criteria will be used to help select priorities. The Council will promote a participatory approach to management, encouraging stakeholders such as Community Councils, local interest groups and volunteers to become actively involved in the monitoring and management of the network.



Principle 3. SUSTAINABLE IMPROVEMENTS

The future shape, condition and use of the network depends on how it is used and supported by its stakeholders. Access improvements should also be sympathetic to nature conservation and the environment, and be appropriate for both landowners and users. New or improvement schemes must be affordable and maintainable. Best use of resources should be made through assuring viability, partnership working, seeking grant sponsorship, and through promoting local and voluntary help.

Principle 4. BETTER INFORMATION

Use of the network, as well as its day-to-day and longer-term management, is dependent on accurate, appropriate and available information. This includes the Definitive Map and on- and off-site route information. The Council will strive to create, maintain and make available this information base for the managers of the network and its users.



Principle 5. IMPROVED NETWORK OF ROUTES

Changes to the existing provision and any additional routes should be based upon agreed management criteria. Potential for multi-use, permissive

paths and access agreements should be considered in investigating new routes for bridleways and cycle routes. The ultimate aim is for a coherent network of routes, meeting the needs of its users, with minimal impact on landowners and occupiers.

Principle 6. WIDER CONTEXT

Proposals in the ROWIP should accord with, and feed into other policy documents including the Community Plan, the Local Development Plan, the Local Transport Plan and the Health, Social Care and Wellbeing Strategy. Relationship to other ROWIPs, other relevant regional and national strategies, other thematic areas and cross boundary linkages are important considerations.

2 INTRODUCTION TO RIGHTS OF WAY IN THE VALE

2.1 *A portrait of the Vale of Glamorgan*

The Vale of Glamorgan is the southernmost local authority in Wales, with a lengthy shoreline on the Severn Estuary. With some of the best agricultural land in Wales, the Vale appears as a rural green lung surrounded by the capital city, Cardiff to the east, the South Wales Valley towns to the north and Bridgend to the west.



The two major towns of Barry and Penarth, together with the smaller settlements of Dinas Powys, Sully and Wenvoe, make up the more urban eastern part of the Vale. The rolling farmland of the central and western Vale provides the setting for the two historic market towns of Cowbridge and Llantwit Major. There are many small areas of woodland scattered through the Vale, the biggest being Hensol Forest which covers some 227 hectares (ha).

The 45kms of varied coastline of the Vale make this the number one attraction to both visitors and residents. From the popular beaches and promenades of Barry and Penarth in the east of the Vale, to the 20 km length of the stunning Glamorgan Heritage Coast in the west, the sea proves a major magnet for recreation, including swimming and surfing, sailing and boating, fishing and rock climbing, (as well as more informal pursuits such as walking). Visitors can provide a welcome economic benefit to the area, and improving access can make a contribution to this.



The beaches at Barry, Penarth, Ogmere by Sea, Dunraven Bay and Llantwit Major attract many thousands of visitors each year. At peak times, some of the more rural sites are overwhelmed by the numbers of visitors,

putting a huge strain on both site management and the highway network. This needs to be considered in the context of the coastal access improvement programme promoted by the Welsh Assembly Government (WAG). (See Section 3.2).

In the east of the Vale, two very popular countryside attractions are the two country parks. Just west of Barry, Porthkerry Country Park's 89 ha of woodland and meadows also adjoin the sea, providing a link between urban Barry and its rural hinterland. The 80 ha of Cosmeston Lakes Country Park near Penarth has lakes, woodland and meadows, as well as a fascinating reconstructed Medieval Village based on the original site. One of the most popular country parks in Wales, this site attracts thousands of visitors each year, particularly to the Medieval Village events. Again, this can cause local access problems and congestion.



In the heart of the Vale, Dyffryn Gardens is listed Grade 1 in the Cadw Register of Park and Gardens, with 22 ha of feature gardens and an arboretum. Currently undergoing a major restoration project the gardens are a popular heritage attraction, which hosts a varied programme of events each year.

One element linking these disparate sites is the 550 km of public rights of way, which provide a good network of paths around communities and visitor sites. In addition, the 26 areas of common land add over 520 ha of access land providing further opportunities for recreation and leisure.

It is this network of routes and the access land, which is the focus for the Rights of Way Improvement Plan.

2.2 Who manages Public Rights of Way in the Vale?

The Public Rights of Way network in the Vale of Glamorgan is managed by the Council's rights of way team, led by the Public Rights of Way Officer. The team covers a variety of roles:

- Updating and managing the Definitive Map
- Diversions and diversion orders
- Maintenance of the network
- Enforcement
- The ROWIP
- Managing the section's Geographical Information System (GIS)

A major contribution to the upkeep and improvement of routes within the Glamorgan Heritage Coast area is made by the Ranger team. This includes regular clearance and improvement work as well as the negotiation of permissive paths, particularly following the loss of footpaths through cliff erosion. Similarly, the Valeways charity helps considerably throughout the Vale, with a rolling programme of footpath improvement and maintenance, as well as the production of a series of walks leaflets.

The Rights of Way team is supported by the Local Access Forum, which was formed in October 2003, in line with the Countryside and Rights of Way Act (2000). It comprises people with a wide variety of interests in the Vale’s rights of way network. Its role is to support the officers with ideas and advice to help bring about local access improvements.

2.3 More information about PROW

If you would like more information on any aspects of Public Rights of Way in the Vale of Glamorgan, the members of the team can be contacted at:

Public Rights of Way
 Countryside and Environmental Projects
 Vale of Glamorgan Council
 Dock Offices, Barry
 CF62 4RT

Telephone (01446) 704810 for general inquiries,
 or 704781 for specific maintenance inquiries.

Email: footpaths@valeofglamorgan.gov.uk

2.4 What are Public Rights of Way?

Public Rights of Way include Footpaths, Bridleways, Restricted Byways and Byways Open to All Traffic (BOATs, of which there presently are none in the Vale), all of which enable people to experience the wider countryside in a variety of ways. Permissive routes may also exist for public use when agreed by a landowner. The diagram below¹ shows what uses are allowed by law for each type of right of way.

Access route	Legal Users
Footpath	
Cycle track	
Bridleway	
Restricted byway	
Byway open to all traffic	

¹ Adapted from a diagram used by Suffolk County Council.

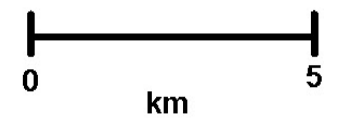
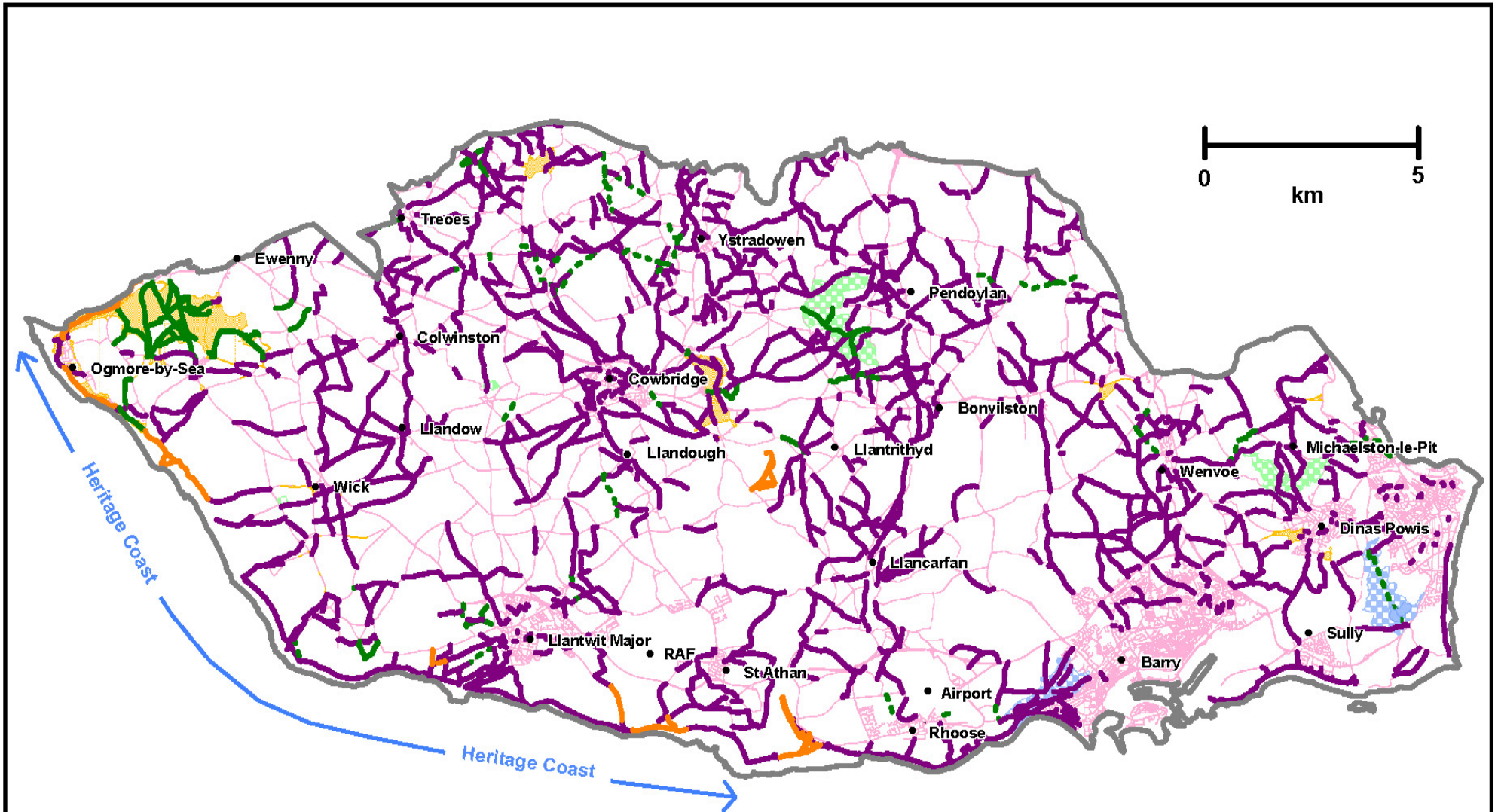
2.5 Public Rights of Way in the Vale

There are approximately 550km of public rights of way in the Vale of Glamorgan. This includes:

- 498km of footpaths
- 27 km of bridleways
- 27 km of restricted byways

Please refer to the following page to see a map showing their distribution. As this map shows, footpaths can be found in all parts of the Vale, although in greater density in some areas, often close to towns and villages. Bridleways are scarce and scattered; a number of Community Council areas have none at all. The greatest concentration is found in St Bride's Major Community Council area. Restricted Byways are also uncommon and tend to run for short distances linking farm roads. Historically, routes developed based on local people's needs, primarily to link communities or along people's routes to work. Nowadays the network is used almost entirely for leisure purposes. There is, as a result, a need to develop the network for a wider range of users particularly for horse riders and cyclists. There is one designated long-distance trail shown on the Ordnance Survey Map, The Valeways Millennium Heritage Trail, which is a circular route around the Vale. The Heritage Coast Path also offers opportunities for lengthy walks.





Public Rights of Way	Forestry	Access Land	Country Parks
— Footpath			
- - - Restricted Byway	Permissive Paths	Adopted Highway	
— Bridleway			

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Access Map



2.6 Other forms of access

The public rights of way network is not the only way to access the countryside in the Vale. In addition, there are:

- **Permissive paths** –

These are mostly short stretches of path, in some cases helping to complete a longer route or circular walk by linking existing footpaths, most notably along the Heritage Coast Path. (Permissive paths are not defined in law, but exist because of the agreement of the landowner to establish a route).



- **Green lanes** – Several green lanes have been identified, found in the central and eastern parts of the Vale. (A Green Lane is a term with no legal meaning. It is a physical description of an (usually) unsurfaced track, normally hedged, and often, but not always, of some antiquity. It may be a footpath, bridleway or carriageway or may carry no public right of way at all. In the instances mentioned above they form part of the adopted highway network, but are no longer maintained to a standard suitable for vehicular traffic. They do not appear on the Definitive Map.).



- **Cycle routes** – At present there are limited dedicated cycle routes in the Vale of Glamorgan, but numerous country lanes provide additional opportunities. In recent years, efforts to develop cycling

infrastructure within the Vale of Glamorgan have been concentrated along the coastal strip from Barry through Penarth to Cardiff and has looked to build on earlier initiatives, such as the Penarth to Sully cycle route. Recent improvements have tended to be progressed under the Welsh Assembly Government's Safe Routes to Schools Initiative and have been concentrated within the urban settlements of Barry, Penarth, Cowbridge and Llantwit Major. The Council has aspirations to develop a link to the National Cycle Network through the Vale of Glamorgan, which would connect NCN Route 8 in Cardiff Bay with NCN Route 4 at Margam Park, providing for utility and recreational trips.

- **Common land** – There are over 500 ha of common land in the Vale of Glamorgan, but over 70% of it is concentrated in the west. This has been formally recognised as access land under the provisions of the CROW Act 2001. The largest single area of registered common land comprises Ogmere Down and Old Castle Down (372 ha) around St Bride’s Major, with another large area at Stalling Down and St Hilary Down (91 ha) on the eastern side of Cowbridge. Mynydd Ruthin in the north, St Lythan Downs near St Nicholas, together with the two commons in Dinas Powys, are the other sizeable areas. The remainder are smaller commons - such as those at Leckwith and Llanblethian - and the 18 village greens. All commons within the Vale are designated as rural commons.
- **Forestry with public access** – There are two sizeable areas of forestry with public access: Hensol Forest, managed by the Forestry Commission and Cwm George/Case Hill Wood, which is a Woodland Trust site on the northern edge of Dinas Powys.



- **Country parks** – There are two country parks in the Vale. Porthkerry Country Park lies just to the west of Barry, and Cosmeston Lakes Country Park on the western outskirts of Penarth.
- **Access to the foreshore** – Importantly for a coastal county, at least 18 important locations have been identified along the length of the county’s coastline that allow access to the foreshore. This is mostly informal, but includes some promenades and slipways.
- **Nature reserves and other wildlife sites** – There are 8 small nature reserves in the Vale of Glamorgan managed by The Wildlife Trust of South and West Wales, but not all of them have public access. The National Trust has only one small reserve, a bog to the west of Peterston-super-Ely. [A map for all of these is available on request from the Rights of Way team].

3 THE STRATEGIC CONTEXT

The ROWIP is not a stand-alone document. It currently nests within a host of other strategies and plans published at local, regional and national levels. These have been reviewed as part of the process of preparing the ROWIP. Of these many strategies, the Community Strategy and the Unitary Development Plan (UDP) have been identified as the most immediately relevant, particularly in the light of Welsh Assembly Government’s rationalisation of required plans and strategies. The UDP will eventually be superseded by the Local Development Plan, which is now in preparation.

3.1 The Community Strategy and the UDP

<p>Community Strategy (2003 – 2013)</p> <p>Links between the Community Strategy and the ROWIP include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tourism: a growing market for ‘green tourism’, developed and marketed in a co-ordinated way. • Health & Well-being: priorities for action include providing greater opportunities for people to participate in sport and other physical activity, including walking and outdoor recreation. • Access & Transport: consultation showed that a noted issue was access to leisure facilities and the countryside. • Environmental Improvement: a priority to reduce dependence on the car in favour of, among other things, cycling. 	<p>The Adopted Vale of Glamorgan Unitary Development Plan (to 2011) (Adopted 18th April 2005)</p> <p>Links between the UDP and the ROWIP include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Environment: policies and proposals to encourage cycling and walking. Development of recreational activities to be permitted where they are informal and compatible with the rural landscape and nature conservation, including walking, climbing, angling and picnicking. • Transportation: policies and proposals to ensure that cycling and walking facilities are a consideration in land-use planning. Cycling development is seen as particularly important for leisure and commuting purposes. Disused rail lines will be safeguarded for future use, including cycling or pedestrian use. • Sports & Recreation: improving opportunities for access and enjoyment of the countryside, including informal facilities and a system of public rights of way that maximises the available recreation opportunities.
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3.2 Other relevant strategies

WAGs Walking and Cycling Strategy for Wales provides a useful context. It recognises the contribution which the rights of way network can make in providing opportunities for leisure as well as for work and utility journeys. It emphasises the need for good maintenance of the network, the need to provide for disabled people, and the contribution which walking and cycling can make to improve the health of the population.

The South East Wales Transport Alliance (Sewta) will take the lead in preparing the Regional Transport Plan, which will supersede the Local Transport Plan. Sewta has already produced a Walking and Cycling Strategy. Whilst this focuses primarily on urban and non-leisure trips, Sewta's role in helping to harness resources for all levels of access is very relevant to the ROWIP.

The ROWIP has a resonance for the health agenda, in terms of the potential to provide a resource for healthy living activities. "A



Healthy Vale", the Health, Social Care and Wellbeing Strategy for the Vale, specifically refers to 'improving opportunities for recreation in a countryside setting', amongst a number of initiatives to promote healthy activity. The Walking the Way to Health initiative is promoted, and clearly the ROWIP has a role to play in enabling safe and convenient exercise in an informal way.

WAG's Strategy for the Horse Industry in England and Wales will be a key reference document as we work towards improving access for horse riders. This document highlights the need for cooperation between the equestrian industry, landowners, the Local Access Forum and Local Authority.

Of particular significance to the Vale of Glamorgan is the Coastal Access Improvement Programme. This is a WAG initiative, which aims to improve access to Wales' coast via:

- Local path improvements, including circular routes
- Extending opportunities for young families, disabled people and other people with mobility problems
- Delivering new opportunities for cyclists and horse riders
- Improving and extending areas with public access (such as CROW access land and publicly owned land)
- Delivery of an all Wales coastal path, connecting up existing trails
- Provision of information and activities to promote and increase use of coastal access

4 THE ROWIP PROCESS

4.1 How have we prepared the ROWIP so far?

The Vale of Glamorgan Council began to prepare this ROWIP in 2003. The process that the Council has been following is that laid out by the legislative guidance. It includes: an outline plan of the work needed to prepare the ROWIP; widespread consultation with a variety of stakeholders (users, landowners, public sector organisations etc.) about their needs and their perception of the adequacy of the network now and for the future; a review of relevant policy and strategy documents; an assessment of the condition of the network; a review of the Definitive Map; production of a draft ROWIP document and consultation with stakeholders about this; and finally, production of a final ROWIP. The ROWIP will be regularly monitored and reviewed.

A key part of the preparation process has been consulting stakeholders. There is a huge variety and number of stakeholders for the rights of way network and other forms of access to the countryside in the Vale of Glamorgan. The challenge for the Council has been to reach out to key stakeholders and also to make it possible for anyone else who is interested to have their say, within the time and budget available. The table below summarises ways in which stakeholders were consulted during the Assessment phase.

Stakeholder	Format of consultation
Community Councils	Presentation & discussion & questionnaire
Horse riders	Workshop
Walkers	Workshop
Individual users and visitors	Questionnaire survey
Neighbouring Local Authorities	Meetings
Local Access Forum	Workshop/Reports/Discussions
Landowners	Workshop
People with disabilities	Presentation & Discussion
Residents	Valewaves Community Newspaper questionnaire

4.2 Monitoring

The ROWIP is intended to be a long-term strategy for the Vale's rights of way network, guiding maintenance and improvement work over the next 10 years to 2017. Over this time, many things will change, but the Council is keen that the ROWIP remains relevant and useable. In order to achieve this, the Council's Rights of Way team will produce a rolling work programme and conduct an annual review. This will include:

- Monitoring progress against the Statement of Action and work programme on an annual basis, by the Council ROW team. This annual review will include the removal of completed actions, the addition of new actions and the amendments of any others as necessary.
- It will also include a stakeholders’ annual ROWIP review meeting, beginning at the end of the first implementation period. At this meeting, the Council will update stakeholders on the year’s progress and key emerging issues, as well as seek input about ideas for new and revised actions.
- Within the first five years, the ROWIP aims will be reviewed in consultation with the LAF. The aim of this is to ensure their continued relevance and to make changes as required.

4.3 How will we use the ROWIP?

The ROWIP provides the strategic framework for all our future management and improvement works for the Vale’s public rights of way network. Out of this, we will create annual workplans, which will provide the detail to guide our daily work.

We have identified three main groupings of work:

- Management
- Stakeholders
- Information, communication and promotion

For each of these main groupings, we have broken them down into several themes, as we show below.

Management
Legal work
Maintenance
Resourcing
Volunteer involvement

Stakeholders
The range of users
Landowners and occupiers
Interest bodies

Information, communication and promotion
Off-site
On-site

5 MANAGEMENT: Assessment Summary, Objectives & Proposed Actions

5.1 Introduction

This grouping – management – refers to all of the work which needs to be done to manage the maintenance and development of the network.

MANAGEMENT	
Theme	Types of work
Legal work	Definitive Map Enforcement Modification Orders
Maintenance	Hierarchy of routes Surfacing Furniture Clearance
Resourcing	Funding Staffing Awareness-raising about PROW
Volunteer involvement	Valeways Opportunities for other volunteer input

5.2 Legal work

The legal requirement for local authorities to record public rights of way began in 1949. The recording of a right of way on the Definitive Map is a legal record of its existence at the date of the Map. Once a right of way exists, it remains in existence unless and until it is lawfully closed or diverted. This can only be done through legal action. New public rights of way can be created in various ways: through dedication by the landowner; through public use which has been unchallenged by the landowner; through agreement between the landowner and the local authority; and by order made by the local authority. The Countryside and Rights of Way Act (2000) has specified a “cut-off date” in 2026, after which rights of way that existed before 1949 but which have not been recorded on the Definitive Map will be extinguished.

Under the Rights of Way (Registers)(Wales) Regulations 2006 it is a legal requirement to maintain a register of any applications made requesting a change to the Definitive Map / Statement, and any declaration lodged by landowners in relation to PROW on their land. This register must be available to the public in electronic and paper format.

5.2.1 The Definitive Map

In the Vale of Glamorgan, the Definitive Map was drawn up by the former Glamorgan County Council, following the Country Parks and Access to the Countryside Act of 1949. The current Definitive Map has a Relevant Date of September 14th, 1954. Added complications in the Vale of Glamorgan are the inheritance of part of the South Glamorgan Definitive Map that retained the

1954 Relevant Date, and part of the Mid Glamorgan Definitive Map which had been reviewed and consequently has a different Relevant Date of January 1 1971.

The importance of the Definitive Map is recognised by consultees to the ROWIP process, in particular maintaining it so that it is up-to-date and ensuring that it is available to both Ordnance Survey and the public.

In January 2002 temporary members of staff were added to the Rights of Way team to deal with this backlog, and work continues to address the problem.

5.2.2 Modification Orders

Since 1954 there have been some 400 changes to the network in the Vale of Glamorgan, and each one requires the making of a legal event Definitive Map Modification Order (DMMO) to enable the changes to be incorporated into the Definitive Map. Each new Diversion Order made in the future will also in due course require its own DMMO to be made.

5.2.3 Anomalies

In addition, some irregularities have been identified in the orders made over the years, and some changes have even been made without the benefit of a legal order at all. In these cases backdated diversion or extinguishment orders may have to be made for the paths, before the DMMOs can be used to show the new routes on the Definitive Map, or the old route reinstated. Respondents to the public consultation suggest that in some instances, extinguishments could be substituted by the creation of new routes on the same owners' land to give circular routes.

Review of the Definitive Map provides the opportunity to address anomalies within the network, such as creation of links to produce a more usable network.

5.2.4 Applications for Modification Orders

In addition to past changes to existing routes, new paths can be added to the Definitive Map by means of a DMMO. These are usually the result of members of the public walking a particular route for a period of time, and then, finding it is not shown on the Map, making an application to the Council to have it added. Complex and time-consuming investigations are made by the Rights of Way Team into the claimed history and use of these routes before a decision is made by the Council to either dismiss the application or to make a DMMO thereby adding a path to the Map.

5.2.5 Enforcement

While the Council has a direct responsibility for the surface of a public right of way, all furniture on that path, including stiles and gates etc., is the responsibility of the owner of the land, with assistance given by the Council. The landowner is also responsible for the reinstatement following any ploughing of the route of a path and for the removal of any crops planted on it.

The Council does have a duty to ensure that the landowners carry out these responsibilities satisfactorily, and this can require taking enforcement action against anyone not doing so. Such action can either consist of legal action in court against any offender or the direct removal of an obstruction by the Council and the recovery of the cost of so doing from the person responsible.



Some consultees on the ROWIP sought stronger enforcement relating to the removal of obstructions, in particular the ploughing and cropping incidents, and to the illegal use of the network by motorbikes and vehicles.

Our aims are:

- To bring the Definitive Map up-to-date
- To maintain the Definitive Map as a basis for timely and effective legal processes

The following actions will assist in achieving these aims:

1. Complete a review of the Definitive Map
2. Improve the procedures for keeping the Definitive Map up to date
3. Develop and maintain a register of information relating to PROW applications and declarations, as required under the PROW (Registers) (Wales) Regulations 2006
4. Formalise the system for responding to requests to remove obstructions
5. Take opportunities to improve the PROW network through conditions or obligations on planning applications associated with development proposals

5.3 Maintenance

The Council is responsible for overseeing the condition of the network across the Vale. It is also responsible for clearing surface vegetation (other than crops) which grow across the surface of a right of way and for maintaining signposting and waymarking infrastructure.

Responsibility for maintenance of other route infrastructure, such as stiles and gates, rests with the land owners.

The programme of improvement works carried out by the Valeways charity through a partnership arrangement includes follow up maintenance work to those paths. Similarly, regular



maintenance and clearance work is undertaken by the Ranger team within the Heritage Coast.



5.3.1 Adherence to National and International Legislation

As a plan produced by a local authority as required by national legislation, the ROWIP falls within the scope of the European Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) Directive. The Directive states that its objective is 'to provide for a high level of protection of the environment and to contribute to the integration of environmental considerations into the preparation and adoption of plans and programmes with a view to promoting sustainable development'. However the directive recognises that an SEA need only be undertaken if a plan is likely to lead to significant environmental effects. After screening the ROWIP, it is the PROW team's judgement, that the actions proposed within the ROWIP are of a scale that would not cause significant environmental effects.

However recognising our responsibility to the environment the PROW team will develop a series of guidelines to ensure any individual schemes undertaken are managed in a sensitive, appropriate way.

5.3.2 Condition of the network

Through the Wales Programme for Improvement, the Council is required to report annually on the condition of its PROW network, using a nationally adopted Performance Indicator - "Paths that are easy to use". The Council also annually publishes data on "Paths that are signposted from the road", which is a local performance indicator. The data is collected through a survey each year of 5% of the network (in accordance with national guidelines for data collection). The table shows that the condition of the network, as measured by these two indicators, has been consistently above that of the Welsh average. It is intended to extend this to an annual 10% survey to provide more information to inform our management activities.

Year	Paths that are signposted from the road		Paths that are easy to use	
	The Vale	Welsh Average	The Vale	Welsh Average
1997/98	48%	37%	56%	45%
1998/99	50%	45%	59%	47%
1999/00	32%	44%	53%	55%
2000/01	59%	44%	53%	55%
2001/02	52%	Discontinued as	72%	39%
2002/03	56%	a national indicator	57%	44%
2003/04	58%		51%	44%
2004/05	58%		54%	41%
2005/06	60%		65%	41%
2006/07	59%		64%	Not available

The Council has done further detailed survey work to understand the quality and quantity of signposting from the roadside throughout the county. The survey, undertaken in June 2005, shows that:

- Of 1144 potential post locations, 422 (37%) have a timber post, 63 (5%) a metal post and 159 (14%) a waymarked stile
- 500 locations (44%) have no marker at all

In February 2006, a life cycle analysis of Public Rights of Way assets was carried out. This considered stiles, gates, waymarks and bridges, as well as the surface of routes, and calculated the cost of repair and replacement based upon an estimate of how long the structure or surface would last under normal conditions.

A complete survey was not carried out, but the analysis was based on detailed knowledge of the 60% of the PROW network which has been the subject of improvement works carried out by Valeways since 1996. This enabled estimates of the total number of items of furniture as follows:

Waymark posts – wooden	2200
Waymark posts – metal fingers posts	65
Stiles – wooden	3800
Stiles – stone	240
Kissing gates	110
Bridges – sleeper	15
Bridges – other	15
Gates – footpaths	15
Gates – bridleways	160
Notice boards	5

The majority of the network has natural surfacing, with a small percentage of footpaths having a tarmac or compacted stone dust surface. These paths are maintained by the Public Rights of Way Section unless the path also carries higher rights as an Adopted Highway, in which case the routes are maintained by the Highways Section.

Estimated breakdown of the network’s surfaces:

Tarmac surface (without Adopted Highway status):

Footpaths	8.34 km
Bridleways	0.00 km
Restricted Byways	0.61 km

Stone dust surface (without Adopted Highway status):

Footpaths	1.03 km
Bridleways	0.00 km
Restricted Byways	0.00 km

The life cycle analysis also considered the estimated “life” of an individual asset, i.e. 10 years for wooden structures (waymark posts, stiles, sleeper bridges and some kissing gates), 25 years for metal structures (finger posts, some kissing gates, other gates). The stone stiles in our inventory are decades if not centuries old and if properly maintained may be expected to survive indefinitely. A life span of 100 years has been estimated for these structures.

The estimated life span for a tarmac surface is 40 years for a fully constructed Restricted Byway and 15 years for a cross-field footpath. A stone dusted footpath surface has an estimated life of 5 years.

Based on these figures, the estimated gross replacement cost of all these assets is some £3.6m. More importantly, an estimate of the annual cost to maintain a steady state condition can be calculated from the formula:

$$\text{Number of assets} \times \text{Cost of purchase and installation} \div \text{Average life} = \text{Depreciation charge}$$

This produces a figure of £275,000 required per year to maintain the structures and surfaces in a steady state of repair, based on average contractor costs.



It is clear from consultation, that maintenance is one of the highest priorities for users of the network. The issues that people raised include: muddy surfaces; drainage problems; overgrowth and undergrowth; poor condition of some signposts and waymarks; poor condition of some stiles and gates.

5.3.3 Improvement of the network

The partnership arrangement with Valeways has led to considerable improvement work being completed. The table below shows the length of network which has been improved, and the proportion of the total network that this represents. Early improvements were more easily identified and most cost effective, whereas those identified later in the programme have become more onerous. Since many paths were in good order before the commencement of this programme, it is not necessary to achieve 100%, and this programme will soon be nearing completion.

Year	Kms	% of network	% combined year on year
pre 1996	53	9.64	9.64
1996/97	33	6.00	15.64
1997/98	41	7.45	23.09
1998/99	34	6.18	29.27
1999/00	37	6.73	36.00
2000/01	42	7.64	43.64
2001/02	50	9.09	52.73
2002/03	23	4.18	56.91
2003/04	22	4.00	60.91
2004/05	19	3.45	64.36
2005/06	15	2.73	67.09

Respondents recognised the improvements that the Council has brought about in recent years and that the Council has a limited budget for maintenance work; however, there were clear messages about the need to make further improvements.

Consultation respondents' suggestions for improvements included a better management system for maintenance and making more use of volunteers e.g. for reporting problems.

Improvement targets have not been set at this stage because targets in themselves can distort priorities if they are not comprehensive. Success will be reviewed annually and considered in annual reports.

Our aims are:

- To maintain the Vale's Public Rights of Way network in a condition suitable for the intended type and level of use
- To create and maintain an effective information base to inform maintenance planning
- To adopt a policy/standard for maintenance of furniture and surfaces

The following actions will assist in achieving these aims:

6. Carry out a condition survey of surfaces and furniture, and review it regularly
7. Devise and introduce a county policy/standard for maintenance of furniture and surfaces, based on lifecycle analysis, environmental factors and access for all
8. Devise and implement an effective information base to ensure that environmentally sensitive areas are recognised and appropriate agencies consulted for all works
9. Full implementation of the Countryside and Access Management System (CAMS) for ongoing maintenance management
10. Carry out an annual clearance programme for priority routes and review the programme annually
11. Aim to remove of all obstructions on PROW within 2 months of notification
12. Carry out a 10% random sample survey of the ease of use of paths each year
13. Catalogue and prioritise improvement of coastal path and coastal access routes including surfacing, signage and fencing

5.4 Resourcing

The resources available can be thought of in terms of staffing and finance. The current staffing is described in section 2.2.

5.4.1 Where does the money come from?

Finance for PROW work is found from a number of sources. The basic budget is the Council's annual allocation for PROW work, of some £68,000 (2007). This is used for a variety of ongoing work, including:

- The annual maintenance programme
- Funding of materials for improvement schemes by Valeways
- Contractual works

- Advertisements required by law
- Production of leaflets and guides
- Purchase of computer software and associated training

Importantly, this budget is enhanced by grants, including the annual partnership grant programme with the Countryside Council for Wales, and newer initiatives like the Rural Regeneration grants. Volunteer time adds significant value to the work, most notably that provided by the Valeways charity, which carries out the annual improvement programme, as well as the time-consuming preparatory work on walks leaflets. Considerable value is also added by the work of the Heritage Coast Rangers, who spend much time carrying out practical tasks, again often with the help of volunteers.

5.4.2 What is the money needed for?

The resourcing which is currently available has to be assessed against the need for continuing improvement, maintenance and promotion of the PROW network. The cost of this work continues to grow each year, costs compounded not unreasonably by the public desire for a better maintained and more extensive network.

This ROWIP highlights the needs and the priorities for a whole spectrum of improvement works, as well as the continuing statutory duties on the Council.

In Section 5.3.1, the 2006 life cycle calculations produced an estimated annual cost of £275,000 to maintain the structures and surfaces of the PROW network in its present condition.

A comparison can be made to the estimated figure extrapolated from an all Wales study in 2002 by the Countryside Council for Wales. This produced an annual maintenance cost of £220,000 for the first 5 years of a PROW improvement programme.

The Statement of Action, at the back of the document, gives detailed information about the financial and 'people' resources that we think will be needed to make each Action Idea happen. It is clear that some Action Ideas can be taken forward within the existing budget and staff team, but others will only happen if extra resources can be found.

5.4.3 Key issues

All the teams most closely involved in access work are under pressure. The Rights of Way team is currently under-funded and under-staffed, in terms of meeting its duties, particularly in the light of the Countryside and Rights of Way Act (2000) responsibilities and the growing maintenance need. The Heritage Coast team continues to make a contribution despite clear under resourcing, whilst Valeways as a charity finds it difficult to ensure continuity of funding.

The assessment revealed a number of other areas that needed additional resourcing in terms of committing staff time or finance.

- Clearing the Definitive Map backlog
- Increasing voluntary participation in the rights of way network
- Extending partnership working with other organisations for the benefit of the network
- Improving and extending the level of maintenance work
- Identification and implementation of appropriate additional routes
- The development and use of CAMS
- Producing and maintaining more information about the network

Consultees during the assessment phase were aware of the financial difficulties facing the Council and expressed a definite wish to see an increased Council budget for improvement and maintenance of the Vale's rights of way network.

Our aims are:

- To harness enough resources – financial and manpower – to enable high quality maintenance and improvements
- To raise awareness of the ROWIP to generate support for its implementation

The following actions will assist in achieving these aims:

14. Extend partnership working, with Valeways and others
15. Secure suitable funding opportunities to enable implementation of the ROWIP
16. Identify specific staffing needs to implement the ROWIP

5.5 Volunteer involvement

Currently, volunteers are involved in improvement works and promotion of the Vale's rights of way network mainly through Valeways, who run a regular volunteer programme.

5.5.1 Issues and opportunities

Consultees during the assessment phase suggested a number of ways in which voluntary input could be used, including reporting of problems, hands-on maintenance and improvement work, and helping to prepare route information. There was a marked interest and willingness from a variety of stakeholders to get actively involved – in consultations, planning and physical work.

However, as one respondent noted, volunteers are not a free option. Individuals or groups need strong management support, and there are issues of health and safety, training, supervision and insurance cover which must be dealt with.

Currently, Valeways runs a successful programme for volunteer involvement in practical improvement works and promotion, so the new opportunities are likely to lie in other areas. Also, at present, the Council

only works directly with volunteers through the Ranger teams. So, as this would be a different aspect of work, there is considerable preparation work needed to build



relationships with potential volunteers (individuals and groups) and to identify their most appropriate roles, and in particular to complement the work of Valeways.

Our aim is:

- To enable greater involvement by volunteers and stakeholders in the management and improvement of the network

The following actions will assist in achieving this aim:

17. Promote voluntary support for the network including investigating the potential for volunteer path stewards (see Action 29)
18. Instigate an annual stakeholder meeting to review ROWIP progress and opportunities
19. Work with the LAF to identify better ways of engaging stakeholders and volunteers

6 STAKEHOLDERS: Assessment Summary, Objectives & Proposed Actions

6.1 Introduction

This section – stakeholders – refers to all the different groups who have some kind of ‘stake’ or interest in the Vale’s network of rights of way. They fall into three main categories: users, landowners and occupiers, interested organisations. This categorisation is reflected in our themes.

STAKEHOLDERS	
Theme	Types of work
The range of users	Changes/additions to the network Meeting needs unique to particular user groups
Landowners and occupiers	Sharing information and good practice, investigating a more coherent network of routes
Organisations/interest bodies and neighbouring authorities	Making links with other organisations and interest bodies, including neighbouring Authorities

6.2 The range of users

The rights of way network is used by people for many different activities – walking (including walking the dog), cycling, horse riding, carriage driving, off-road motor-biking and driving.

6.2.1 A network fit for a range of users?

The different types of rights of way in the Vale (see Section 2.5) are able to accommodate most of the types of use legally, to varying levels. However, the assessment shows some key issues:

- There is a general lack of bridleways in the Vale. They are non-existent in some areas and sparse in many more, restricting off-road opportunities for cyclists and horse-riders
- There is a lack of off-road routes available for legal use of motorbikes and motorised vehicles
- Gates and stiles restrict use of the network by less mobile people, families with pushchairs, wheelchair users and people with dogs
- There are problems with surfaces for multiple use, particularly for people with disabilities
- There is demand for more circular routes

6.2.2 Walkers

The footpath network in the Vale is comprehensive (see map on p. 15).

The assessment showed that walkers have concerns about footpath drainage and muddy surfaces, accessibility issues relating to stiles and gates particularly when walking with a pushchair or a dog, obstructions in particular ploughing and cropping, safe access to the coast, network fragmentation and dead ends, lack of paths alongside country roads, lack of signposting and waymarking.

Opportunities identified by consultees included: creation of multi-use routes with surfacing suitable for all users, in some locations; creation of short circular routes close to where people live; suggestions of a variety of new routes to de-fragment the network or open up access to places; improvements in design of gates and stiles.

6.2.3 Horse riders

The bridleway network in the Vale is very patchy (see map on p. 15). Around two-thirds of the existing bridleways are concentrated in the Ewenny/St Brides area. The British Horse Society (BHS) estimate that the rest of the Vale



has less than 7 miles of bridleway to serve around 2,700 horses kept there. The majority of horse owners do not own horse transport, so are limited to using the local area for riding. In comparison to surrounding counties, the opportunities presented by the Forestry Commission for horse riding in the county are very limited, even with open access or permit only access areas.

The consultation confirmed that the highest priority for horse-riders was extending the off-road network available to them. Riders noted that often local roads are not suitable for riding as they lack verges, and problems are exacerbated by drivers failing to understand the needs of horses and riders.

There is interest in a long-distance route through the Vale, which could form a basis for shorter, circular routes. BHS feels that the development of cycle routes potentially offers opportunities for improved routes for horse riders. Other opportunities include the development of toll rides and permissive routes.

6.2.4 Cyclists

There are few dedicated cycle routes existing in the Vale. These are mostly roadside routes, and opportunities are being taken to include new routes within major development schemes.

The consultation showed that there was a demand to increase the opportunities offered to cyclists by such dedicated cycle routes. There was an interest in recreational use, as well as use for everyday travel e.g. to work or the shops.



A number of suggestions were made about possible new cycle routes. Sustrans are working with the Council's Planning Department with the aim of creating a national cycle route in the Vale, for which they are keen to explore the use of the existing rights of way network. Sustrans note that the route could provide a basis for a series of circular or linear routes between communities.

6.2.5 Motorised users

The assessment showed that there is some local demand for off-road motor-biking and driving, although there are no existing off-road routes. Also, consultees stressed that a distinction must be made between responsible users who use legal routes, and other riders who do not follow the legal restrictions. There is concern that many other users do not understand this distinction and believe that all off-road biking and driving is illegal.

As with other user groups, ideas were given about how to extend the length of network available to them. Opportunities to upgrade Roads Used as Public Paths to Byways Open To All Traffic, has now been lost through recent legislation, but other opportunities can be explored.

6.2.6 People with disabilities and less mobile users

Access to the network of rights of way in the Vale is restricted for people with disabilities and less mobile users in many places due to the nature of the surfacing, the types of gates and stiles, a lack of information about routes, and the lack of associated facilities e.g. parking, toilets.

Consultees from this user group made the following comments:

- Information available in advance of using a route brings confidence and a feeling of being welcomed, but must provide information about parking, toilet facilities, availability of

refreshments etc. As wide a variety of formats of information as possible should be made available to enable the disabled person to make an informed decision for themselves; possible formats include a basic leaflet, large print leaflet, audiocassette, Internet and Braille. There are examples of good practice in information provision e.g. Kent Council.

- It is better to promote two 'pristine' routes than 20 routes each with a 'little problem' at some point on the route. There was strong support for fewer, higher quality routes.
- Bicycle use of a route promoted for users with disabilities can make a person with disabilities nervous.
- There is a need to be aware of the wide range of disabilities and therefore the variability of route grades and lengths that may be feasible and desirable.
- Guided walks (similar to the Healthy Walking scheme) would be welcomed.
- People with disabilities are often unable to use public transport, which limits their access to the countryside.
- Walks beginning where a variety of activities are available offers the potential for enjoyment for all members of a group.

Our aims are:

- To ensure that the Vale has a network which is welcoming to and fit for all different types of users
- To implement the principle of least restrictive access, wherever practicable

The following actions will assist in achieving these aims:

20. Implement least restrictive access policy for all future maintenance or improvement works, following WAG guidance
21. Investigate the potential for a multi-use north-south route through the central Vale, using the former railway line
22. Undertake a review of the feasibility of routes noted in the UDP and Walking Strategy
23. Establish a reference group to advise on opportunities to upgrade the network for people with disabilities and less mobile users and implementation of WAG guidance
24. Work with cycling interest groups to investigate the creation of cross Vale cycling routes and links
25. Work with equestrian groups to investigate a more coherent network of suitable routes, including potential upgrading of existing routes to bridleway status
26. Work with motorised vehicle interest groups to look at appropriate opportunities for safe driving routes within the Vale

6.3 Landowners and occupiers

The Vale of Glamorgan is a rich agricultural area of mixed farmland. There are a few large estates within the area, such as Penllyne, Coedarhydyglyn, Merthyr Mawr, Dunraven and the Duchy of Lancaster, which incorporate numerous tenant farms, but the majority of the land is in the ownership of smaller individual farmers in coherent blocks, and a few larger farms with scattered holdings. Within this is a relatively large proportion of arable land that has a greater potential to create conflict with path users.

The Council works closely with the people and organisations whose land is crossed by public rights of way, including supporting them to meet their responsibilities in relation to these rights of way.

The assessment showed that there are issues about crop obstructions and the maintenance of gates and stiles, for which landowners and occupiers have responsibilities. Consultees noted that there are opportunities for improving the management system to re-establish paths after cropping or ploughing, and that there is scope for the Council to do more in relation to enforcement where necessary.

It is important for the landowners that users understand where and how they can access the countryside, particularly in the light of the CROW Act. Other input during the assessment phase noted that 'access for all' as a result of the Disability Discrimination Act has led to some uncertainty about the requirements for countryside access sites.

Our aim is:

- A network which meets the needs of its users, whilst minimising the impacts on landowners and occupiers.

The following actions will assist in achieving this aim:

27. Establish better liaison with landowners and representatives to ensure best practice, sharing of information and practical management advice (See Action 20)
28. Work with landowners and occupiers to investigate a more coherent network of routes especially for horse riders (see Action 25)

6.4 Organisations, interest bodies and neighbouring authorities



There are many organisations external to the Council which have an interest in the Vale's rights of way network. Neighbouring local authorities have direct links through cross-border rights of way networks. There are other public sector and voluntary sector organisations which are linked through their interest in the potential benefits the rights of way network can offer for their stakeholders e.g. the Local Health Board, community groups, environmental organisations and voluntary organisations promoting specific user groups. Also, there are other elements of local government, such as Community Councils or other departments within the Council.

6.4.1 Neighbouring Authorities

There are a number of cross-border routes. Where changes are made to the Definitive Map, the neighbouring authorities are statutorily notified. The Valeways Millennium Heritage Trail is a common link route between the Vale and other counties, as are the Bridgend Circular Walk in the west, and the proposed Glamorgan Seascap Trail.

In general, further exchange of information between authorities is to be welcomed because it will help to meet the public's needs better. Information useful to exchange includes: promotional material, Definitive Map changes, route improvement plans. There are some potential difficulties in how this can be achieved, as other Authorities may not use compatible GIS packages.

During the assessment, it was noted that residential developments in neighbouring authority areas close to the boundary with the Vale of Glamorgan could lead to increased use of the rights of way network in the Vale.

6.4.2 Other organisations

Consultees suggested a number of organisations with whom the Council could work in future, including Community Councils, the Vale of Glamorgan Health Alliance, HM Coastguard, Ministry of Defence St Athan, the Vale Physical Activity Forum, the Vale Older Person’s Forum, the Marine and Coastguard Agency, Sustrans and RWE n power.

Our aims are:

- To increase the number and range of potential partners
- To build relationships with external bodies that can contribute to improving and maintaining the network

The following actions will assist in achieving these aims:

29. Improve partnership working with Community Councils to include investigating path stewardship, community route maps and information boards
30. Extend partnership working with neighbouring Authorities, in particular with regard to cross-border routes

7 INFORMATION, COMMUNICATION & PROMOTION: Assessment Summary, Objectives & Proposed Actions

7.1 Introduction

This section – information, communication and promotion – refers to all the work that is done to inform anyone interested, including users and potential users about where the Vale’s rights of way are and what they are. Information can be found on the ground e.g. signposts and is also available to people who are not out and about e.g. in a leaflet, on a website or Ordnance Survey Explorer maps. The pro-active distribution of information about the network and raising people’s awareness about the network includes all forms of promotion.

INFORMATION, COMMUNICATION AND PROMOTION	
Theme	Types of work
Off-site	Websites Leaflets & booklets Ordnance Survey Explorer maps Other awareness-raising
On-site	Signage and waymarks Information boards Awareness-raising

7.2 Off-site information and promotion

7.2.1 The current situation

The Council has worked with its partners, and in particular the charity Valeways, to identify ways to promote the PROW network in the Vale of Glamorgan. The most important form of promotion has been a series of leaflets and booklets, describing various circular walks.

Leaflets are available through the Tourist Information Centres in Barry, Penarth and Llantwit Major, the Cowbridge Information Centre, libraries, the Council's Dock Office reception and at various events, e.g. the Vale of Glamorgan Agricultural Show, as well as the Valeways office in Barry.



There is also a booklet, The Valeways Millennium Heritage Trail Guide, which describes a 100 km long distance route around the Vale, is available on the Ordnance Survey Explorer 151 map. This booklet is promoted and sold by Valeways.

Some of the featured circular walks, plus other different routes not yet in leaflet form, are publicised on the Valeways website (www.valeways.org.uk), to which there is a link from the Vale of Glamorgan Council website.

7.2.2 Problems and opportunities

A number of issues have been identified:

- There is demand for more information than is currently available through existing leaflets or websites, in particular for people with disabilities. Advance information on accessibility and facilities is particularly important.
- The Council needs to extend the outlets where route leaflets can be found.
- It is important to keep information up-to-date, but it is recognised that this can be costly in terms of staff time and money.

- More people are accessing information in advance from websites.

Opportunities to increase circulation need to be investigated, including accessing key local websites such as BBC Wales and Barry Town Council, and exchange of promotional information with neighbouring Authorities.

Our aim is:

- To create and maintain an up-to-date information resource about the network which is available to all stakeholders, especially current and potential users

The following actions will assist in achieving this aims:

31. Improve the distribution of existing promotional material
32. Improve information available on the Council website, including legislation and PROW management
33. Continue to produce 3 new circular walks leaflets each year
34. Create promotional material specifically for less able users
35. Develop a variety of additional promotional material, which may relate to health initiatives, access opportunities from main visitor sites and multi use routes

7.3 On-site information

7.3.1 Signposts and waymarking

The provision of signposts and waymarks has been identified as a high priority, as some network users may not be used to the countryside or be able to read maps. Also, a lack of signposts and waymarks could encourage inappropriate use of the routes and the land. Currently, the Council's performance in relation to signposting needs to be improved, as shown by our local performance indicator returns (table on page 25).

7.3.2 Information boards

Information boards are currently mainly available at popular visitor sites such as



Dunraven Bay or Cwm Colhuw on the Heritage Coast, or Cosmeston Lakes Country Park. Information here can be valuable in helping to encourage visitors to explore the wider network.

As part of an earlier pilot scheme, circular walk information boards were erected in Wenvoe, Arberthin, Dinas Powys and at Dyffryn Gardens. These are all popular but require resourcing in terms of maintenance and updating of the information.

Our aim is:

- To ensure that all users have the information they need to enjoy the network and use it responsibly

The following actions will assist in achieving this aim:

36. To erect 150 new road side signs per annum
37. Provide and maintain up-to-date information boards at key locations
38. Initiate a survey and review system for waymarks using volunteers (see Action 17)

8 STATEMENT OF ACTION

8.1 Introduction

This is the crux of the ROWIP. We have outlined what the current situation is and what our stakeholders would like to see in the future. The Statement of Action, which you will find laid out in tabular format over the following pages, outlines the steps which we think are needed to enhance our maintenance work and improve the network as a whole based on these aims and actions outlined in Sections 5-7. Those which are statutory requirements are highlighted by brown text.

Improvement targets have not been set at this stage because targets in themselves can distort priorities if they are not comprehensive. Success will be reviewed annually and considered in annual reports.

Unfortunately, the requirement for each Highway Authority to produce a ROWIP does not come with associated funding. Therefore, we have had to make difficult decisions about what we can realistically achieve in the near future and what we will have to put 'on the back burner' until we can find additional resources. Even so, the Action programme is knowingly ambitious.

The implementation periods have been chosen to reflect the practicality of carrying out the proposed Actions based on staff and financial implications. The first stage of the programme is short: 2007/8/9. This encompasses only one full financial year after the approval of the ROWIP in autumn 2007. It is anticipated that few, if any, additional resources will become available during this time, and any initiatives will rely on stretching existing staff time. Rather, the proposed Actions in this first period will lay the foundations for future practical and resource demanding initiatives.

For this reason, Actions programmed in this early period consist of:

- Statutory duties
- Actions already started
- Actions requiring little or no additional staff time

Also included are some initiatives which should be started early in the life of the ROWIP as a foundation for later actions.

In this early period, the cumulative effect of a number of tasks needing additional staff input will be hard to accommodate. However, it is important to try to maintain the momentum generated during the preparation of the ROWIP.

Based on the Statement of Action, we intend to produce an annual work programme which will detail immediate intentions, seek to harness new resources and reflect the evolving priorities over time.

8.2 Key to understanding the Statement of Action

The Statement of Action tabulates the proposed Actions described in sections 5 – 7. For each proposed Action, the table indicates: which Principle(s) the Action supports; a priority ranking; a cost estimate; staffing implications; potential partners in the initiative, and a proposed implementation programme.

Principle

Relates to the Principles described in Section 1.3.

Priority

The priority is assigned by reference to the Assessment document and responses to it.

Cost of Project

1. Up to £2500
2. £2500+ to £10000
3. £10000+ to £25000
4. £25000+

Staffing

1. Empty box Within existing staff resources
2. S Some added staff time needed
3. SS Considerable added staff time needed
4. C Consultant / contractor input needed
5. V Volunteer input

Programme times

Phase 1 2007/8 and 2008/9

Phase 2 2009/10, 2010/11 and 2011/12

Phase 3 2012 – 2017

Text colour

Text in brown denotes actions which are based on a statutory duty for the Council.

MANAGEMENT

LEGAL WORK

Aims:

- To bring the Definitive Map up-to-date
- To maintain the Definitive Map as a basis for timely and effective legal processes

Action	Principle that action works towards	Priority	Cost of project	Staffing	Potential partner organisations or other VOG service	Year of potential implementation			
						2007/8 – 2008/9	2009/10 – 2011/12	2012 – 2017	
1	Complete a review of the Definitive Map	2,4	H	2	S	-	X		
2	Improve the procedures for keeping the Definitive Map up to date	2,4	H	1		-		X	
3	Develop and maintain a register of information relating to PROW applications and declarations, as required under the PROW (Registers)(Wales) Regulations 2006	2,4	H	1		-	X	X	X
4	Formalise the system for responding to requests to remove obstructions*	2,3	H	1		VOG Legal	X		
5	Take opportunities to improve the PROW network through conditions or obligations on planning applications associated with development proposals	1,2,5	H	1		VOG Planning	X	X	X

Notes: * Examples of obstructions include crop growth, ploughing, fallen trees, man-made barriers, and verbal.

MANAGEMENT

MAINTENANCE

Aims:

- To maintain the Vale's Public Rights of Way network in a condition suitable for the intended type and level of use
- To create and maintain an effective information base to inform maintenance planning
- To adopt a policy/standard for maintenance of furniture and surfaces

Action	Principle that action works towards	Priority	Cost of project	Staffing	Potential partner organisations or other VOG service	Year of potential implementation		
						2007/8 – 2008/9	2009/10 – 2011/12	2012 – 2017
6	Carry out a condition survey of surfaces and furniture, and review it regularly	2	M	2	S C	-	X	
7	Devise and introduce a county policy/standard for maintenance of furniture and surfaces, based on lifecycle analysis, environmental factors and access for all	1,2,3	H	1		LAF	X	
8	Devise and implement an effective information base to ensure that environmentally sensitive areas are recognised and the appropriate agencies consulted for all works	2,3,4	H	1		-	X	

Action		Principle that action works towards	Priority	Cost of project	Staffing	Potential partner organisations or other VOG service	Year of potential implementation		
							2007/8 – 2008/9	2009/10 – 2011/12	2012 – 2017
9	Full implementation of Countryside and Access Management System (CAMS) for ongoing maintenance management	2	M	1	S C	VOG IT		X	X
10	Carry out an annual clearance programme for priority routes and review the programme annually	1,2,3	H	3	C - VOG Parks and Grounds**		X	X	X
11	Aim to remove of all obstructions on PROW within 2 months of notification	1,2	H	1		VOG Legal	X	X	X
12	Carry out a 10% random sample survey of the ease of use of paths each year*	2	H	1	S / V	Volunteers LAF Usergroups	X	X	X
13	Catalogue and prioritise improvements to coastal path and coastal access routes including surfacing, signage and fencing	1,2,3,5	H	1	S	Landowners	X		
Notes: * Currently a 5% random sample is carried out by volunteers for a statutory performance indicator ** VOG Parks & Grounds act as internal contractors									

MANAGEMENT

RESOURCING

Aims:

- To harness enough resources – financial and manpower – to enable high quality maintenance and improvements
- To raise awareness of the ROWIP to generate support for its implementation

Action	Principle that action works towards	Priority	Cost of project	Staffing	Potential partner organisations or other VOG service	Year of potential implementation			
						2007/8 – 2008/9	2009/10 – 2011/12	2012 – 2017	
14	Extend partnership working, with Valeways and others	1,2,3,4,5,6	M	1	S / V	Valeways Interest groups	X	X	X
15	Secure suitable funding opportunities to enable implementation of the ROWIP	1,2,3,4,5,6	H	1	S	CCW/WAG Business community	X	X	X
16	Identify specific staffing needs to implement the ROWIP	2	H	1		CCW/WAG	X	X	X
Notes:									

MANAGEMENT

VOLUNTEER INVOLVEMENT

Aim:

- To enable greater involvement by volunteers and stakeholders in the management and improvement of the network

Action	Principle that action works towards	Priority	Cost of project	Staffing	Potential partner organisations or other VOG service	Year of potential implementation			
						2007/8 – 2008/9	2009/10 – 2011/12	2012 – 2017	
17	Promote voluntary support for the network including investigating the potential for volunteer path stewards. (see Action 29)	2,3	M	1	S / V	Community Councils Interest groups	X	X	
18	Instigate an annual stakeholder meeting to review ROWIP progress and opportunities*.	1,2,3,6	M	1	S	Stakeholders LAF	X		
19	Work with the LAF to identify better ways of engaging stakeholders and volunteers	2,3	M	1		LAF Stakeholders	X	X	X

Notes: *Starting from the end of Phase 1.

STAKEHOLDERS

THE RANGE OF USERS

Aims:

- To ensure that the Vale has a network which is welcoming to and fit for all different types of users
- To implement the principle of least restrictive access wherever practicable

Action		Principle that action works towards	Priority	Cost of project	Staffing	Potential partner organisations or other VOG service	Year of potential implementation		
							2007/8 – 2008/9	2009/10 – 2011/12	2012 – 2017
20	Implement least restrictive access policy for all future maintenance or improvement works following WAG guidance*	1,2,3,5	H	4	S / C	Valeways Landowners & occupiers User groups	X	X	X
21	Investigate the potential for a multi-use north-south route through the Central Vale, using the former railway line	1,2,3,5,6	M	3	S / C	Herian Sustrans BHS		X	
22	Undertake a review of the feasibility of routes noted in the UDP and Walking Strategy	5,2,6	H	1	S	Sustrans Herian VOG Planning Policy	X		
23	Establish a reference group to advise on opportunities to upgrade the network for people with disabilities and less mobile users and implementation of WAG guidance	1,2,4,5	H	1	S	Stakeholders Interest groups	X		

Action		Principle that action works towards	Priority	Cost of project	Staffing	Potential partner organisations or other VOG service	Year of potential implementation		
							2007/8 – 2008/9	2009/10 – 2011/12	2012 – 2017
24	Work with cycling interest groups to investigate the creation of cross Vale cycling routes and links	1,2,5,6	M	1	S / C	Sustrans CTC		X	
25	Work with equestrian groups to investigate a more coherent network of suitable routes, including potential upgrading of existing routes to bridleway status	2,5,6	M	1	S	BHS Safe		X	
26	Work with motorized vehicle interest groups to look at appropriate opportunities for safe driving routes within the Vale	2,5	L	1	S	Interest groups VOG Highways		X	

Notes: * By looking at gap – gate – stile in that order, recognising the need to consult with, and gain agreement from landowners while working within the statutory guidance. This guidance emphasises better accessibility whilst consistent with the need to contain or exclude animals.

STAKEHOLDERS

LANDOWNERS AND OCCUPIERS

Aim:

- A network which meets the needs of its users, whilst minimising the impacts on landowners and occupiers

Action		Principle that action works towards	Priority	Cost of project	Staffing	Potential partner organisations or other VOG service	Year of potential implementation		
							2007/8 – 2008/9	2009/10 – 2011/12	2012 – 2017
27	Establish better liaison with landowners and representatives to ensure best practice, sharing of information and practical management advice (See action idea 20)	2,3,5	M	1	S	NFU FUW CLBA LAF Landowners	X		
28	Work with landowners and occupiers to investigate a more coherent network of routes especially for horse riders (see Action Idea 25)	2,5,6	M	1	S	Landowners NFU FUW CLBA		X	
Notes:									

STAKEHOLDERS

INTEREST BODIES

Aims:

- To increase the number and range of potential partners
- To build relationships with external bodies that can contribute to improving and maintaining the network

Action		Principle that action works towards	Priority	Cost of project	Staffing	Potential partner organisations or other VOG service	Year of potential implementation		
							2007/8 – 2008/9	2009/10 – 2011/12	2012 – 2017
29	Improve partnership working with Community Councils to include investigating path stewardship, community route maps and information boards	1,2,3,4	H	1	S	Community Councils	X	X	
30	Extend partnership working with neighbouring Authorities, in particular with regard to cross-border routes	2,3,5	M	1	S	Neighbouring local authorities	X		

Notes:

INFORMATION, COMMUNICATION & PROMOTION

OFF-SITE

Aims:

- To create and maintain an up-to-date information resource about the network which is available to all stakeholders, especially current and potential users

Action		Principle that action works towards	Priority	Cost of project	Staffing	Potential partner organisations or other VOG service	Year of potential implementation		
							2007/8 – 2008/9	2009/10 – 2011/12	2012 – 2017
31	Improve the distribution of existing promotional material	1,4	H	2	S	Valeways VOG Tourism Tourism providers	X		
32	Improve information available on the Council website, including legislation and PROW management	4	H	1	S	VOG IT and Legal	X		
33	Continue to produce 3 new circular walks leaflets each year*	4	H	2	S/ C/ V	Valeways	X	X	X
34	Create promotional material specifically for less able users**	1,4	H	2	S / C / V	Valeways Fieldfare Trust Disability support groups		X	X

Action		Principle that action works towards	Priority	Cost of project	Staffing	Potential partner organisations or other VOG service	Year of potential implementation		
							2007/8 – 2008/9	2009/10 – 2011/12	2012 – 2017
35	Develop a variety of additional promotional material, which may relate to health initiatives, access opportunities from main visitor sites and multi use routes	1,4,6	M	2	S / C / V	Valeways Business community Community Councils		X	X
Notes: * Assumes no reduction in currently available resources ** Recognising the importance of advance information in respect of facilities such as refreshments / toilets / seating Action ideas 32 and 33 should be considered with action 31									

INFORMATION, COMMUNICATION & PROMOTION

ON-SITE

Aims:

- To ensure that all users have the information they need to enjoy the network and use it responsibly

Action	Principle that action works towards	Priority	Cost of project	Staffing	Potential partner organisations or other VOG service	Year of potential implementation			
						2007/8 – 2008/9	2009/10 – 2011/12	2012 – 2017	
36	To erect 150 new road side signs per annum.	2,4	H	2	S / C		X	X	X
37	Provide and maintain up-to-date information boards at key locations*	4	M	2	S / C	Community Councils Railtrack Business community VOG Tourism	X	X	X
38	Initiate a survey and review system for monitoring waymarks using volunteers (see Action 17)	2,3,4	M	1	S / V	Volunteers User groups Community Councils		X	

Notes: * E.g. car parks, railway stations



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