

# Monmouthshire

## Local Access Forum

### AGENDA ITEM: 4

**SUBJECT: REVIEW OF RIGHTS OF WAY IMPROVEMENT PLAN**

**MEETING: MONMOUTHSHIRE LOCAL ACCESS FORUM**

**DATE: 27 SEPTEMBER 2016**

#### 1. PURPOSE:

- 1.1 To consider the revised timetable for the Review of the Rights of Way Improvement Plan.

#### 2. RECOMMENDATION:

- 2.1 To approve the revised timetable for the Review of the Rights of Way Improvement Plan and note the requirements for joint working arrangements with the Brecon Beacons Local Access Forum.

#### 3. BACKGROUND:

- 3.1 This Forum considered the broad approach and timetable for the review of the Rights of Way Improvement Plan (RoWIP) in January 2016. Since then Welsh Government Guidance on the review of RoWIPs has been published (July 2016).
- 3.2 The RoWIP was last approved in 2007 (and can be viewed at <http://www.monmouthshire.gov.uk/app/uploads/2013/09/ROWIP-final-doc.pdf>). We are now required to carry out a new assessment; review the existing plan and decide whether or not to amend it; and if required to publish a new plan within 12 months of that decision (see appended diagram extracted from guidance).
- 3.3 The review requirements and the proposed timetable are set out in the appended paper. The formal review has to take place within 10 years of the plan's original approval (i.e. before Oct 2017) and our proposal is to complete that stage by July 2017 and to publish a final plan by March 2018.
- 3.4 Our view is that the existing RoWIP has been very successful in guiding a "benefits driven" approach to countryside access management and has helped secure external investment over the last decade. So the proposed approach is to review and refine and set the ROWIP into the new wellbeing / natural resource management policy context but aim not lose the essence of the original plan.
- 3.5 The intention is that the new Local Access Forum will be consulted throughout; the RoWIP being its main focus of work over the coming months. The guidance suggests the involvement of the LAF should cover:
  - Assisting with dialogue through contacts with national, regional and local organisations;

- Informing the data gathering exercise including the extent to which local rights of way meet the present and likely future needs of the public;
- Advising on how the network could be improved for the public and where there are particular land management concerns;
- Advising on the related issue of access to open countryside especially where new linear routes may be desirable;
- Providing advice on prioritising implementation;
- Commenting on published draft plans; and
- Assisting in the resolution of conflicts between different representations when plans are issued for consultation.

In addition formal MCC scrutiny and approval is built into the timetable at appropriate stages.

- 3.6 Following the guidance the scope of the new RoWIP will cover all of Monmouthshire including that part within the Brecon Beacons National Park. This will require either a joint sub group with the Brecon Beacons LAF or for both Forums to meet together at the appropriate stages of the review. As Brecon Beacons NPA has not yet indicated whether they intend to prepare their own RoWIP (which they may do provided it reflects the RoWIPs each highway authority is preparing) the precise approach to joint working can be settled in the coming months and considered by the new LAF.

#### 4. **AUTHOR:**

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**Appendix 1:** Process diagram from Welsh Government Guidance July 2016 (<http://gov.wales/topics/environmentcountryside/consmanagement/rights-of-way-and-wider-access/rights-of-way/?lang=en>)

**Appendix 2:** MCC Public Rights of Way Improvement Plan Timetable Review 2016 (August 2016)

## Appendix 1:



Diagram 1: Summary of the ROWIP process and timetable