

Out & About

THE RIGHTS OF WAY IMPROVEMENT PLAN
FOR RHONDDA CYNON TAF



COUNTRYSIDE



STRONG HERITAGE | STRONG FUTURE
RHONDDA CYNON TAF
TREFTADAETH GADARN | DYFODOL SICR

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VISION STATEMENT FOR COUNTRYSIDE ACCESS IN RHONDDA CYNON TAF

“ To manage, develop and promote the network of local public rights of way and other countryside access in order to satisfy present and likely future demand for the enjoyment of the countryside, open-air recreation, exercise and ‘access for all’.

”

Executive Summary

The Rights of Way Improvement Plan is published following a lengthy consultation process that included an Issues Paper (2005), Assessment (2006) and the draft Plan (Jan 2007). The response to consultation at each stage has also been published. The amended Assessment forms part of the final plan and is available on request. The publication of the Plan meets the duty set out in The Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000.

The Introduction describes the legislative background and the landscape of Rhondda Cynon Taf. It summarises the access opportunities identified in the Assessment.

Chapter two summarises the policy context as relevant to Out & About, drawing on the Issues Paper, the Assessment and consultation responses.

Chapter three describes the different users of the access network and their needs. It highlights the deficiencies as identified in the Issues Paper, the Assessment and the responses to consultation.

Chapter four focuses on the use, demand and reasons for access. Healthy living, recreation and utility use are considered, as well as latent demand and conflicting interests.

Chapter five examines the current access provision. The Rights of Way network is described, the new Open Access provisions are explained, together with permissive paths, Key Countryside Sites and Parks. The role of the highway network is also addressed.

Chapter six presents the objectives for the Rights of Way Improvement Plan. Each objective is discussed in relation to the assessment findings and the policy that underpins the objective.

Objective 1:

Promote outdoor countryside activity for health, regeneration, tourism and recreation

Objective 2:

Promote walking and cycling as transport options

Objective 3

Protect the access resource (including PROW, highways, access land and Council facilities)

Objective 4:

Improve provision for walkers, cyclists, horse riders, off road vehicles and users with disabilities

Objective 5:

Involve local community and voluntary organisations in the development, promotion and use of access opportunities

Objective 6:

Develop a more efficient office management system for statutory Rights of Way work including the Definitive Map



Executive Summary

Chapter seven sets out the Statement of Action. For each objective, a series of actions are proposed. These are categorised as ‘service’ actions or projects. The service actions are subdivided into strategic and routine. The projects are divided into existing and new projects. Tables associated with each objective indicate the resource requirements (existing and new), timescale and the partners involved in the implementation of each action.

Chapter eight summarises the issues relating to the implementation of the action plan.

Chapter nine sets out the proposals for monitoring, evaluation and review of the Plan.

The Appendices provide background and supporting information.

The Rights of Way Improvement Plan should be read in conjunction with the Issues Paper (2005) and the Assessment (2006).

1. Background and context

Introduction

The Out & About Plan is the final stage in the Rights of Way Improvement Plan process. The procedure and content is set out in Guidance from the Welsh Assembly. In spring 2005, an Issues Paper was published for consultation giving an outline of the stages of the Plan preparation and the key issues relevant for the Plan. This informed the Assessment, published in January 2006, which considered the access network and access needs within the County Borough. The Draft Plan was published in January 2007, the consultation closed in April and the report of the final consultation has been published. Amendments have been made as a result of the consultation.

Legislative background

Under Section 60 of the Countryside and Rights of Way Act, each local Highway Authority is required to assess the rights of way network and access land within the County Borough, and produce a Rights of Way Improvement Plan. For 'Out & About: the Rights of Way Improvement Plan for Rhondda Cynon Taf' rights of way, open access land, dedicated access land (Forestry Commission land), Key Countryside Sites, parks and other permissive access land have been included.

The Welsh Assembly Government guidance states that the Rights of Way Improvement Plan should assess:

- the extent to which local rights of way meet the present and likely future needs of the public.
- the opportunities provided by local rights of way (and in particular by footpaths, cycle tracks, bridleways and restricted byways), for exercise and other forms of open air recreation, the enjoyment of the

area, and the accessibility of rights of way to blind or partially sighted persons, and others with mobility problems, and

- a statement of the actions that the Local Authority will take to improve the network of rights of way.

The guidance sets out the roles of the Rights of Way Improvement Plan as a strategic plan, a bidding document for resources and the basis for developing work programmes.

Area Description

Rhondda Cynon Taf County Borough extends from the uplands of the Brecon Beacons, to the rolling hills of the Vale of Glamorgan. Out & About does not cover the area included in the Brecon Beacons National Park, as the National Park Authority is preparing its own Rights of Way Improvement Plan. See Map 1.

The countryside is extensive, covering about 80% of the County Borough. In the north, steep-sided valleys cut the spectacular scenery of the moorland and forestry plateau. The slopes of fridd with crags, scree, woodland, wet flushes, heath and grassy slopes form the backdrop to the valley towns. South of Pontypridd, the valleys are wider and the plateau lower. The scenery is more characteristic of the borders of the Vale of Glamorgan, with rolling hills and a lowland landscape of enclosed farmland and woods. There is also more built development, with housing estates and businesses taking advantage of the M4 corridor.

Throughout the County Borough there are diverse access opportunities. The open moors can offer remote and challenging walking, thick forestry plantations contrast with the dappled sun-lit deciduous woodlands. You can choose a steep scramble by a mountain stream or a level, surfaced





former railway track by the river. In the north of the County Borough open access land is extensive, in places adjoining the terraced streets. In the south, the footpath and bridleway network is denser, crossing a countryside of farms and small woods.

The Assessment

The Assessment quantified the extent of the countryside access network available for public recreation and enjoyment. Details were presented for the County Borough as a whole and for each ward. Almost 25% of the County Borough is designated as access land (outside the Brecon Beacons National Park), most of this being in the north of the borough. The south has a greater concentration of the extensive 743 km public rights of way network. Most people have access opportunities close to where they live and work.

The Assessment also considered the needs of users and of specific groups. This drew on the results of consultation with interested organisations and the general public through the Issues Paper and a public questionnaire. Further information was obtained through examination of existing internal and external strategic policy and consultation with a range of partnership bodies, which have undertaken their own consultation exercises. The improvement of the access network has clear links, for example, with the Council's Community Plan and the emerging action plans of the five thematic partnerships as well as the Area Regeneration Partnerships.

To build a detailed picture of access provision, a ward-by-ward assessment of the access network has been conducted. This includes Open Access land, Forestry Commission land, Key Countryside Sites, parks, permissive paths and footpaths, bridleways, byways as recorded on the Definitive Map. The results are presented in summary tables, graphs and maps for the County Borough as a whole, with the ward descriptions, maps and full data presented in appendices. The tables showed the length of path and the area of open access in relation to the population and area of the ward. The results of the Assessment have informed the preparation of the Draft and the Final Plan.

Map One: Rhondda Cynon Taf County Borough Council



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2. Policy

Policy Context and the Importance of Policy

The Rights of Way Improvement Plan should consider the strategic policy context. This will ensure that the Plan does not conflict with other policies and reflects the access needs identified by others. Where other policies and plans are being developed in parallel with Out & About, joint working can be promoted. The Issues Paper set out a list of relevant policy documents and this was developed in the Assessment. This section does not repeat the detail provided in the Assessment, but identifies the key areas of policy interaction with Rights of Way and access concerns. This provides the basis for the vision, aim, objectives and actions in the Rights of Way Improvement Plan.

Community Plan 'A Better Life'

The Community Plan provides the overarching strategic policy for the Council and others operating in the County Borough. The Plan is being implemented through five thematic partnerships, each with representation from the statutory, voluntary and business sectors. In addition, there are twelve area regeneration partnerships involving the same sectors at a more local level. All of these partnerships have undertaken extensive consultation with the general public and specific interest groups. Detail of the five themes is given in the Assessment. Each of the themes and their associated action plans has relevance for Out & About.

Regeneration includes economic considerations such as tourism development, an attractive environment and a positive image,

access to employment and climate change adaptation, as well as the Local Development Plan and the Regional Transport Plan. Social inclusion and equal access to facilities are also relevant.

Health improvement has strong links with Out & About, including promoting physical activity, the social and mental health benefits of recreation out of doors and access for all. The Active Living Partnership is charged with progressing part of this agenda. Other aspects of relevance include transport issues and healthy environments.

Bro Dysg's focus is on individuals valuing and supporting learning. There are curriculum requirements for outdoor learning, and the voluntary and statutory providers of lifelong learning are prominent users of the countryside.

Community Safety has concerns regarding environment, transport, road safety and youth safety as well as crime, disorder and anti-social behaviour. Illegal off road vehicle use is a specific public issue focused on off road motorcycle scrambling. As a result the Partnership has employed an Off Road Motorcycle Co-ordinator.

Living Space considers transport, accessibility, parks, countryside, waste, built environment, environmental quality and strategic issues such as energy, resource use and climate change. All of these are relevant to Out & About.

Area Partnership and Communities First Action Plans

Audits and Action Plans have been produced for each of the twelve Area Partnerships that cover the whole of Rhondda Cynon Taf. Some have identified access and rights of way concerns and these were listed in the Assessment. Within Rhondda Cynon Taf, there are 23 Communities First Partnerships. Again these partnerships have undertaken community audits and developed Action Plans. The issues raised are listed in the Assessment and have informed the Out & About Action Plan.

Local Development Plan

The Local Development Plan is being prepared in parallel with the Rights of Way Improvement Plan and will incorporate any land-use policies arising from Out & About. The detail of existing planning policies to protect access facilities and develop new ones is given in the Assessment.

An Accessible Natural Greenspace audit is being undertaken as part of the Local Development Plan process. This uses a methodology developed by the Countryside Council for Wales and will identify greenspace of value to wildlife and people, together with the urban areas that are more than 300 metres from accessible natural greenspace.

Sustainable Development

Sustainable development is being progressed through the integration of economic, social and environmental concerns in the Out & About action plan. Long term and global concerns have also been considered.

Regional Transport Plan

Details of the current Local Transport Plan is given in the Assessment. This is due to be replaced by a Regional Transport Plan for South East Wales. The Authority has been active in developing regional cycle routes, and in promoting public transport, in particular to Cardiff. Major road schemes are being pursued, including the Porth/Rhondda Fach Relief Road and the Church Village By Pass. 'Safe routes to school' funding has been deployed, and town centre enhancements promoted to improve the walking environment. There is a proposal for the Council to produce its own Walking and Cycling Strategy, possibly in conjunction with the South East Wales Transport Alliance.

Countryside Strategy / Living Space Action Programme

The Countryside Strategy, adopted in 1997, contains policies relating to integrated land management, landscape, nature conservation, environmental education and access. This has been superseded by the Living Space Strategy. The Action Programme, which has been endorsed by the Living Space Partnership, lists actions for the Council and other partners, including the voluntary and community sectors, and is updated annually. The Assessment includes details of the actions relating to access, in Appendix 4. Actions arising from the Rights of Way Improvement Plan will be reflected in the Living Space Action Programme as it is rolled forward.



3. Different Users and their Needs

Introduction

This section draws on, but does not repeat, the detail provided in the Assessment of different users and their needs.

Walking

This is the most common form of access. Rhondda Cynon Taf has an extensive footpath network, supplemented by the introduction of open access in May 2005. Way-marking and maintenance standards have improved due to an increase in staff and resources from 2002, however, consultation and 'easy to use' statistics indicate that further work is required, in particular with regard to the out of date Definitive Map. A lack of publicity regarding the network was also highlighted as a problem that Out & About should address. The levels of use of the footpath network is not known, although the need for vegetation management can be an indicator of low levels of foot traffic. It is likely that the urban fringe footpaths are more heavily used than more remote paths.

Horse Riding

It is recognised that there is a shortage of bridleways in the Rhondda, Cynon and Taff Valleys. In Taff Ely, the area north of Brynna and Llanharan has the most concentrated network of bridleways in the County Borough. Some limited provision for horse riders has been developed as part of the Loops and Links project in the north of the County Borough and there is extensive access to Forestry Commission Wales owned land via their Concordat with the British Horse Society. The need for new bridleways or permissive routes for horse use and potential for their development is addressed by the action plan.

Cycling

Cyclists, like horse riders, are classified as vulnerable road users. Cycling has long been a popular and low cost method of transport. The Council currently manages a number of off-road routes on disused railway lines that are in Council ownership. Some of these form part of the National Cycle Network. There is little specific on-road provision for cyclists. Sustrans, the sustainable transport charity, are continually seeking opportunities to develop cycling routes in partnership with the Council. Mountain biking is also a popular pastime, utilising bridleways and other un-surfaced permissive paths, often on Forestry Commission land. It is likely that on road cycling is declining and off road cycling (both trail and mountain biking) increasing, in line with national trends.

Access for All/ Visually and Mobility Impaired Users

Each disabled person has different abilities, attitudes and needs in relation to access. Closer contact is needed with disabled group representatives through the Local Access Forum, to reduce the exclusion of people with limited mobility or other impairment from using the network. Current Council policy is to replace existing stiles with kissing gates that will remove width restrictions and physical barriers, where possible. Also, where barriers are erected to prevent motorcycle use, chicanes and/or RADAR key gates are provided to allow access for people with mobility problems. A working group undertook specific survey and adaptations on the Taff Trail with disabled users, including the visually impaired. This has informed more recent work on other community routes. Adapted cycles are available

for disabled cyclists in Aberdare Sports Centre. Also, some horse riding establishments provide opportunities for disabled horse riders. The Council employs a disability sports development officer to develop a range of opportunities.

Carriage Driving

No information or complaint has been received from carriage drivers with regard to the facilities or the level of activity in Rhondda Cynon Taf. It is understood that most carriage driving takes place on private land. Forestry Commission Wales also provides opportunities for carriage driving on their land.

Motor Vehicles

It is important to recognise the difference between responsible users and those who misuse the network through illegal activities. It is recognised that opportunities for responsible users are limited and alternatives are required to introduce facilities in conjunction with other public bodies. The Auto Cycle Union has produced a report on off road motorcycling in Rhondda Cynon Taf that contains an assessment of the levels of illegal use and the demand for facilities (2004). The Council's Offroad Steering Group is co-ordinating work in this area.

General Findings

The access resource is extensive, with a large rights of way network and significant areas of access land. However, it is recognised that improvements are required to bring the existing access opportunities to a standard that meets the needs of all users. An increased level of resources would be required to achieve these improvements.

Non-Users

Despite the extensive access resource, generally the levels of use in some areas are quite low. The most well used paths are probably the urban links and the adopted highway. The use of countryside paths is limited to a relatively small group of local, regular walkers, cyclists and horse riders, and occasional use by a larger group of recreational users, again mostly local residents. Levels of knowledge of the available access opportunities are low, both among local people and potential visitors. The lack of information, publicity and promotion of the resource is the major reason for this. Publicity and promotion of the network is a key component of the Action Plan.



4. Use, Demand and Reasons for Access

Population

Rhondda Cynon Taf is the second most populated Authority in Wales. Being located in the M4 corridor and close to Cardiff, there are pressures for development and opportunities for outdoor recreation. The population of the twelve Area Regeneration Partnerships that cover Rhondda Cynon Taf is given in Appendix One.

The population is concentrated in towns and villages, with open countryside between them. All parts of the County Borough are close to either open access and / or the public rights of way network. The Assessment identified a handful of small densely populated wards with few immediate access opportunities, but even these areas had close connections to adjacent access. See Maps 2, 3 & 4.

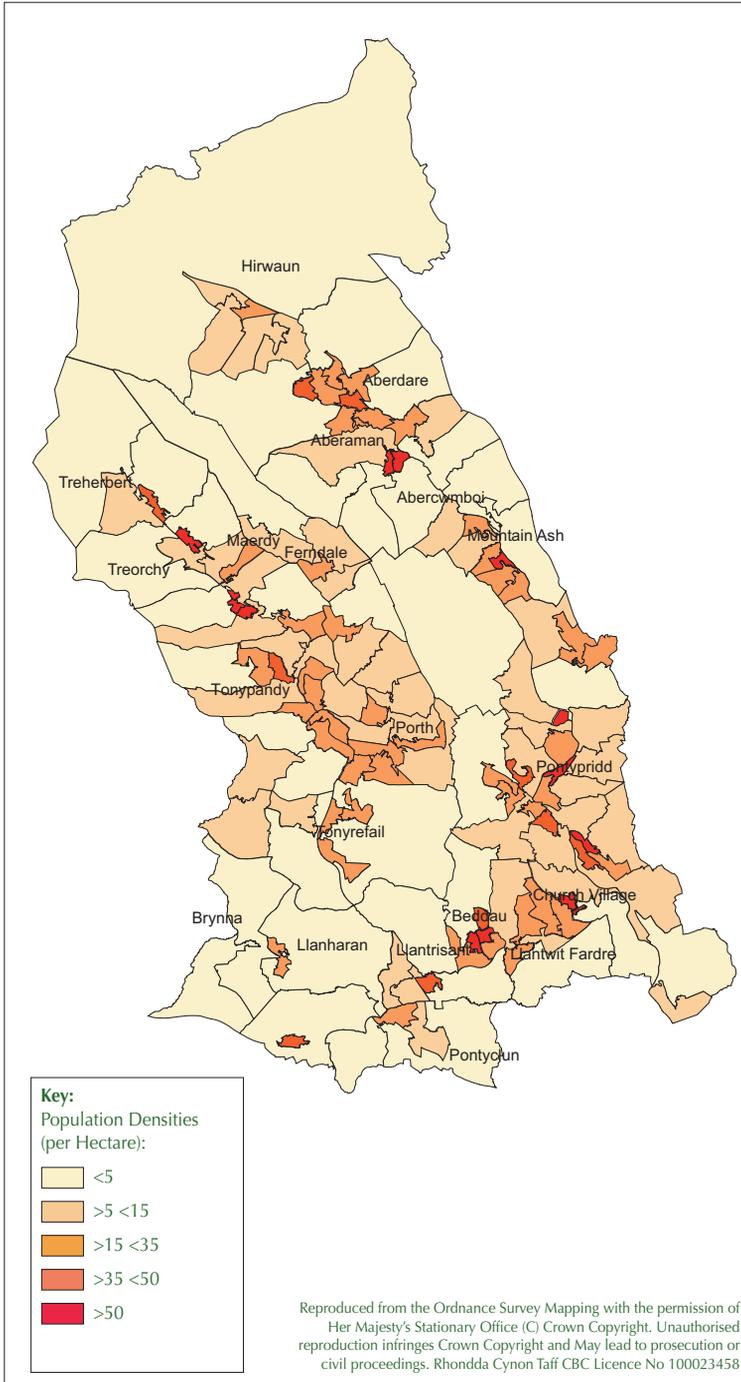
The most well used recreational sites are within or close to built up areas. For example, the Taff Trail, Garwnant, Barry Sidings Countryside Park and the Llwydcoed to Cwmbach former railway Corridor, Dare Valley Country Park and Glyn cornel woods are popular. More remote sites or paths that cross the open countryside are not as popular or well known.

Socio-Economic Profile

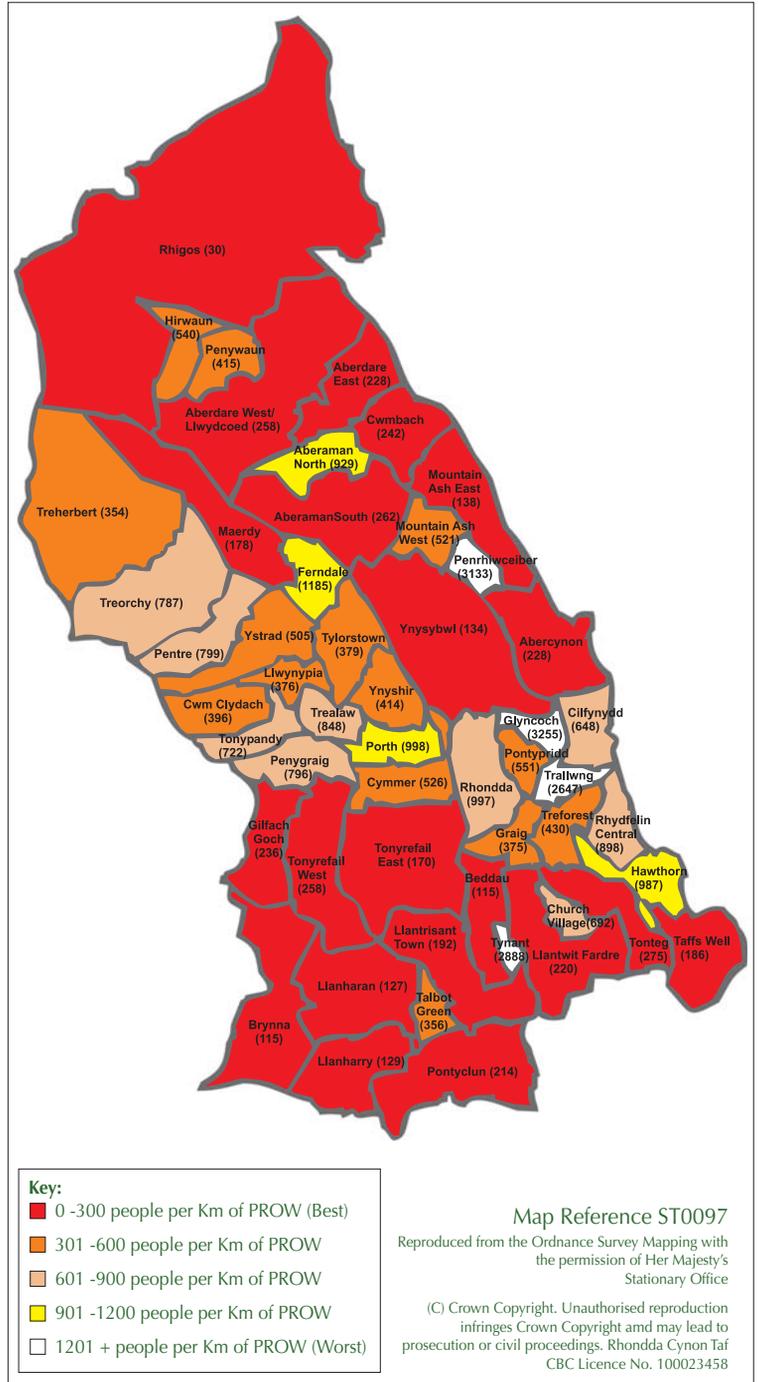
The socio-economic profile of the population will affect the demand and use of access opportunities. In Rhondda Cynon Taf, only 64% of residents are economically active, below average for Wales. Car ownership is also lower with 32% of households having no car, 45% one car whilst 24% have two or more cars (the Welsh figures are 26% no car, 46% one car and 28% two or more). There is considerable variation in wealth across the County Borough, with the northern part of the County generally less affluent than the south. Social inclusion is an important policy priority for the Council. See Map 5.

People with no access to a car may rely more heavily on walking and cycling for daily transport and may be excluded from countryside activities that are poorly served by public transport. Low levels of economic activity are frequently associated with low household income. This may exclude some people from taking part in countryside activity that involves a cost (transport, equipment etc.). On the other hand, many retired people enjoy outdoor activities such as walking as a low cost daytime activity. Working people will tend to use countryside recreation facilities in the evenings, at weekends and holidays. They may use walking and cycling routes as part of their journey to work.

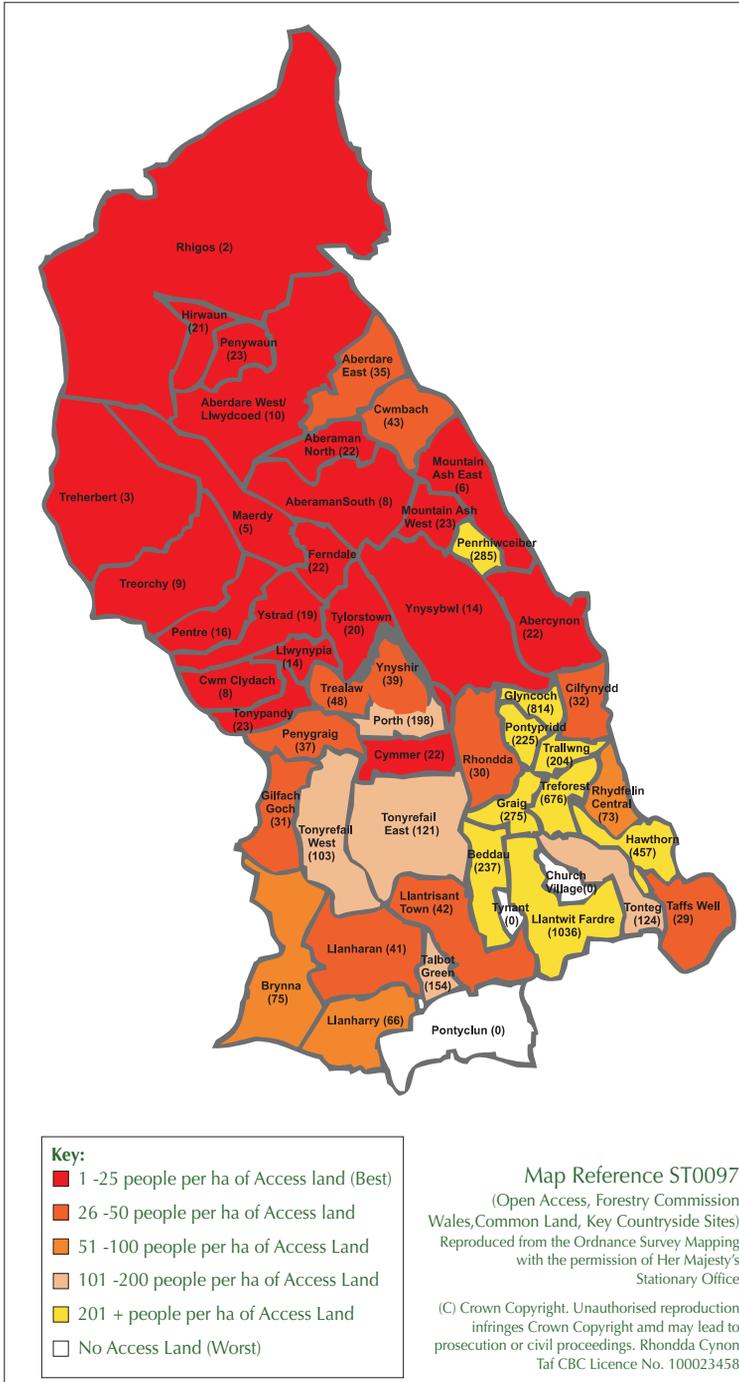
Map Two: Population Density (per hectare)



Map Three: Persons per km of Rights of Way Ward Map



Map Four: Persons per hectare of Access Land



Key:

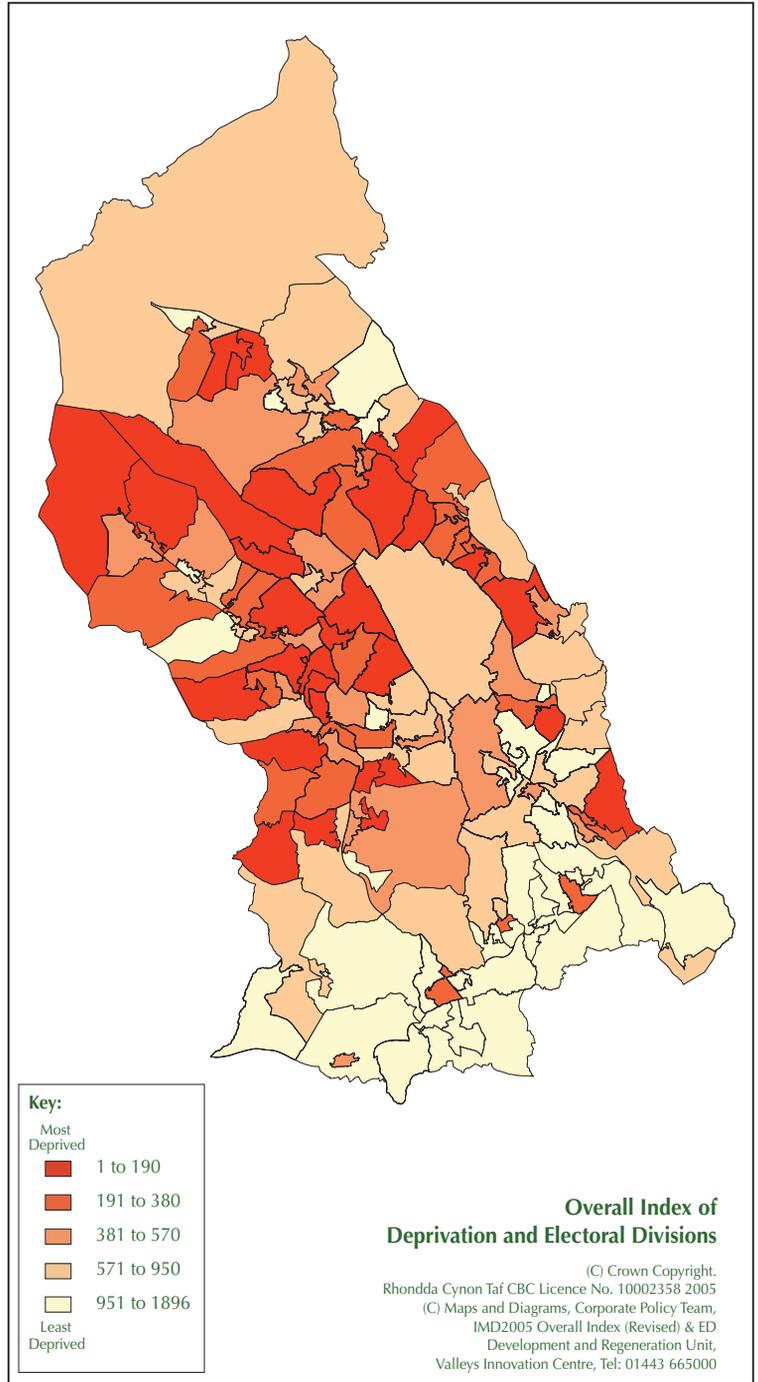
- 1 -25 people per ha of Access land (Best)
- 26 -50 people per ha of Access land
- 51 -100 people per ha of Access Land
- 101 -200 people per ha of Access Land
- 201 + people per ha of Access Land
- No Access Land (Worst)

Map Reference ST0097

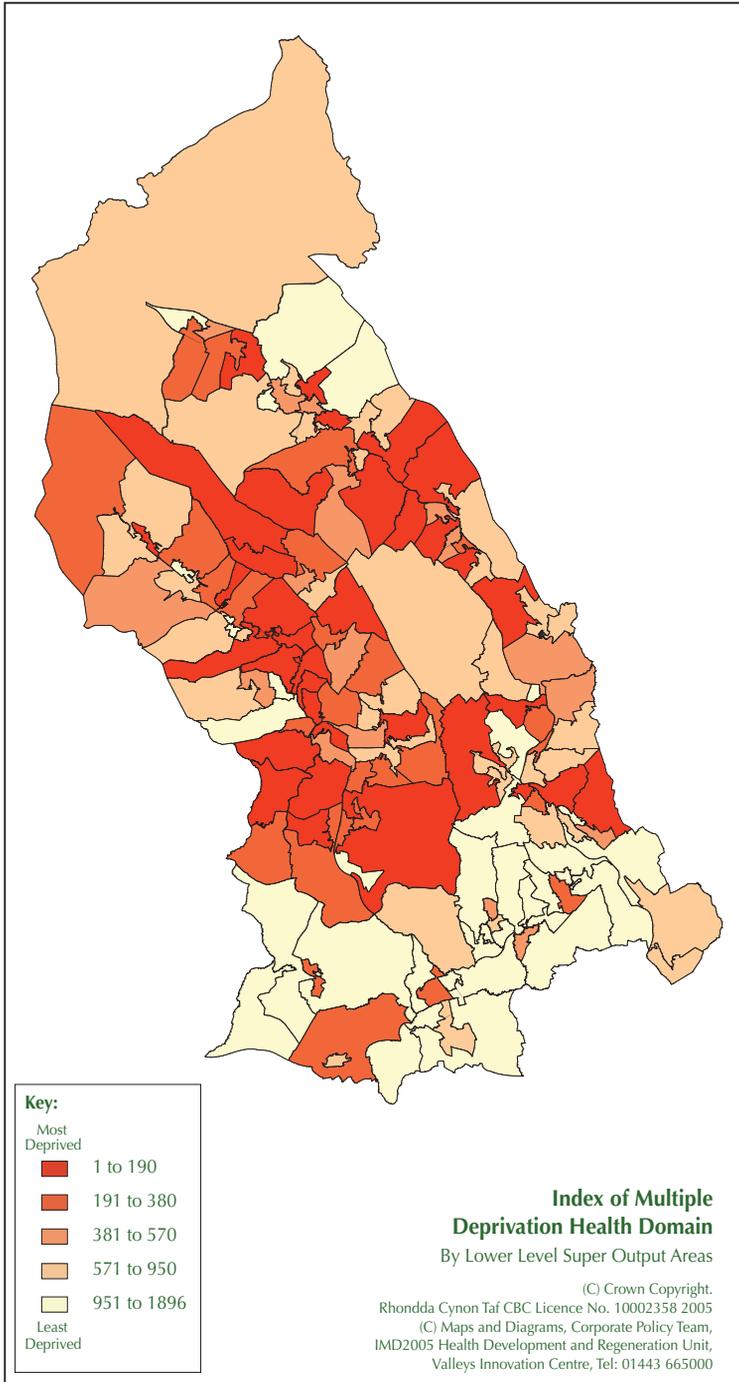
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Map Five: Welsh Index of Multiple deprivation overall deprivation index



Map Six: Welsh Index of Multiple deprivation: Health Deprivation





Healthy Living

Map 6 shows the distribution of poor health across the County Borough. In the 2001 census, people were asked about their general health. In Rhondda Cynon Taf only 61% said their health was good (compared with 65% for Wales), 23% said their health was fairly good (23%) and 16% said their health was not good (Wales 13%). Moderate exercise is an important part of a healthy lifestyle. The countryside and the extensive access network can provide exercise opportunities such as walking, running or cycling, as an alternative to the more structured indoor exercise in the local sports centre. The countryside access network is also a free network, available all day every day, providing a far more flexible resource. Riding and looking after horses can also provide exercise opportunities.

Respondents to the public questionnaire recognised the importance of the access resource for exercise or sport. The Assessment also identified the need to promote physical activity, to improve the health of the local population. Improving the health of the local population is an important policy priority for the Council.

Recreation, Leisure and Tourism

Public rights of way originated from the tracks used by commuting workers to farms, villages and, especially in Rhondda Cynon Taf, the mines. The functional network changed in the latter half of the twentieth century to a largely recreational network.

In the past few decades there have been great changes in the ways people use their leisure time. The opportunities available for recreation have increased dramatically, and,

higher disposable incomes also increase choice. People travel further and more frequently for leisure activities. Local recreation opportunities must compete, not just with the coast or the Beacons, but also with holiday destinations across the UK and abroad. There is anecdotal evidence that the use of the local access network has declined in the last twenty years or so, whilst the use of honey-pot sites and routes that are promoted and well maintained, is increasing.

The extensive network of paths and open access is an important amenity for recreation, leisure, tourism. The access resource is located close to people's homes and work places, and within close proximity of the established tourist areas of Cardiff and the Brecon Beacons. The stunning scenery of Rhondda Cynon Taf, rich in wildlife and opportunities to enjoy the views and recreation value of the open hillsides, has great, if undeveloped tourism potential.

Commuting and Utility Use

In the census of those who work, 60% drive to work while only 10% walk and 2% cycle to work. Despite the changes in the use of the access network described above, some urban routes still contribute to the functional transport network and this role may increase again in the future. Climate change, rising oil prices and healthy living, will encourage more walking and cycling, often associated with increasing public transport use. Also as mentioned above, low car ownership levels can lead to social exclusion if there is no access to facilities and services for pedestrians, cyclists and public transport users.

Latent Demand

The guidance produced by the Welsh Assembly government, states that the ROWIP should assess “...the extent to which local rights of way meet the present and likely future needs of the public.” This would indicate that latent demand should also be assessed.

The Assessment identified the following latent demands:

- The increasing demand for off road vehicle use, especially motorbikes currently illegally using routes and open countryside.
- With unacceptable levels of poor health and rising obesity, the access network can provide a sustainable, low cost exercise opportunity.
- Access for all routes: although a number of the routes across the County Borough are open for those using mobility aids, there is a demand for a greater diversity of paths, and publicity material, for those using wheelchairs etc..
Mobility scooters are becoming more advanced allowing users to travel further. These larger scooters require wider access controls than traditional wheelchairs.
- More Bridleways. There are 743 km of public rights of way of this only 82 km are bridleways, most of which are in the Brynna ward on the border with Bridgend County Borough Council.
- More Byways. Only 15 km of Byways, the majority of these tracks are in a poor condition.
- Tourist use, combined with economic regeneration opportunities.

To address latent demand, the following issues identified in the public consultation, need to be considered.

- Better information about routes
- Need to control illegal motorbike use
- Better provision for Access for All
- Better maintenance of paths, signage and path furniture

Conflicting Interests

Some conflict of interests between users of the paths and sites are identified through customer services and ranger contacts. Physical damage of path surfaces by horses and off road vehicles, and illegal use of paths and sites by motorcycle scramblers are the most frequent complaints. This was reflected in responses to the public questionnaire. Potential conflict between access and nature conservation has also been highlighted in specific circumstances.

Conflicts with landowners do occur where footpaths are obstructed, though these conflicts are often swiftly dealt with reopening and improving access. There was initial landowner apprehension regarding the new open access created by Countryside and Rights of Way Act. The Local Access Forum provides a mechanism for dealing any concerns, building relationships and open communication with the farming community. Publicity and guidance from the CCW also contribute to managing any potential conflicts between users and landowners. Tir Gofal and Tir Cynnal funding for farmers is dependant on compliance with Rights of Way law.



5. Current Provision

The Public Rights of Way Network

The public rights of way network is a rich legacy, part of the rural communications network that originated before the era of surfaced roads and motor vehicles. Over time, it has evolved into a recreational and functional web, that enables people to explore the countryside on foot, on horseback, on a bicycle or in a vehicle.

Rhondda Cynon Taf has approximately 2000 individual paths with a total length of 743km, of which, 646km are footpaths, 82km are bridleways and 15km are by-ways open to all traffic. Details of the network across the County and on a ward-by-ward basis are presented in the Assessment. Maintaining and enhancing these routes is a priority if the increased recreational and sustainable transport demands that will be put on the rights of way network in the years to come are to be met. Map 7 shows the extent of access opportunities.

The State of the Network

The Assessment considered the current condition of the rights of way network in some detail. The Wales Rights of Way Condition Survey 2002 found that Rhondda Cynon Taf achieved an 'easy to use' figure on all paths of 53% (10% sample). The National Assembly Wales Performance Indicator (5% sample) shows that the percentage of paths that are easy to use in Rhondda Cynon Taf has increased from 21% in 2001/2002, to 64% in 2004/2005, 67% in 2005/06 and 73% in 2006/7.

Legally Defined

The National Parks and Access to the Countryside Act 1949 introduced the procedures for recording public rights on definitive maps and statements. They are so called

because they can be produced in court as conclusive evidence of those rights. The Act also required Local Highway Authorities to maintain these routes at public expense.

Glamorgan County Council published a draft map and statement on the 31st January 1955. The map and statement had a relevant date of the 14th September 1954. Following the resolution of objections, a provisional map and statement was published on the 1st May 1964, and following further objections a definitive map and statement was published on the 4th August 1970.

Further reviews were carried out on the areas now found in Rhondda Cynon Taf. The definitive map and statement for Rhondda Valley has a relevant date of 6th November 1992, and the Cynon Valley has a relevant date of 15th December 1995. The relevant date of the Taff Ely definitive map and statement is 1st January 1971. This is the date up to which the information contained in the Definitive Map and statement is correct.

Management

Current staff regularly involved in managing Public Rights Of Way and open access in Rhondda Cynon Taf are as follows:

- Countryside Manager
- Public Rights of Way Officer
- Countryside Projects Officer (20%)
- 3 Countryside Rangers
- 3 Rights of Way Rangers (Practical Team)

Rhondda Cynon Taf CBC is responsible for the day-to-day management of the public rights of way network. The duties include the continual review of the definitive map through the processing of

applications for modification orders, diversion orders, extinguishment orders and creation orders.

The Council currently has three agency agreements with Community Councils, which allow them to carry out basic maintenance works for an annual payment by the Council. There is also an agency agreement with Brecon Beacons National Park that allows them to carry out maintenance works, and to carry out diversions and other legal orders on behalf of the Council.

Publicity

Limited publicity and promotion of rights of way and open access has been carried out in Rhondda Cynon Taf. Recent events such as a Walking Festival, and the creation of a circular walk around Pontypridd, are being encouraged to raise the profile of the public rights of way in Rhondda Cynon Taf. Promotion has also been undertaken by other organisations, for example, Walking the Way to Health, Groundwork Loops and Links project and the Llantrisant Bunny Walks.

Claimed Rights of Ways

Under Section 53 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981, anyone may apply to the Council to add a right of way to, or delete from the definitive map and statement. An application can also be made to upgrade or downgrade a right of way already shown on the map and statement. The majority of applications are to add rights of way to the map, the presumption being that they exist but have not previously been recorded. The Council has a duty to fully investigate the claims, to uncover evidence to support or reject the application made under the above Act.

Open Access Land

The Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000 created a new statutory right of access on foot to certain types of open countryside. This land comprises mountain (over 600 metres), moorland, heath, down and registered common land. On 28th May 2005, the Act made these designated areas open to public use. Temporary closures are permitted, subject to a specific procedure. Maps showing the designated areas of public access are located in the Council's Countryside Section, and information is also available on the Countryside Council for Wales' website (www.ccw.gov.uk). All relevant updated information, including any restrictions, can be found on this website. The open access land is also shown on the Ordnance Survey Explorer series. There are 4865 hectares of open access land found in Rhondda Cynon Taf. Map Seven includes these areas.

Forestry Commission Wales land

At the launch of open access in Wales, the Forestry Commission dedicated all their own land for public access. Forest on leased land has not been dedicated though there are plans to dedicate many of these areas. There is 5197 hectares of dedicated forestry open access land within Rhondda Cynon Taf. Map Seven includes these areas.

In Rhondda Cynon Taf a number of rights of way cross Forestry Commission land. For a number of years the Forestry Commission has over planted trees on their land that contain rights of ways and this has resulted in a high percentage of them being obstructed, though the forest tracks provide alternative access. Negotiations are currently being held with the Forestry Commission Wales regarding the plans to reopen rights of





way on their land after harvesting. Horse riding and carriage driving are permitted on Forestry Commission Wales land, but again not necessarily on leased land, for example St Gwynno's Forest. Cycling and mountain biking is allowed on forestry roads and tracks. A copy of the Forestry Commissions Cycle Code can be seen on their website (www.forestry.gov.uk/recreation). Members of the public must be aware that forests are a working environment and that diversions to roads and tracks may be required.

Council-owned land including Key Countryside Sites, Local Nature Reserves, Country Parks and Public Parks

The majority of Council owned land is available for public access on foot. Key Countryside Sites provide 1280 hectares of land available for public access, (including Glynconel Local Nature Reserve, 36 hectares, and Dare Valley Country Park, 176 hectares). There are a number of public parks in the area with Aberdare Park, Aberdare and Ynysangharad Park, Pontypridd having the highest profile. Some Key Countryside Sites are former spoil tips that have been reclaimed by the Council, however, some former tips have no public access due to health and safety issues. Map Seven only includes the areas with public access.

Permissive Paths

A number of disused railway lines owned by the Council are managed for public access and are included on Map 7. The surface of the routes varies. Routes are generally open to pedestrians and cyclists, with some routes shared by horses. The Taff Trail and the Dare Aman Line in the Cynon Valley are prime examples of permissive access on Council owned land.

Permissive access is also available on land in private ownership, particularly where the landowner is involved in grant schemes such as the Woodland Grant Scheme/ Better Woodlands for Wales and Tir Gofal. Under these schemes public access along permissive routes is provided under the terms of the grant scheme, but only for the duration of the scheme in question. These routes are not included on Map 7. Tir Gofal permissive access routes and access land are publicised on the CCW website (www.ccw.gov.uk).

Highway Network

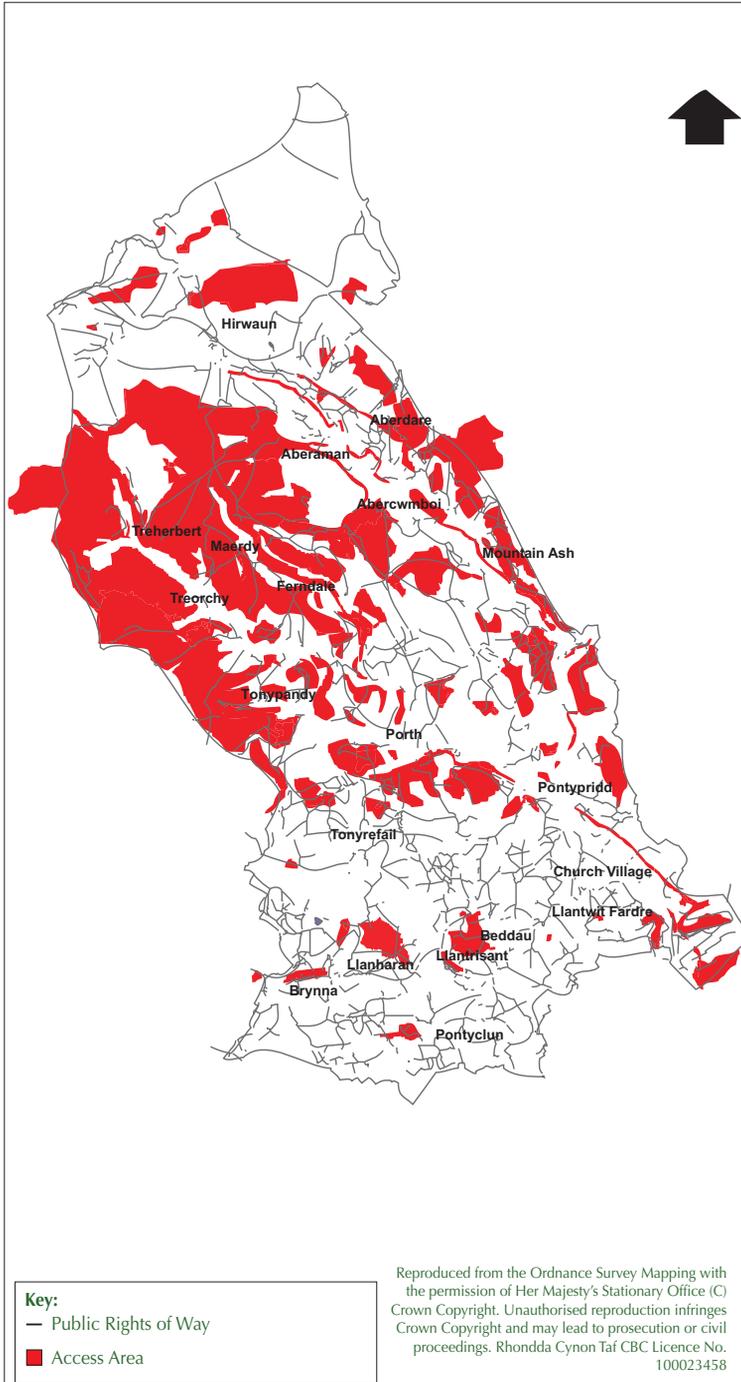
Rhondda Cynon Taf is responsible for all maintainable highways in the area. This responsibility includes all main roads and footways adjacent to highways in the County Borough shown on the list of streets. The list of streets records the highways that a Highway Authority is liable to maintain at public expense, and is a mandatory requirement.

Adopted highways form an important connection between the community and the surrounding countryside. For the majority of people, the adopted highway will form a part of any journey into the countryside or to reach any form of countryside access. The Assessment identified a specific concern that some highways, that link to public rights of way, are of uncertain legal status.

A number of public rights of way have become adopted highways, typically through the development of housing estates. These now follow metalled roads forming part of the highway network.

The Council has a duty to signpost all footpaths, bridleways and byways found on the definitive map and statement where they leave the metalled road.

Map Seven: The Access Network



6. Assessment and Evaluation

The Assessment, Issues Paper and their associated consultations have identified a range of issues to be addressed by the Rights of Way Improvement Plan. This chapter draws together this information, and presents a framework of six objectives for the action plan.

The Vision

To manage, develop and promote the network of local public rights of way and other countryside access, in order to satisfy present and likely future demand for the enjoyment of the countryside, open-air recreation, exercise and 'access for all'.

Objective 1:

Promote outdoor countryside activity for health, regeneration, tourism and recreation.

Health, regeneration, tourism and recreation are all policy priorities for the Welsh Assembly Government and for the Council. The Assessment has identified that Rhondda Cynon Taf has a superb resource for outdoor countryside activity in the rights of way network, our Parks and Key Countryside sites and the new Open Access land. This resource has huge potential both for local people to use, free of charge, and as a driver for regeneration and tourism. But it is also a well-kept secret. The resource is underused, with little promotion or publicity and currently has a low priority for investment and development.

General health standards in Rhondda Cynon Taf are below the average for Wales. The Active Living Partnership, set up by the Health and Wellbeing Partnership (under the Rhondda Cynon Taf Community Plan 'A Better Life') looks at promoting physical activity for social, mental and physical health and wellbeing. Not forgetting the benefits of fun and relaxation!

The Welsh Assembly Government has targets in 'Climbing Higher', their strategy for sport and physical activity. These include;

- access to a footpath or cycle path within a ten-minute walk, for 95% of the population, and
- for everyone to live within a six minute walk (300m) of a natural green space.

By these measures, which consider the availability of the access resource, it is likely that most residents of Rhondda Cynon Taf are already very well served. The Assembly has also set a target for the use of the access resource;

- Percentage of people using the natural environment for outdoor activities to rise from 36% to 60%.

A question 'Do you use the countryside or parks for outdoor activities?' was included in the Council's 2006 Residents' Survey to establish a baseline figure for this indicator. A total of 68.8% of respondents reported that they use the countryside and parks for outdoor activities. The survey is repeated at two yearly intervals and a repeat of the question will be requested in 2010.

Regeneration and tourism promotion are key elements of the Community Plan and are being addressed through Area Regeneration Partnerships, Communities First, the Local Development Plan and the Tourism Strategy. The access network is an excellent resource for environmental tourism, providing access to dramatic scenery, stunning wildlife, historic landscapes and visitor attractions. Again the potential is largely untapped. With unemployment and economic inactivity above the national average, our countryside and diverse landscape should be utilised as a resource for regeneration.

**Objective 2:
Promote walking and cycling as
transport options.**

Climate change is a global issue that needs to be tackled at every level. The promotion of walking and cycling as sustainable transport options can contribute to this, linked with the location of facilities and services in places that people can reach without driving. The Regional Transport Plan (RTP) and the Local Development Plan (LDP) will be the key Council policy documents to tackle these issues. The access network is an important part of the integrated highway network. 18% of the people who responded to the public consultation use the access network to get from A to B. Making the walking or cycling experience easier and more enjoyable will be important in changing people's attitudes to transport choices.

Active commuting is a key theme for the Active Living Partnership, as regular exercise as part of the daily routine is central to a healthy lifestyle. Improving access to services and facilities for those without a car is also a key policy for social inclusion. This is particularly relevant for children, some disabled people and for older people who may rely on the access network for independent travel.

Improved and targeted publicity and promotion of walking and cycling opportunities will be important for the achievement of this objective.

**Objective 3:
Protect the access resource (including
Public Rights of Way, highways, access
land and Council facilities).**

The Assessment identified the nature and extent of the access resource and some of the pressures on it. The law requires the Local Highway Authority to undertake a range of specific duties to protect and manage the Rights of Way Network. Further duties are being introduced as the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000, Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act 2006 and the Clean Neighbourhood Act 2006 are implemented. The resources currently available are insufficient to adequately address all of these issues.

The Council will include policies in the Local Development Plan relating to the protection of Public Rights of Way, open access and recreation sites. The Regional Transport Plan will also contain policies regarding the access resource.

Managing the network involves joint working with the Council's highway managers, development control and legal officers as well as practical work on the ground. Joint working with other major landowners, such as the Forestry Commission Wales is also important.

Protection also embraces issues such as rubbish dumping and anti-social behaviour that can damage the resource as well as deterring users.





**Objective 4:
Improve provision for walkers,
cyclists, horse riders, off road vehicles
and users with mobility and sensory
disabilities.**

The survey of the definitive map and other access opportunities to produce the total access map has highlighted clear gaps in the network for specific user groups. The results of the public consultation also support this conclusion. There is a lack of bridleways and byways in most of the County Borough and there is demand for additional facilities for horse-riders, off-road vehicles and cyclists. It is not known if additional facilities are required for carriage drivers. The Community Plan supports the need to provide opportunities for people. Off-road motor biking is a popular activity throughout the County Borough. Unfortunately most current activity is illegal, the physical scars are clear on the landscape and public support is low. There is little legal provision and the communication between the user group, the Police and the general public, is poor. Through the Community Safety Partnership an Off Road Motorcycle Coordinator has been employed and the Off-Road Motorcycle Steering Group has been set up.

There is a growing number of Access for All routes across the County Borough with improved access opportunities for those with mobility difficulties. To meet the requirements of the Disability Discrimination Act, and to promote social inclusion, further work is required. The public consultation results showed that the public support this action.

As part of the Local Development Plan, the Local Transport Plan and some major development schemes, integrated community routes are being incorporated with future developments to improve the access provision.

Opportunities may arise for improved provision in association with funding opportunities. A current example is the development of the Cynon Trail in association with the Heads of the Valleys environmental programme.

Continued maintenance of the path network and, in particular, the updating, of the definitive map (objective 6) are important for the continuing improvement of the rights of way network.

**Objective 5:
Involve local community and
voluntary organisations in the
development, promotion and use of
access opportunities.**

The public consultation and the Assessment, identified a number of issues relating to publicity and promotion. In consultations with Area Regeneration Partnerships, Communities First and Community Councils the importance of grassroots participation was recognised. Access is a popular local issue and many communities are taking actions forward to improve access. Publicity and promotion developed for specific audiences is also likely to be more successful.

User groups are able to contribute to the discussion about access via the Local Access Forum, but the response to the Out & About consultations has been disappointing. New ways of working with user groups are being investigated as a result. Local membership of user groups such as the Ramblers, BHS, CTC etc. is probably quite small, however there are a diverse range of local voluntary and community groups who may have an interest in access matters. The British Horse Society has recently established a bridleways group and a bridleways officer in Rhondda Cynon Taf.

Encouraging community and voluntary participation is also seen as a way of reaching people who don't currently use the access resource and to investigate barriers to use and the potential to realise latent demand. Among the public at large, knowledge of Rights of Way and open access is low. The Library Service will be involved in developing these opportunities.

**Objective 6:
Develop a more efficient office
management system for statutory
Rights of Way work including the
Definitive Map.**

The Issues Paper, the Assessment and the consultation responses highlighted the need for improvement of the office management systems for Rights of Way work. The Definitive Map and Statement and the computerised mapping system were identified as priorities. Paper based systems, developed in the 1950's, must be replaced by modern computer systems. An up to date definitive map and efficient data management are essential to progress all the other objectives.

The Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000, includes a number of new statutory functions to be carried out to improve public information and address internal procedures.

The Welsh Assembly government's 'Climbing Higher' environmental targets have been identified as indicators for this Action Plan.





7. Actions

7.1 Statement of Action

This section focuses on the proposed actions. First the aim and objectives are listed. For each objective, the actions are described and each is classified as a service action (strategic or routine) or a project (existing or new). This is followed by a tabular summary including: resources, timetabling, lead organisation and partners.

- ss – Strategic Service
- rs – Routine Service
- ep – Existing Project
- np – New Project
- * – Statutory duty

Estimated Costs

- £ ~ less than £5000
- ££ ~ £5000 - £30000
- £££ ~ more than £30,000
- c current
- a additional

CAP – project included in the Countryside Action Programme

Aim

To manage, develop and promote the network of local public rights of way and other countryside access, in order to satisfy present and likely future demand for the enjoyment of the countryside, open-air recreation, exercise and ‘access for all’.

Objectives

- Objective 1:** Promote outdoor countryside activity for health, regeneration, tourism and recreation
- Objective 2:** Promote walking and cycling as transport options
- Objective 3** Protect the access resource (including PROW, highways, access land and Council facilities)
- Objective 4:** Improve provision for walkers, cyclists, horse riders, off road vehicles and users with disabilities
- Objective 5:** Involve local community and voluntary organisations in the development, promotion and use of access opportunities
- Objective 6:** Develop a more efficient office management system for statutory Rights of Way work including the Definitive Map



Objective 1: Promote outdoor countryside activity for health, regeneration, tourism and recreation.

Strategic Service Actions

Input to Active Living Partnership	Partnership set up under the Community Strategy Health and Wellbeing Partnership to promote physical activity, meets 4 times a year and aims to add value through joint working.
Develop links with Education	A twice-yearly meeting is proposed, to consider the use of the local countryside by schools for curriculum study/activity and informal learning such as sports clubs or Duke of Edinburgh award.
Input to Council's Tourism Strategy Involve libraries	A twice-yearly meeting with Council Tourism Officers is proposed to develop the potential of walking, cycling and horse riding tourism. The Council's library service provides information about access and local walking opportunities. It is also a mechanism for communicating with local people. There is potential to use this resource more effectively. Quarterly meetings with the library service are proposed.
Marketing	The new marketing officer for Leisure, Parks and Countryside will coordinate the promotion of Rights of Way and Open Access, alongside other services. A marketing strategy should be a priority.
Liaise with Neighbours	The Living Space Action Programme provides a mechanism for identifying joint projects. The twice-yearly meeting of the SE Wales Rights of Way officers will address cross-border issues.

Existing Projects

Walking the Way 2 Health (CAP) / Walking Wales	Ten projects in Communities First Partnerships were funded to Dec 2006. These should continue, utilising the trained walk leaders and risk assessed walking routes developed as part of the project. Walking is a feature of the PALS and STARs projects. Various family learning projects include walking and cycling for health. Walking Wales grant funding is available for the period 2007-10.
Valleys Walking Festival (CAP) Loops and Links (CAP)	The Festival was established in 2005 and aims to promote walking for local people and visitors. Groundwork project to link valley communities and promote regeneration through activity tourism. 1st phase in the north complete, 2nd phase in the south of the County is being developed.
School Nature Trails	Developing nature trails in conjunction with the Local Biodiversity Action Plan using Key Countryside Sites and public rights of way.
Mentro Allan	Lottery funding stream for countryside access targeted at disadvantaged groups in parts of Rhondda Cynon Taf.
Guided walks	Existing programmes of Ramblers Groups, including short stepping stones walks, biodiversity walks etc. Also Bike events (CAP). Potential for development.
Joint projects Leaflets	Promote long distance routes (CAP), Pontypridd Circular Walk (CAP). For example, Ramblers Bunny Walks, Daerwynno cycle paths.

New Projects

Provide on-line information	Walking, cycling, horse riding, access for all and off road vehicles via the internet.
Circular routes	Develop and promote new circular / linear routes for a variety of target audiences. E.g. Area 8 walk, Area 7 walk.
Facilities	Dare Valley visitor centre facilities, equestrian tourism (CAP), Cross border horse routes, Bwllfa project (CAP), Bike hire.
Public Transport	Working with providers on promotion and improved links. Including disabled access and social inclusion. Public transport map.

Objective 1: Promote outdoor countryside activity for health, regeneration, tourism and recreation.

No	Type	Action	Resources	Year	Lead and Partners
1	ss	Active Living	people c	From 2006	Countryside/ ALP
2	ss	Education	people c	From 2007	Countryside / Education
3	ss	Tourism Strategy	people c	From 2007	Countryside / Tourism
4	ss	Libraries	people c	From 2007	Countryside / Libraries
5	ss	Marketing	people ££c/a	From 2007	Leisure, Parks + Countryside
6	ss	Liaise with neighbours	people c	From 2007	Countryside / SE Wales ROWO
7	ep	Walking the Way 2 Health / Walking Wales	people c/a	2006	Countryside / LHB / CF /SCW
8	ep	Valleys Walking Festival	people c	From 2005	Countryside / Tourism
9	ep	Loops and Links	people ££c/a	2006-9	Countryside / Groundwork
10	ep	School Nature Trails	people c/a	From 2006	Countryside / Schools
11	ep	Mentro Allan	people ££a	2007- 2010	ALP / Sustrans
12	ep	Guided walks and bike rides	people c/a	ongoing	Ramblers/ Glynconel etc.
13	ep	Joint Projects	people c	ongoing	Bridgend, NPT, Countryside
14	ep	Leaflets	people £ c/a	ongoing	Voluntary organisations
15	np	Provide on-line information	people £ a	From 2007	Countryside / IT
16	np	Circular routes and database	people £ a	From 2007	Countryside / IT / Area Regeneration Partnerships
17	np	Visitor facilities (new and improved)	£££ a	From 2007	Countryside
18	np	Public transport	people £ c/a	From 2007	Countryside / Voluntary Sector/ Transportation/ operators

Objective 2: Promote walking and cycling as transport options.

Strategic Service Actions

Develop Links with Transportation	Regional Transport Plan for SE Wales is being prepared. Input to provide integrated access information. Initially a twice yearly meeting is proposed.
Regional Cycling Strategy	Input to the Regional Cycling Strategy will be progressed through the twice-yearly meetings with Transportation. This is an important bidding document for Assembly and other funding.
Input to Local Development Plan	The Local Development Plan (LDP) will contain policies for the development and conservation of land and will include a map of land use allocations. It is due to be adopted and replace the existing land-use plans (Structure Plan and Local Plans) in 2009. The Countryside Section will provide input via the officer working group and the Strategic Environmental Assessment/ Sustainability Appraisal working group. The Living Space partnership will also provide input to the process. The LDP should locate development to maximise walking and cycling opportunities, identify new strategic routes and provide for routes in new development.
Active Travel	Active Living Partnership task group on Active Travel.

Existing Projects

Safe routes to school (CAP)	Each year the transportation section bids for funding from the Assembly for specific schools (Liaison via meetings as proposed above).
Improvements to the National Cycle Network (CAP)	Pontypridd – Funding has been allocated for the off road routes for the Taff Trail (no.8) and the Celtic Trail (no.4) through Pontypridd. Abercynon to Cilfynydd- Sustrans has objective one funding for an off road alternative to the current Taff Trail road route. Parc Eirin to Blackmill – Sustrans has objective one funding for an off road alternative to the current Celtic Trail on road route.
Cynon Trail (CAP)	Heads of the Valleys funding for works to the Cynon Trail and community links, available 2006/7 and 7/8. Gaps remain to be filled.

New Projects

Targeted promotion	Targeted promotion for example pedestrian signposting in town centres, access opportunities to/from public transport.
New Community Routes	Links with National Cycle Network, including Taff Trail links (CAP). University of Glamorgan cyclepath. Porth Bypass Community Route. Church Village Bypass Community Route. Rhondda Community routes (CAP). Heads of the Valleys Cyclepath (CAP). Coedely to Talbot Green (CAP). Porth to Maerdy (CAP).

Objective 2: Promote walking and cycling as transport options.

No	Type	Action	Resources	Year	Lead and Partners
1	ss	Links with Transportation	people c	From 2007	Countryside / Transportation
2	ss	Regional Cycling Strategy	people c	From 2007	Countryside / Transportation
3	ss	Local Development Plan	people c	2006-9	Countryside/ Development Plans
4	ss	Active Travel	people c	From 2007	Active Living Partnership
5	ep	Safe routes to school	people c	From 2007	Transportation
6	ep	National Cycle Network (NCN): Pontypridd	£££ c/a	2007	Transportation / Countryside / Sustrans
7	ep	NCN Abercynon - Cilfynydd	£££ c/a	2007	Transportation / Countryside / Sustrans
8	ep	NCN Parc Eirin to Blackmill	£££ c/a	2007	Transportation / Countryside / Sustrans
9	ep	Cynon Trail and links (some funding available from Heads of the Valley Strategy)	£££ c/a	2007/8	Countryside / Groundwork
10	np	Targeted promotion	££ c/a	From 2007	Countryside/ Transportation/
11	np	New community routes: Taff Trail Links	££ c/a	2007	Countryside / Sustrans
12	np	Porth bypass community route	£££ c/a	2007/8	Sustrans / Transportation
13	np	University of Glamorgan community route	£££ a	2008/9 ?	Sustrans / Highways
14	np	Church Village bypass community route	£££ a	?2009/10	Sustrans / Transportation
15	np	Rhondda Community Routes	£££ a	?	Countryside / Transportation
16	np	Heads of the Valleys cycle path	£££ a	? 2010	Countryside / Transportation
17	np	Coedely to Talbot Green cycle path	£££ a	?	Countryside /Land Rec/ Transportation
18	np	Porth to Maerdy	£££ a	?	Sustrans/ Countryside



Objective 3: Protect the access resource, including Public Rights of Way, highways, access land and Council facilities.

Strategic Service Actions

Input to Local Development Plan policies	Policies should ensure that development does not compromise the current access provision, improved and integrated access provision for new development is provided including signage, furniture and access for all. Input via meetings as described under Objective 2.
Input to Regional Transport Plan Integrated highway and pedestrian network	Policies and proposals to promote walking and cycling. Input via meetings as described under Objective 2. Liaison with Highways section via twice a year meetings proposed to consider: highways of uncertain status, structures, policy and resources and a consistent approach to enforcement. Consider the dedication of permissive routes where Council land is being considered for sale. Barriers to access: major roads, rivers, railways. Identify problem locations and potential solutions.
Forestry Commission Wales land	Remove obstructions caused by tree planting through the FCW felling and restock programme in their Forest Design Plans. Prioritise work on obstructed routes through leased FCW land (not dedicated as open access land). Promote access on foot to all FCW forests (CAP). Management agreements for FCW land for sale (CAP).
Lost Ways	Under the Countryside and Rights of Way Act, paths in existence prior to 1949 but not shown on the definitive map and statement will be lost if an application to register the paths is not made before 2026. A proactive approach to identifying these will be required to ensure rights are not lost.

Routine Service Actions (*See Appendix 4 for list of statutory duties and powers.)

Public Rights of Way Enforcement *	The duties and powers for the Council to remove unlawful obstructions, crops and overgrowth and to protect the surface of paths from disturbance. C.f. obj. Six protocols for routine works.
Changes to the Public Rights of Way Network *	The legislation by which Rhondda Cynon Taf' s PROW network can be legally altered. Includes dealing with claimed rights of way, where an application has been made to add unregistered paths to the Council's Definitive Map and Statement and applications to divert or extinguish paths.
Maintenance and improvement of Public Rights of Way*	The Council has a duty to signpost and maintain the surface of paths contained on the Definitive Map and Statement. The Council also have powers to improve PROW e.g. erect barriers, fencing and to construct footbridges. It is legally the responsibility of landowners to replace and maintain stiles and kissing gates.
Permissive Routes	Management of Taff Trail, acquire Rockwood section (CAP).
Key Countryside Sites	Management of Key Countryside Sites (CAP).

New Projects

Information leaflet for landowners.	Useful for Rangers, especially when dealing with routes that have been obstructed.
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Objective 3: Protect the access resource, including Public Rights of Way, highways, access land and Council facilities.

No	Type	Action	Resources	Year	Lead and Partners
1	ss	Local Development Plan policies	people c	2006-9	Countryside / Development Plans
2	ss	Regional Transport Plan	people c	From 2007	Countryside / Transportation
3	ss	Integrated Highway and Pedestrian Network	people £££ c/a	From 2007	Countryside / Highways / Legal
4	ss	Forestry Commission Wales land	people, £££ c/a	ongoing	Countryside / FCW
5	ss	Lost Ways	people ££ a	By 2026	Countryside / LAF / Users
6	rs	PROW Enforcement	people c	ongoing	Countryside / Legal
7	rs	PROW Changes to Network	people ££ /a	ongoing	Countryside
8	rs	Maintenance and Improvements	people ££ c	ongoing	Countryside
9	rs	Claimed rights of way	people c/a	ongoing	Countryside / Legal
10	rs	Permissive routes	people ££ c/a	ongoing	Countryside / Legal/ Property
11	rs	Key Countryside Sites	people ££ c	ongoing	Countryside
12	np	Information leaflet for landowners	people £ c	2007/8	Countryside / Legal



Objective 4: Improve provision for walkers, cyclists, horse riders, off road vehicles and users with disabilities.

Strategic Service Actions

Identify potential improvement and creation projects	Identify gaps in the current network for specific user groups. Identifying priorities and funding opportunities for improvements and future maintenance (incl. routes, surface and furniture). Prioritise improvements where access is poor. Connecting routes and signage to other access opportunities. Develop communication with user groups (see Objective 5 below).
Strategic path improvement works	Protocol for developing the annual work programme to be implemented by interested organisations. This would involve the Countryside Section, Community Councils, Groundwork and Forestry Commission Wales (FCW) and Sustrans.
Tackling waste and anti-social behaviour	Litter, flytipping, arson, dog fouling, car dumping etc. Joint working with the Council's Waste Services, enforcement, the police, Territorial Army, Keep Wales Tidy and others is proposed. Twice yearly meetings proposed if no existing mechanism is available.
Joint working with the Motorbike Liaison Officer	The Council has appointed a Motorbike Liaison Officer and established the Off Road Motorbike Steering Group to promote enforcement, tackle illegal activity and develop provision for legal off road motorcycling. Countryside is represented on the group.
Develop and improve links	Prioritise links to access land, across access land and dedicated FCW open access land. Promote and improve links to cyclepath network. Promote and improve community links, including public transport.
Improve Access for All routes	Develop access for all protocol, including access for mobility and sensory disability access. Survey network accessibility and map potential routes. Prioritise disabled access improvements in and around popular countryside sites.
Accessible natural green space	Work with CCW, Development Plans and their consultants to identify accessible natural green space in Rhondda Cynon Taf. This will build on the work undertaken for the Assessment (2006).

Routine Service

Path works	Signpost and waymark footpaths, bridleways and byways.* Continue reactive path improvement works. Warranted enforcement. Management of disused railway lines owned by Sustrans (CAP). Facilities for dog walkers.
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Existing Projects

	Progress National Cycle Network (CAP). Mid Fach access improvements (CAP). Horse riding concordat with BHS on FCW land. Ynysybwl bus and cycle trailer, Beacons Bus.
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New Projects

Various horse projects	BHS Wales bridle route (CAP). BHS develop riding routes Creigiau to Tonteg, Pontypridd to Nantgarw (CAP), Fforest Fawr-Walnut Tree. SAFE horse route Pontyclun (CAP).
Cycle projects	Mountain bike ring way (CAP).

Objective 4: Improve provision for walkers, cyclists, horse riders, off road vehicles and users with disabilities.

No	Type	Action	Resources	Year	Lead and Partners
1	ss	Identify potential improvement and creation projects	people c/a	From 2006	Countryside , Community Councils, Groundwork
2	ss	Strategic path improvement works	people £ c/a	on going	Countryside , Community Councils (CCs) Groundwork
3	ss	Tackling waste and anti-social behaviour	people c/a	From 2007	KWT, Waste , Police, Countryside, enforcement
4	ss	Joint working with the Motorbike Liaison Officer	people c	on going	Countryside, Off Road Steering Group , Enforcement
5	ss	Develop and improve links	people ££ c/a	From 2007	Countryside , FCW, Transportation, Com. Councils, ARPs, CF, Sustrans
6	ss	Access for All	people £££ c/a	on going	Countryside , disability groups
7	ss	Accessible natural greenspace	people ££ c/a	From 2007	CCW/ Countryside / Development Plans
8	rs	Pathworks	people ££ c/a	on going	Countryside , Community Councils,
9	ep	National Cycle Network	people £££ c/a	on going	Sustrans
10	ep	Mid Fach access improvements	people £ c	on going	Mid Fach / Countryside
11	ep	Horse riding concordat on FCW land	people c	on going	FCW / BHS
12	ep	Bike bus	?£ c	on going	Bus operators / transportation
13	np	BHS/ SAFE various horse route projects	people c	?	BHS / SAFE
14	np	Mountain bike ringway	££ a	?	Countryside / FCW



Objective 5: Involve local community and voluntary organisations in the development, promotion and use of access opportunities.

Strategic Service Actions

Wider Communication	Produce and distribute a general leaflet abouts Rights of Way and Open Access. Develop links with Area Regeneration Partnerships. Develop links with Communities First Partnerships. Develop links with Community Councils. Utilise the Library Service (see Objective One above).
Support the Local Access Forum*	Continue to support and develop the LAF. Develop topic sub groups. Consult with BBNP LAF.
Voluntary and community participation	Provide opportunities for voluntary and, through community existing channels for example Older People's Forums. Seek input from disability groups and transport organisations. Develop links with organisations like the Ramblers, British Horse Society and Sustrans.
Surveys	Develop a volunteer group to survey Public Rights of Way. Investigate potential for Groups to 'adopt' specific routes or sites. Establish levels of use of paths, parks, forests, open access etc. possibly in conjunction with the University and schools

Routine Service

Agency agreements Consultations	With Community Councils and BBNP (CAP). Changes to the definitive map. Consultations with landowners re path works etc..
Public events	Provision of information and advice at public events.

Existing Projects

Circular walks	Area 8 walk route. Area 7 walk route. Pontypridd Circular Walk.
Tourism projects	Penrhys tourism projects including the Cisterian Way (CAP). Valleys Walking Festival.
Health	Walking the Way to Health / Let's Walk Cymru projects.
Surveys	Ramblers currently surveying all OS grid squares across Wales, BHS headcount of horses and riders in RCT.
Countryside	Cefn Pennar Countryside projects (CAP).

New Projects

Horse leaflets	BHS proposals for a folder of horse ride leaflets (CAP).
Tourism	Destination marketing for Arriva Trains (CAP).
Walks	Ynysmaerdy Community Centre walk.

Objective 5: Involve local community and voluntary organisations in the development, promotion and use of access opportunities.

No	Type	Action	Resources	Year	Lead and Partners
1	ss	Wider communication	people £ c/a	From 2006	Countryside/ ARPs/ CFs/ CCs/ LAF/ BBNP
2	ss	Local Access Forum	people c	From 2005	Countryside
3	ss	Voluntary and community participation	people c/a	From 2006	Countryside / Interlink / ARP
4	ss	Surveys	people ££ c/a	From 2007	Countryside / Ramblers / Sustrans
5	rs	Agency agreements	people £ c	ongoing	Countryside Legal
6	rs	Consultations	people £ c/a	ongoing	Countryside
7	rs	Public events	people c/a	ongoing	Countryside
8	ep	Circular walks	people ££ c/a	ongoing	Countryside / ARPs
9	ep	Tourism projects	people £££ c/a	ongoing	Penrhys Partnership / Valleys Tourism / Countryside
10	ep	Health	people ££ c/a	ongoing	WW2H, CF, LHB, SCW
11	ep	Surveys	people c	By 2007	Ramblers / BHS
12	ep	Cefn Pennar Countryside projects	people c/a	ongoing	Cefn Pennar Community
13	np	Horse leaflets	people c/a	?	BHS
14	np	Tourism marketing for Arriva Trains	people £ c	From 2006	Arriva Trains
15	np	Walks	people £ c/a	From 2007	Sports development



Objective 6: Develop a more efficient office management system for statutory Rights of Way, including the Definitive Map.

Strategic Service Actions

Definitive Map Officer	Obtain funding and appoint a Definitive Map officer, by 2007-8, est cost £30k/yr. The Definitive Map review* cannot be undertaken with current staff resources, an additional permanent, qualified member of staff is required.
Computer software and Technical support	Investigate and purchase appropriate computer software for Rights of Way management. CAMS Countryside Access Management System or MAYRISE highways systems are under investigation. Technical support will be required to operate the system. Develop and implement a structured programme for data migration to the new system, for analysis and to inform future work programmes.
Update the Definitive Map*	Taff Ely Area, Rhondda Valleys, Cynon Valley This would include the legal paper version of the map and statement and the computerised Geographic Information System map and new management database. (CAP) This would include a review of path anomalies and proposals to deal with them. Appendix 4 gives details of statutory duties.
Internet access	Aim for internet access to rights of way information, including the definitive map, and for reporting problems.
NAW 'Climbing Higher' environment targets	Investigate how and then calculate National Assembly for Wales' environmental targets in 'Climbing Higher' for Rhondda Cynon Taf. This is being progressed by the Countryside section in conjunction with the Assembly, the Active Living Partnership, Forward Plans and the Council's residents' survey.

Routine Service

Protocols for routine tasks	Train call centre staff re Rights of Way / Open Access / Highways / pavements etc.. Establish and implement protocols for logging and monitoring progress for claims, diversions, obstructions, updating OS maps etc.. Develop and implement protocols for comments on planning applications and for land charges searches. Provide information for developers regarding public rights of way. Establish joint working protocols with Highways. Tackle the backlog of modification orders.*
S. 106 agreements	Develop a proforma for S106 agreements relating to planning applications for new development.
New duties	Establish timetables and protocols to implement new duties arising from legislation such as the CROW Act, Clean Neighbourhoods Act and Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act.

Objective 6: Develop a more efficient office management system for statutory Rights of Way, including the Definitive Map.

No	Type	Action	Resources	Year	Lead and Partners
1	ss	Obtain funding and appoint Definitive Map Officer	££ a	2007 - 08	Countryside
2	ss	Computer software and technical support	people ££ a	2007 - 08	Countryside
3	ss	Develop and implement a structured programme for data migration	people ££ a	2008 - 10	Countryside
4	ss	Update the Definitive Map Taff Ely Area	people a	2009	Countryside / Legal
5	ss	Update the Definitive Map Rhondda Valleys	people a	2011	Countryside / Legal
6	ss	Update the Definitive Map Cynon Valley	people a	2013	Countryside / Legal
7	ss	Internet access	people ££ a		Countryside / IT
8	ss	NAW Climbing Higher environment targets	people £ c/a	2007	Countryside / WAG / ALP / LDP / Residents Survey
9	rs	Protocols for routine tasks	people £ c/a	2007	Countryside / Customer services / Legal / Highways
10	rs	Proforma for S106 agreements	people a	2008	Countryside / Legal / DC
11	rs	New duties	people £ a	2008	Countryside / Legal



8. Implementation

The Improvement Plan provides actions that are aimed at increasing public benefits through access improvements. Many of these actions however are clearly beyond the existing Countryside Section small budget management for primarily recreation purposes. Much time and funding will be required to deliver many of the actions. There are however, some actions that can be delivered within a shorter timescale, and within current resources. These actions will be the ones that can be delivered by the Countryside Section soonest, as their implementation does not rely on the successful outcome of any bid for additional funding.

Other providers of Countryside access have been encouraged to contribute to the Improvement Plan and be guided by this plan. The realisation of related and partnership work by other Council departments and organisations such as Groundwork Merthyr, Rhondda Cynon Taf and Sustrans will also fulfil substantial access network benefit. Once again these organisations are not bound by the actions in this plan. Reliance on additional funding is still a crucial factor.

The proposed Valleys Regional Park may provide opportunities for enhanced regional working across

the South Wales coalfield including matters covered by Out & About.

The implementation of certain actions will be more visible and recognisable to public users of access facilities in Rhondda Cynon Taf. For example, more signposting, provision of new kissing gates, better maintenance, provision of access for all and supply of information will provide more immediate benefit and public feedback than Definitive Map work and collection of further information on use and demand.

Definitive Map work is however still crucial to the longer term realisation of public rights of way overall network improvements as explained previously. Work on the Definitive Map is costly in terms of officer time and requires complex legal procedures to carry out a review. These actions will take the longest to complete as the existing maps will have to be reviewed over a number of years. The cut off date of 2026 introduced by the CROW Act 2000 for new path claims may appear a distant date at present but progress so far has been slow due to other demands on the ground. The appointment of a new Definitive Map officer in 2007 is likely to be one of the first major actions identified in the Improvement Plan making process to be implemented in advance of the Full Plan.

Prioritisation of actions is therefore crucially important and this will be undertaken to a certain degree as part of the Plan process through consultation with key stakeholders and the Local Access Forum. Similarly it must be recognised that whilst the actions give direction they cannot anticipate unplanned opportunities or change in circumstances. They should not therefore be allowed to override such new elements as they arise.

The Council is under no statutory duty to implement the contents of this action statement. The achievement of maintainable benefits beyond existing activities and funding, therefore needs to be flexible. A flexible approach linked to the annual Parks and Countryside Business Plan processes and appraisals rather than a specific Business Plan is considered appropriate. The statement of action and other initiatives will be considered when producing these annual plans.

An implementation document has been prepared identifying which Council officer is responsible for progressing each action. This will be linked to the Section's annual business plan and to funding opportunities such as the CCW Partnership Programme.



9. Monitoring and Reporting

This Action Plan covers the period to 2007-2017. It will provide a guide for actions to improve, and encourage more use of, the rights of way network and the wider access resource.

The Action Plan has been structured so it is clear who will be responsible for implementing action. It is proposed that the monitoring of these actions is undertaken through the Council's established Living Space Action Programme process. This currently contains a Countryside Access theme and this will be reviewed to ensure all the Out & About actions are included. All partners are asked to provide progress reports to contribute to the monitoring.

Monitoring reports on the Living Space Action Programme will be received by the Living Space Partnership. In addition, the monitoring report on the countryside access theme, including the Out & About actions will be reported to the Local Access Forum. Measuring and reporting on the Assembly's 'Climbing Higher' environmental targets provide longer-term benchmarks of progress.

The Living Space Action Programme also provides a mechanism for incorporating relevant new actions.

A formal review of Out & About has not been scheduled at this stage. Guidance from the Assembly and the Countryside Council for Wales is awaited with regard to the future of Rights of Way Improvement Plans in Wales.

Appendix One:

Population for each Area Regeneration Partnership

Area	Population
Cynon North (area 1)	9038
Cynon Central (area 2)	29955
Cynon South (area 3)	19732
Pontypridd (area 4)	24624
Rhondda South (area 5)	15311
Rhondda Fach (area 6)	12575
Upper Rhondda Fawr (area 7)	19540
Mid Rhondda Fawr (area 8)	25981
Ely North (area 9)	14469
Ely South (area 10)	22479
Taff West (area 11)	22246
Taff East (area 12)	16960

The information was generated from 2001 Census





Appendix Two:

Assessment Summary points for each objective

Objective 1

- There is a need to link outdoor activity for health purposes with the countryside access network
- There is great potential to use the vast areas of countryside for tourism to improve the local economy
- Publicity and promotion of the public rights of way network is poor
- There is a need for more promoted and circular routes
- The network is currently used for the purpose of exercise, recreation and tourism
- There are a number of other strategies which highlight the importance of the countryside as a valuable abundant natural resource

Objective 2

- Other ongoing strategic processes and the WAG guidance link the ROWIP with the Regional Transport Plan and the Local Development Plan.
- There is a good infrastructure which currently isn't being used to its full potential
- Publicity and promotion of the public rights of way network is poor
- There are not as many cycle ways as footpaths

Objective 3

- The Regional Transport Plan and the Local Development Plan are currently being developed and the ROWIP has an important place within the process
- There is public concern that paths are being lost because of development
- There is a need to improve enforcement to protect the resource
- There are not enough community links or paths close to communities
- Many of the public Rights of Way through FCW are obstructed by plantation
- There are many outstanding claimed rights of way applications
- There are many paths not being used and will be lost with time
- There are clear gaps in the network where there is no access
- There are clear gaps in the network for specific user groups

Objective 4

- There is an extensive problem with off-road motorcycles destroying footpaths, other dedicated access areas and wildlife areas
- There are not enough paths which are suitable for those with mobility difficulties
- There are not enough bridleways
- There are not enough byways
- There are clear gaps in the network for specific user groups
- Antisocial behaviour is a wide concern and is preventing full use of the access network
- Path surface and furniture need to be better maintained

Objective 5

- Resources are insufficient to fully maintain the entire network
- There is a communication gap between the public and the local authority
- There are a lot of community and interest groups within the area
- There is a lack of understanding of what a public Right of Way is.
- Publicity and promotion of the public rights of way network is poor
- There is a need to improve and promote community routes and links to the surrounding environment

Objective 6

- The definitive map is not up to date
- There are many anomalies and inconsistencies on the definitive map
- The GIS system used is inaccurate and out of date
- There are a number of new statutory obligations to undertake as part of the CROW Act
- Diversions are not always added to the OS map
- There are many outstanding modification orders
- There are a number of paths which have changed status due to development
- There should be more use of the internet to report complaints and problems



Appendix Three:

Rights of Way and other Access funding 2007- 8

Rights of Way and Access – Direct and Budgeted Costs Guide

Comprises the following:

Staff Costs including:-

Office based

Rights of Way Officer

Countryside Manager (50%)

Countryside Projects Officer (50%)

Definitive Map Officer

Sub Total - £85K

Ranger Service

3 Area Rangers (50%) including vehicles, premises, equipment, materials, etc

3 Rights of Way Rangers inc. including vehicles, premises, equipment, materials, etc

Sub Total - £110K

Signs, furniture, structures, agency, legal and contractor costs on PROW and permissive cycle / access for all routes –

Sub Total - £55K

Total £250,000

Value of work eventually carried out will be much higher because of joint initiatives with Groundwork, Area Regeneration Groups, NAW grants, CCW, some involving capital provision.

Appendix Four:

The duties and powers of local authorities under public rights of way legislation (see Appendix 5 for abbreviations and definitions)

Routine Service Actions (*Statutory functions)

Public Rights of Way: Enforcement

Statutory Duties

- | | |
|-----------------|--|
| HA 1980 s 130 | To assert and protect the rights of the public to the use and enjoyment of, and to prevent so far as possible the stopping up or the obstruction of all their highways |
| HA 1980 s 130A | Enforcement of duty to prevent obstructions |
| HA 1980 s 131A | To take action if the ploughing or disturbance of a highway was unlawful |
| HA 1980 s 134 | To enforce the restoration of footpaths and bridleways lawfully ploughed or disturbed |
| HA 1980 s 137A | To enforce the duty of an occupier to ensure that crops do not inconvenience users of footpaths, bridleways and unmetalled carriageways |
| HA 1980 Sch 12A | To make good the surface of a right of way under certain circumstances |
| HA 1980 Sch 12A | To carry out works where a duty to keep a path clear of overhanging crops has not been complied with |

Statutory Powers

- | | |
|---------------|---|
| HA 1980 s 132 | To remove unauthorised signs from rights of way |
| HA 1980 s 143 | To require the removal of a structure or other obstruction from a right of way |
| HA 1980 s 145 | To require the enlargement of gates across bridleways or carriageways |
| HA 1980 s 149 | To require the removal of things deposited on a right of way causing a nuisance |
| HA 1980 s 154 | To require the cutting back of vegetation |
| HA 1980 s 164 | To require the abatement of a nuisance caused by barbed wire adjoining a right of way |

Public Rights of Way: Changes to the PROW Network

Statutory Duties

- | | |
|----------------|---|
| WACA 1981 s 53 | To keep the definitive map under continuous review |
| WACA 1981 s 53 | To make modification orders to take account of events requiring the map to be modified |
| WACA 1981 s 57 | To keep copies of the definitive map and statement, together with copies of any subsequent modification and orders, available for public inspection in every district |





- WACA 1981 s 57 To draw the attention of the public to the availability of definitive maps for inspection and to the right to apply for modification orders to be made
- WACA 1981 s 53B To keep a register to contain such information as may be prescribed with respect to applications under

Statutory Powers

- HA 1980 s 25 To create a footpath or bridleway by agreement
- HA 1980 s 26 To make an order to create a footpath or bridleway
- HA 1980 s 38 To agree to undertake maintenance of a footpath or bridleway
- HA 1980 s 116 To apply to the magistrates court for the closure of a right of way
- HA 1980 s 118 To make an order to stop up a footpath or bridleway
- HA 1980 s 118A To make an order to stop up a footpath or bridleway which crosses a railway HA 1980 s 119 To make an order to divert a footpath or bridleway
- HA 1980 s 119A To make an order to divert a footpath or bridleway which crosses a railway
- HA 1980 s 119ZA (Sch 6 CROWA 2000) To make an order to divert a footpath or bridleway on land used for agriculture, forestry or the breeding or keeping of horses
- HA 1980 s 119B (Sch 6 CROW 2000) To make an order to divert a footpath or bridleway for certain highways for crime prevention
- HA 1980 s 119C (Sch 6 CROWA 2000) To make an order to divert a footpath or bridleway on land that is occupied for the purposes of a school
- HA 1980 s 119D (Sch 6 CROWA 2000) To make an order to divert a footpath or bridleway for certain highways for the protection of sites of special scientific interest
- HA 1980 s 135 To make an order temporarily diverting a footpath or bridleway to enable agricultural excavation or engineering works to be carried out
- TACPA 1990 s 257 To consider an application for a diversion of a footpath or bridleway where planning permission or consent has been granted
- RTRA 1984 s 14 To make temporary traffic regulation orders to restrict use for public safety reasons

Public Rights of Way: Maintenance and Improvements

Statutory Duties

- CA 1968 To signpost and waymark footpaths, bridleways and byways where they leave the metalled road and elsewhere to help people follow the route

Statutory Powers

CA 1968	To signpost and waymark footpaths, bridleways and byways where they leave the metalled road and elsewhere to help people follow the route
HA 1980 s 38	To agree to undertake maintenance of a footpath or bridleway
HA 1980 ss 62, 72 and 76	To improve, widen or level rights of way
HA 1980 s 91	To construct a bridge to carry a right of way
HA 1980 s 100	To undertake works on a right of way
HA 1980 s 145	To require the enlargement of gates across bridleways or carriageways
HA 1980 s 146	To require maintenance work to be undertaken on stiles and gates
HA 1980 s 147ZA	To authorise new stiles and gates in certain (s 69 CROW 2000) circumstances for the improvements.

Key

HA 1980	Highways Act 1980
WACA 1981	Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981
RTRA 1984	Road Traffic Regulations Act 1984
CA 1968	Countryside Act 1968
NPACA 1949	National Park and Countryside Act 1949
CROWA 2000	Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000
TACPA 1990	Town and Country Planning Act 1990

Timescales

The making of an order is subject to statutory time limits. Prior to making an order consultations are carried out with the landowners, user groups, local members, community councils and the planning authorities. There is no statutory requirement to carry out any consultations. This however, has been found not only to be good for public relations, but also helpful in discovering whether any objections will be made against the order and if modifications can be made to meet the objections.

Although this procedure adds time to the processing of an order, it may prevent objections being received and the matter being passed to the National Assembly Wales for determination, leading possibly to a public inquiry.



Appendix Five:

Abbreviations and glossary

a	Additional
Access for All	Access suitable for people with visual or mobility impairment.
ALP	Active Living Partnership
ARP	Area Regeneration Partnership Six partnerships cover the Rhondda Cynon Taf area
BBNP	Brecon Beacons National Park The area covered by the Brecon Beacons National Park
BHS	British Horse Society
BOAT	Byway Open to All Traffic Public rights of way with rights for pedestrians, horse riders, cyclists and licensed motor vehicles
Bridleways	Public rights of way with the right to walk, ride or lead a horse or to cycle (cyclists give way to other users)
Bro Dysg	Community Plan Partnership for education and lifelong learning
c	current
CA 1968	Countryside Act 1968
CBC	County Borough Council
CCW	Countryside Council for Wales The Government's statutory adviser on sustaining natural beauty, wildlife and the opportunity for outdoor enjoyment in Wales and its inshore waters.
Com Councils, CCs	Community Councils Local government at the community level covering parts of the Taff, Ely and upper Cynon areas.
CF	Communities First Assembly designation of the 100 most deprived wards in Wales
c.f.	compare
Community Route	Permissive route, open to walkers, cyclists and wheelchair users
CRoW Act	Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000
CRoW Access Land	Areas of land, rural commons or land described as mountain, moor, heath or down (open country) to which the public have a right of access on foot under the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000)
CAP	Countryside Action Programme
DC	Development Control

Dedicated Access Land	Under the CROW Act there is provision under section for landowners to dedicate areas of land to become open access land
Definitive Map	The legal register for public rights of way on a map and the accompanying written description
ep	Existing Project
FCW	Forestry Commission Wales
GIS	Geographical Information System A mapping computer program holding Ordnance Survey baseline data and individual access data sets.
Ha	Hectares
HA 1980	Highways Act 1980
IT	Information Technology
Km	Kilometres
KWT	Keep Wales Tidy
LAF	Local Access Forum Forums of local volunteers with experience of a wide variety of access issues. They were established under the CROW Act to advise Local Authorities, national park authorities, CCW, WAG and others on improvement of public access to land for the purposes of open air recreation and enjoyment. There is a Rhondda Cynon Taff Local Access Forum and Forums within Brecon Beacons National Park.
LHB	Local Health Board
Lost Ways	Lost ways are public rights of way that may have existed before 1949, but were not legally registered. They may also be public rights of way with incorrectly recorded status. Sections 53 – 56 of the CROW Act state that unrecorded rights of way must be proved by historical evidence, the paths must be registered by 2026 when any unrecorded higher rights will be lost.
Local Transport Plans	The Welsh Assembly Government directed that all Local Authorities should produce a Local Transport Plan by 2000; these are now being replaced by Regional Transport Plans. The WAG Guidance stresses the importance of the ROWIP being integrated into the Local Transport Plans
NAW	National Assembly for Wales
NCN	National Cycle Network
np	New Project





NPACA 1949	National Park and Countryside Act 1949
NPT	Neath Port Talbot CBC
Permissive Path	A path where the landowner grants access rights which can be withdrawn
Public Bridleway	Public right of way with right of passage on foot, horseback and cycle
Public Byway	Public right of way with right of passage on foot, horseback, cycle, driven horse and motorised vehicle.
Public Footpath	Public right of way with right of passage on foot only
Public Right of Way	A linear route where the public have a legally enforceable right of passing and re-passing. The public have a right to walk, to ride horses or cycle, and in other cases to use motorised vehicles, according to the classification of the right of way on the definitive map.
ROWIP	Rights of Way Improvement Plan Under Section 60 of Countryside and Rights of Way Act
ROWO	Rights of Way Officer (s)
rs	Routine Service
RTRA 1984	Road Traffic Regulations Act 1984
RUPP	Road Used as a Public Path RUPP's are cart road footpaths (CRF's) and cart road bridleways (CRB's). These are regarded as having bridleway rights, although it is uncertain whether they warrant higher rights. The 1968 Countryside Act directed reviews of RUPP's with a view of reclassifying them into footpaths, bridleways or byways open to all traffic (BOAT). They are to be re-classified as restricted byways, with the enactment of Sections 47 and 48 of the CRoW Act, giving rights to walkers, horse riders, cyclists and carriage drivers.
S	Section
SAFE	Safety and Facilities for Equestrians
S106	Section 106 Agreement under the Town and Country Planning Act monies contributed by developers to provide public infrastructure in connection with development
Sch	Schedule
SCW	Sports Council for Wales
SE	South East
ss	Strategic Service

SUSTRANS	Sustainable Transport Charity
TACPA 1990	Town and Country Planning Act 1990
Tir Gofal and Tir Cynnal	Welsh Assembly Government agri-environment scheme
WAG	Welsh Assembly Government
WAG Guidance	Welsh Assembly Government, Rights of Way Improvement Plans, Guidance to Local Highway Authorities in Wales (2002), a document produced by the Welsh Assembly Government to help Local Authorities in their production of Rights of Way Improvement Plans.
Waymark	A coloured disc showing status and direction of a public right of way.
WACA 1981	Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981
£	estimated cost less than £5000
££	estimated cost £5000 - £30000
£££	estimated cost more than £30000

*Statutory duty





