



HILLINGDON
LONDON

Rights of Way Improvement Plan for Hillingdon

2021 – 2031



This document is a Rights of Way Improvement Plan (ROWIP) under Section 60 of the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000. It supersedes the 'Rights of Way Improvement Plan for Hillingdon 2011 - 2021' and all previous policies contained within that Plan.

Vision Statement

To enhance and promote the borough's Rights of Way Network for the purpose of providing exercise and open-air recreation into the borough's green spaces and to access to local amenities.

The Rights of Way Improvement Plan aims to:

- Provide a Rights of Way network which is correctly signed, free from obstruction and easy to use.
- Develop the network to enable use by all, with regard to least restrictive access where possible.
- Promote the network to increase health and wellbeing, recreational opportunities and as a means of accessing the natural and built environment.
- Help develop the network of access around the borough.

Contents

1.	Introduction	4
1.1	Hillingdon	4
1.2	Aim of the Rights of Way Improvement Plan	4
1.3	Legislative background	4
2.	What are Public Rights of Way	5
2.1	Categories of Rights of Way	5
2.2	Private Rights 'easements'	6
2.3	List of Streets	6
2.4	Legally Defined	6
2.5	The Definitive Map and Statement	6
2.6	Amendments to the Definitive Map	7
3.	Hillingdon's Rights of Way Network / Current Access Provision	8
3.1	Health Opportunities	8
3.2	Public Rights of Way	9
3.3	Public Bridleways	9
3.4	Byway Open to All Traffic (BOAT)	10
3.5	Cycle Ways	10
3.6	Wider Network of Access	11
3.7	Public Open Spaces	13
3.8	Accessibility	13
3.9	Canal Towpath	14
3.10	Colne Valley Regional Park	14
4.	Network Management	16

4.1	Existing management of Public Rights of Way	16
4.2	Local Performance Indicator (BVPI) 178	16
4.3	Inspections of Rights of Way	16
4.4	Condition of the Network	17
4.5	Enforcement and Protection	17
4.6	Maintenance	18
5.	The Policy Framework & Rights of Way Improvement Plan Links	20
5.1	Regional and Local Policies	20
5.2	Local Implementation Plan	20
5.3	Integration of the Rights of Way Improvement Plan Into the Local Implementation Plan	20
6.	Review of the ROWIP 2011-2021	21
6.1	Achievements of first ROWIP	22
7.	Statement of Actions	25
	Action 1 - Regeneration of existing public rights of way	25
	Action 2 – Maintenance schedules	26
	Action 3 – Least restrictive access	27
	Action 4 – Definitive Map and Statement	28
	Action 5 – Promotion of network	29
	Action 6 – Crime and anti-social behaviour	30
	Action 7 – Health Promotion	31
	Action 8 – Creation of new routes and links	32
8.	Monitoring the ROWIP	33
8.1	Monitoring	33
8.2	Deliverability	33

List of Figures

Figure 1	Abstract from Hillingdon Definitive Map	7
Figure 2	Public Rights of Way with Walks and Trails in the borough	15

List of Tables

Table 1	Breakdown of Rights of Way in the borough	9
Table 2	Designated Cycle Tracks remote from carriageways	10
Table 3	Regional and Local Plan links	20

Appendices

Appendix A	Policy Framework & Rights of Way Improvement Plan Links	34
Appendix B	Survey / Consultation feedback from first ROWIP	38

Bibliography		43
---------------------	--	-----------

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 Hillingdon

Hillingdon is the second largest of London's 33 boroughs in area, covering approximately 115 kilometres (44.6 miles). Hillingdon forms a long narrow strip on the western edge of London approximately 18 kilometres (11.1 miles) from north to south and 6 kilometres (3.7 Miles) from west to east. The London boroughs of Harrow, Ealing and Hounslow lie to the east of Hillingdon and it is bounded on the north by Hertfordshire, on the west by Buckinghamshire and Slough and to the south by Surrey.

Hillingdon varies from open country and housing development in the north to a more heavily developed, urban structure in the centre and south. Whilst the south of the borough is relatively flat, the north becomes increasingly hilly as the land rises toward the Chilterns. The River Colne and the Grand Union Canal run down the western perimeter of the borough and the river Pinn and Yeading Valley also thread their way through the eastern side of the borough and are all important areas for leisure and nature pursuits.

Hillingdon has over 5,000 acres of open countryside including lakes, fields, rivers, and woods. A large green belt in the borough is largely protected from urban development. The majority of Hillingdon's woodland lies within Ruislip Woods National Nature Reserve. There are over 200 parks and open spaces in the borough including parks, allotments, commons, recreation grounds, playing fields, children's play areas, and civic spaces.

1.2 *Aim of the ROWIP*

The Rights of Way Improvement Plan (ROWIP) is the means by which local highway authorities identify the changes to be made, in respect of management and improvements to the local public rights of way network, in order to attain better provision for all users, including walkers, cyclists and horse riders.

1.3 Legislative Background

Hillingdon Council produced its first Rights of Way Improvement Plan (ROWIP) to meet the requirements of Section 60 of the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000 (CROW) which requires each local highway authority in England and Wales (excluding inner London Boroughs) to publish a Rights of Way Improvement Plan. There is a statutory duty to review the plan every ten years.

The Rights of Way Improvement Plan was set within the context of other relevant plans and strategies at national and local levels.

The statutory guidance required that a Rights of Way Improvement Plan

assessed:

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

2. What are Public Rights of Way

2.1 Categories of Rights of Way

England contains a unique historic network of paths, approximately 118,000 miles, which are legally protected highway. The original purpose of Rights of Way, as with roads today, was to provide links to settlements for access and commerce, though many Rights of Way are now utilised for recreational amenity.

Public Rights of Way are routes that allow the public a right of passage over land, which can be privately, or Council owned. Common Law states that users can pass and re-pass along highways at all times. Footpaths, bridleways, and byways are all highways, differing from roads only in the type of traffic entitled to use them and surface types. Most Public Rights of Way are publicly maintainable. Once a Public Right of Way has been established it will remain maintainable at public expense until there is a legal order to either close, divert or extinguish it as a Public Right of Way.

Public Footpath	On which there is a right of way on foot only
Public Bridleway	On which there is a right of way on foot, on horseback and leading a horse, with an additional right for cyclists provided that they give way to other users; in some cases, also with a right to lead or drive animals.
Roads Used as Public Paths (RUPPS)	Highways mainly used by the public for the purposes that footpaths or bridleways are used, but which may or may not carry vehicular rights. In some parts of the country RUPPs were reclassified individually as byway, bridleway or footpath and those remaining in 2006 became restricted byways.

Restricted Byways	A category created by CROW Act 2000 with rights for all traffic except mechanically propelled vehicles.
Byways Open to All Traffic (BOATS)	Highways that are mainly used for the purposes that footpaths and bridleways are used, but on which there is a right of way for all traffic.
Cycle Ways	A way over which there is a right of way on pedal cycles (cycle ways are not a type of right of way that has to be shown on a definitive map). These are established by an Order under the Cycle Tracks Act 1984 and are separate to those cycle routes provided at the side or within the road.

2.2 Private Rights 'easements'

Private rights are termed easements. For example, one landowner might have a private right of access over a neighbour's land and usually be mentioned in the deeds of both properties. Such private rights do not apply to the public at large, but only to those for whose benefit they have been granted. Some ways can carry both public and private rights. For example, a farm access road may also be a public bridleway, and a public footpath may also carry private vehicular rights. Private rights must not be exercised in such a way as to interfere with the rights of the public.

2.3 List of Streets

The list of streets is a statutory requirement the Council is required to keep under the Highways Act 1980. This is held by the Highways Department. It Record's all highways that are publicly maintainable including Public Rights of Way recorded on the definitive map and adopted paths which are not on the Definitive Map and Statement.

2.4 Legally Defined

Public Rights of Way excluding Cycle Tracks are required by law, under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 to be recorded on the Definitive Map and Statement.

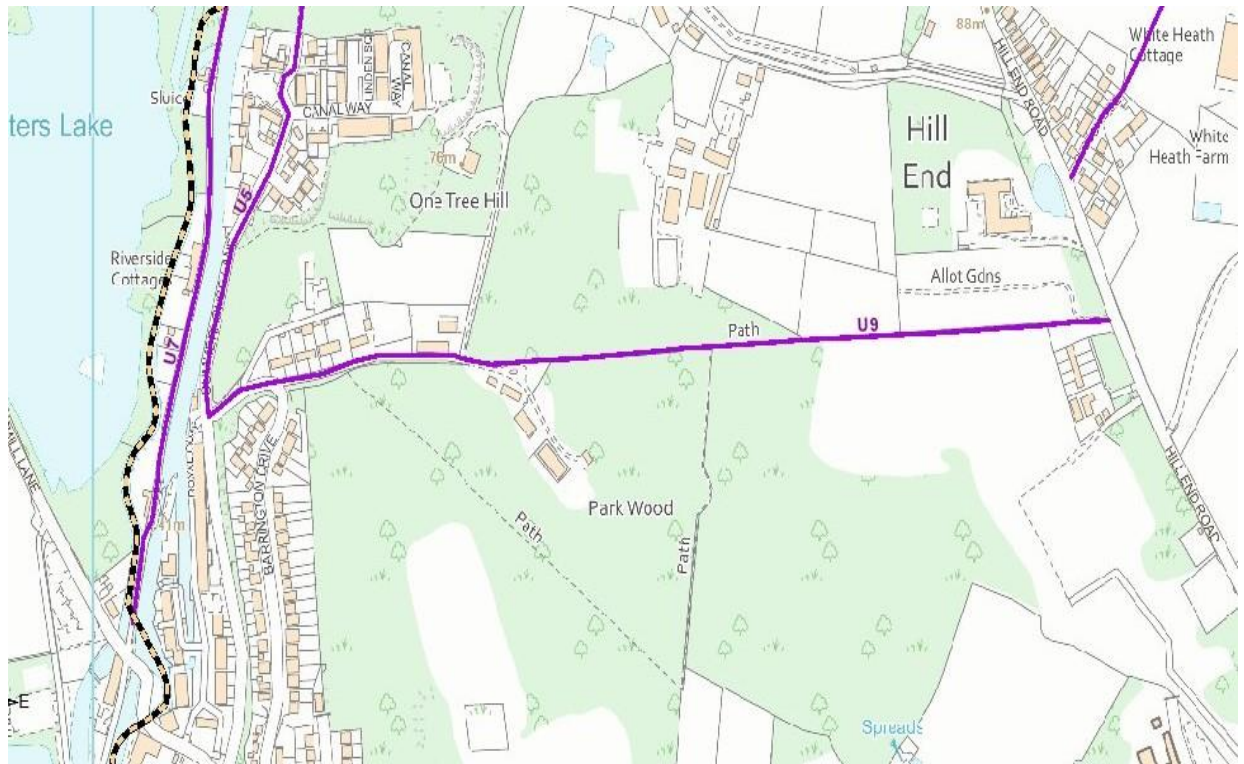
2.5 The Definitive Map and Statement

The first Definitive Map came into existence as a result of the National Parks and Countryside Act 1949, which required all county councils in England and Wales to carry out a survey of their area and produce a map showing footpaths, bridleways and byways which were Public Rights of Way.

Definitive Maps and Statements are extremely important records of Public Rights of Way, they provide conclusive evidence, at the relevant date of

the map, of the existence and status of the Public Rights of Way which are shown on them. The Definitive Map and Statement for Hillingdon records all Public Rights of Way within the borough, it is a living document as it is subject to on-going changes as routes are added, changed, or deleted.

Figure1 Example of an abstract from Hillingdon's Definitive Map showing footpath U9, Hill End Road to Summerhouse Lane, Harefield.



The Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 also requires the Highway Authority to keep the Definitive Map and Statement under continuous review and ensure that the Rights of Way are adequately signposted, maintained, and free from obstruction.

2.6 Amendments to the Definitive Map

Changes can be made to the map most commonly by Modification Orders and Public Path Orders.

Modification Orders may be made:

- To add a Right of Way where it is shown to exist but not recorded on the Map.
- To alter the status of a Right of Way.
- To delete a Right of Way where it is shown to be included on the Map in error.

- To record a width in the Definitive Statement.

The process is based on user / archive evidence. Before making an order, the authority must have evidence which shows the right of way has come into being through presumed dedication following use over a period of time. If Modification Orders are made, they can be challenged and could lead to a public enquiry.

Public Path Orders may be made:

- To create a Public Right of Way.
- To divert an existing Public Right of Way onto a new route.
- To extinguish an existing Public Right of Way.

Public Path Orders enable applicants to apply to make a permanent legal change to a Public Rights of Way across their land. This is a public process where anyone may object to the making of an order. The authorities will process Public Path Orders in response to applications, or as authority generated schemes.

If a new path is to be created the test is that it must appear to the authority that there is a need for it and the authority must be satisfied it is expedient to create it having regard to the extent to which it would add to the convenience or enjoyment of a substantial section of the public or of local residents and the effect the creation would have on the rights of those with an interest in the land.

The tests for extinguishing a public path include that it is 'not needed for public use'.

Statutory duties also include the requirement to keep a register of applications made for modification orders, which must be available for viewing on the internet.

3. Hillingdon's Rights of Way Network / Current Access Provision

3.1 Health Opportunities

The Rights of Way network plays an essential role in health and well-being. It provides an opportunity to carry out daily exercise and organised activities. The promotion of recreational walking has increased and has been supported with the development of a range of walks both in the open countryside and parks. These walks are supplemented by a series of led walks undertaken by walk leaders and can be found on the Council's website. Together these form an important resource to encourage walking in the borough and make walking accessible to individuals who may not have had

the confidence or experience to enjoy many of the more rural routes available in the borough. In addition to these walks, a range of cycle promotion activity has been developed and is supplemented by led rides, training with advice provided by Hillingdon cycle instructors.

3.2 Public Rights of Way

The Public Rights of Way network in the borough as recorded on the Definitive Map and Statement is approximately 128 km (79 miles) long and contains 377 footpaths, 11 Bridleways and 10 BOATS (byway open to all traffic). Hillingdon produced its Definitive Map and Statement in December 1964 as an amalgamation of the three Urban Districts of Hayes and Harlington, Ruislip, and Northwood, Yiewsley and West Drayton and former borough of Uxbridge. Although consolidated into one Definitive Map and Statement for Hillingdon the boroughs Rights of Way are split into four areas comprising Ruislip / Northwood, Hayes / Harlington, Uxbridge, and Yiewsley / West Drayton. Each route is identified by a letter and number, for instance H8 in Hayes.

Hillingdon's Rights of Way network encompasses both urban and rural routes. Urban paths are in the main used for convenient short cuts to schools, shops, public transport, and other local amenities and are in the whole metalled surfaces. Other public footpaths follow and cross through farmland, parks and open spaces, woodland, nature reserves, golf courses, riverbanks and canal towpaths and have differing surfaces. Rights of Way form a significant part of the local access infrastructure in the sense, that they are a major recreational resource and offer access into the borough's countryside and surrounding areas.

Table 1 Breakdown of Rights of Way in the borough

Status	Footpath	Bridleway	BOAT	Total Number	Total length km
Ruislip / Northwood	186	7	3	196	49.28 (30.62 m)
Hayes / Harlington	71	0	4	75	14.61 (9.07 m)
Uxbridge	97	2	0	99	51.98 (32.29 m)
Yiewsley	23	2	3	28	12.36 (7.68 m)

3.3 Public Bridleways

Hillingdon has eleven bridleways of which eight are situated in Ruislip Woods National Nature Reserve. These routes connect with permissive bridleways to provide an extensive route through the differing woods which make up the National Nature Reserve. Bridleways were originally designated as a right of

way for people on horse or foot, but the Countryside Act 1968 introduced legislation to allow cyclists to use bridleways with the intention that cyclists give way to horse riders and walkers.

3.4 Byway Open to All Traffic (BOAT)

The term Byway Open to All Traffic means a highway over which the public have a right of way for vehicular and all other kinds of traffic, but which is used by the public mainly for the purposes of which bridleways and footpaths are used. Hillingdon has ten BOATS.

3.5 Cycle Ways

Cycle ways have a two-fold remit; “on highway” and “off highway”. Cycle ways that are classified as falling in the “on highway” category can form part of the carriageway or footway. They are usually designated as shared use for pedestrians and cyclists when on the footway. On the carriageway cycle facilities are commonly either advisory or mandatory cycle lanes.

Cycle ways that are classified as falling in the “off highway” category can be specifically designated for cyclists or shared use facilities with pedestrians. This type of cycle track is created by means of a Cycle Track Order. Cycle ways created utilising a Cycle Track Order have specific legal status but are not shown on the Definitive Map and Statement. Hillingdon has a total 4.78 km (2.97 miles) of Cycle Tracks remote from carriageways.

Table 2 Designated Cycle Tracks remote from carriageways

Start	Finish	Ward	Length km
Station Road	Peachey Lane	Colham & Cowley	0.43 (0.27m)
Park Road	A40 – Western Avenue	Uxbridge	0.42 (0.26m)
A40 – Western Avenue	Warren Road	Ickenham & South Harefield	0.84 (0.52m)
Warren Road	Milton Road	Ickenham	0.53 (0.33m)
Shakespeare Avenue	Shakespeare Avenue	Belmore	0.14 (0.08m)
Hill Lane	Hill Lane	Ruislip	0.29 (0.18m)
Elmbridge Drive	Fore Street	Eastcote	0.15 (0.09m)
Bedwell Gardens	Shepiston Lane	Pinkwell	0.36 (0.22m)
Hobart Road	Glencoe Road	Yeading	0.28

			(0.17)
Pendula Drive	Friar Road	Yeading	0.19 (0.12)
Carlyon Road	Parkway East	Belmore	0.12 (0.08)
Carlyon Road	Dorchester Way	Belmore	0.38 (0.24)
Springfield Road	Abbotswood Way	Wood End	0.48 (0.3)
Dawley Road	Keith Road	Hayes Town	0.17 (0.10)

3.6 Wider Network of Access - Permissive and Promoted Routes

Permissive paths are paths which the landowner permits the public to use, with the intention that it should not be dedicated a Public Right of Way. Because a permissive path is not a Public Right of Way, it is not subject to Rights of Way law. Hillingdon's permissive routes are usually located on local authority owned land.

Hillingdon has a good network of permissive promoted routes of varying lengths for walking, horse riding and cycling which complement the network of definitive routes to make up the wider access network. Permissive paths, particularly in Green Spaces, form an important and well used part of the network. These routes are utilised for regional and local recreational use.

Permissive Bridleways in Hillingdon

Hillingdon has approximately 37km (22 miles) of permissive Bridleways; they form an essential recreational resource for horse riders, cyclists, and walkers. They are located around the borough through woodland, farmland, and parkland, and also form links with South Buckinghamshire and surrounding authorities.

Hillingdon Trail

This is a 32.1km (20 miles) walk through Hillingdon's countryside from Cranford to Harefield. The walk passes through Nature reserves, parks, meadows, parks and open spaces, Grand Union Canal, Yeading Brook and the River Pinn.

Celandine Route

A walk of 19.3km (12 miles) along the River Pinn from Pinner to the Grand Union Canal at Cowley. The path follows the River Pinn and passes through meadows, woodland, and green spaces. The Celandine Route links Hillingdon to Harrow.

Willow Tree Wander

This is an 8km (5 miles) walk along a stretch of the Yeading Brook from North Harrow station to Ickenham Station. The path passes through meadows and open spaces. Willow Tree Wander links Hillingdon to Harrow.

Ruislip Woods Walks

Ruislip Woods walks consists of 3 different routes, the Blue route, Red route and White route. The routes take in Ancient woodland environments in Mad Bess Wood and Park Wood and also the Ruislip Lido. The routes are around 1.6 km (1 mile) each in distance.

London Loop (London Outer Orbital Path)

The London Loop encircles Greater London. The total length reaches 150 miles and consists of 24 sections through London's boroughs. Hillingdon has 3 sections which run through parkland, canal side and river side for approximately 18.5 km (11 ½ miles).

Colne Valley Trail

The Colne Valley Trail is a shared use route designed for walkers, cyclists and horse riders and is part of the Colne Valley Regional Park. The majority of the trail in the borough passes along the Grand Union Canal and runs an approximate length of 16 km (10 miles). Horses are only permitted on certain parts of the trail.

Dog Rose Ramble

This route starts and finishes in Ealing, approximately 4.8 km (3 miles) wanders through farmland and meadows alongside the Yeading Brook in Hillingdon.

Walks in the Colne Valley Regional Park

Large selection of walks within the park, including short walks, long walks and guided walks. Further information can be found at the Colne Valley Park website, www.colnevalleypark.org.uk.

David Brough Cycle Trail

The trail is located in Bayhurst Wood and offers views of a wide range of wildlife; a full circuit of the trail is just over 1.6km (1 mile) long.

Harefield Church to Springwell Lock

This is a 8 km (5 miles) walk through fields and woodlands, alongside the Grand Union Canal and offers local historical landmarks.

Little Britain walk

3-4-mile route, which takes you along the Grand Union Canal and around Little Britain lake.

Manor Farm Walk

A 3-mile walk along the River Pinn through the beautiful grounds of Eastcote House Grounds and Manor farm.

Uxbridge Walks

4 walks which explore Uxbridge and take in parks, open spaces, and the Grand Union Canal.

West Drayton Walk

This 3.7-mile route takes you through many beautiful open and green spaces, including the The Closes, Harmondsworth, Moor and Saxon Lake.

Walk the Planets

This interesting walk around Ruislip Lido takes you on a journey of our solar system, starting with the sun and encountering each planet in order.

Details of these routes can be obtained by visiting the Council website at www.hillingdon.gov.uk.

3.7 Public Open Spaces

Across the borough, there are a range of town parks, open spaces, commons, country parks, a National Nature Reserve at Ruislip Woods (NNR), and over 40 Sites of Importance for Nature Conservation (SINCs), all of which are open to the public. Hillingdon has approximately 200 sites which form an important part of the network of routes.

Some of Hillingdon's green spaces are among the best in London with 60 sites holding Green Flag status (a national standard for parks and green spaces across England).

3.8 Accessibility

Statutory guidance requires assessment of the accessibility of the local Rights of Way for the blind or partially sighted and others with mobility problems this includes those who use pushchairs.

Urban footpaths in the borough have in the past had tube barriers placed to prevent illegal use by motorcycles; the same barriers can also prevent access for disabled users. Where possible these barriers are being replaced with compliant barriers to allow equal access for all.

Relatively few rural footpaths and trails are truly suitable for use by people with mobility problems, sections rather than whole routes are user friendly. The nature of the rural terrain and steps, stiles, bridges, and gates will always be a barrier to some users, added to this is the inconvenience of footpaths ending or starting on busy roads in the borough.

The aim of any Local Authority should be to carefully consider the options available and to provide the least restrictive option for the circumstances at the specific location.

The majority of local green spaces, parks and country parks offer wheelchair access.

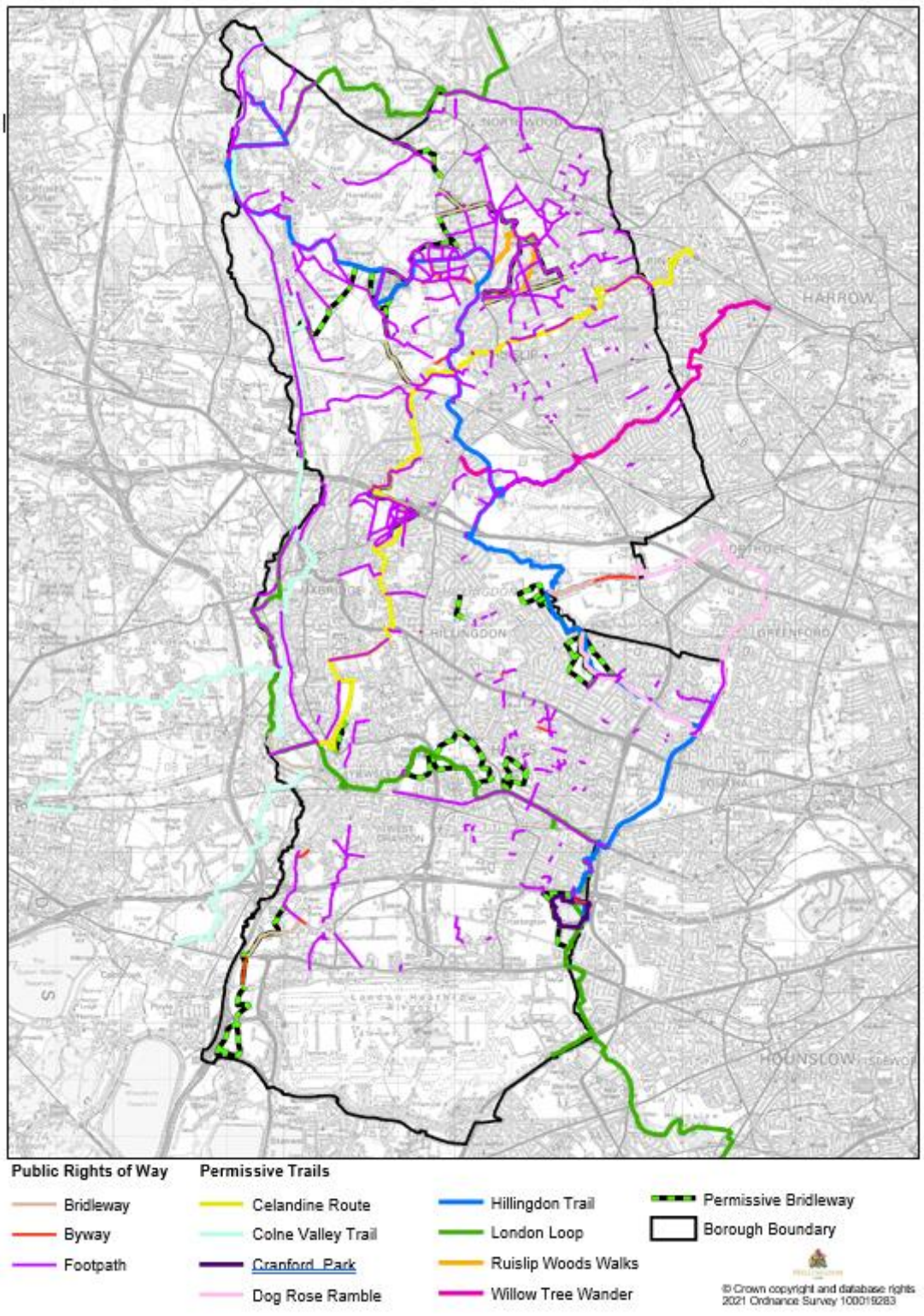
3.9 Grand Union Canal Towpath

Hillingdon contains approximately 13 miles of the Grand Union Canal with large sections recorded on its Definitive Map and Statement, but canal towpaths are legally part of the canal. Towpaths are generally owned by the Canal and Rivers Trust who are normally responsible for their upkeep and enforcement of their bylaws. The Council is committed to working with the Canals and Rivers Trust to continue to improve and promote use of the canal routes, varying sections have been upgraded with the long-term aim of upgrading the whole length as part of the ongoing Greenways and Quietways project.

3.10 Colne Valley Regional Park

The Colne Valley Regional Park is a large area to the west of London and contains approximately 270km of Rights of Way, offering local residents further opportunities to explore their local countryside. Hillingdon Council is committed to working with the Colne Valley partnership to ensure residents can benefit from a co-ordinated network of Rights of Way that are joined up across administrative boundaries.

Figure 2 Public Rights of Way with Walks and Trails in the borough



4. Network Management

4.1 Existing management of Public Rights of Way

Management of the statutory public rights of way network and permissive networks is carried out by the Highways and Green Spaces teams within Residents Services. Statutory Rights of Way duties are co-ordinated by the Rights of Way Manager in the Network Operations Team and permissive networks by the Green Spaces Team. The Rights of Way Manager and the Green Spaces Team work together to achieve an enjoyable recreational experience for users of statutory and permissive routes.

4.2 Local Performance Indicator (formally BVPI 178)

Best Value Performance Indicators were previously used to measure performance against national key performance indicators set by the Audit Commission. Ex Best Value Performance Indicator 178 relates to a minimum 5% sample of the public rights of way network. The government has now removed BV178 from national performance indicators, but Hillingdon Council continues to use ex BV 178 as performance indicator to monitor Public Rights of Way.

The methodology developed requires the assessment of a randomly selected sample of routes from the Definitive Map to determine the percentage that are easy to use.

'Easy to use' means:

- Signposted or waymarked where they leave the road in accordance with the authority's duty under s.27 of the Countryside Act 1968.
- Free from unlawful obstructions and other interference, (including overhanging vegetation and fences) to the public's right of passage.
- Surface and lawful barriers (e.g., stiles, gates) in good repair and to a standard necessary to enable the public to use the way without undue inconvenience.

4.3 Inspections of Rights of Way

Public footpath inspections are carried out at least once a year to assess the condition of the paths and to help plan maintenance schedules and identify defects. These are accompanied by a reactive inspection service where users who encounter problems contact the Council via the contact centre and the issue addressed.

4.4 Condition of the Network

The Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000 (CROW) highlighted the growing importance of Rights of Way both in legislation and as a national high-profile subject.

Surveying authorities will often find problems within their Definitive Map and Statement which have developed over time for example through development, lost routes, lack of management and routes incorrectly recorded.

An assessment has been undertaken of survey data relating to the condition of the network and the nature of problems reported etc.

Issues identified through this process were:

- It is estimated that 100% of the network is now signposted and waymarked following a recent programme of signage replacement due to wear and tear and vandalism. There will always be a need for an ongoing signage replacement due to the issues identified.
- Surface condition, and particularly undergrowth, continues to be an issue on some routes. It is the council's responsibility to cut back and keep down vegetation growing from the surface of rights of way. Following the previous ROWIP a maintenance schedule was developed to tackle undergrowth on public rights of way, and this resulted in clearance work being undertaken on around 160 footpaths. This programme is expanding annually; however, it is recognised that the current programme of 2 cuts a year is not enough to keep certain paths clear throughout the year as weather conditions play a part as well as contractor difficulties.

4.5 Enforcement and Protection

The Council has a legal duty under the Highways Act 1980 to assert and protect the rights of the public to use and enjoy Public Rights of Way. There are various provisions contained mainly within the Highways Act 1980 which deal with obstructions and disturbance to the highway.

Enforcement follows a process of written letters which highlight the problems and actions required, if no response is forthcoming, legal notices can be served on offenders and this could ultimately lead to prosecution.

The Council will always strive to solve problems through negotiation; this can help to promote good practice and relations between Council Officers and landowners who have property next to footpaths or footpaths running through their land.

4.6 Maintenance

Maintenance standards for the network are based on the ex Best Value Performance Indicator (BVPI) 178.

Signposting and Waymarking

Highway authorities have a duty to signpost all statutory Footpaths, Bridleways and Byways Open to All Traffic where they leave a metalled road and the status of the route must be given on the sign. Waymarkers are added to the route to assist the user where deemed necessary.

Permissive routes are signed and waymarked in a similar fashion as statutory footpaths.



Statutory signage for footpath R168

Surfaces

The Council has a responsibility for the maintenance of Public Rights of Way which includes the surface and surface vegetation that causes an obstruction. Surface type varies with tarmac and artificial stone path (ASP) the most prominent surface type in urban areas. Rural paths and bridleways are predominantly natural surfaces to fit into the rural surroundings but can be surfaced with scalping's or hogging materials.

Landowners can also surface PROW, but the surface must be safe and suitable, and they must obtain permission from the Council before carrying out any works.

Vegetation Management

Where vegetation or trees overhang or encroach onto the highway the responsibility lies with the owner or occupier of the land to ensure that it does not cause a danger or obstruction to users of the highway.

The Council is responsible for cutting surface vegetation other than crops on PROW with environmentally sensitive chemical control being applied to the surfaces in urban areas to suppress weeds and unwanted vegetation.

Management of vegetation on statutory and permissive footpaths is undertaken by contractors and volunteers.

Gates, Stiles and Structures

A highway authority may allow the erection of stiles or gates by the owner of the land to prevent animals from escaping from their land, the British Standard, BS5709 offers guidance to local authorities and landowners; it covers the provision of gates and stiles and recommends specifications for structures.

Public Rights of Way can suffer from illegal use by motorbikes. To address health and safety issues the Council can install anti-motorcycle barriers to eradicate this problem, but this does not allow for the needs of disabled users under the Equalities Act 2010. The design and placement of barriers or Kissing gates allows for access by disabled mobility scooters, but this can be difficult and not always possible depending on the width of the footpath, therefore assessments are made on the individual footpath.



Barriers placed at footpath R174, Cranley Drive, Ruislip

5. The Policy Framework – Rights of Way Improvement Plan Links

5.1 Regional and Local Policies

Regional and local policies support the promotion of health, accessibility, safety, and sustainable forms of transport other than the car. The Rights of Way Improvement Plan is complementary to these policies and can further help to achieve shared aims and objectives set in the regional and local plans below, Identifying and linking these plans will help with funding bids and possible joint working with potential partners. A summary of these plans and strategies can be seen in Table 3 below, the ROWIP will co-exist and contribute to these plans.

Table 3 Regional and Local Plan links

Regional Plans
London Plan (2021)
Mayors Transport Strategy (2018)
Local Plans
London Borough of Hillingdon Local Implementation Plan 3
Hillingdon Local Plan: Part 2 Development Management Policies (2020)
Hillingdon Green Spaces Strategy
Colne Valley Regional Park Action Plan

Appendix A: The Policy Framework – Rights of Way Improvement Plan Links gives a more in-depth look into the regional and local plans.

5.2 Local Implementation Plan

Hillingdon's Local Implementation Plan 3 (LIP3) sets out how the Council proposes to implement the Mayor's Transport Strategy (MTS) and provides details on projects, proposals, and programmes. In the LIP3 Hillingdon has presented a range of transport policies, initiatives and projects and reflects the Council's commitment to improving transport in the borough and ensuring that Hillingdon remains an attractive place in which to live, work and visit. The LIP3 has been prepared in accordance with the Guidance issued by Transport for London. The approved LIP is a statutory document, legally binding on the Council and the Mayor of London.

5.3 Integration of the Rights of Way Improvement Plan into the Local Implementation Plan

The Government expects that each ROWIP is incorporated into local transport planning and in the case of London Boroughs, Local Implementation Plans.

This can be achieved by incorporating the aims of the ROWIP to contribute to the shared aims and objectives of the LIP. The ROWIP can contribute to the following objectives of the LIP:

- Increasing sustainable travel
- Improving air quality
- Encourage active travel, especially to schools
- Provide safer roads especially for walkers and cyclists
- Reduce crime and anti-social behaviour
- Delivering 'Healthy Streets'

6. Review of the ROWIP 2011-2021

The Rights of Way Improvement Plan published in 2011 was based upon an assessment of the current and future needs of the public. This was gathered primarily by a public consultation, questionnaire, and user groups. A summary of the assessment can be seen in Appendix B.

The first rights of way improvement plan for Hillingdon, established a framework for rights of way and countryside access work over the ten years from 2011 to 2021.

The aim of the second rights of way improvement plan is to provide a review of the Council's first ROWIP and set objectives for the future maintenance and improvements to the network. The ROWIP builds on the data gathered in the original ROWIP as this is still considered relevant to consolidate aspirations and provide a set of realistic and achievable objectives for the future, taking into account a combination of resident's needs, Council aspirations, statutory obligations, and financial/resources.

As part of the process of preparing the first rights of way improvement plan a statement of action was prepared. The statement of action brought together the information and issues collected in the assessment and consultation stages of the plan. The issues were grouped into eight themes.

- Regeneration of existing public rights of way
- Maintenance schedules
- Least restrictive access
- Definitive Map and Statement
- Promotion of network
- Crime and anti-social behaviour
- Health promotion
- Creation of new routes and links

A statement of actions has been continued taking into consideration the initial actions and what has been achieved and what needs to be improved on to continue to improve the path network and provide greater opportunities for the users of those paths.

6.1 Achievements of first ROWIP

Key themes identified in the first plan including regeneration of existing public rights of way, introducing maintenance schedules, definitive map and statement update and promotion of the network have mainly been achieved or identified and continue to be carried out as required. The creation of new routes and links or improvement to those links has proved less successful in that identified areas have not yet come to fruition.

Achievements include:

- Surveys of all public rights of way once a year, reactive surveys to enquires and reports.
- Encouraging use of the current network by surface upgrades linking to schools, amenities, and countryside walks.
- Sign posting all registered public rights of way and permissive routes.
- Introducing a vegetation control maintenance schedule to cover the main growing season, therefore taking a proactive approach to management.
- Producing public rights of way website pages, which include an interactive map and downloadable maps of all routes in the borough.
- Access for all, upgrading surfaces and removing and replacing barriers where possible to provide easy access.
- New routes added to the definitive map and statement.
- Grand Union Canal Quietway improvements, with the aim of improving all sections within Hillingdon to Quietway standard.
- Promotion of walking supported by the development of a range of walks both in the open countryside and parks. Walks are supplemented by a series of led walks undertaken by walk leaders.

During the ROWIP 2011-2021 several rights of way improvements were carried out, including public footpath Y29 which runs between Falling Lane and Fairfield Road, West Drayton.



The route was in a poor state of repair and had been suffering from antisocial behaviour. Funding was gained through the Local Implementation Plan to enhance user experience by landscaping, resurfacing, and updating lighting columns along the route.

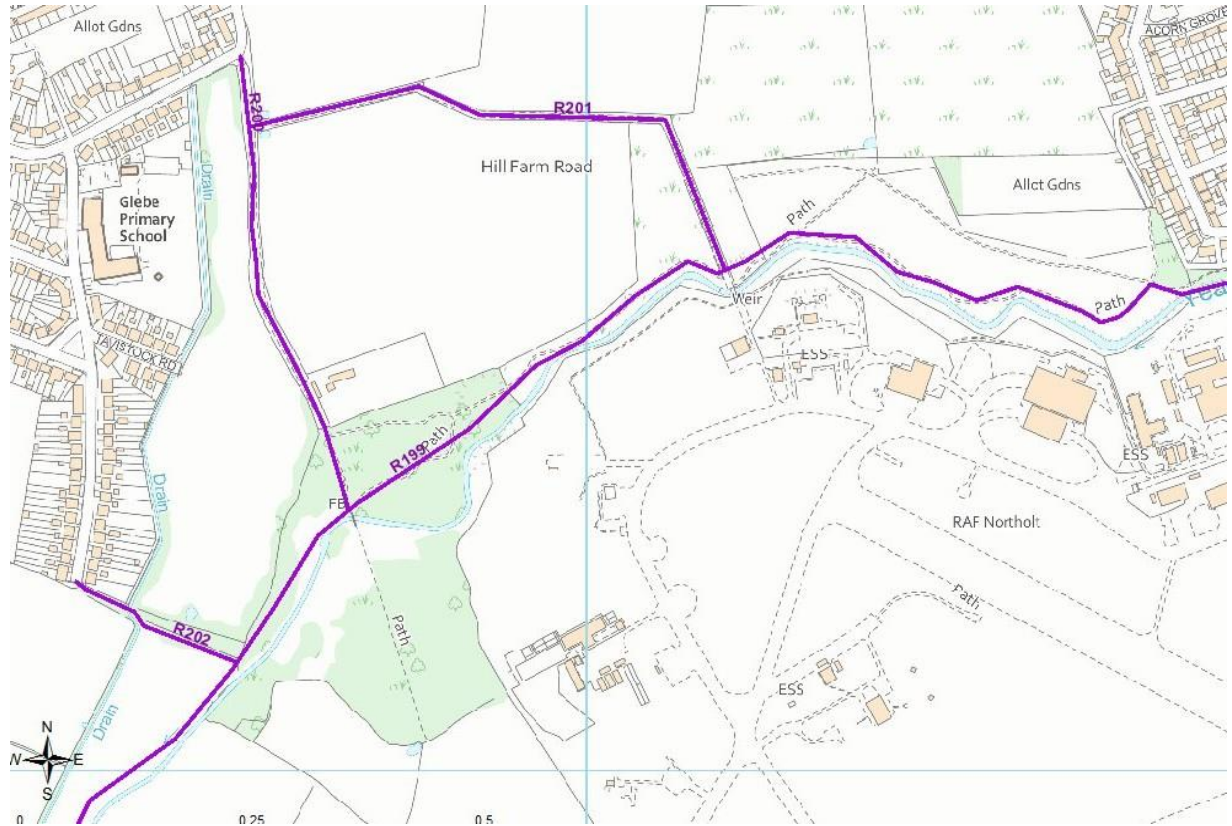
Clack Lane is an ancient lane leading to the river Pinn, the lane was severely eroded in sections and had become difficult to use. The lane was improved by raising the height and laying a Coxwell gravel surface to fit in with the adjoining surroundings.



Public footpath U65 adjoining the river Colne, Uxbridge. The footpath was affected by anti-social behaviour and in particular illegal motor bike use which had in one area led to the line of the footpath being indistinguishable. The route was re landscaped in sections and laid with a durable aggregate surface to enjoy this riverside walk.



A number of routes have been added to the Definitive Map and Statement including recording footpath rights over Ickenham Marsh. These routes were highlighted by residents who were concerned that they could be lost without been formerly recorded.



7. Statement of Actions

The action plan provides the focus for the what the Rights of Way Improvement Plan 2021-2031 wants to achieve. The Statement of Action is compiled based on a revision of the 2011 actions with alterations made to adjust to what has been achieved, what needs to continue along with areas that need more improvement.

Action 1 - Regeneration of existing Public Rights of Way

Action 1 is to prioritise existing problem routes by carrying out physical improvement works, removing blockages, hazards, updating furniture and removing trip hazards.

Action / objective	Timescale	Resources	Partnerships	Linked Plan
Action 1. Regeneration of existing public rights of way				
1.1 Reconstruction / physical improvement works to identified routes.	Ongoing	Existing revenue budget, Local Implementation Plan funding, Chrysalis Programme, Section 106 agreement, Groundwork Partnership / funding opportunities	Highways, Green Spaces, Council departments & landowners	Hillingdon Local Implementation Plan, Equalities Act 2010, Green Spaces Strategy
1.2 Furniture – replacing gates and stiles as identified.	Ongoing	Existing revenue budget, External opportunities	Highways, Green Spaces & landowners	Equalities Act 2010
1.3 Ensure statutory & permissive routes continue to be correctly signed	Ongoing	Existing revenue budget	Highways & Green Spaces	Green Spaces Strategy

Action 2 – Maintenance Schedules

Action 2 aims to review and improve current maintenance schedules. This being to provide a continued and improved vegetation management schedule and litter picking schedule.

Action / objective	Timescale	Resources	Partnerships	Linked Plan
Action 2. Maintenance schedules				
2.1 Introduce planned joint programme of maintenance for vegetation control for statutory and permissive routes	Ongoing	Existing revenue budget Source best value options	Highways, Green Spaces, current contractors & external partnership opportunities	Green Spaces Strategy
2.2 Introduce litter & path cleansing schedule for urban Public Rights of Way	1-3 years then review	Funding needed	Highways, Waste Services (Street Cleansing) & Investigate support from community-based projects	

Action 3 – Least Restrictive Access

Action 3 relates to the Countryside Rights of Way Act 2000 requiring ROWIPS to assess accessibility of local Rights of Way to the principles of least restrictive access and adhere to the Equalities Act 2010.

Action / objective	Timescale	Resources	Partnerships	Linked Plan
Action 3. Least restrictive access				
3.1 Review statutory & permissive routes and trails in terms of least restrictive access.	Ongoing	Existing revenue budgets	Highways, Green Spaces & landowners	Equalities Act 2010 & Green Spaces Strategy
3.2 Identify opportunities to improve or create routes with an emphasis on improvement for the mobility or visually impaired	1-10 years as funding becomes available	Existing revenue budget, Local Implementation Plan funding, Chrysalis Programme, Section 106 agreement, Groundwork, Partnership / funding opportunities	Highways, Planning Department, Green Spaces	Hillingdon Local Implementation Plan, Hillingdon UDP, Equalities Act 2010, & Green Spaces Strategy
3.3 Continued access into parks & open spaces that ensure least restrictive access by reasonable means in the borough	Ongoing	Existing revenue budget, Local Implementation Plan funding Chrysalis Programme, Section 106 agreement, Groundwork Partnership / funding opportunities	Highways & Green Spaces	Hillingdon Local Implementation Plan, Equalities Act 2010, & Green Spaces Strategy
3.4 Continue policy of balancing user needs with issues of anti-social behaviour	Ongoing	Existing revenue budget	Highways, Green Spaces & ASBIT.	Equalities Act 2010
3.5 Continue annual survey of statutory routes to identify surface defects / obstructions and improvements	Ongoing	Existing revenue budget	Highways & ASBIT	Highways Inspection Policy

Action 4 – Definitive Map and Statement

To update the Definitive Map and Statement, by identifying and addressing anomalies in the statutory Public Rights of Way network as required by the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981.

Action / objective	Timescale	Resources	Partnerships	Linked Plan
Action 4. Definitive Map and Statement				
4.1 Identify and address current anomalies in the DM&S, including permissive trails in relation to the DM&S	Ongoing	Officer time	Highways, Green Spaces, landowners, User groups & Legal Department	Definitive Map and Statement.
4.2 Investigate Public Path Orders, Definitive Map Modification Orders & Legal Event Orders	Ongoing	Officer time, Applicant fees	Highways, applicant & Legal Department	
4.3 Review List of Streets & DM&S to assess whether paths need to be added or removed from the DM&S	Ongoing	Officer time	Highways & Legal Department	
4.4 Update Definitive Map & Statements to incorporate changes to the network	Ongoing	Officer time	Highways	
4.5 Promote greater understanding between Council Departments regarding the legal complexities of Public Rights of Way	Ongoing	Officer time	Highways, Green Spaces, Planning Department, relevant departments & staff	

Action 5 – Promotion of Network

The aim is to provide information not just for legal procedures and practices but promoting and encouraging the use of Public Rights of Way for recreational and health benefits as well as sustainable travel methods.

Action / objective	Timescale	Resources	Partnerships	Linked Plan
Action 5. Promotion of network				
5.1 Continue to develop online information to promote Rights of Way practice, statutory legal procedure.	Ongoing	Officer time	Highways, Green Spaces & Web & Digital team	Green Spaces Strategy
5.2 Continue to update public rights of way web pages as legally required	Ongoing	Officer time	Highways & Web & Digital team	
5.3 Update and maintain the web based interactive map and down loadable maps for public rights of way.	Ongoing	Officer time	Highways & Web & Digital team	
5.4 Investigate feasibility of web-based application to promote rights of way and walks in the borough.	Ongoing	Officer time	Corporate Communications, Green Spaces	
5.5 Continue work with the Groundwork and the Colne Valley Regional Park to promote public rights of way and access.	Ongoing	Officer time	Highways, Green Spaces & Colne Valley Park	Colne Valley Regional Park action plan.

Action 6 – Crime and Anti-Social Behaviour

Hillingdon Community Safety and Enforcement seeks to reduce crime in the borough which includes Public Rights of Way and adopted highways. Action 6 aims to further links with Community Safety and Enforcement and to review crime prevention measures on Rights of Way.

Action / objective	Timescale	Resources	Partnerships	Linked Plan
Action 6. Crime and anti-social behaviour				
6.1 Further develop close working with Community Safety and Enforcement	Ongoing	Officer time	Highways, Community Safety and Enforcement	
6.2 Review crime prevention on Rights of Way regarding the complex legal nature of Public Rights of Way	Ongoing	Officer time	Highways, Green Spaces, Community safety and Enforcement & Property & Estates team	
6.3 Continue policy of measures to limit anti social behaviour with the needs of user groups	Ongoing	Officer time	Highways, Green Spaces, Community safety and Enforcement, Property & Estates team & Wellbeing team	Equality Act 2010
6.4 Renew no cycling signage on footpaths with no cycling bylaws attached to them	Ongoing	Existing revenue budget	Highways	

Action 7 – Health Promotion

Public Rights of Way offer the opportunity for regular exercise and to the promote the government Healthy Streets and Active Travel programme. By improving the network this Rights of Way Improvement Plan can help achieve these aims. Promotion is an essential element in getting greater use of the borough’s network.

Action / objective	Timescale	Resources	Partnerships	Linked Plan
Action 7. Health Promotion				
7.1 Develop links between the Rights of Way network and the Wellbeing Team	Ongoing	Officer time	Highways, Green Spaces & Wellbeing team	Green Spaces Strategy, Healthy Streets and Active Travel
7.2 Help develop potential routes / walks	Ongoing	Officer time	Highways, Green Spaces & Wellbeing team	Green Spaces Strategy, Healthy Streets and Active Travel
7.3 Promote health benefits and wellbeing regarding the varying uses of Rights of Way via web site. (walking, cycling & horse riding)	ongoing	Officer time	Highways, Green Spaces & Wellbeing team	Green Spaces Strategy, Healthy Streets and Active Travel

Action 8 – Creation of New Routes and Links

Action 8 aims to improve the connectivity of the network by identifying and developing the network through the creation of routes where possible.

Action / objective	Timescale	Resources	Partnerships	Linked Plan
Action 8. Creation of new routes and links				
8.1 Investigate suggestions for routes to be added to the Definitive Map & Statement or through permissive agreement	Ongoing	Officer time	Highways, Green Spaces, landowners & Legal services & Property & Estates team	
8.2 Explore creating circular / multi use routes in the borough's green spaces through identified need.	Ongoing	Local Implementation Plan funding, Chrysalis Programme, Section 106 agreement, Colne Valley Park / Groundwork Partnership funding opportunities	Highways, Green Spaces, landowners & Legal services & Property & Estates team	Hillingdon Local Implementation Plan, Equalities Act 2010, Green Spaces Strategy Healthy Streets and Active Travel
8.3 Identify possible shared cycling routes and continue association with partners to develop possible routes in the borough	Ongoing	Local Implementation Plan funding, Section 106 agreement, Partnership / funding opportunities	Highways, Green Spaces, Transport Policy and Planning & Legal Services	Hillingdon Local Implementation Plan, Equalities Act 2010, Green Spaces Strategy Healthy Streets and Active Travel
8.4 Assess fragmentation of network to investigate possible increased connectivity	Ongoing	Officer time	Highways, Green Spaces, landowners & Legal services & Property & Estates team	
8.5 Identify and utilise opportunities to create new paths as part of new developments	Ongoing	Section 106 agreement, Partnership / funding opportunities	Transport, Policy & Planning	Hillingdon Local Plan: Part 2 Development Management Policies (2020)
8.6 Grand Union Canal Quietway	Ongoing	Partnership funding	Transport, Policy &	Hillingdon Local Implementation

connections. Continued improvements to the GUC network			Planning, Canal and Rivers Trust & Sustrans	Plan, Equalities Act 2010, Healthy Streets and Active Travel
High Speed 2 (HS2) The creation of statutory and permissive as part of the mitigation process	1-7 years	High Speed 2 (HS2) mitigation funding	High Speed 2 (HS2), Highways, Property & Estates team & Transport, policy & Planning	High Speed Rail Act 2017

8 Monitoring the ROWIP

8.1 Monitoring

The Authority has a duty to review the ROWIP within a ten-year period and then on a ten-yearly cycle. It is intended that the ROWIP will be incorporated into the Local Implementation Plan and a review be carried out after a five-year period in 2016. The Rights of Way Officer will be implementing the ROWIP, and an annual delivery report will be produced to monitor the implementation of actions and any amendments to actions as the plan develops.

8.2 Deliverability

Actions have been identified for implementation over a ten-year period, but further consultation will have to be undertaken in relation to individual actions where appropriate. Following the endorsement of the approved ROWIP and within the next year, consultation should take place with Council officers and stake holders with a view to agreeing programme dates for each of the actions. This will however depend on available funding and resources.

It is intended that the Rights of Way Improvement Plan will be integrated into the Local Implementation Plan but the ROWIP will have to bid for funding against other LIP projects as not all the ROWIP actions are relevant to the LIP objectives, therefore LIP funds cannot be sought for all of the actions. Funding for projects will also be sought through other organisations and opportunities.

Appendices

Appendix A:

Policy Framework – Rights of Way Improvement Plan Links

Regional and local policies support the promotion of health, accessibility, and sustainable forms of transport other than the car. The Rights of Way Improvement Plan is complementary to these policies and can help to achieve objectives set in the regional and local plans below, Identifying and linking these plans will help with funding bids and possible joint working with potential partners.

Regional Plans

London Plan 2021

The plans integrated and strategic policies cover a range of areas including transport.

The fundamental objectives set out in the London Plan are:

- To accommodate London's growth within its boundaries without encroaching on open spaces.
- To promote social inclusion and tackle deprivation and discrimination.
- To improve London's accessibility.
- To make London a more attractive, well-designed and green city.

Mayors Transport Strategy

The Mayor's proposals for improving transport for London are set out in his Transport Strategy.

The key theme for the strategy is Healthy Streets:

- Improving local environments by providing more space for walking and cycling, and better public spaces where people can interact.
- Prioritising better and more affordable public transport and safer and more appealing routes for walking and cycling.
- Planning new developments so people can walk or cycle to local shops, schools and workplaces, and have good public transport links for longer journeys.

Local Plans

London Borough of Hillingdon Local Implementation Plan 3 2019 - 2041

The Local Implementation Plan is a statutory document and sets out how the borough proposes to deliver the Mayor's Transport Strategy in Hillingdon as well as contributing to local and sub regional goals.

The LIP objectives include:

- Healthy Streets and healthy people.
- A good public transport experience.

Hillingdon Local Plan Part 2.

Development Management Policies, its purpose is to provide detailed policies that form the basis of the Council's decisions on planning applications. All development proposals are required to ensure direct and inclusive access for pedestrians and cyclists connecting to the wider network.

Hillingdon Green Spaces Strategy

The Green Spaces Strategy gives direction to the improvement of the Borough's Green Spaces required to meet the needs and interests of the people who live, work and play in the Borough.

The Green Spaces strategy highlights the need to address issues to do with all green spaces in the Borough (whether public or private, formal or informal) and the green corridors, pathways, highways and waterways that provide links to and between other green spaces. The Strategy contains eight themes based on creating and enhancing a borough wide network of green spaces, connecting routes and other green links.

The Eight Themes of the Strategy:

- A Borough Wide Network of Green Spaces, Connecting Routes and other Green Links – to optimise the value of Green Spaces throughout the borough to people, wildlife and the community as a whole. Help maintain the network of statutory and non-statutory footpaths, bridleways and other link ways such as canals and streams and rivers more effectively as part of the network of organisations with responsibility for these features.
- Working with Communities, Local Groups and Organisations – to support and work well with communities and local groups when planning new facilities, implementing work on site, maintaining existing facilities or promoting the use of particular Green Spaces.
- Young People and Green Spaces- to provide a wide range of appropriate facilities and activities for young people in Green Spaces. Recognising that young people need places to let off steam, socialise and enjoy the great outdoors. Addressing inappropriate uses of Green Spaces so that young people and other users are safer and can feel safe in the Borough's green spaces

- Community Safety issues related to Green Spaces- to continue to reduce crime and anti-social behaviour and fear of crime/anti-social behaviour in Green Spaces, continuing to make parks patrol work more visible and effective, with community support.
- Using Green Spaces for Sports and Recreation- to encourage the use of the Borough's Green Spaces for appropriate sports and recreation by people of all ages and backgrounds. Catering for informal and formal sports and informal recreational use and providing good quality facilities to encourage participation in these healthy and socially beneficial activities. To ensure that the Borough achieves the national "6 Acres" standard for playing pitches set by Sports England and best practice provision for other recreational uses.
- Nature Conservation and Attractive Sites – to optimise the nature conservation (biodiversity) and visual amenity value of green spaces. Making all the sites important and attractive features in the locality, thereby enhancing the image of the area, thereby providing social and economic benefits for the immediate area and borough as a whole.
- Gaining increased Health and Educational Benefits from Green Spaces - to ensure that Green Spaces contribute positively to the health and well being of people throughout the borough and to provide educational opportunities for children, young people, and adults as part of the borough's commitment to lifelong learning objectives.
- Promoting Green Spaces, Facilities and Events - to ensure that people through out the borough and more widely are able to take part in an appropriate range of events and activities on Green Spaces throughout the Borough. Ensuring equal opportunities for all.

Colne Valley Park Regional Plan

The Colne Valley Partnership was established in 1965, members of the partnership are 8 local authorities, Groundwork and the Chiltern Society.

The 5 key aims of the Colne Valley Park are:

- To maintain and enhance the landscape, historic environment and waterscape of the park in terms of their scenic and conservation value and their overall amenity.
- To resist urbanisation of the Colne Valley Park and to safeguard existing areas of countryside from inappropriate development.
- To conserve the biodiversity resources of the park through the protection and management of its diverse plant and animal species, habitats and geological features.

- To provide opportunities for countryside recreation including appropriate accessible facilities.
- To achieve a vibrant and sustainable rural economy, including farming and forestry, underpinning the value of the countryside.

The Colne Valley Park Action Plan aims to tie together the works of local authorities and ensure that park-wide projects are executed in a co-ordinated and efficient manner.

Appendix B:

Survey / Consultation Feedback from first ROWIP

General Public

A range of issues were highlighted by the consultation process with has provided information about the borough's Rights of Way and how they are used.

The survey showed that the public used both urban and rural footpaths and bridleways and utilised permissive routes. The main use of Rights of Way was for the following:

- For recreation / leisure.
- To access open space / parks.
- To access shops / local amenities.
- For exercise / health reasons.
- To get to / from work.
- For business.

Usage of the network varied most popularly between 5 and 7 and 1 and 2 times a week with up to 1 hour the most popular time span.

Problems highlighted by the general public survey were:

- Fly tipping/ litter / dog mess.
- Vegetation encroachment.
- Surface condition.
- Signposts / waymarking.
- Illegal motorcycle use.
- Access to footpaths and bridleways.
- Other type of user.
- Number and design of gates, stiles and barriers.

The survey asked which aspects of the network were important to improve, the following list was prioritised:

- Litter / dog fouling / graffiti.
- Obstructions / overgrown vegetation.
- Surface improvements.
- Signs / waymarking.
- Gates / stiles / barriers – accessibility.
- Awareness of rights of way.
- Personal safety.
- Lighting.
- Conflict with other users.

Further comments included:

- Providing information leaflets.
- Introduce litter cleansing programme.
- Vegetation management control programme.
- Promotion of Rights of Way through the Council website.
- Gating of alleyways.

Individual footpath issues were identified, these included:

- Unclear and blocked paths near Newyears Green.
- Overgrown vegetation at Clack Lane.
- Poor surface and lighting through RAF Eastcote.

From the individual footpath issues raised above, Newyears Green has six footpaths. Footpaths U40 and U49 are currently undergoing an application for diversion due to planning permission being granted to West London Composting LTD. Footpath U38 St Leonard's farm, blockages on the path route have been identified and works are ongoing with the landowner to clear the route. Clack Lane has undergone vegetation clearance works and is now clear. Footpath R154 through the former RAF Eastcote, the site is now being developed for housing with the footpath due to be upgrading as part of the development. The footpath receives vegetation maintenance and the lighting columns have had tree growth cleared back to increase lighting.

Other issues were raised which were not strictly Rights of Way issues but were forwarded to the appropriate Council department where applicable.

Key Organisations and Steering Group

Key organisations with an interest in Hillingdon's Rights of Way network were consulted to establish:

- The current frequency and for what purpose you make use of rights of Way in Hillingdon.
- Whether or not the network of Rights of Way meets your current needs.
- Whether or not you find them easy to use and what particular difficulties, if any, that you encounter.
- What improvement to the network which you would like to see.

Walkers

Healthy Hillingdon - Walking and Health

The new National Change4Life programme highlights the importance of walking and cycling to the cultural shift in lifestyle that is needed to address increases in obesity and other health problems related to physical inactivity. In terms of cost to the NHS alone the Chief Medical Officer has estimated that the increase in obesity is already costing the NHS £4.2 billion a year. The CMO further suggests that the wider cost to the economy of decreasing physical activity in terms of quality of life, morbidity and mortality is significantly higher.

The goal for activity promotion is creation of a sustainable culture in the UK in which adults and children understand the health risks of inactivity and value resources like walks and walking as part of their everyday lifestyle. In relation to objective developing a sustainable 'active culture' the long-term maintenance and development of Rights of Way in Hillingdon is extremely important. The need to enhance current levels of use of Rights of Way suggests that the focus of the ROWIP can help to develop community awareness of, appreciation and confidence in using existing routes, in addition to physical management of the links between routes, communities and facilities (shops, work, schools, leisure, friends etc).

Rights of Way are important for a whole range of quality-of-life issues that are now being promoted in the National Change4life programme. Achieving the vision of the Change4Life programme, of a sustainable culture, suggests the need to develop partnerships within Council departments to integrate use of Rights of Way with wider Council active community engagement initiatives.

The Hillingdon branches of the Ramblers Association and Open Spaces Society

The Ramblers organise an extensive programme of led leisure walks of varying distances which make use of the various Rights of Way in the borough. Most of the walks take place in the north of the borough to access rural areas and the National Nature Reserve.

The Ramblers have highlighted areas for access improvement such as links into Minet Country Park from the Grand Union Canal but identified the most extensive problems of the network as being:

- Signage which is missing or dilapidated.
- Blockages in various forms.
- Problems with stiles and furniture.

The Open Spaces Society

The Open Spaces Society identified a broad spectrum of ideals which relate to Public Rights of Way, their management and the legal requirements surrounding them. The following were listed:

- Existing PROW should be brought back into use with correct signage and agreements (where required) over surface maintenance. We have a problem with clay soil in Hillingdon and this can be a problem on Bridleways where use by other recreational uses can cause problems for walkers.
- Look to join up existing paths / open spaces / parks to create good circular walks.
- Ensure that urban short cuts are maintained, and due process adhered to with regard to footpath closures / safety concerns.
- Ensure that all planning decisions that could affect rights of way have timely input from local interest groups (i.e., OSS / Ramblers + ROW Officer) and this information is included in the reports to the planning committees.
- Coordinate action with any new cycle paths to ensure that all uses of land / paths can be safely accommodated and sufficient space is available to both uses.

Cyclists

Hillingdon Cycle Users Group

Hillingdon Cycle Users Group acknowledges an extensive network of bridleways for use by cyclists but highlight up-grading these surfaces as a priority area, thus allowing easier access for cyclists. Another area of interest to users is the upgrading of footpaths where possible to dual use between roads and links across parks and green spaces to encourage cycle use and off road safe cycling.

Horse Riders

Hillingdon Equestrian Advisory Committee (HEAC)

The majority of use of public rights of way for horse riding is for leisure purposes, with riders coming from a wide range of age and abilities. Horse riding as an activity is taken up for a number of reasons including parents introducing young children and people enjoying early retirement.

While Hillingdon's network of statutory and permissive bridleways compares favourably with a number of London boroughs, the horse riders feel the network can benefit from the following improvements:

- The network is disjointed and needs the creation of safe routes to link the bridleways.
- Increased surface and vegetation maintenance of the bridleways.
- Whilst there is good access and parking to some bridleways often riders with transport are denied access due to barrier restrictions to combat illegal use of car parks.

- Lack of signage which can lead to confrontation with landowners and recreational users, therefore re-signage of the bridleway network.
- Lack of finance.

Groundwork Thames Valley – Colne Valley

Groundwork highlighted their aspirations which were relevant the Rights of Way Improvement Plan. These being:

- The creation of 2 new circular routes along public Rights of Way in the north of the borough to promote as part of a series of walks within the Colne Valley Park.
- Continued promotion of Colne Valley Park walks within Hillingdon.
- Disabled access where possible.
- Possible addition of links into the borough from neighbouring counties

Disabled access – Physically and Visually Impaired

The general public consultation response informed us that regular problems encountered were:

- Surface maintenance
- Control of vegetation
- Height of kerbs
- Barriers

All make use more difficult for the less mobile, elderly, visually impaired, mobility scooter users and parents with pushchairs.

Disablement Association Hillingdon (DASH) in response to the survey commented that the surfaces of Rights of Way or cycle routes are very important to disabled users and they would like to see tarmac surfaces where possible. DASH also identified the use of radar key gates so wheelchair users can access Rights of Way whilst stopping illegal use by motorbikes.

Bibliography

- Rights of Way Improvement Plans Statutory Guidance to Local Highways Authorities in England. Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, November 2002