



BRECON BEACONS
NATIONAL PARK

1957-2007

BRECON BEACONS NATIONAL PARK AUTHORITY

RIGHTS OF WAY IMPROVEMENT PLAN

JUNE 2007

FOREWORD

This document aims to comply with 'acceptable standards of fairness, transparency, accountability, equality, respect and bi-lingualism' (*Climbing Higher, the Welsh Assembly Government Strategy for Sport and Physical Activity 2000, 1.2*). We aim to make it clear, concise and accessible to as many people and groups as possible.

Consultation on this document has been extensive. Copies of the Draft Rights of Way Improvement Plan were sent to all statutory consultees as well as many user groups and individuals (see Appendix 1). A copy was made available for inspection at the Brecon Beacons National Park Authority head office at the address below and also on the National Park Authority website.

During the consultation period on the Draft Plan a large number of comments were received. Most of those comments have been incorporated into this final Plan.

This final version of the Rights of Way Improvement Plan was adopted by the Brecon Beacons National Park Authority on the 26th June 2007.

Copies of the final Plan are available for inspection at the National Park Authority head office at the address below and also on the National Park Authority website.

**THIS DOCUMENT IS AVAILABLE IN LARGE PRINT OR
ON EMAIL ON REQUEST TO THE ADDRESS BELOW.**

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ABBREVIATIONS AND GLOSSARY

Access Land	<i>Registered common land and land mapped by CCW 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</i>
BBNP	Brecon Beacons National Park <i>The area covered by the Brecon Beacons National Park</i>
BBNPA	Brecon Beacons National Park Authority <i>A special purpose local authority responsible for the management of the Brecon Beacons National Park.</i>
BOAT	Byway Open to All Traffic <i>Public right of way with rights for pedestrians, horse riders, cyclists, carriages and mechanically propelled vehicles.</i>
Bridleway	<i>Public right of way with the right to walk, ride or lead a horse or to cycle (cyclists must give way to other users).</i>
CBC	County Borough Council
CC	County Council
CCW	Countryside Council for Wales
CRoW Act	Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000
Definitive Map	<i>The Definitive Map and Statement identifies all registered public rights of way.</i>
Footpath	<i>Public right of way with rights for walkers and users of class 2 and 3 disabled vehicles.</i>
Ha	Hectares
Km	Kilometres
LAF	Local Access Forum <i>Statutory body of local volunteers with experience of a wide variety of access issues. LAFs 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. The National Park Authority currently has three LAFs covering the western, central and eastern areas of the National Park and their meetings are open to members of the public for observation.</i>
Least Restrictive Option	<i>There is no standard definition of the term but it encompasses the principle of making access as easy as possible for the greatest diversity of people and is generally applied to field furniture. The order of priority when installing furniture will be gap, gate and stile according to the expected level of use likely to be made of the route and the management of the land.</i>
Lost Ways	<i>Lost ways are public rights of way which may have existed before 1949 but were not legally registered.</i>

They may also be public rights of way with incorrectly recorded status. Sections 53 to 56 of the CRoW Act state that unrecorded rights of way which must be proved by historical evidence will be extinguished in 2026 when any unrecorded higher rights will also 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 reviewed. The WAG Guidance stresses the importance of the ROWIP policies being integrated into those of the Local Transport Plans.*

Public Right of Way *A way over which members of the public have a right to pass and repass. There are four types - see footpath, bridleway, RB and BOAT.*

ROWIP Rights of Way Improvement Plan

RB Restricted Byway

An RB is a former Road Used as a Public Path (RUPP) and came into being on enactment of sections 47 and 48 of the CRoW Act giving rights to walkers, horse riders, cyclists and carriage drivers. Due to legal reclassification RUPPs no longer exist.

Scoping Study *exeGesIS, Brecon Beacons National Park Authority, **Rights of Way Improvement Plan, Scoping Study** (September 2003). The Scoping Study was commissioned by the BBNPA and part funded by the Countryside Council for Wales.*

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.*

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SUMMARY

This Rights of Way Improvement Plan has been produced as required by the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000 following the principles laid down in the Welsh Assembly Government Guidance.

This Rights of Way Improvement Plan has involved a fundamental review of the condition of the public rights of way network, how it is managed and how it can be improved for the benefit of its users and potential users. Production of the Rights of Way Improvement Plan is also regarded as an opportunity to identify the necessary staff and financial resources to improve and maintain this network. Production of this Rights of Way Improvement Plan should not be seen as an end in itself but rather as part of a continuing process of improvement.

Part 1 of this Rights of Way Improvement Plan presents a background both to the Brecon Beacons National Park, its public rights of way network and other public access provisions and, to the development of the document itself.

Part 2 describes the extensive assessments and public consultations which have been undertaken to establish the physical and legal condition of the current network, its management, publicity and promotion and the needs of its current and future users. In addition, the function of the Rights of Way Improvement Plan and implementation of the proposed improvements contained within it are placed within the context of government aims and policies as well as those of the Brecon Beacons National Park Authority, other local authorities, community councils and voluntary groups. In particular, links are made between an improved public rights of way network and health, social and economic opportunity agendas.

Part 3 sets out the Statement of Action which has been derived from the conclusions drawn from the assessments.

Overall, the National Park's network is in a better condition than the average for Wales. Nevertheless, many shortcomings have been identified and after completing the analysis of the assessments and responses to three consultation documents it emerged that the identified issues and shortcomings could be divided into six categories:

- Management and monitoring of improvements
- Improving and extending the public rights of way network
- Improvements in the provision of information about the public rights of way network
- Physical improvements to the public rights of way infrastructure
- Improvements to the Definitive Map and Statement
- Miscellaneous improvements

Only two recommendations made in this Plan were contentious:

- the intention to establish a rights of way hierarchy for prioritising maintenance and improvements was opposed by a very small minority of individuals and one user group

- the issue of lost ways was debated between those who want the National Park Authority to search for, identify and develop claims for all possible lost ways and, the majority, who maintain that, subject to funding, claims for lost ways should be dealt with as they are made.

The remainder of this document establishes policies and identifies actions which are based on the above issues and involve:

- Monitoring and assessment of the Rights of Way Improvement Plan
- Improvements to the public rights of way network
- Improvements in the provision of information
- Improvements to the Definitive Map and Statement
- Improvement of public access through agri-environment schemes
- Parking for disabled people and the integration of public transport and public access

Implementation costs, a timetable and possible public and private sector partners are included but it is emphasised that all of the proposed improvements require additional funding if they are to be implemented. It is also emphasised that no changes or improvements will be made which will in any way alter the essential character of the National Park, and principles of conservation and sustainability must take priority over any identified needs for improvements to the network.

The Authority will ensure that any proposed improvements arising from this Plan will comply with the Disability Discrimination Act 1995 as far as is reasonably practicable. It is also important to note that under the Disability Equality Duty, the Authority has made a commitment to ensure that it takes into account the needs of disabled people in everything it does, from providing services, employing people, delivering policies, communicating and consulting. This should be borne in mind whilst reading this document.

It is intended that progress on the implementation of this Rights of Way Improvement Plan be reviewed annually with a major review being undertaken every five years. The establishment of procedures for the annual and five year reviews will be required which will outline consultation and reporting practices.

STRATEGIC CONTEXT

1. The National Park Authority's Corporate Aim and Vision

The Aim, Vision and Strategic Intentions of the Brecon Beacons National Park Authority were identified in the 'Future Directions' document adopted by the National Park Authority on 2 April 2004. The content of the document is subject to periodic review and Future Directions will inform the Authority's corporate direction and business planning over the next twenty years. Future Directions recognises the importance of the National Park's designation - locally, nationally and internationally and brings the concept of sustainability to the forefront of our thinking.

OUR AIM is to achieve widespread understanding and support for the National Park as a protected landscape which will be recognised as a valued local, national and international asset.

OUR VISION is that the Park's landscape is managed sustainably with widespread appreciation of its special qualities and where local communities benefit from its designation.

Future Directions delivers the intentions of the Brecon Beacons National Park Authority under the following headings and sub-headings:-

Conservation and Enhancement - The National Park Authority will conserve and enhance the natural beauty, wildlife and cultural heritage of the Park in the following ways:

- Landscape
- Biodiversity
- Earth Heritage
- Cultural Heritage

Promoting Understanding - The National Park Authority will use its information, interpretation and education services to promote understanding of the Park's special qualities by:

- Raising Awareness
- Promoting Enjoyment

Vibrant Sustainable Communities - The National Park Authority will foster the social and economic well being of the local communities within the Park by promoting:

- Sustainable Economic Activity
- Thriving Healthy Communities
- Sustainable Transport

The delivery of Future Directions is facilitated through the Authority's Corporate Objectives set out in Section 2 of the Business and Improvement Plan.

2. The National Park Authority's Corporate Objectives 2007-2010

The Authority has set the following fourteen medium term Corporate Objectives for 2007/2010:

- Demonstrate sustainable landscape scale conservation techniques compatible with the reformed Common Agricultural Policy on National Park Authority-owned sites
- Apply Geopark status to raise awareness of the geological heritage for the benefit of the communities in and around the Fforest Fawr Geopark area
- Enable investment into historical, archaeological and ecological conservation
- Make the Park more accessible and welcoming to a wider range of visitors
- Develop and launch a new website to allow greater public access to the National Park Authority and its services
- Improve customer service at Visitor Centres
- Improve the Rights of Way network
- Improve delivery of the development control service
- Make best use of the National Park designation to help local communities adapt to climate change
- Instil the principles of sustainable development throughout the Authority and its work
- Successfully integrate conservation, visitor management and sustainable tourism
- Improve decision making, performance management and business planning
- Continue to improve the knowledge and skills of our staff to support good service delivery

3. National Park Management Plan

The National Park Management Plan is the National Park Authority's leading document, which it is required to prepare under the 1995 Environment Act. It sets out a vision for the whole Park over the coming years, which has been endorsed by a wide range of consultees. The

current plan covers the period 2000-2005 and, at the time of preparing this Rights of Way Improvement Plan, the process of preparing the new management plan is underway. In the current National Park Management Plan, Chapter 9 deals with Access and Rights of Way, Chapter 10 covers Recreation and Chapter 14 is concerned with Transport. In the preparation of this Rights of Way Improvement Plan due regard has been had to the relevant sections of the management plan whilst bearing in mind the fact that the plan is about to be superseded. In addition, in the period since the management plan was produced, the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000 has significantly altered national policy.

4. Authority Approved Unitary Development Plan

On 26th March 2007 the National Park Authority approved the Unitary Development Plan for Development Control Purposes. The Unitary Development Plan is the most up-to-date policy framework for the National Park. It is now the primary document for all planning purposes.

Whilst there are a number of detailed policies in the Unitary Development Plan that are relevant to the Rights of Way Improvement Plan, the overall policy context is summarised in Part 1, Policy 4: *Access to Opportunities for Enjoyment of the National Park*, which states:

Proposals which enable access to opportunities for enjoyment of the National Park will be permitted where:

- i) the proposal is sustainable in terms of its impact on both the environment and the community within which it is located; and**
- ii) there are no unacceptable impacts on areas which are vulnerable to recreational pressure.**

5. “Climbing Higher” – Welsh Assembly Government

The Climbing Higher Strategy is the Welsh Assembly Government’s twenty-year vision for sport and physical activity. It sets out objectives and targets dealing with health, economy, culture, society and environment. Particular objectives and targets that are relevant to the Rights of Way Improvement Plan are:

- The percentage of people in Wales using the Welsh natural environment for outdoor activities will increase from 36% to 60%
- 95% of people will have a footpath or cycle path within a 10 minute walk
- No one should live more than a 6 minute walk (300m) from their nearest green space.
- Encourage the integration of walking and cycling into everyday life and a means of recreation and transport
- Minimise the gaps related to gender, age, disability, ethnicity and deprivation

- By increasing participation in sustainable ways that ensure that the quality of the natural environment is maintained and enhanced.

6. Community Strategies

Nine Unitary Authorities have land within the Brecon Beacons National Park. The area of land falling within two of these (Caerphilly and Neath Port Talbot County Borough Councils) is negligible. This leaves seven Authorities – Powys, Monmouthshire, Carmarthenshire, Merthyr Tydfil, Rhondda Cynon Taff, Blaenau Gwent and Torfaen – that nominate Members to the National Park Authority and contribute financially via the levy to its operation.

The Local Government Act 2000 gave the Unitary Authorities the responsibility to produce a Community Strategy for their area. The aim of these strategies is to make sure that local people can make their voices heard, whilst also ensuring that local services, whoever they are provided by, are better co-ordinated. The process is one that seeks to empower the community and to allow it to influence the long-term vision for its area, and the way that public resources are allocated to communities over the next 10 to 15 years.

The most relevant priorities from the seven community strategies that cover the National Park are summarised below:

Powys Community Strategy 2004-2020

Health, Social Care and Well Being.

To develop health promotion, prevention & early intervention (p37)

Environment

An integrated and sustainable transport system that is safe, accessible, and socially inclusive, and that supports the economic, social and cultural life of Powys (p117)

To provide well-managed opportunities for enjoying the open spaces and wider countryside of Powys (p125)

Monmouthshire Community Strategy 2004-2008

A Better Environment

To reduce car use by encouraging alternative sustainable integrated transport options (p26)

To sustain the quality and diversity of Monmouthshire's countryside and green spaces to benefit everyone in the community and to improve access to such areas for everyone (p26)

Health and Well Being

People find healthy choices easier to make. E.g. healthy school meals vs. vending machines and walking vs. driving. (p30)

Carmarthenshire County Council

A Better Place: Investment & Innovation

To support provision of more accessible public transport and, where appropriate, community based local transport schemes (p32)

Merthyr Tydfil County Borough Community Strategy

A Clean, Green Place to be Proud of

To work towards a County Borough where open spaces and the natural environment are valued, protected and enhanced to provide places for people to enjoy and to conserve local wildlife. (p28)

Health Check

To promote and educate people in the concept of Healthy Living and Wellbeing, enabling individuals and communities to make lifestyle decisions that enhance health and well-being. (p30)

Rhondda Cynon Taff Council Community Plan 2004-2014

Our Health and Well Being

To promote healthy lifestyles and opportunities for active involvement in community life. (p21)

Blaenau Gwent Community Plan 2005-2009

Environment

Provide accessible greenspace for all people including a mix of play, recreation and wildlife areas (p24)

Greater opportunities for participation and involvement in cultural activities, sport, recreation and active living in the natural environment (p26)

Transportation

To promote alternative modes of transport such as walking, cycling and rights of way (p31)

Culture and Sport

Increasing active living opportunities in the natural environment (p35)

Torfaen Community Strategy 2007-2015

Health and Wellbeing

People feel safe to go out into the community to exercise e.g. walk, run cycle and play sport (p7)

Environment and Transport

Greenspace is clean, safe and enjoyed everywhere people live, work, shop and play (p15)

7. Local Transport Plans

The Transport Act 2000 required each Unitary Authority to produce a Local Transport Plan for its area in order to set out its policies:

“for the promotion and encouragement of safe, integrated, efficient and economic transport facilities and services to, from and within their area”

Although the main focus of these plans is on road and rail transport, some do consider the role of walking, cycling and horse-riding and the need to make provision for these activities. Relevant policies from Local Transport Plans produced by four Unitary Authorities within the Brecon Beacons National Park are summarised below.

Powys

Key Objectives

- Increase accessibility and improve social inclusion by offering public transport to employment, education, training, leisure and other services especially for those without access to a car;
- Reduce car dependency and widen travel choices by offering more sustainable and affordable travel alternatives;
- Improve the quality, accessibility, safety and image of public transport services;
- Support the full integration of all modes of public transport (as well as the car, walking and cycling) to provide seamless journeys.

Monmouthshire

Policy LTP51

The County Council will manage and improve the rights of way network and endeavour to integrate them with the highway network to facilitate increased opportunities for walking as a means of transport and recreation.

Policy LTP52

The County Council will continue to work with the British Horse Society to enhance and develop horse-riding circuits.

Policy LTP55

The County Council will continue to promote cycling as a leisure activity and as a mode of transport.

Policy LTP59

The County Council will encourage walking as a mode of transport.

Carmarthenshire

It is the policy of the County Council:

- That a countywide network of cycling and walking will be developed and promoted, as and when resources allow;
- That public rights of way will be retained and enhanced and that development that prejudices future opportunities for horse riding and walking will be resisted. Where this is not possible, their re-routing or replacing in a convenient and appropriate manner prior to development will be required;
- To maximize the role of cycling as a means of transport, through the continuing development of a convenient, safe and attractive network, by prioritizing routes; adopting use of cycle audit and review on highway schemes and developments; developing a maintenance regime for all Council cycle routes; and ensuring that cycling is fully integrated with public transport;
- To support the use of public transport, cycling and walking as preferred modes of transport wherever possible.

Merthyr Tydfil

9.18 Provision For Cyclists And Pedestrians

9.18.1 In accord with the objectives of sustainable development and the need to provide people in Merthyr Tydfil with a wider choice of the means of getting around, there is a definite need to promote and develop a network of cycleways and routes for pedestrian priority... Cycling and

walking also provide an opportunity to improve the general health and well being of the community.

9.19 Rights Of Way

9.19.1 Rights of way in Merthyr continue to serve their primary function of providing access for people within their local community. In accord with the general aim of giving local residents more choice of moving around Merthyr, it is important that the rights of way network is identified, safeguarded and improved. Increasingly many rights of way are now used principally for recreational purposes and for access to the countryside.

8. Conclusions

The majority of the plans and strategies quoted in this section refer to a small number of consistent themes:

1. The need to consider walking and cycling as alternative modes of transport to the use of motor vehicles and to make appropriate provision for this
2. The importance of walking, cycling and horse-riding as recreational activities
3. The role that access to the countryside on foot, by bicycle and on horseback can play in improving the physical health and mental well being of the population.

It is therefore important that the policies developed in this Rights of Way Improvement Plan support these three themes of transport, recreation and health and that appropriate linkages are made in the implementation phase with the plans, programmes and aspirations of partner Authorities and bodies.

PART 1

BACKGROUND

1.1 STRUCTURE OF THIS PLAN

Part 1 of this Rights of Way Improvement Plan presents a background both to the Brecon Beacons National Park, its public rights of way network and other public access provisions and, to the development of the document itself.

Part 2 describes the extensive assessments and public consultations which have been undertaken to establish the physical and legal condition of the current network. Also, how it is managed, publicised and promoted and what the needs of its current and future users are. The function of the Rights of Way Improvement Plan and the implementation of the proposed improvements contained within it are placed within the context of both the United Kingdom and Welsh Assembly Government aims and policies as well as those of the Brecon Beacons National Park Authority and other partner authorities and organisations.

Part 3 identifies actions based on the above issues, implementation costs and timetables for action. Potential public, voluntary and private sector partners are also identified.

1.2 INTRODUCTION TO THE RIGHTS OF WAY IMPROVEMENT PLAN

1.2.1 The Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000 created a duty for all highway authorities in England and Wales to produce a Rights of Way Improvement Plan (ROWIP)¹ and made provision for local authorities to make arrangements with national parks to undertake this function.

All of the constituent unitary authorities have agreed that the Brecon Beacons National Park Authority should take the lead in the preparation of a Rights of Way Improvement Plan for the area within the National Park. This is regarded as a joint working process and officers from the unitary authorities have been kept informed and consulted at all times. In particular, representatives from the Countryside Departments (usually the Rights of Way or Rights of Way Improvement Plan Officer) and the Local Transport Plan Officers from the main counties involved, namely Powys, Monmouthshire and Carmarthenshire, sat on the National Park Authority ROWIP Project Steering Group.

1.2.2 This Rights of Way Improvement Plan has been produced in accordance with the Countryside and Rights of Way Act and also with the Welsh

¹ Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000 s.60

Assembly Government’s Guidance (hereafter called “the Guidance”) on producing such plans.²

The content, structure and aims of this Rights of Way Improvement Plan (and to a lesser degree the earlier consultation documents) are shaped by the requirements of the Countryside and Rights of Way Act and of the Guidance which sees these plans as the prime means:

*by which local highway authorities should identify, prioritise and plan for improvements to their local rights of way network – and in doing so make better provision for walkers, cyclists, equestrians and people with mobility problems*³

and also as a means to plan strategically for:

*the development, better management and promotion of ... existing local rights of way; and changes or additions to the rights of way network.*⁴

1.2.3 The National Park Authority has expressed additional purposes for its Rights of Way Improvement Plan via its Scoping Study as shown in Table 1. These are upheld throughout this document, although, in line with the Guidance, it will also examine wider access opportunities including the new Access Land made available under the Countryside and Rights of Way Act.

TABLE 1 Brecon Beacons National Park Authority Rights of Way Improvement Plan Purposes and Priorities⁵

Purpose	Priority
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To provide a strategic and more holistic approach to the authority’s management of linear access so that it can better meet its purpose of ‘promoting opportunities for understanding and enjoyment of the area’s special qualities’ 	A
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To provide a rational and justifiable basis for resource bidding 	B
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To provide a mechanism that encourages a sharing of aims and the delivery of these aims through partnership working 	C
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To provide a basis for more detailed work programming 	C

1.2.4 The Guidance also describes the two main elements of the plan which will be an assessment of:

the extent to which local rights of way meet the present and likely future needs of the public

² Welsh Assembly Government, *Rights of Way Improvement Plans Guidance to Local Highway Authorities in Wales* (2002)

³ Guidance 1.3

⁴ Ibid. 1.4

⁵ exeGesIS, *Brecon Beacons National Park Authority: Rights of Way Improvement Plan, Scoping Study* (September 2003) 4.1 (Purpose) (Scoping Study)

the opportunities provided by the local rights of way for exercise and other forms of open-air recreation and the enjoyment of their area

*the accessibility of local rights of way to blind or partially sighted persons and others with mobility problems*⁶

and, a statement of the action proposed to:

*manage the local rights of way, and for securing an improved network of local rights of way, with particular regard to this guidance.*⁷

The Guidance describes the more detailed assessments required⁸; all of these have been undertaken by the Brecon Beacons National Park Authority.

THE BRECON BEACONS NATIONAL PARK AUTHORITY AIMS TO IDENTIFY THE CURRENT CONDITION OF ITS PUBLIC RIGHTS OF WAY NETWORK INCLUDING ANY SHORTCOMINGS AND HOW IT CAN BE IMPROVED TO MEET THE NEEDS OF CURRENT AND FUTURE USERS.

1.2.5 The value of the public rights of way network extends far beyond the bare legal definition as described below in 1.4.1. This document therefore concerns itself with issues which are outside the scope of the National Park Authority's delegation agreements with the unitary authorities, for instance, health, social inclusion, the economy and transport. Particular attention has been paid to all relevant plans and strategies of those authorities to ensure that all policies and action points are compatible.

1.2.6 The Brecon Beacons National Park Authority recognises that *Public Rights of Way are the single most important means by which people can enjoy the countryside*⁹ and that its public rights of way network is core to its work. It therefore sees this Rights of Way Improvement Plan as a ten year strategic document which is:

*a major opportunity for the Park Authority to thoroughly overhaul access opportunity in the National Park and to ensure that it delivers countryside access that truly meets the present and future needs of users, landowners and other interests.*¹⁰

The Authority also recognises that the over-arching principle in undertaking any proposed improvements must be those of sustainability, conservation, and preservation of the National Park's natural and cultural environment, its natural features and habitats and its special qualities as

⁶ Guidance 2.1

⁷ Ibid. 2.2

⁸ Ibid. 3.3.1, based on Section 60(1)(a) and 60(3)(a) of the Countryside and Rights of Way Act.

⁹ Brecon Beacons National Park Authority Walking Tourism Strategy (Walking Tourism Strategy),

¹⁰ *Scoping Study* (Summary, Conclusion)

expressed in Brecon Beacons National Park Authority policy documents.¹¹ This is consistent with the Sandford Principle¹² which is now enshrined in Section 62 of the Environment Act 1995 and which states that where there is conflict between the National Park's two statutory purposes, greater weight shall be attached to the purpose of conserving and enhancing the natural beauty, wildlife and cultural heritage of the area.

1.2.7 In accordance with The Countryside Access (Local Access Forums)(Wales) Regulations 2001 and the Guidance, the Brecon Beacons National Park Local Access Forums have played a major part in the production of this Rights of Way Improvement Plan. The three Forums, covering the west, central and eastern areas of the National Park have been instrumental in advising and consulting on all aspects of the Rights of Way Improvement Plan at all stages.

1.3 THE BRECON BEACONS NATIONAL PARK

The Brecon Beacons National Park, as shown on Map 1, covers an area of 1,347 square kilometres (520 square miles). It was established in 1957 under the terms of the National Parks and Access to the Countryside Act 1949 and its purpose and aims, as originally laid down in the 1949 Act and as amended in the Environment Act 1995, are:

*...conserving and enhancing the natural beauty, wildlife and cultural heritage ...and ... promoting opportunities for the understanding and enjoyment of the special qualities ... by the public.*¹³

The National Park Authority must also foster the economic and social well-being of its local communities.

The Brecon Beacons National Park was the third national park to be established in Wales and is important locally, nationally and internationally, attracting visitors and tourists to its spectacular scenery, its peaceful and remote environment and its various opportunities for outdoor activities, most of which are based on public rights of way.

1.4 PUBLIC RIGHTS OF WAY AND OTHER ACCESS IN THE BRECON BEACONS NATIONAL PARK

1.4.1 Public rights of way are rights to walk, ride horses, cycle, drive carriages and mechanically propelled vehicles. The use of these rights of way is very important to many aspects of life. The public rights of way network is the main facility for recreation for people who walk, cycle and horse ride; a

¹¹ Brecon Beacons National Park Authority, *National Park Management Plan, 2000-2005* (Management Plan)

¹² "National Park Authorities can do much to reconcile public enjoyment with the preservation of natural beauty by good planning and management and the main emphasis must continue to be on this approach wherever possible. But even so, there will be situations where the two purposes are irreconcilable... Where this happens, priority must be given to the conservation of natural beauty." (Lord Sandford, 1974)

¹³ Environment Act 1995 s. 65 (1)

recognised means of sustainable transport; a means of access to other recreational opportunities¹⁴ and, a means of travel within residential and other urban areas. It also benefits the economy, tourism and organised sport and contributes towards the physical, mental and social well-being of the population.

As shown in Tables 2 and 3, there are over 2,880 registered public rights of way extending over 1,983 kilometres within the 65 communities of the Brecon Beacons National Park; these are footpaths, bridleways, restricted byways (RBs) and byways open to all traffic (BOATs).

Table 2 Public Rights of Way and Access Land within the Brecon Beacons National Park

	PUBLIC RIGHTS OF WAY	FOOT PATHS	BRIDLE WAYS	BOATS	RBS	URBAN COMMON AND COMMON WITH DEED OF DEDICATION*	CROW ACCESS LAND*	OPEN
TOTAL NO.	2,884	2,304	326	4	250	N/A	N/A	
TOTAL LENGTH /AREA**	1,983 km	1,415 km	367 km	200 km		4,016 ha	53,305 ha	

* Figures from CCW website

** Rounded to nearest whole number

Table 3 Lengths and Status of Public Rights of Way by County

COUNTY	FOOTPATHS (KM)	BRIDLEWAYS (KM)	RBS (KM)	BOATS (KM)	TOTAL (KM)	% OF TOTAL NETWORK
BLAENAU GWENT	11.627	0.665	0	0	12.292	0.6
CAERPHILLY	0	0	0	0	0	0
CARMARTHENSHIRE	181.952	40.098	0	0.901	223.947	11.2
MERTHYR TYDFIL	9.713	5.431	0	0	15.144	0.8
MONMOUTHSHIRE	402.611	26.754	41.632	0	470.997	23.7
NEATH PORT TALBOT	0	0	0	0	0	0
POWYS	776.138	278.251	155.508	0.262	1,210.159	61
RHONDDA CYNON TAFF	29.272	16.195	1.928	0	47.395	2.4
TORFAEN	4.089	0	0	0	4.089	0.2
TOTAL	1,415.402	367.395	199.064	1.163	1,983.023	100%

¹⁴ Within the Brecon Beacons National Park these include activities such as caving, climbing, hang-gliding, para-gliding and canoeing.

- 1.4.2** The network varies from being relatively sparse in the western area (1.69 rights of way per km² or 1.15 km of rights of way per km²) to being much denser in the east (3.5 rights of way per km² or 2.4 km of rights of way per km²).

Table 4 Lengths of Public Rights of Way in National Park Areas

AREA	LENGTH (KM)	% OF TOTAL NETWORK
EAST	969	49
CENTRAL	483	24
WEST	531	27
TOTAL	1,983	100

This difference results from several factors, one of which is the way the county councils recorded their public rights of way in the 1950s where inconsistencies arose from the differing interpretation and emphasis that they placed on this task. In addition, the current network is a legacy of a period when the routes had a specific purpose, from farm to farm, farm to church or farm to market, for example, so that topography and historic land use governed by social, economic and religious behaviour also played a part. Not all of these routes may be of particular interest to rights of way users today; it may be desirable for some routes which are fragmented to be 'joined up' (where they stop short of a road or on either side of a farm yard) to make them more appealing to more people; some which are isolated may currently be of very little or no use in recreational terms and some areas with a sparse network may now have large areas of accessible Access Land.

A concentration of rights of way does not automatically imply a better network or more useful access opportunities; different densities generate different problems which need to be taken into account when developing any proposals for improvements. Such proposals will involve enhancement of the whole of the existing network including, for example, improvements to surfaces, drainage and furniture as well as changes to rights of way, be they path creations, diversions or extinguishments, as necessary.

- 1.4.3** Table 2 also shows that there is far more access within the National Park than that provided by the public rights of way network alone. Urban commons are open to the public for fresh air and exercise,¹⁵ while the Countryside and Rights of Way Act has provided a right of access on foot over Access Land as mapped by Countryside Council for Wales as shown on Map 2.¹⁶ In addition, the Forestry Commission has dedicated a further 9,556 ha of land as Access Land (the above figures are based on the Provisional Access Map).

¹⁵ Law of Property Act, 1925 s.195. Urban commons within the National Park include Mynydd Llangattock, the Bloreng and Llangynidr Common.

¹⁶ All areas of Access Land under the Countryside and Rights of Way Act are shown on CCW website and on Ordnance Survey maps

In some areas permissive paths have been granted and *de facto* access is tolerated by landowners. In forested areas, for example, the Walking Tourism Strategy estimates that these routes extend to 620km of linear access. Some landowners also provide permissive paths or access by means of agri-environmental schemes such as Tir Gofal.

There are also a number of promoted routes within the National Park such as part of the Offa's Dyke National Trail that crosses the Black Mountains; part of the Usk Valley Walk and the Beacons Way which runs east-west across the entire Park. These use public rights of way as well as public roads and Access Land.

Unsurfaced, unclassified county roads are a further part of the recreational network, but their total length within the National Park is uncertain. The Walking Tourism Strategy, for example, states that they account for over 500km of extra routes¹⁷ but a more realistic figure is shown in Table 5 below.

Table 5 Unclassified County Roads by County*

County	Length (km)
Blaenau Gwent	0
Caerphilly	0
Carmarthenshire	13.5
Merthyr Tydfil	0
Monmouthshire	24.75
Neath Port Talbot	0
Powys	13
Rhondda Cynon Taff	0
Torfaen	0
Total	51.25

*the table contains details of UCRs that are not duplicated by Restricted Byways and is very approximate

Cycleways are a further resource.

1.5 ADMINISTRATION OF ACCESS AND PUBLIC RIGHTS OF WAY

1.5.1 The Brecon Beacons National Park area is covered by nine unitary authorities, ranging from Powys County Council with 66% of the Park's area to a minimal 2 hectares each covered by Caerphilly and Neath Port Talbot.¹⁸ It is managed by the Brecon Beacons National Park Authority, a special purpose local authority established in 1996, which undertakes many of the duties of a local authority for the National Park area. These

¹⁷ Walking Tourism Strategy, 2.1. This figure probably includes RBs and BOATs

¹⁸ The other authorities are Monmouthshire and Carmarthenshire County Councils and Blaenau Gwent, Merthyr Tydfil, Rhondda-Cynon-Taff and Torfaen County Borough Councils. Caerphilly and Neath Port Talbot have no public rights of way within the National Park.

include planning, conservation and the management of public rights of way (under delegated powers) and Access Land.

In addition to its statutory duties under the Environment Act 1995, the rights of way functions delegated to the National Park Authority in relation to footpaths, bridleways, restricted byways and BOATs are:

- the construction, maintenance, repair, signposting and inspection of all public rights of way
- enforcement of the over-riding duty to protect public rights of way
- continuous review of the Definitive Map and Statement i.e. Definitive Map Modification Orders (except in Carmarthenshire)
- orders under section 116 of the Highways Act 1980

Rights of Way functions exercisable by the Brecon Beacons National Park Authority under statute are:

- public path orders under s.257 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990
- public path orders under s.26, 118, 119 of the Highways Act 1980 and public path creation agreements under s.25 of the Highways Act 1980
- traffic regulation orders

The Countryside and Rights of Way Act identifies National Park Authorities as Relevant Authorities and Access Authorities. As a Relevant Authority, the Brecon Beacons National Park Authority has duties relating to applications and notifications of access restrictions and as an Access Authority, has powers to improve access to Access Land. The Act also requires National Park Authorities to establish access advisory bodies called Local Access Forums.

PART 2

ASSESSMENTS OF THE PUBLIC RIGHTS OF WAY NETWORK AND USER NEEDS

2.1 INTRODUCTION

- 2.1.1** Section 60 of the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000 states that Rights of Way Improvement Plans should contain an assessment of the following:

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 for exercise and other forms of open-air recreation and the enjoyment of the authority's area

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

- 2.1.2** The Guidance¹⁹ states that authorities should aim to establish:

the strategic context for the management and improvement of local rights of way;

the condition of the existing rights of way network, its legal definition, publicity, management and protection;

the existing and likely future needs of different classes of users of local rights of way, the accessibility of local rights of way to blind or partially sighted people and others with mobility problems;

the identification of areas where provision for one or more class of user is considered to be deficient or is likely to be deficient in the future and indicate the scale of those deficiencies;

the specification of other shortcomings that have been shown by the review to exist

the opportunities and priorities for the improvement of the existing network, its management and development; and

the resources that are available and that are required to meet people's needs for local rights of way

- 2.1.3** The National Park Authority has undertaken these assessments and each one of these is, in turn, detailed below. The Statement of Action contained in Part 3 of this Plan has been informed by the outcomes of these

¹⁹ Guidance 3.3.1

assessments. It has also been influenced by the other plans, strategies and policies referred to throughout this Plan.

2.2 THE STRATEGIC CONTEXT FOR THE MANAGEMENT AND IMPROVEMENT OF LOCAL RIGHTS OF WAY

2.2.1 The Strategic Environment Assessment Directive²⁰ (European Directive 2001/42/EC) states that plans that have a significant effect on the environment must be subject to a formal environmental assessment. This has been considered during the development of this Rights of Way Improvement Plan. The Authority has been advised that no Assessment is necessary, but, consistent with this Directive and several National Park Authority documents, all of the actions proposed in this Rights of Way Improvement Plan must be implemented in such a way that they will not alter the essential character of the National Park in any way. This is emphasised, for example, in all aspects of the Authority's *Future Directions*²¹ and in its Management Plan²² which also states that the land use needs to be sustainable in line with Local Agenda 21.²³

In addition to being the main resource for the enjoyment of the countryside, public rights of way also make a wide ranging contribution to many aspects of life such as planning, community, healthy living, education, leisure, countryside, recreation, sport, tourism and transport.²⁴ Documents relating to these activities have been considered in the production of this Rights of Way Improvement Plan. The proposals contained in the Rights of Way Improvement Plan are in turn supported by, and contribute towards, plans and strategies relating to these activities.²⁵ The Guidance, in particular, states that Rights of Way Improvement Plans should integrate, as far as possible, with local transport plans.²⁶

THIS RIGHTS OF WAY IMPROVEMENT PLAN PROVIDES A CONSISTENT APPROACH TO ALL ASPECTS OF THESE DOCUMENTS.

2.2.2 Health and Social Issues

Both the Welsh Assembly Government and the United Kingdom Government have consistently stated their commitment to improving the physical, mental and social well-being of all sectors of the population over the past few years and have made connections between outdoor activities, for example, and improved well being.

²⁰ transposed into UK law by the Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations 2004

²¹ Brecon Beacons National Park Authority, *Future Directions*, April 2004

²² Management Plan, 15.5

²³ Ibid 15.5

²⁴ Scoping Study, 3.2.1 (Links to other plans)

²⁵ Scoping Study 3.2.2. (Partnership working)

²⁶ Guidance 2.9

The Welsh Assembly Government explicitly lays down targets for increased participation in outdoor sport and physical activity during the next twenty years, including:

- *The percentage of people in Wales using the Welsh natural environment for outdoor activities will increase from 36% to 60%*²⁷
- *95% of people in Wales will have a footpath or cycle-path within a ten-minute walk of their home*²⁸

Both the National Park Authority and its constituent unitary authorities either have strategies in place, or are in the process of developing strategies to support these targets and this Rights of Way Improvement Plan contains proposals which will contribute to their success.

This Rights of Way Improvement Plan can also contribute to the aims of the United Kingdom and Welsh Assembly Governments' various strategies for social inclusion. *Wales: a Better Country*, published in 2003 sets out the Welsh Assembly Government's agenda for making Wales a healthier, more prosperous and better educated country with the over-arching aims of:

- Sustainable development
- Building a dynamic and advanced economy
- Tackling disadvantage
- Equal opportunities

The National Park Authority has established a policy of introducing a specific social inclusion dimension into its key documents. In addition, the National Parks in Wales have developed a draft Social Inclusion Strategy and Action Plan (September 2005). One of its remits, *to promote inclusive opportunities for the understanding and sustainable enjoyment of the special qualities of the Parks for the people of Wales and the United Kingdom*, and one of its aims, *to promote social inclusion by broadening access for the wider community in Wales, the United Kingdom and beyond who may be excluded from understanding or enjoyment of the special qualities of the Park as a result of poverty, lack of employment, lack of services, poor health, lack of education, psychological barriers or other disadvantage*, are particularly relevant to this Rights of Way Improvement Plan and support proposals in its action plan.

To achieve both health and social inclusion benefits the Rights of Way Improvement Plan must facilitate methods of encouraging more people to become more active, primarily by improving the public rights of way network to make it and Access Land more accessible and attractive to more people. In this aim the Rights of Way Improvement Plan has been informed by the Brecon Beacons National Park Authority Disabled Access

²⁷ Ibid. Target 10

²⁸ Ibid. Target 11

Steering Group Action Plan, the Social Inclusion Strategy and the Social Inclusion Action Plan as well as the National Park Management Plan.

Implementing proposals in support of Welsh Assembly Government targets will involve increasing collaborative working with other groups and societies such as community councils and groups representing, for example, those with mental and physical health problems, older people, and minority groups.

IMPROVEMENTS IN THE PUBLIC RIGHTS OF WAY NETWORK, IMPROVED ACCESS TO THE NETWORK AND TO OPEN ACCESS LAND SHOULD INCREASE PARTICIPATION IN OUTDOOR ACTIVITIES TO THE BENEFIT OF BOTH PHYSICAL HEALTH AND MENTAL WELL BEING AND PROVIDE A VEHICLE FOR SOCIAL INCLUSION IN LINE WITH THE POLICIES OF THE UNITED KINGDOM AND WELSH ASSEMBLY GOVERNMENTS.

2.2.3 Economic Benefits

The main economic activities in the Brecon Beacons National Park are farming, forestry and tourism. The Brecon Beacons National Park Authority Management Plan states: *... farming and forestry are needed to conserve the Park's beauty and maintain the long-term vitality of its communities and way of life.*

The Plan makes the link between farming and forestry practices and sustainability and sustainable tourism and states that tourism is one of the most important industries in the Park.²⁹

Much of this tourism is based upon the landscape and flora and fauna of the area and the accessible nature of these features via the rights of way network and Access Land. Significant income is derived from employment opportunities and the direct spend from those who walk, cycle, ride horses and drive vehicles on various public rights of way. This is emphasised by the Wales Tourist Board which stated in its *Walking and Cycling Strategy for Wales 2003*:

Rural rights of way, whether footpaths, bridleways or other routes are at the heart of opportunities for rural tourism and so are essential for the economy of rural Wales.

A key action in the Wales Tourist Board's *Action Plan for the Countryside Experience* is improvement of access to the countryside through public rights of way.

The Brecon Beacons National Park Authority's Walking Tourism Strategy also stresses the importance of the public rights of way network, stating:

²⁹ Ibid. 13.3

*The public path network is quite simply the largest visitor attraction in the Park and is the foundation of the area's tourism income. Authorities that fail to make the necessary investment risk losing market share to competing areas that are able to offer more accessible countryside.*³⁰

It envisages the Brecon Beacons National Park becoming:

*widely known as a lead exemplar of sustainable tourism with key partners from the statutory, commercial, voluntary and community sectors working together to develop the industry. Tourism should become an increasingly important part of the Park's local economy and should contribute towards the vitality of local communities and the integrity of the environment.*³¹

It also recognises the need for improvement to some aspects of the public rights of way network, identifying two of the constraints on walking in the National Park as the state of the access network and control and repair of erosion damage.³²

Walking is a relatively environmentally sustainable mode of travel and, is also the most popular and profitable tourism activity in the National Park. The Strategy states 2003 ... data for the BBNP area suggests that just over 2 million tourist days are spent in the Park, giving a total value of tourism of £72.6million, 6% up on 2002.³³ It also suggests that the annual value of walking tourism in the National Park is approximately £28 million,³⁴ a figure which it is anticipated can be increased by implementation of the proposals within this Rights of Way Improvement Plan.

THE BRECON BEACONS NATIONAL PARK AUTHORITY RECOGNISES THAT THE PUBLIC RIGHTS OF WAY NETWORK IS CENTRAL TO SUSTAINABLE TOURISM. IT IS A MAJOR ECONOMIC ASSET, ATTRACTING TOURISTS WHO USE IT FOR A NUMBER OF OUTDOOR ACTIVITIES. IT ALSO RECOGNISES THE POTENTIAL FOR INCREASED SUSTAINABLE TOURISM WHICH MAY BE CREATED BY AN IMPROVED NETWORK.

2.2.4 Transport

Projected figures for road traffic growth suggest that increasing traffic will lead to a problem of insufficient road capacity and this has led to a demand for the provision of sustainable transport solutions.

Both the United Kingdom and Welsh Assembly Governments have produced documents that identify sustainable transport as an important issue and the Welsh Assembly Government has stated that: *walking and*

³⁰ *Walking Tourism Strategy, 2.4*

³¹ *Ibid. The Vision, para.3*

³² *Walking Tourism Strategy, 2.6*

³³ *BBNPA Walking Tourism Strategy, 4.2*

³⁴ *Walking Tourism Strategy, 4.3.* Two calculations were made, giving figures of £25.04m and £31.23m, £28m was described as a 'reasonable working figure'.

cycling offer healthy, accessible, convenient and environmentally friendly ways of making local journeys.

This Rights of Way Improvement Plan recognises that an improved public rights of way network will provide greater opportunities for a reduction in motor vehicle use, particularly by encouraging walking and cycling for utility, short or local journeys and that increased opportunities must be made available. It goes without saying that these opportunities should be made available to all including those who are disabled or have mobility or visual impairments.

In addition to improving recreation provision in the National Park, expanding the bridleway network would also increase sustainable transport provision. Cycling is seen as being of major importance; it is a leisure activity, an alternative mode of sustainable transport and an activity which contributes to the economy. The Wales Cycle Tourism Strategy suggests that cycle tourism is currently worth £18 million to Wales and envisages that this sum could increase to £34 million by 2007. It sets out a vision of Wales as a leading United Kingdom and European cycle tourism destination with four key cycle tourism products for Wales: mountain biking, cycle breaks, family cycling and cycle touring,³⁵ all of which are suitable for this National Park. Some Brecon Beacons National Park communities have already endorsed this, stating, *a long term aim of the National Park Authority is to make more use of the disused railway lines in the Park for cycle tracks and rights of way*,³⁶ while others have identified a need for an alternative to towpaths for cycling.³⁷

Natural England argues that a lack of accessible and affordable public transport contributes to problems of social exclusion but that walking and cycling are accessible to nearly everyone.³⁸ Sustainable transport, therefore, including community transport and public transport to access public rights of way within the National Park should be increased.

IMPROVEMENTS TO THE PUBLIC RIGHTS OF WAY NETWORK WILL BENEFIT THE ECONOMY OF THE AREA AS WELL AS THE USERS. IMPROVEMENTS SHOULD BE AN INTEGRAL PART OF THE GOALS FOR SUSTAINABLE TOURISM AND SUSTAINABLE TRANSPORT, AVAILABLE TO AS MANY PEOPLE AS POSSIBLE. THE BRECON BEACONS NATIONAL PARK AUTHORITY MUST PLAY A MAJOR PART IN THE WELSH ASSEMBLY GOVERNMENT'S IDEA OF THE FUTURE FOR WALES.³⁹

³⁵ Wales Tourist Board Activity Product Strategies, Executive Summary, *Moving up a Gear: a cycle tourism strategy for Wales*

³⁶ BBNPA Local Plan (1999), for example Yscir, Honddu Uchaf, Llanddew, Hay on Wye, Trallong, Maescar and Llangors

³⁷ Ibid., for example, Llangynidr, Llangattock, Llanelly, Brynmawr, Tredegar, Nantyglo, Blaena, Llanfoist Fawr, Blaenavon, Llanover, Goetre Fawr and Pontypool

³⁸ Natural England website, Greenways handbook

³⁹ as contained in Wales: A Better Country The Strategic Agenda of the Welsh Assembly Government (2000)

We acknowledge that attempting to calculate some of the economic and social benefits that may arise from the implementation of this Rights of Way Improvement Plan is difficult. In their report 'The Economic and Social Value of Walking in England' (2003)⁴⁰ Dr Mike Christie and Jon Matthews state that "there does not appear to be any research to show what effect improvements to a path have on the use of that particular path. Also, it is unclear whether improving a path would generate additional walking activity, or displace current activity from one path to another, and whether the additional walking opportunities would result in benefits such as reduced use of transport and reduced travelling times". They also state that they have "highlighted the various types of social benefits that have been associated with walking: for example, health and spiritual benefits. However, little or no research has been undertaken to quantify the economic value of these social benefits....although further research is needed, it is likely that greater efforts to restore the existing rights of way network, by removing obstructions and opening paths, would offer significant additional economic and social benefits in that area".

The Authority anticipates that improvements to the network will be delivered through close consultation and cooperation with stakeholders and that use of the proposed network hierarchy (see 2.6.12) can target resources to where they are most needed.

2.3 CONDITION OF THE PUBLIC RIGHTS OF WAY NETWORK

2.3.1 National surveys of the condition of public rights of way in England and Wales were made in 1988 and between 1992 and 1997, but a more recent and comprehensive report was produced in May 2003 when the Countryside Council for Wales commissioned a Rights of Way Condition Survey designed to:

- establish the condition of the path network in 2002 and of progress towards meeting the national target
- establish how the condition may have changed since previous surveys
- provide baseline data for local authority use
- provide estimates of the resources required to properly maintain public rights of way in Wales

One of the conclusions was:

...the public rights of way in Wales are generally in poor condition. The poor condition of the path network is preventing its potential being realised in terms of providing access to the countryside, sustainable tourism, amenity use by local people and the generation of potential health benefits to users.

It also stated that current expenditure is less than one fifth of that required to fully upgrade and maintain the network and that existing approaches to

⁴⁰ Commissioned by The Ramblers' Association

monitoring the network condition are inadequate. The report saw Rights of Way Improvement Plans as a means of addressing the failures.⁴¹

As illustrated in Table 6, however, the National Park public rights of way network proved to be in a better condition than average for Wales.

Table 6A Wales and Brecon Beacons National Park, Results from Countryside Council For Wales Condition Survey⁴² (Sample details)

	Total Length (Km) (fig. 4.2b)	Sample Length (Km) (fig.4.2b)	Sample Size (fig 2.2b)	Number of squares (fig.4.2.2a)	Road junctions, satisfactory signage (fig. 5.1a)
BBNP	1,867 ¹	138	7.4%	10	44%
Wales	33,211	3,284	9.9%	225	39%

¹ figure correct at the time of the survey. See Table 2 for current figure.

Table 6B Wales and Brecon Beacons National Park, Results from Countryside Council for Wales Condition Survey (Condition details)

	Condition of path furniture (fig. 5.2a)			Frequency of obstacles per 10km (e.g. fences, hedges, vegetation) (fig. 5.3a)		
	satisfactory	inconvenient	unusable	inconvenient	unusable	total
BBNP	91%	7%	2%	17.7%	4.7%	22.4%
Wales	83%	11%	6%	22.9%	12.4%	35.3%

2.3.2 Since 1999, the National Park Authority has undertaken an annual survey of the condition of 5% of its network to generate Welsh Assembly Government Performance Indicators. This random sample survey, using the three measures of being open, easy to use and signposted shows that there has been an improvement in the condition of the network over the years 2002-2004, but a general decline between 2005-2007, as shown in Table 7 below.

⁴¹ *Wales Rights of Way Condition Survey 2002 Final Report for the Countryside Council for Wales May 2003 1.4*

⁴² The figures in brackets refer to the relevant section of the Survey Report

Table 7 Results of 5% Surveys, 2002 – 2007

YEAR	FOOTPATH	BRIDLEWAY	RB/BOAT	TOTAL (all approx 94km)
2007	72	11	7	90 (78% complete)
Open				62%
Easy to use				46%
Signposted				72%
2006	116	19	13	149
Open				66%
Easy to use				53%
Signposted				67%
2005	97	21	9	127
Open				73%
Easy to use				62%
Signposted				67%
2004	128	17	11	156
Open				79%
Easy to use				72%
Signposted				69%
2003	118	11	15	134
Open				78%
Easy to use				73%
Signposted				62%
2002				130
Open				64%
Easy to use				71%
Signposted				56%

2.3.3 A 5% random survey, however, may not give a true representation of the entire network. In 2004 the National Park Authority decided to undertake a survey of the whole network using Authority staff and volunteers. This survey was approximately 80% complete at the time of writing this Plan and the extra information generated will be a more valuable indicator of the network's condition. Details of the survey are contained in Appendix 4.

2.3.4 A summary of the results of this survey to date have been tabulated below. These results, with those from the other assessments, have been used to establish the Statement of Action in Part 3.

Table 8 Summary of the Brecon Beacons National Park Authority Condition Survey to date (April 2007)

Number of Communities ¹	Number of rights of way	Number of footpaths	Number of bridleways	Number of RBs	Number of BOATs	Total Length (Km)
62	2,256	1,800	270	183	3	1,574.5 (79%)

¹Part only of 3 communities, 2 others not completed

Ease of use		Degree of use ²			
Easy to use	Open	None	Low	Medium	High
832(36%)	1475(65%)	258(11%)	883(39%)	705 (31%)	342 (15%)

¹ see appendix 4

²Approximately 40% of the paths described as having no use cannot be used either because an alternative line is used or because of obstructions. 3% not categorised

Surface condition/obstructions ¹			
Ground vegetation	Over hanging vegetation	Other obstruction	Erosion
5,430 m (3%)	3,275 m (2%)	310 (14%)	51 (2%)

¹Vegetation figures collected on two different basis, and underestimate the amount of clearance necessary

Furniture Numbers and Condition							
Finger post in place ¹	Need finger post ¹	Way markers needed	Stiles in good condition ²	Stiles in need of repair ³	New treads needed	Gates in good condition	Gates in need of repair ⁴
1483	1600	678	615	2,380	1,330	2,806	537
Gates to be re-hung	Bridle gates in need of repair	Bridle gates in good repair	New bridle gates needed	Dog stiles in place	Bridges in good condition	Bridges in need of repair	Major bridges needed
266	Figure not consistently collected	488	250	91	348	83	4

¹Where they leave a metalled road

²All new stiles are to British Standard

³With very few exceptions these needed one or more new treads

⁴Mainly need to be re-hung; small number of new latches needed

2.3.5 As described in Section 2.6, the Brecon Beacons National Park Authority's Public Rights of Way Section currently maintains a database of work completed and works to be done on public rights of way on a temporal basis. This, together with the completed condition survey (estimated completion date, Summer 2007) and subsequent database of information (estimated completion date with additional resources, Summer 2008 (see 2.10 in the Statement of Action)) will be a valuable tool for day-to-day maintenance and improvements as well as providing an extensive baseline which will assist management and future implementation of this Rights of Way Improvement Plan.

2.4 DEFINITIVE MAP AND STATEMENT

2.4.1 It is a legal duty under the National Parks and Access to the Countryside Act 1949 for highway authorities to produce what is termed a 'Definitive Map and Statement' which is a legal document that records registered public rights of way in a cartographic and written form. The Countryside Act 1968 made provision to speed up this process and this was further

incorporated into the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 which also created a duty to keep the Definitive Map and Statement under continuous review.⁴³

The Brecon Beacons National Park Authority's Definitive Map (which is kept at its head office in Brecon) consists of sections of the Definitive Maps held by the seven main unitary authorities who have delegated most of the duties associated with these sections to the National Park Authority as described in 1.4

2.4.2 The Brecon Beacons National Park Authority recognises that *an accurate and up to date Definitive Map of the rights of way for an area underpins the management of the network*,⁴⁴ and that this must be an aim of this Rights of Way Improvement Plan.

ALTHOUGH IT IS CONSTANTLY UPDATED AS ORDERS ARE CONFIRMED, THE BRECON BEACONS NATIONAL PARK AUTHORITY RECOGNISES THAT THE ENTIRE MAP NEEDS TO BE BROUGHT UP TO DATE.

2.4.3 Definitive Maps can be modified by 'legal events' to create, divert or extinguish a path, to change the status of a right of way or to modify its line. Legal events can be:

- Definitive Map Modification Orders (DMMOs) confirmed as a result of presumed rights claims or the discovery of relevant historical evidence
- Public Path Orders (PPOs) - diversion, extinguishment and creation orders
- magistrates court orders⁴⁵ - diversion and stopping up orders

As shown in Table 9 below, the National Park Authority has a number of outstanding orders in some of the constituent unitary authorities.

Table 9 Schedule of Outstanding Public Rights of Way Applications as at April 2007

Type of Application	Carmarthenshire	Monmouthshire	Powys	Rhondda Cynon Taff	Total
Diversions	5	11	45	3	64
Extinguishment	0	14	6	0	20
Creation	0	4	8	0	12
Modification	0	9	12	0	21
Total	5	38	71	3	117

⁴³ Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 s.53

⁴⁴ Guidance 3.3.4

⁴⁵ Scoping Study 6.3.2

One application (in Monmouthshire) dates from 1989 but the remainder are post 1995. 80 of these applications have been approved by the Authority (but still require an order to be made) with 38 applications remaining undetermined.

2.4.4 At present, the Authority, on average, completes 25 Public Path Orders and one Definitive Map Modification Order annually. On that basis and with the current level of resources the current backlog of applications for public path orders will take approximately four years to clear and applications for definitive map modification orders will take 21 years (not including any new applications submitted in the meantime).⁴⁶

Presently, unopposed public path orders (i.e. those that are not objected to by a member of the public) cost the Authority approximately £1500 to process and unopposed Definitive Map Modification Orders approximately £3000. These costs can easily increase by three or four times when an order is opposed.

Given the current resources and performance the progress to clear the existing backlog of applications is as follows:

Table 10 Progress in Clearing Existing Backlog of Applications

Type of order	Rate of progress*	No. of outstanding applications	No. of years to clear backlog	Cost at existing rates
PPO	25/annum	96	4	£144,000
DMMO	1/annum	21	21	£63,000

* assuming that all are unopposed

2.4.5 Surveys undertaken during the production of the Rights of Way Improvement Plan show that there are approximately 500 anomalies currently in existence on the Definitive Map and Statement. These are largely examples of the map not being consistent with the situation on the ground or vice versa (due to a drafting error on the map or an unrecorded change on the ground), public rights of way whose status changes at an administrative boundary or cul-de-sacs.

Other problems highlighted by a study of the Definitive Map and the List of Streets (the register of adopted highways kept by highway authorities) show⁴⁷:

- isolated public rights of way with few or no links to the wider network or other access opportunities
- public rights of way crossing a main road
- settlements with insufficient links to countryside

⁴⁶ Further details of order procedures are contained in A Guide to Definitive Maps and Changes to Public Rights of Way CA142 (2003) available from Natural England (www.naturalengland.org.uk)

⁴⁷ Most of the bulleted issues have also been raised in user surveys

- land with public access rights needing links to public rights of way, roads or communities
- anomalies between public rights of way shown on the Ordnance Survey and on the Definitive Map
- fragmented nature of the bridleway network

The existence of 500 anomalies on the Definitive Map (which might be resolved by means of a Public Path Order, a combination of Public Path Orders or by a Definitive Map Modification Order, depending on the circumstances), will clearly increase the backlog of Definitive Map work that is required. In order to ensure that the Definitive Map and Statement is a true record of public rights of way and that the backlog of work is cleared, a large increase in resources will be required. A significant percentage of these anomalies do not, at present, cause a problem to the public or landowners and are largely academic in nature. But others may, for example, have a direct affect on property and may become a problem when property changes hands (and may result in possible effects on property values), or may adversely affect the accuracy of commercial maps. It is therefore clear that the backlog needs to be prioritised so that the more significant or detrimental anomalies are dealt with first.

Taking into account the additional anomalies discovered as part of the Rights of Way Improvement Plan process and given the current resources and performance, progress to clear this backlog would be as follows:

Table 11 Likely Progress to Clear Identified Anomalies

Type of order	Rate of progress*	No. of outstanding applications	No of years to clear backlog (with current staff resources)	Total cost at existing rates
PPO ¹	25/annum	500	20	£750,000
DMMO ²	1/annum	500	500	£1,500,000

* on the assumption that all are unopposed

¹ best case scenario – assumes that all are PPOs

² worst case scenario – assumes that all are DMMOs

It is likely that the actual situation may be somewhere in-between these predictions and costings more likely to be £1,125,000 and the work is likely to take 260 staff years (not taking account of inflation and other increases).

Additional staff and resources could make a significant impact on these figures. For example an additional member of staff and a 100% rise in the budget (up to £20,000) could double the present performance. In essence a backlog of 500 public path orders could conceivably be eliminated in 10 years. This would have to take account of the fact that the staff time commitment from the Legal Section would also need to increase from the present 10% to 20%.

These calculations do not take account of the fact that there could be a significant number of lost ways within the National Park (see 2.4.8), which,

if claimed would increase the backlog further and add significantly to the costings.

- 2.4.6** The User Assessments discussed at 2.7 have highlighted the need for improved bridleway provision and especially more circular routes and more links within the bridleway network. The bridleway network within the National Park is relatively small at 367 km and, as mentioned earlier, is fragmented. This is a particular problem, for example, in Monmouthshire where the network is affected by high levels of anomalies. This may impact on the Definitive Map and Statement in that more bridleways will require registration and more routes will need upgrading. This will impact on the workload and further resources will be needed to develop this area.

Future development may also prompt more Definitive Map work through the provision of more pedestrian and cycling routes within and in the vicinity of settlements that require registration. The Authority's Unitary Development Plan supports such initiatives (policies ES44 and ES45) where routes are provided to schools, community facilities and work places; link communities; link closely with public transport facilities; encourage walking as a prime means of access and, where new cycle tracks utilise disused railway lines, forest tracks, space alongside rivers, canals and linear parks.

- 2.4.7** Where anomalies, problems or gaps have been identified in the rights of way network it may be possible to provide a short to medium-term solution or provision by the use of a permissive path. Use of permissive access through agri-environment schemes such as Tir Gofal (administered by the Countryside Council for Wales and latterly by the Welsh Assembly Government) is increasing and whilst the National Park Authority is consulted on their creation there is little strategic planning for their deployment within the wider access network. As a result of this Rights of Way Improvement Plan a record of anomalies, problems and gaps will be available and that could be used as a basis for future discussions with the Welsh Assembly Government in its development of an agri-environment related permissive access network.

- 2.4.8** The National Park Authority has attempted to estimate the number of lost ways that may exist in the National Park in order to calculate the potential number of claims and the resources required to deal with them. Estimates suggest that there may be between 2 and 5 possible lost ways in each community, giving a total of between approximately 130 and 350 possible claims. Costs are difficult to estimate but using figures derived from 2.4.4 above and assuming that all applications would be unopposed costs of between £390,000 and £1,050,000 are considered to be reasonable. As has been stated previously opposed application would increase the costs substantially.

- 2.4.9** The views of consultees appeared to be divided between those who wanted the National Park Authority to invest resources immediately into investigating and dealing with lost ways and slightly more who felt that lost

ways should not be proactively investigated, with resources and improvements being concentrated on the existing network.

SUBJECT TO ADDITIONAL RESOURCES BEING AVAILABLE, THE BRECON BEACONS NATIONAL PARK AUTHORITY WILL DEAL WITH LOST WAYS CLAIMS AS THEY ARE MADE.

2.4.10 The Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000 has introduced, via Schedule 5 and Schedule 6, new requirements into the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 and the Highways Act 1980 for local Authorities to keep and publish registers of applications for Modification Orders⁴⁸ and some types of diversion and extinguishment orders⁴⁹. In addition, Section 31A of the Highways Act 1980 requires that authorities keep and publish a register of statements deposited and declarations lodged under section 31(6) of that Act. All registers must be kept in both paper and electronic format and must be available for inspection by the public in the authority's principal office and on the authority's website.

2.4.11 The Regulations relating to these changes came into force on the 15 January 2006⁵⁰. As yet the Authority has not complied with the Regulations mainly due to the reconstruction of its website. However, the registers should be included in the new website.

2.5 PUBLICITY AND PROMOTION FOR PUBLIC RIGHTS OF WAY

2.5.1 The Guidance stresses the importance of publicity and promotion of the public rights of way network, stating,

Information to the public can improve their understanding of the countryside and its long-term care. It also helps to increase the confidence of users and landowners about their rights and responsibilities. Information is the key to encouraging visitors to an area and promoting the opportunities for them to enjoy the countryside through walking, cycling and horse riding.⁵¹

It adds that a review of the current position will contribute towards actions needed for improvements. The Brecon Beacons National Park Authority endorses these statements.

2.5.2 The Visitor Services section of the National Park Authority aims to raise awareness, respect for and understanding of the National Park whilst also promoting opportunities for enjoyment. The information, education and interpretation services aim to increase public confidence so that more people are happier to use the rights of way network to enhance their experience of the Park. This is achieved through a network of Visitor

⁴⁸ Section 53B of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981

⁴⁹ Section 121B of the Highways Act 1980

⁵⁰ The Public Rights of Way (Registers) (Wales) Regulations 2006

⁵¹ Welsh Assembly Guidance, 3.3.11

Information Centres and Village Information Agencies, leaflets, books, interpretation panels, exhibitions, events and guided walks.

The education staff discuss the Countryside Code and public rights of way in introductory talks and on walks while providing more detailed information at GCSE and higher levels. The National Park Authority is currently drafting an Interpretation Strategy and an Information Strategy both of which will support the relevant sections of this Rights of Way Improvement Plan's statement of action.

2.5.3 The Public Relations and Communications Department promote all access, public rights of way and Rights of Way Improvement Plan work via press releases and through articles in their newsletter which is sent to community councils and community groups. They have responsibility for the National Park Authority website.

2.5.4 In addition, the National Park is frequently promoted by groups and individuals outside the National Park Authority through literature, educational materials and by individual contact.

2.5.5 Dedicated staff are employed to publicise and promote the National Park, including its areas of Access Land and its public rights of way network. Methods employed are intended both to inform and encourage involvement and include:

- Books and leaflets - The National Park has attracted an enormous literature resource; its topography, geology, ecology and biodiversity, its history and archaeology are all the subject of many books and leaflets and in many cases these publications promote specific walks which use the public rights of way network. The major achievement of the National Park Authority in being granted Geopark status for part of the central and the western areas can only generate an increase in such publications. Research for this document, however, has only covered those publications produced by the National Park Authority or in conjunction with it, and on a secondary level, any others which are sold in National Park Authority outlets.
- Newsletters are produced as described above and a programme of guided walks and events is published annually.
- Information and Interpretation boards within the National Park - The Interpretation Strategy for the National Park proposes erecting orientation panels at key gateway / decision-making points within the National Park. Some of these are already in situ and aim to raise awareness in visitors that they are in the National Park, what there is to see, how to get to places which interest them and where important facilities are located. A recent development has been the installation of a touch-screen at Llanthony as part of the Black Mountains Cross Border Demonstration Project that provides access to a wide variety of information.

- Information and Interpretation boards at Tourist Information Centres – The National Park Authority also has interpretation and information boards at Tourist Information centres in Brecon and Abergavenny. Its main centres, however, are its Visitor Centres at Libanus near Brecon, Craig y nos Country Park and Llandovery. In addition to having major interpretation and information boards, staff advise the public on all aspects of the National Park including up-to-date information on Access Land, rights of way and local conditions; they can suggest routes that vary from a half-hour stroll to more adventurous days; centres also hold a stock of relevant publications and Ordnance Survey maps.
- Local and national newspapers, television and radio - The Public Relations and Communications section frequently issue press releases to both local and national papers. These relate to all matters concerning the Brecon Beacons National Park, events and publications, including this Rights of Way Improvement Plan.
- Brecon Beacons National Park Authority website - The Brecon Beacons National Park Authority website gives information about guided walks. It also includes some information documents relating to this Rights of Way Improvement Plan, information relating to the Local Access Forums and the Access Land made available by the Countryside and Rights of Way Act in May 2005.
- Events and exhibitions.
- Direct mailing.

2.5.6 The Authority's Walking Tourism Strategy includes a review of information provision available to the first time visitor to the National Park. As would be expected there is a huge array of information available largely targeted at walkers. The Strategy proposes a range of actions to meet its objectives some of which are relevant to the Rights of Way Improvement Plan. Actions NPP4, WTP1 - 3, IS1 - 10, IS12 - 13 and IS15 -16 if implemented, will substantially increase the range, quality and delivery of information to the public.

2.5.7 The Parkin Report⁵², commissioned by the National Park Authority to review the Authority's information, interpretation and education provision made a number of recommendations with regard to the provision of information to local people, visitors and potential visitors. These are not restricted to promoting rights of way as they seek to improve the promotion of the special qualities of the National Park and proactively encourage the use of its facilities.

2.5.8 Some of the recommendations that the report makes are as follows:

⁵² entitled Brecon Beacons Information, Interpretation and Education Strategy (2003)

- an enhanced web site will become increasingly important but it needs to be well managed and continually developed
- there is a need to enhance the provision of information to others who produce print on the Park and meet the public through regular briefings
- there is a case for establishing a 'presence' in the Cardiff TIC with a small exhibition and 'focused' Park leaflet
- achieving a much higher standard of information service provision by all of the Tourist Information Centres around the park and in the wider 'zone of influence'
- improved range of free literature and publications
- enhancing the level of information provision provided at the National Park Visitor Centre
- training to Tourist Information Centre staff on the Park, its special qualities and features, its facilities, walking trails, issues of weather, safety, clothing etc
- a 'hotline' supplying information and briefing on the Park on a daily basis
- developing the range of free literature on the Park including the visitor newspaper
- extend the provision of visitor orientation panels at key locations throughout the Park

The report contains a fully costed programme of work to implement these recommendations. Some of these recommendations have already been commenced. For example, several orientation and information panels have been erected at key locations throughout the National Park supplying information on Access Land and the implementation of part 1 of the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000.

2.5.9 From the assessment of the needs of current and future users at 2.7, many issues arose which are closely linked with this review of publicity and promotion. In particular, several issues were identified which, in some way, are linked to the provision of information:

- More short themed walks are required
- More easy to follow walks are required
- More easy off-road cycling routes for families are required
- More safe routes for cyclists on country lanes are required
- More high quality riding routes are required

The South East Wales Visitor Survey 2005⁵³ also noted that 30% of respondents identified that more bike friendly accommodation would make them much more likely to cycle in the National Park and 33.2% identified that more routes on hilly tracks would have the same influence.

Equally, good information on riding centres would make 56.2% of respondents much more likely to go horse riding in the National Park.

⁵³ Research and Marketing Ltd. February 2006

2.6 MANAGEMENT AND PROTECTION OF THE PUBLIC RIGHTS OF WAY NETWORK AND ACCESS AREAS

2.6.1 The Access and Rights of Way Section within the Countryside Department is responsible for the current management and protection of the public rights of way network and other access areas in the National Park.

The Public Rights of Way Team (one officer and an assistant) is responsible for all matters relating to public rights of way. For example, they deal with problems (and initiate enforcement action where necessary) and queries as they arise. The Access Team deal with the management of Access Land and the administration of Local Access Forums. The Access Officer is also responsible for the management of upland erosion and has led on bidding for external funding for this and Countryside and Rights of Way Act implementation.

In common with all the work of the National Park Authority, their work is governed by conditions of sustainability and conservation, and these conditions will be continued in any proposals for improvements in the Rights of Way Improvement Plan.

2.6.2 The Rights of Way Team liaises with all constituent unitary authorities and interest groups on matters concerning public rights of way, deals with applications for Public Path Orders and Definitive Map Modification Orders. The Public Rights of Way Officer has a budget of £10,000 for publicity which is statutorily required for any orders that need to be made (although applicants pay in certain cases) and for any traffic regulation orders. Orders require a substantial amount of the Team's time as well as approximately 10% of that of the Authority's Solicitor and Legal Assistant.

The Team also advises colleagues, National Park Authority committees and Local Access Forums on matters relating to public rights of way and they organise and undertake rights of way surveys.

2.6.3 The three areas⁵⁴ within the National Park are managed by Area Managers and a team of wardens. The teams' workloads on public rights of way vary from approximately 30% to 60%. This includes day to day management of the network as well as the planning and implementation of repairs.

2.6.4 The teams are already responsible for identifying and implementing certain improvements in the network, implementing an action plan each year and often working closely with officers from constituent unitary authorities and national and local groups and sourcing money from external sources.

External money has already been received for some projects. A recent Upland Erosion Project involved joint working with the National Trust and received funding from Adfywio, for example. The Black Mountains Cross

⁵⁴ There are now two management areas following a review of the Area and Estate Teams as discussed in 2.6.11

Border Demonstration Project was a partnership project involving the Brecon Beacons National Park Authority, the Countryside Council for Wales, the Countryside Agency, Herefordshire County Council, the relevant Local Access Forums and the Disabled Ramblers Association in making improvements to some rights of way linking Access Land in the eastern Black Mountains, including, amongst other things, specific improvements for the disabled.

2.6.5 The National Park Authority also involves volunteers in its public rights of way work. Many are involved in the on-going complete network condition survey; others join working groups to assist with the maintenance of the network. Contractors are also used for some maintenance work and have been involved in the control of upland erosion.

2.6.6 The current annual resource for the management of the entire network and all access areas is shown in Table 12 below. The Rights of Way Section and the Access Section have a combined expenditure budget of £19,000 (excluding staff costs). In addition, budgets for access and public rights of way work for each area team are nominally a maximum of £20,000 (excluding staff costs). In 2006/07 their combined budgets totalled £53,400. Also, £23,600 is derived from some of the constituent unitary authorities as part of the rights of way delegation agreements as detailed in Table 13.

Table 12 Access and Rights of Way Budgets

Budget ¹	2005/06	2006/07
Public Rights of Way Officer	£10,000	£10,000
Access Officer	£9,000	£9,000
Western Area Team	£32,250 ²	£15,000
Central Area Team	£20,400	£20,400
Eastern Area Team	£12,000	£18,000
Total	£83,650.00	£72,400.00

¹ excluding salaries

² income derived from other work undertaken by the team was used to enhance their access budget

Table 13 Unitary Authority Contributions

Unitary Authority	Delegation Agreement Contributions
Powys County Council ¹	£10,000
Monmouthshire County Council ¹	£8,000
Carmarthenshire County Council	£4,000
Rhondda Cynon Taff County Borough Council ¹	£1,000
Merthyr Tydfil County Borough Council ¹	£600
Total	£23,600.00

¹ including Definitive Map Modification Orders

2.6.7 The salary budgets associated with the above work are shown in Table 14 for 2005/06 and Table 15 for 2006/07.

Table 14 Total Salary Budgets 2005/06

Team	Salary Budget
Rights of Way Team	£59750
Access Team	£57760
Western Area Team	£28077
Central Area Team	£35019
Eastern Area team	£61596
Estate Team	£40552
Legal Team ¹	£6508
Total	£289262

¹ Largely work associated with the Definitive Map

Table 15 Total Salary Budgets 2006/07

Team	Salary Budget
Rights of Way Team	£61600
Access Team	£59630
Western Area Team	£28749
Central Area Team	£36588
Eastern Area Team	£63972
Estate Team	£42500
Legal Team ¹	£6700
Total	£299739

¹ Largely work associated with the Definitive Map

2.6.8 Current expenditure is insufficient to maintain the existing rights of way network to an acceptable condition⁵⁵. Changes proposed by this Rights of Way Improvement Plan will require enormous investment, for example, for capital works and changes to the Definitive Map. Subsequently, effected changes will involve future maintenance considerably greater than the current staffing levels and resources. The production of this Rights of Way Improvement Plan is a statutory duty but the implementation of its statement of action is not. Consequently, it will not automatically receive extra funding. The statement of action recognises the need for additional national funding and for the identification of partners and the need to bid for external funding opportunities. The National Park Authority will be seeking partners at a national level but also, for specific projects, on a community level, whether local or community councils or voluntary groups. Current suggestions for sources of funding are listed in 3.1.2 and Appendix 3. The Authority would welcome any voluntary groups within the National Park or any that are associated with, or use, the National Park and who

⁵⁵ See 2.3.4

wish to offer suggestions for partnership for specific improvements to contact us at the address on page 1.

Increased use of National Park volunteers and cooperation and help from other organisations in implementing this Plan may be possible but cannot be taken into account in projected figures.

2.6.9 ExeGesIS⁵⁶ estimate that an annual investment for the next five years of £13.6 million (or approximately £400 per km) is needed to upgrade and maintain the network in the whole of Wales; the sum includes an annual £8.37 million maintenance budget.⁵⁷ They justify this investment by quoting Wales Tourist Board figures which estimate the economic value of the rights of way network to Wales as £548 million.⁵⁸ Using the ExeGesIS figures⁵⁹, the Brecon Beacons National Park Authority, with nearly 2,000 km of rights of way, needs over £1 million to upgrade the network to a satisfactory condition and £500,000 per annum thereafter to maintain it in that condition.

ExeGesIS also made detailed estimates of furniture costs, some of which are shown in Table 16 and can be used as a bench mark (although not allowing for inflation).

Table 16 Standard Furniture Costs⁶⁰ (Includes Materials and Labour)

Type	Longevity (years)	Repair	Replace
Fingerpost	12	£40	£80
Stile	12	£90	£150
Kissing gate	10	£150	£300
Gate	10	£87	£175
Bridge (<2 m span)	10	£200	£800
Bridge (2-5m span)	12	£500	£2,000
Bridge (>5m span)	15	£1,250	£5,000

These, together with current National Park costs as shown in Table 17 have been used to develop the Statement of Action. Costs for legal events vary but an estimated average is £1,500 per diversion, rising to £5,000 to £10,000 if the Order goes to a public Inquiry (National Park Authority costs only - excludes those of the Planning Inspectorate and other participants).

The figures in Table 17 below relate only to the installation of new furniture that is required to bring the existing network up to a satisfactory standard; improvements to the network will require extra furniture, future maintenance and financial commitment to provide resources to replace furniture in line with the longevity in Table 16.

⁵⁶ ExeGesIS Spatial Data Management Ltd. – consultants engaged by CCW

⁵⁷ ExeGesIS CCW Condition Survey Report 10.3

⁵⁸ Ibid.

⁵⁹ Based on 2003 costs

⁶⁰ Ibid. fig. 8.2a Standard Furniture costs , build in renewal / replacement on a 5/10/20 year cycle

Table 17 Brecon Beacons National Park Authority Current Costs for New Furniture (April 2007, All Figures Rounded Up)⁶¹

Type	Labour (includes on-costs) ¹	All materials	Total unit costs	Estimated numbers needed ²	Total costs
Vegetation clearance	40p per metre	N/A	40p per metre	23,750m	£9,500
Way marker ³	£25	£10	£35	678	£23,730
Fingerpost	£25	£50 (includes routing)	£75	1,600 ⁴	£120,000
Stile	£75	£55	£130	350	£45,500
Stile treads			£30	1,330	£39,900
Dog stile ⁵	£95	£25	£120	150	£18,000
Kissing gate (V type)	£145	£50	£195	see right	see below
Kissing Gate (D type)	£175	£62	£237	see right	£31,620 ⁶
Kissing gate) (D type Disabled access)	£200	£75	£275	see right	see above
Gate, all users	£120	£60 (average only, depends on width)	£180	100	£18,000
Bridle gates	£145	£50	£195	250	£48,750
Minor bridges	see right	see right	Average, £6,000	6 per year for next 5 years	£180,000.
Major bridges	see right	see right	£60,000	4	£240,000
					£765,700

¹ e.g. transport² Based on condition survey to date³ Post and discs⁴ This figure includes finger posts needed for Restricted Byways⁵ To be concentrated around communities⁶ This is the total for all types of kissing gates, so the median type and cost has been used

The table above does not take account of repairs that are needed to existing furniture. It is estimated that a total of approximately £120,000 is needed to bring existing furniture up to a satisfactory standard. Therefore

⁶¹ This does not take into account the costs of running the Ffrwdgrech Depot, e.g. transport, clothing, administration for managing work and stock

the total amount of resources needed to bring the existing network up to a satisfactory standard is approximately £892,000.

2.6.10 In addition to statutory work on public rights of way some work has also taken place to combat the problem of erosion on certain upland paths. The Brecon Beacons National Park Upland Erosion Strategy (which is currently at Draft stage) aims to establish the extent of erosion on upland paths in the National Park (not all of them public rights of way), to estimate costs to repair current damage and to undertake works to prevent future problems occurring. The draft strategy illustrates the enormity of the task facing the National Park and others and the vast resources needed.

Table 18 Upland Paths Surveyed, 2006

Priority	Length (m)	% of path length surveyed	Cost (£)	Cost/metre (£)
<i>1 - most urgent</i>	24,562	15.86	1,587,042	65
<i>2</i>	21,522	13.90	684,102	32
<i>3</i>	19,799	12.79	325,994	16
<i>4</i>	29,185	18.85	199,082	7
<i>5 - least urgent</i>	59,784	38.61	204,289	3
Total	154,851	N/A	3,000,508	19¹

¹ average cost

The report concludes that 'Although the cost of repairing paths that are currently in poor condition is significant, comparison with data collected in 1996/97 would suggest that inaction will simply create a greater problem and increased costs in the future.'

A realistic timescale to complete works identified in the survey would be five years, this could provide significant economic and social benefit to the area if, for example, the work were undertaken by locally based contractors or employees in the public sector.

In order to draw maximum benefit from devoting resources to this issue it is argued that a strategic approach is required that takes account of skills and training requirements, developing short, medium and longer term work programmes and links with other areas of work that the National Park Authority is involved in.

2.6.11 During the preparation of the Rights of Improvement Plan a restructure of the Area and Estate Teams was undertaken. This was partly informed by the Rights of Way Improvement Plan process. The aim of the restructure was to provide more warden posts and thereby increase the capacity for works that could be undertaken on the rights of way network and other areas of work for which the Teams have responsibility. The restructure has been accomplished by using savings at managerial level to pay for the employment of additional frontline staff. The new structure is shown at Appendix 5.

2.6.12 Given the enormity of the figures quoted in 2.6.9 and the fact that the amount of resources needed to improve and maintain the accessibility of every right of way in the National Park is unlikely to ever be attainable, combined with the fact that, from a management perspective, there is little sense in attempting to maintain all rights of way to the same standard irrespective of their location, use and condition, the need arises for the Authority to plan and undertake work on the network in a more structured way. To this end it is suggested that the network be divided into a priority driven hierarchy.

It is proposed that the way forward is to identify those rights of way that have the greatest value, or potential value, to communities and visitors. This value may be in terms of contribution to the local economy through tourism, through health benefits or through local use and enjoyment. By prioritising these rights of way for action through a network hierarchy the Authority will be achieving the best value for its investment.

This does not mean that low-priority rights of way can be ignored; the Authority cannot escape its delegated highway authority duties to assert and protect the rights of the public to the use and enjoyment of rights of way and to maintain the rights of way for which it is responsible but a hierarchy will give a priority framework for the sensible targeting of investment.

In recognising the critical dependence of the tourism industry on the accessibility of the countryside, and that the level of maintenance of individual rights of way will vary, the establishment of a network hierarchy becomes an essential next step.

Work on the development of the hierarchy will follow on the completion of this Rights of Way Improvement Plan and will involve detailed discussion and consultation with stakeholders.

2.7 ASSESSMENT OF NEEDS OF CURRENT AND FUTURE USERS

2.7.1 In order to assess what users and potential users wish to use the public rights of way for and, what would encourage them to use the network more, the Brecon Beacons National Park Authority carried out extensive consultations and surveys of access users and groups representing potential users.

Consultees included:

- Local Access Forums
- Area Advisory Forum members
- National Park Authority members
- User groups
- Individual members of the public
- Public consultation at two stages of the Rights of Way Improvement Plan process
- Letters and questionnaires targeted at specific user groups

- Community displays and exhibitions
- Questionnaires at visitor centres, car parks and the Royal Welsh Show

2.7.2 Questionnaires were used which were designed to collect a broad range of information on the following topics:

- knowledge of rights of way within the National Park
- users and their use of the network
- problems encountered
- suitability of the current network
- suggestions for improvement
- understanding/knowledge of Definitive Maps

A map, referred to as a Total Access Map was compiled for the National Park area showing the public rights of way network as well as:

Rural commons
Urban commons
Promoted routes
Dŵr Cymru / Welsh Water land
Land with Forest Access
Permissive paths (largely derived from the Tir Gofal scheme)
Woodland Trust land
National Trust land
Forestry Commission land
Nature Reserves
British Waterways Board land agreements
Local authority owned countryside sites
Brecon Beacons National Park Authority owned land
Land with Brecon Beacons National Park Authority agreements (much of which is now coincidental with Access Land)

This has been used for consultation purposes, for example, at each of the National Park Authority's Local Access Forums, Area Advisory Forums, various public meetings and displays at libraries.

2.7.3 Overall, 90% of those surveyed knew what public rights of way were and 78% knew of and used public rights of way within the National Park. Knowledge varied depending on the location; all respondents at the Mountain Centre and at Carreg Cennen knew what public rights of way were, whereas in Merthyr Tydfil 78% were aware of public rights of way and 65% stated that they used rights of way in the National Park. Over 97% of all of those surveyed made use of the National Park's public rights of way network.

2.7.4 Issues raised in these user consultations and surveys have been used to assess:

1. *Whether provision for one or more class of user is considered to be deficient or is likely to be deficient in the future and indicate the scale of those deficiencies*
2. *Whether the data suggested that there were other shortcomings in provision*⁶²

A relatively small variety of issues were raised and many of the observations, problems and identified short comings were common to all users as shown in Table 19 below.

Table 19 Issues Raised in User Assessments

Issues	Users¹
All public rights of way should be properly maintained and well publicised	all
The Definitive Map should be accurate and up to date	all
The public should have easy access to a map showing the current public rights of way network	all
Public rights of way through gardens and close to dwellings should be diverted whenever possible.	W
Inconsistent classification of public rights of way across administrative boundaries should be resolved.	all
There are insufficient public rights of way for people with limited mobility, with visual impairment or wheelchair users; it was observed that improvements would also benefit pushchair and pram users, cyclists, equestrians, off-road vehicle users	C, W C,H, W MU
There are insufficient public rights of way over Access Land which could result in the area being closed	W, H
Parts of the public rights of way network are fragmented	all
Too many paths lead nowhere	all
There are insufficient circular routes for horse riders and cyclists	H, C
There is insufficient information (maps and leaflets) about public rights of way	all
There is insufficient information on fingerposts	W
People with any kind or degree of disability need information concerning the whole length of a public right of way	D
There is inadequate information concerning legal routes for off-road vehicles	MU, W
A consistent approach to way-marking on the hill is needed	W
Communicating problems on public rights of way could be via the internet	all
Some public rights of way are obstructed	all
Erosion of footpaths is a major problem in some areas	W, H
There is conflict between different users, for example, motorised users and all other users, walkers and horse riders ²	all
Public rights of way are dangerous when they cross roads	W, H
Public rights of way are dangerous when they go alongside a main road	W, H
Public rights of way are dangerous when they are on a road	W, H
More public rights of way for all users need to be developed around villages	all

⁶² Guidance 3.3.1

Connect public rights of way to public transport network	W
Linear walks at various levels should be developed and publicised in conjunction with reliable public transport that operates at weekends.	W, C
More information about car parking facilities in the National Park area and car parking areas with improved facilities	all

¹W - walkers H - horse riders C - cyclists D - disabled users MU - motorised users

²The Walking and Cycling Strategy 2003⁶³ stated that research has shown that conflicts between users are more perceived than actual

2.7.5 In addition, particular problems have been identified by different users:

Walkers

All issues identified by walkers have been identified above.

Horse riders

90% of equestrian respondents considered the facilities for walkers as either very good or good, but only 2% described bridleway provision as very good, with 50% considering such provision as poor or very poor. Assessments have identified a need for more bridleways; more specifically, more circular routes and more links within the bridleway network allowing longer routes for horse riders. The data also identified a need for more access to bridleways from towns within and outside the National Park, particularly the South Wales valleys. It has been suggested that the use of road verges could facilitate some of these needs.

Some progress has already been made for horse riders. The Three Rivers Ride, for example, a promoted route extending from Worcestershire, through Herefordshire and through the National Park, was developed by the British Horse Society and opened in 2005. The Brecon Beacons National Park Authority received an award for equestrian access in 2005 partly related to this project. In addition, development of links into the National Park from the South Wales valleys area are currently being explored. A leaflet entitled 'Black Mountains Riding Loops' recently published by the Authority provides details of five routes that will appeal to riders of all abilities. It brings together information on routes, horse bed and breakfast, horse friendly pubs, picnic sites, trekking centres, viewpoints and horse box parking.

Such ventures have, however, shown that accessing the bridleway and restricted byway network on horseback is difficult. Virtually all the trekking centres within the National Park, for example, are separated from the rideable network necessitating a heavy dependency on the tarmac road network. Whilst improvements have been made to the bridleway network over the past few years (e.g. improving gates, installing horse-friendly latches etc.) the improvements have largely been constrained to furniture

⁶³ Walking and Cycling Strategy 2003, 3.2.7

and surface works on the existing network. No attempts have been made to develop and expand the bridleway network so as to reduce the current dependency on tarmac roads.

Cyclists

There are a variety of cycling activities in the National Park such as mountain biking, touring on roads, utility use, children riding around their home area etc. Cyclists can use bridleways and their expressed needs (identified in the survey) almost mirror those of horse riders, identifying a need for more bridleways and for more dedicated cycle paths, both of which should have more suitable surfaces. Some of the issues raised are included in the Authority's Cycling Strategy which has six core aims for developing cycling for leisure and utility trips in the National Park. The aims most relevant to the Rights of Way Improvement Plan are CA1: maximise the role of cycling as a form of recreation, tourism and transport for residents and visitors to and within the Park; CA2: develop cycle tourism as a significant part of the overall economy of the National Park and its communities; CA3: enhance the cycling infrastructure in the Park to meet the needs of the core potential visitor markets and promoting economic development through sustainable tourism; CA4: enhance supporting infrastructure for cycle tourism and, CA5: increase publicity for cycling for all journey purposes.

Disabled users

There is consensus from most users that there are insufficient public rights of way that meet the needs of wheelchair users, people with limited mobility and for people with visual impairment. Only 2% of respondents considered provision for disabled users to be very good, 20% describing them as good and 75% as poor. All disabled users stressed the need for the removal of barriers to access public rights of way and for the entire route to be considered when improvements are made. Implementation of such improvements will improve provision for all users, including those with children and pushchairs.

More specific identified needs are:

- More information in a variety of formats and better route descriptions
- Tactile way marking for shorter circular routes
- Clearly defined paths
- More car parking
- More car parking areas with improved facilities for disabled people

The Authority has produced a 'Places to Visit with Disabled and Easier Access Guide' which lists over 40 sites, routes and attractions within the National Park that have disabled and easier access. Many of the sites listed were specifically designed or improved to meet the requirements of disabled access. The guide is currently being revised.

The Authority has recently produced a Disability Equality Scheme and Action Plan⁶⁴. From consultation on the scheme the following actions emerged which are included in the Scheme's action plan:

- Improve signage on all easier access sites and routes
- Improve signage for visually impaired people on easier access sites and routes
- Prepare disability equality impact assessments and access statements for all Authority supported walks and routes
- Authority website to exceed minimum standards of visual accessibility

Motorised users

Motorised users stated a need for more legal routes but equally important was the need for widely publicised information about existing legal routes for off-road vehicles within the National Park. They recognised the conflict between motorised and other users but maintained that illegal users cause this perceived conflict and were also responsible for some erosion of paths and tracks.

Farmers and graziers

Many farmers and graziers recognised the importance of public rights of way to various diversification businesses but stressed that improvements should not be at the expense of the natural beauty and character of the National Park. They emphasised the need for early consultation on proposed improvements.

Businesses

These included trekking centres, cycle shops, some caravan sites, guest houses and hotels. They all stressed the importance of public rights of way to their businesses with some, for example, trekking centres, being more specific in their comments and recognising the need for more accessible bridleways.

Non-users and latent demand

Some factors identified that may be contributing towards the non-use of public rights of way in the National Park are insufficient circular routes for horse riders and cyclists; insufficient information on fingerposts and in the form of maps and leaflets; rights of way being obstructed and rights of way being dangerous in the vicinity of roads.

In the South East Wales Visitor Survey 2005⁶⁵ respondents were asked which types or routes or facilities would increase their likelihood of carrying out those activities in the National Park:

⁶⁴ Disability Equality Scheme and Action Plan 2006 - 2009

⁶⁵ Research and Marketing Ltd. February 2006

- Walking

38.1% of respondents considered that short themed walks would make them much more likely to walk in the National Park and 45.1% considered that easy to follow walks would have the same influence.

- Cycling

41.2% of respondents considered that easy off road routes for the family would make them much more likely to cycle in the National Park and 54% considered that safe routes on country lanes would have the same influence.

- Horse riding

57% of respondents considered that high quality riding routes would make them much more likely to horse ride in the National Park.

Some of these issues are already being addressed. For example, a booklet of short Wildlife Walks was published by the Authority in 2006 and a leaflet of horse riding routes in the Black Mountains was published recently. A publication including family cycling routes is currently being prepared.

2.7.6 Despite extensive consultation, there was a large degree of consensus expressed by respondents on most issues. However, the following conflicting views were expressed on two particular issues:

- Lost Ways

- Identify and claim all lost ways after publication of Rights of Way Improvement Plan
- Concentrate resources on the existing network and, subject to resources, deal with lost ways claims as they are made

- Establish a hierarchy of routes within the public rights of way network

- Perform all statutory duties for all public rights of way but create a hierarchy of paths for prioritising maintenance and improvements.
- All paths to be treated equally

The Brecon Beacons National Park Authority has made clear statements on these issues based on a majority of opinions derived from surveys, advice from the Local Access Forums and also on the practicalities of implementing improvements and managing the public rights of way network.

THE BRECON BEACONS NATIONAL PARK AUTHORITY WILL NOT DELIBERATELY SEEK OUT LOST WAYS BUT WILL SEEK RESOURCES TO IMPLEMENT THE APPROPRIATE SYSTEM TO INVESTIGATE AND PROCEED WITH ALL VALID CLAIMS.

THE BRECON BEACONS NATIONAL PARK AUTHORITY WILL CREATE A RIGHTS OF WAY HIERARCHY TO MANAGE THE NETWORK AND PRIORITISE MAINTENANCE AND IMPROVEMENTS.

2.7.7 Opportunities

A number of National Park Authority plans and strategies have already identified that improvements in the public rights of way network are necessary to achieve many of their aims. This Plan, therefore, is an opportunity for the National Park Authority to integrate work from several of its strategies and plans that are in progress.

2.7.8 Some improvements have already been made, for example, some projects have already been implemented and have involved partnership and cross border working and involvement with groups representing users on both national and local levels.⁶⁶

2.7.9 The Rights of Way Improvement Plan now gives the National Park Authority the opportunity to plan strategically for improvements over the whole network and for areas of Access Land. It is also a statutory document which should be used to argue for essential resources to implement such improvements.

The implementation of improvements will be integrated into annual work programmes and the Authority will ensure that its existing duties continue to be fulfilled.⁶⁷

2.7.10 Conclusions from assessments

The following conclusions have been derived from the assessments undertaken:

- There is a need for more circular and connecting routes of varying lengths around identified hubs with particular focus on social inclusion and making routes accessible for all
- There is a need for specific routes / sites to be upgraded to make them accessible to all users
- Some of the furniture on public rights of way within the National Park needs renewal or repairs to make it suitable for all users
- There is a need to improve signs and furniture where rights of way meet main roads

⁶⁶ Guidance 6.6

⁶⁷ Guidance 2.7

- There is a need for information concerning legal routes for motorised users
- There is a need to make the Definitive Map more easily available to members of the public
- There is a need to review the Definitive Map and deal with all the anomalies
- More use of the internet is needed to provide information and report problems and complaints
- There is a need for improved links between public transport and the public rights of way network
- There is a need for more information about car parking facilities in the National Park area
- There is a need to prioritise rights of way maintenance and improvement
- There is a need for a schedule of vegetation clearance (linked with the rights of way hierarchy)
- There is a need for a system of monitoring and dealing with erosion on public rights of way and paths across Access Land
- Permissive paths created under agri-environment schemes should be made more available to the public and link with the rights of way network

PART 3

3.0 STATEMENT OF ACTION FOR THE MANAGEMENT AND IMPROVEMENT OF THE PUBLIC RIGHTS OF WAY NETWORK

3.1.1 Introduction

The proposed improvements are intended for all users of the public rights of way network within the National Park.

Implementation of the Key Actions will be by means of annual plans with specific targets.

As outlined below, this Action Plan is consistent with policies in addition to those described in Part 2.2, Strategic Context for the Management and Improvement of Rights of Way.

Where appropriate, funding for all key actions must be sought immediately after publication of this Rights of Way Improvement Plan. The actions can only be implemented if funding is available.

Some specific costs have been included. These do not take inflation into account but include Brecon Beacons National Park Authority costs where additional staff are required.

Although an indication of priority has been given in some instances in the Statement of Action, prioritisation of specific suggestions will be undertaken by National Park Authority countryside staff on the adoption of this Rights of Way Improvement Plan. Consultation and negotiation will then take place concerning the implementation of specific improvements. It will be essential, for instance, to consult with landowners and occupiers prior to developing any specific plans.

3.1.2 KEY

Benefits

- A Provide an inclusive countryside access network
- B Improve the condition of the existing network and access provision to modern standards
- C Provide reliable information to increase people's awareness, appreciation and responsible enjoyment of the countryside
- D Provide a network which will enhance tourism and economic prosperity
- E Promote a healthy lifestyle
- F Provide opportunities for and promotion of sustainable access to the countryside.
- G Improve land management
- H Provide reliable and accurate information regarding the countryside access network

- I Promote and maintain access arrangements and management that are compatible with biodiversity and conservation of the environment

Partners⁶⁸

ACU	Auto Cycle Union
ATE	Army Training Estate
BCs	Bus Companies
BDA	British Driving Association
BG	Blaenau Gwent County Borough Council
BBPS	Brecon Beacons Park Society
BHS	British Horse Society
C	Carmarthenshire County Council
CCs	Community Councils
CCW	Countryside Council for Wales
CTC	Cyclists Touring Club
DASG	BBNPA Disabled Access Steering Group
DC/WW	Dŵr Cymru/Welsh Water
DR	Disabled Ramblers
FC	Forestry Commission
FUs	Farming Unions
GTs	Groundwork Trusts
HAC	Honourable Artillery Company
L	Landowners and occupiers of land
LAFs	Local Access Forums
LARA	Land Access Recreation Association
M	Monmouthshire County Council
MT	Merthyr Tydfil County Borough Council
NT	National Trust
OSS	Open Spaces Society
P	Powys County Council
PAROW	Planning, Access and Rights of Way Committee (BBNPA)
RA	Ramblers' Association
RCT	Rhondda Cynon Taff County Borough Council
T	Torfaen County Borough Council
TCs	Train Companies
TICs	Tourist Information Centres
TRF	Trail Riders Federation
UAs	Unitary Authorities
UGs	User Groups
WAG	Welsh Assembly Government

Sources of Finance⁶⁹

BBNPA	Brecon Beacons National Park Authority
CCs	Community Councils

⁶⁸ not an exhaustive list - additional partners may be added as circumstances dictate

⁶⁹ not an exhaustive list - additional sources of finances may be added/become accessible as circumstances dictate

CCW	Countryside Council for Wales
DC/WW	Dŵr Cymru/Welsh Water
FC	Forestry Commission
HLF	Heritage Lottery Fund
NT	National Trust
SDF	Sustainability Development Fund
UAs	Unitary Authorities
WAG	Welsh Assembly Government

Estimated Costs

†	Some extra staff time required
† †	Significant extra staff time required
£	Less than £5,000 per annum
££	£5,000 to £10,000 per annum
£££	£10,000 to £25,000 per annum
££££	£25,000 to £50,000 per annum
£££££	More than £50,000 per annum

Link to Policies

CH	Climbing Higher
CS	Community Strategy
DASGAP	BBNPA Disabled Access Steering Group Action Plan
LTP	Local Transport Plan
NPCS	BBNPA Cycling Strategy
NPINFS	BBNPA Information Strategy
NPINTS	BBNPA Interpretation Strategy
NPMP	National Park Management Plan
NPWTS	BBNPA Walking Tourism Strategy
NPUES	BBNP Upland erosion strategy (draft)
UDP	Unitary Development Plan
WES	Wales Environment Strategy
WTS	Wales Transport Strategy

STATEMENT OF ACTION

SOA1		Monitoring and Assessment of Rights of Way Improvement Plan							
Ref	Action	Benefits	Partners	Sources of finance	Estimated Costs				Links to Policies
					Y1	Y2	Y3-5	Y6-10	
1.1	Establish procedure to report on the implementation of the ROWIP		LAFs All UAs	BBNPA					
Establish procedure through consultation with the LAFs and PAROW									
1.2	Prepare report on the implementation of the ROWIP	AB	LAFs All UAs	BBNPA					
Annual report to be prepared and presented to the LAFs and PAROW									
1.3	Establish procedure for 5 year review of the ROWIP		LAFs All UAs	BBNPA					
Establish procedure through consultation with the LAFs and PAROW									
1.4	Undertake 5 year review of the ROWIP	AB	All	BBNPA					
£ £									

SOA2	Improvements to the Public Rights of Way Network
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Ref	Action	Benefits	Partners	Sources of finance	Estimated Costs				Links to Policies
					Y1	Y2	Y3-5	Y6-10	
2.1	Establish a hierarchy of routes within the PROW network	ABDEFGI	UAs, CCs, UGs, LAFs, L	BBNPA	£	£			NPWTS
2.2	Raise the % of the PROW network that is easy to use to 65% by 2013	ABCDEFH	UAs, UGs, DASG, LAFs, CCW, L, WAG, CCs	BBNPA, UAs, UGs, DASG, CCW, WAG, CCs					
Considerable additional resources will be required to increase the target beyond this figure									
2.3	Identify and implement circular and connecting routes within the network.	ABDEFGI	CCs, LAFs, UAs, UGs, L	BBNPA, WAG, CCW, UAs, CCs	£	£	£	£	UDP
Particular attention will be given to routes around communities and sites of historic, archaeological, environmental or visitor interest and routes for cyclists and horse riders									
2.4	Identify and implement routes and sites where barriers for disabled people can be removed where reasonably practical	ABDEFGI	DASG, CCs, LAFs, UAs, DR, UGs, L	BBNPA, WAG, CCW, UAs, CCs	£	£	£		DASGAP
Work with disabled groups, in particular DASG and DR with the intention of having 100 kms of barrier free routes by 2013									
2.5	Replace furniture as necessary using the principle of least restrictive option where reasonably practical	ABDEFGI	UAs, CCs, UGs, DASG, LAFs, L	BBNPA, CCW, UAs	£	£	£		
BBNPA seeks to follow BSI Guidelines for furniture and will encourage landowners to do the same									
2.6	Renew or replace waymarkers and fingerposts as necessary, improving information depicted on fingerposts wherever possible and appropriate	ABCDEFH	UAs, CCs, UGs, DASG, LAFs, L	BBNPA, CCW, UAs	£	£	£		
Priority to be given to higher category routes under the hierarchy									
2.7	Compile a schedule of routes for periodic vegetation clearance	ABDEFGI	UAs, CCs, UGs, LAFs, L	BBNPA	£				
To be linked with the criteria contained in the ROW hierarchy									
TABLE CONTINUED ON NEXT PAGE									

SOA2 Improvements to the Public Rights of Way Network (Continued)

Ref	Action	Benefits	Partners	Sources of finance	Estimated Costs				Links to Policies
					Y1	Y2	Y3-5	Y6-10	
2.8	Take positive steps to implement the BBNP upland erosion strategy	BDEFGI	NT, CCW, LAFs, L, DC/WW, HAC, FUs, OSS, RA, BBPS	BBNPA, WAG, CCW, HLF	£ £ £ £ £	£ £ £ £ £	£ £ £ £ £	£ £ £ £ £	CH, CS, NPWTS, NPUES
To be considered in the BBNPA Upland Erosion Strategy									
2.9	Replace bridges as necessary in accordance with the hierarchy	ABDEFGI	UAs, DASG, LAFs, L, UGs, CCs	BBNPA, UAs	£ £ £ £	£ £ £ £	£ £ £ £	£ £ £ £	
Bridges will be made suitable for disabled users wherever reasonably practical									
2.10	Enter all information derived from rights of way network survey into the Authority's ROW database	ABDFGH		BBNPA, UAs	£ £	£ £			

SOA3	Improvements in the Provision of Information					
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Ref	Action	Benefits	Partners	Sources of finance	Estimated Costs				Links to Policies
					Y1	Y2	Y3-5	Y6-10	
3.1	Provide more information in a variety of accessible formats	ABCDH	WAG, CCW, DASG, TICs, UAs, CCs, LAFs,		£	£	£	£	DASGAP NPINFS NPINTS NPWTS DDA
Ensure that information complies with the Disability Discrimination Act 2005 and meets the needs of all current and potential users									
3.2	Establish an Access and Rights of Way section on the BBNPA website	CH			£	£	£		
Include an up to date map showing all registered PROW, Access Land, and other access opportunities									
3.3	Set up electronic method of reporting PROW problems.	ABDGH			£				
Incorporate this into BBNPA website									
3.4	Provide information on routes for off-road vehicles on BBNPA website	CDGHI	LARA, TRF, ACU, UAs, LAFs, UGs,	BBNPA	£				
Publish map showing vehicular routes in the National Park									
3.5	Provide information on position and extent of parking areas and associated facilities.	ACDGH	TICs, UAs, CCs, LAFs, L, FC, DC/WW, NT	BBNPA	£	£	£	£	LTPs
Information to be provided on BBNPA website and other publications as appropriate									
3.6	Identify information regarding public transport links to BBNPA promoted routes and incorporate into Authority publications	ACDEF	BCs, TCs,	BBNPA, BCs, TCs, WAG					LTPs, NPWTS, NPCPS,

SOA4	Improvements to Definitive Map and Statement
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Ref	Action	Benefits	Partners	Sources of finance	Estimated Costs				Links to Policies
					Y1	Y2	Y3-5	Y6-10	
4.1	In cooperation with the UAs bring the Definitive Map and Statement up to date	CDGH	UAs	BBNPA, UAs	£	£	£	£	
	Update Definitive Map and Statement from parish system to community system and republish on modern Ordnance Survey base maps								
4.2	Identify and resolve all anomalies on the Definitive Map and Statement	CDGH	UAs, L, LAFs, CCs, UGs	BBNPA, UAs	£	£	£	£	
4.3	Clear backlog of Definitive Map Modification Orders.	CDGH	UAs, L, LAFs, CCs, UGs	BBNPA, UAs	£	£	£	£	
	Including any future applications for lost ways								
4.4	Clear backlog of Public Path Orders	BCDGH	UAs, L, LAFs, CCs, UGs	BBNPA, L	£	£	£		
4.5	Deal with exceptions to the NERC Act as they arise	CGH	UGs, CCs, P, M, BG, LAFs, L	BBNPA	£	£			
	Work with User Groups to identify routes that are likely to be exceptions								
4.6	Compile and publish statutory register of DMMOs	H		BBNPA	£				
	Compile, keep and publish a register in accordance with section 53B of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 and make it available on the Authority's website and at the Authority's head office								
4.7	Compile and publish statutory register of PPOs	H			£				
	Compile, keep and publish a register in accordance with section 121B of the Highways Act 1980 and make it available on the Authority's website and at the Authority's head office								
4.8	Compile and publish statutory register of statements deposited and declarations lodged	H			£				
	Compile, keep and publish a register in accordance with section 31A of the Highways Act 1980 and make it available on the Authority's website and at the Authority's head office								

SOA5	Improvement of Public Access through Agri-Environment Schemes
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Ref	Action	Benefits	Partners	Sources of finance	Estimated Costs				Links to Policies
					Y1	Y2	Y3-5	Y6-10	
5.1	Negotiate additions to the access network through the Tir Gofal scheme	ABDEFGI	WAG		♿	♿	♿	♿	
Undertake during initial round of consultations with a view to providing circular routes, links and disabled access.									
5.2	Encourage partners to adequately publicise these additions	ABCDEF HI	WAG, LAFs, UAs, L, UGs, FUs		♿	♿	♿	♿	
Work with partners to ensure that information regarding permissive access is easily available both electronically and in situ.									

SOA6	Parking for Disabled People and the Integration of Public Transport and Public Access
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Ref	Action	Benefits	Partners	Sources of finance	Estimated Costs				Links to Policies
					Y1	Y2	Y3-5	Y6-10	
6.1	Identify suitable areas for establishment of more dedicated car parking spaces for disabled people.	A	DASG, UAs, CCs, LAFs, L, FC, DC/WW, NT	BBNPA, WAG, UAs,	♿				LTPs, DASGAP
6.2	Implement improvements identified in 6.1 wherever reasonably practical	A	DASG, UAs, CCs, LAFs, L, FC, DC/WW, NT	BBNPA, WAG, UAs, CCs, L, FC, DC/WW, NT		£	£	£	LTPs, DASGAP
6.3	Liaise with bus companies to provide links to promoted routes and rights of way	ACDEF	BCs,	BBNPA, BCs, TCs	♿	♿	♿	♿	LTPs, NPWTS, NPCS,

APPENDIX 1

List of consultees for the Brecon Beacons National Park Authority Draft Rights of Way Improvement Plan

Action for the Disabled
Age Concern
Agents for Cnewr Estate
Agents for Duke of Beaufort's Estate
Agents for Glanusk Estate
Agents for Tregoes Estate
Alcoholics Anonymous UK
All Wales Ethnic Minority Association
All Wheel Drive Club
Alzheimer's Society
Association of Outdoor Education Centres
Autism Cymru
Auto Cycle Union
Black Environment Network
Blaenau Gwent County Borough Council
Brecon & District Disabled Club
Brecon Beacons Environmental Charter Group
Brecon Beacons National Park Authority Central Area Advisory Forum
Brecon Beacons National Park Authority Disabled Access Group
Brecon Beacons National Park Authority Eastern Area Advisory Forum
Brecon Beacons National Park Authority Western Area Advisory Forum
Brecon Beacons National Park Central Area Local Access Forum
Brecon Beacons National Park Eastern Area Local Access Forum
Brecon Beacons National Park Western Area Local Access Forum
Brecon Beacons Park Society
British Cycling Federation
British Driving Society (Wales)
British Gas Transco
British Heart Foundation
British Horse Society
British Mountaineering Council
British Telecom
British Trust for Conservation Volunteers (Cymru)
British Trust for Ornithology
British Upland Footpath Trust
British Waterways Board (+ Abergavenny Group)
Byways and Bridleways Trust
Cadw
Caerphilly County Borough Council
Cambrian Caving Council
Caravan Club
Carmarthenshire County Council
Central Council for Physical Recreation
Clwyd & Powys Archaeological Trust
Coed Cadw (Woodland Trust Wales)
Community Health Exercise and Sport Science
Council for National Parks
Countryside Agency

Countryside Council for Wales
Country Land and Business Association
Council for the Protection of Rural Wales
Crickhowell 21
Cyclists Touring Club
Dementia Services Development Centre Wales
Depression Alliance Cymru
Dinefwr Ramblers
Disability Wales
Disabled Access Group - Abergavenny
Disabled Access Group - Brecon
Disabled Access Group - Caerphilly
Disabled Access Group - Llandeilo
Disabled Access Group - Merthyr Tydfil
Disabled Drivers Association
Disabled Persons Transport Advisory Committee
Disabled Ramblers Association
Duke of Edinburgh's Award Scheme
Dŵr Cymru/Welsh Water
Dyfed Powys Police
Dyfed Ramblers
English Nature Conservation
Environment Agency, Wales
Farmers Union of Wales
Farming and Wildlife Advisory Group
Federation of Sports Associations for the Disabled
Federation for the Blind
Forestry Commission (Wales)
Forest Enterprise
Forum for Motorised Sport in Wales
GGAT (Glamorgan Gwent Archaeological Trust)
Girlguiding (Wales)
Glamorgan Off-Road Club
Green Lanes Association
Groundwork Wales
Groundwork Merthyr, Cynon Taff
Gwent Disabled motorists
Gwent Wildlife Trust
Health Promotion Service - Brecon
Health Promotion Service - Merthyr Tydfil
Health Promotion Service - Rhondda Cynon Taff
Health Promotion Service - Pembrokeshire and Carmarthenshire
Honourable Artillery Company
Institute of Rural Health, Gregynog
Keep Wales Tidy
LARA (Land, Access and Recreation Association)
Long Distance Walkers Association
Manic Depression Fellowship Wales
Mencap Cymru
Mental Health Alliance
Mental Health Wales
Mentro Allan - Blaenavon
Mentro Allan - Merthyr Tydfil
Merthyr Tydfil County Borough Council
Merthyr Tydfil Naturalists

Mind - Cymru
Mid and West Wales Fire Brigade
Ministry of Defence, Estates
Model Aircraft Society
Monmouthshire County Council
Mosaic Partnership
National Access Forum
National Farmers Union
National Federation for the Blind
National Federation of Bridleway Associations
National Grid
National Trust
Neath Port Talbot County Borough Council
Offa's Dyke Path Officer
Open Spaces Society
Pembrokeshire Coast National Park Authority
Powys County Council
Ramblers Association
Rhondda Cynon Taff County Borough Council
Richmond Fellowship
Royal Commission for Ancient and Historic Monuments (Wales)
Royal National Institute for the Blind, Cymru
Royal Mail Property Holdings
Royal Society for the Protection of Birds, Wales
Snowdonia National Park Authority
South East Wales Hang Gliding and Paragliding Club
South Wales Fire Service
Sports Council for Wales
SUSTRANS Cymru
SWALEC
Torfaen County Borough Council
Tregoeed Mountain Riders
Visual Impairment Brecon
Wales Centre for Health
Wales Council for the Blind
Wales Council for the Deaf
Wales Council for Voluntary Action
Wales Federation of Young Farmers Clubs
Wales Scouts Council
Wales Sports Association
Wales Tourist Board
Wales Trekking and Riding Association
Welsh Ambulance Service
Welsh Assembly Government
Welsh Association of National Park Associations
Welsh Canoeing Association
Welsh Cycling Union
Welsh Federation of Young Farmers Clubs
Welsh Orienteering Association
Welsh Trail Riders Association
Wildlife Trust - Brecknock
Wildlife Trust - Gwent
Wildlife Trust - South and West Wales
Youth Hostel Association
Ystradgynlais Arthritis Group

Ystradgynlais Walking Group

Community Councils within the National Park

Graziers/commoners associations within the National Park

Trekking Centres within the National Park

Welsh Assembly Members and Members of Parliament representing areas within the National Park

Youth Hostels within the National Park

APPENDIX 2

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APPENDIX 3

Possible sources of funding and partners⁷⁰

Welsh Assembly Government

Transport Grant (e.g. Safer Routes to School)
Environmental Development Fund
Local Authority Revenue Support Budget
Local Authority Capital Settlement
Communities First (where relevant)
Local Regeneration Funds (where relevant)
Inequalities in Health Fund

European Commission

European Structural Funds (ESF and ERDF, Objective 1 and 2 where relevant)

Public and Private Sector

Other Local Authorities
Countryside Council for Wales
Welsh Development Agency (or future equivalent)
Wales Tourist Board (or future equivalent)
Forestry Commission
Forest Enterprise
National Trust
Dŵr Cymru/Welsh Water
Environment Agency
Honourable Artillery Company

Lottery

Sports Lottery
Heritage lottery Funds
New Opportunity Fund / Enfys

Voluntary Sector

Groundwork Trusts
Sustrans
Cycling Tourists Club Cymru
Ramblers Association
Open Spaces Society
British Horse Society
Brecon Beacons Park Society

⁷⁰ not an exhaustive list - additional sources of funding and partners may be added/become accessible as circumstances dictate

APPENDIX 4

Survey of the rights of way network

The survey of the network identifies:-

- The ease of use of the network and its availability to different types of users, including those with mobility and visual impairments
- The nature and scale of any problems with the rights of way network
- Where improvements in the maintenance of local rights of way can increase the use and accessibility of routes
- The staff and financial resources required to properly maintain and improve the network for the benefit of the public

The survey includes surveying and reporting on:

- The status of each public right of way
- The condition of the surface of the path
- Whether each path on the ground is
 - open
 - easy to use
 - sign posted from a road
 - adequately way-marked
 - the same as the line on the Definitive Map
- The existence and condition of all necessary furniture:
 - sign posts
 - way markers
 - stiles
 - dog stiles
 - kissing gates
 - gates
 - bridges

Data on necessary furniture repairs or replacements is recorded as are obstructions, including fences, barbed wire, hedges, walls, or buildings; the extent of use is estimated as is the minimum width.

Easy to use defined as:

- Signposted or waymarked where they leave the road in accordance with the Authority's duty under section 27 of the Countryside Act 1968 and to the extent necessary to allow users to follow the path (a public right of way wholly within a built up area and with a hard surface provided along its complete length and with a clearly defined route may be excluded from measurement).
- Free from unlawful obstructions and other interference (including overhanging vegetation) 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.

APPENDIX 5
New structure of the Wardens Section as at April 2007





