

<b>Subject:</b>	<b>Rights of Way Improvement Plan</b>		
<b>Date of Meeting:</b>	<b>23<sup>rd</sup> January 2018</b>		
<b>Report of:</b>	<b>Executive Director Economy, Environment &amp; Culture</b>		
<b>Contact Officer:</b>	<b>Name:</b>	<b>Chantelle Hoppe</b>	<b>Tel: 01273 290393</b>
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<b>Ward(s) affected:</b>	<b>All</b>		

**FOR GENERAL RELEASE.**

**1. PURPOSE OF REPORT AND POLICY CONTEXT**

- 1.1 The Committee are being provided with the draft Rights of Way Improvement Plan [ROWIP] which officers have produced in consultation with the Local Access Forum and other stakeholders.
- 1.2 The plan identifies aims for improved provision for walkers, cyclists, horse riders and those with mobility issues on our rights of way network.

**2. RECOMMENDATIONS:**

- 2.1 That the committee approve wider consultation on the draft Rights of Way Improvement Plan

**3. CONTEXT/ BACKGROUND INFORMATION**

- 3.1 Through the Countryside and Rights of Way Act, 2000 (section 60) the government recognises the value of public rights of way and requires each highways authority to produce a Rights of Way Improvement Plan.
- 3.2 The ROWIP must be reviewed at intervals of not more than 10 years. The last ROWIP was produced in 2007; this is the 10 year review document.
- 3.3 The ROWIP must explain how improvements made by the local authority to the public rights of way network in the area will provide a better experience for the users listed above.
- 3.4 Five main aims have been identified for improving access in and around the city:
  - Improve accessibility for diverse users in Brighton & Hove
  - Make information on the rights of way network and access to green spaces more accessible
  - Improve connectivity to green spaces within the city

- Work with SDNPA and neighbouring authorities to reduce severance and improve access to the National Park and key areas of The Living Coast Biosphere
- Improve the connectivity of the existing rights of way network and access opportunities  
(*Priorities, aims and objectives can be viewed in Chapter 7 of the report, p.34*)

3.5 In order to achieve many of these aims it would be necessary to secure funding in addition to current maintenance budgets.

#### **4. ANALYSIS & CONSIDERATION OF ANY ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS**

4.1 No alternative options have been put forward at this stage. The document contains a list of aspirational improvements to the rights of way network. This plan sets out objectives and actions in a broad sense. Potential partners and funding opportunities may require a reasonably flexible approach in order to achieve improvements across the network.

#### **5. COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT & CONSULTATION**

5.1 The draft document was circulated to the Local Access Forum. We met in October to discuss their feedback. Their comments have been incorporated into the Plan.

5.2 Internal consultation has been carried out with various departments: Planning, Highways, Sustainability, Tourism, Seafront, Biosphere, Parks Projects and Central Policy.

5.3 Once the Plan is approved by ETS Committee a wider external consultation will take place. This will include organisations: South Downs National Park Authority, Natural England, East and West Sussex County Councils (as our highways neighbours), the National Trust and Sussex Wildlife Trust.

5.4 A public consultation will also be held over a 12 week period – with the ROWIP advertised in two local newspapers.

5.5 Following consultation the ROWIP will be brought back to the ETS Committee for approval.

#### **6. CONCLUSION**

6.1 The draft ROWIP has been written in consultation with our Local Access Forum and with advice from other internal departments.

6.2 To progress the further external consultation on the draft ROWIP it is asked that the committee approve the document for wider circulation.

6.3 Once the consultation process is complete the authority can start to implement the Plan to improve our rights of way and access provision.

## 7. FINANCIAL & OTHER IMPLICATIONS:

### Financial Implications:

- 7.1 The consultation costs included in the report recommendations will be met from existing revenue budgets within CityParks.
- 7.2 Projected costs of the various actions outlined have been estimated in Table 1 at the end of the report. Where possible, recommended actions will be carried out using existing staff and resources within CityParks revenue budgets. Recommended actions with higher costs will require additional budgets, therefore external funding will be sought either through funding bids such as The Changing Chalk bid with the National Trust, or through developer contributions (section 106 or Community Infrastructure Levy).
- 7.3 Capital expenditure will require further approval from Policy, Resources and Growth committee as part of the Targeted Budget Monitoring process.

*Finance Officer Consulted: Gemma Jackson*

*Date: 07/12/17*

### Legal Implications:

- 7.4 Under section 60 Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000 every local highway authority must review its ROWIP at intervals of not more than ten years. Government Guidance on Local Transport Plans provides that ROWIPs are to be incorporated in to Local Transport Plans to ensure that rights of way are recognised as part of the transport network.
- 7.5 The actions detailed in this report will assist in demonstrating that the Council is complying with its obligations under the Countryside and Rights of Way Act and the Guidance on Local Transport Plans.

*Lawyer Consulted: Stephanie Stammers*

*Date: 5 December 2017*

### Equalities Implications:

- 7.6 One of the main drivers for the ROWIP is to improve accessibility of the network for all users, including blind and partially sighted people and those with mobility issues. Every improvement will be assessed; adhering to the principals of 'least restrictive access'. Actions include removing obstacles, looking at public transport links to the network, more multi-user paths, and looking at ways to encourage minority groups to access the network (e.g. guided walks).

### Sustainability Implications:

- 7.7 Another important driver for the Plan is to contribute towards Highways objectives of reducing carbon emissions through encouraging low carbon / sustainable travel choices – particularly walking and cycling; by improving the infrastructure for walkers and cyclists.

### Any Other Significant Implications:

- 7.8 There are many national drivers for improved access to green space. Outdoor activity delivers an estimated £2.2 billion of health benefits in England each year. When green space is used more regularly antisocial behaviour and vandalism are reduced in the area. Improvements to Rights of Way fit with objectives of many national, regional and local strategies e.g. Natural Environment White Paper (2012), South Downs National Park Authority Walking & Cycling Strategy, the Local Transport Plan for Brighton & Hove (2015). *The other strategies the ROWIP helps deliver are outlined in Chapter 2 of the ROWIP (p. 8 – 17).*

## **SUPPORTING DOCUMENTATION**

### **Appendices:**

1. None

### **Documents in Members' Rooms**

1. The Rights of Way Improvement Plan, 2017 (Draft 3)\*
2. Appendix Document to the Rights of Way Improvement Plan, 2017\*

\*(Copies sent to Members and published separately on the Council website)

### **Background Documents**

1. None