

Foreword

Welcome to the Rights of Way Improvement Plan for West Sussex. The Plan identifies the actions that need to be done to improve access to the countryside for residents of, and visitors to, West Sussex. It reflects both Government and County Council ambitions.

The Plan is the result of extensive consultation with users, land managers, access providers, the Countryside Access Forum for West Sussex and the general public. The concerns, aspirations and ideas of all these people have contributed to the document. It identifies that, on the whole, the rights of way network in West Sussex is well managed, but, being founded on the routes travelled by our ancestors, it does not always meet the needs and demands of users and land managers today. Users, such as walkers, cyclists, horse riders and carriage drivers, were particularly concerned about the safety and connectivity of the access network and improvements to the access infrastructure will be needed to release its full potential. There is also work to be done to encourage those who lack the confidence and knowledge to go out and explore the countryside and experience the beauty of the West Sussex landscape.

In West Sussex it has long been recognised that in addition to enabling people to enjoy the countryside, the rights of way network provides sustainable options for travelling to school, to work and to local services. It also contributes to people being able to lead a healthy lifestyle – the physical and mental benefits of regular exercise and of visiting the countryside are well documented. Finally, the contribution that visits to the countryside make to the rural economy cannot be overlooked. All these are acknowledged within this Plan.

We are lucky to have a variety of beautiful landscapes that attract visitors and local people alike into the countryside. Maintaining and improving access for all users is fundamental to enable people to enjoy West Sussex to the full. Many organisations will be involved with delivering improved access, however without additional resources the opportunities to make these aspirations a reality will be limited; finding new sources of funding for rights of way improvements is one of the main challenges we face in the future.



A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Louise Goldsmith". The signature is written in a cursive style and is underlined with a single horizontal stroke.

Louise Goldsmith
Cabinet Member for Environment and Economy
West Sussex County Council

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1 Introduction

- 1.1 The West Sussex public rights of way network, comprising footpaths, bridleways, restricted byways and byways open to all traffic, is a major recreational resource and forms a part of our cultural heritage. It enables people to enjoy the beauty and tranquillity of large parts of the countryside to which they would not otherwise have access. Rights of way are becoming more important as they provide safe, traffic free alternatives to increasingly busy roads and lanes, which, with increases in volume and speed of traffic on them are becoming unpleasant and sometimes dangerous places for walkers, cyclists, equestrians and carriage drivers.
- 1.2 Local rights of way are used as part of everyday life for both recreation and communication needs. They are valued by the many people who use them to access services including shops, workplaces, educational and health facilities or to reach public transport. They are also treasured by many who use them for a wide range of leisure purposes including enjoying the fresh air, appreciating wildlife and the landscape, improving fitness and well-being, exploring on foot, by bike or by horse and walking the dog.
- 1.3 The location and status of public rights of way as they exist today are essentially based on historical usage, and therefore do not always reflect the access needs that people have today or are likely to have in the future. To address this, West Sussex County Council (WSSCC), along with all other highway authorities, is required by the Countryside and Rights of Way (CROW) Act 2000, to produce and publish a Rights of Way Improvement Plan (RoWIP).
- 1.4 In addition to the rights of way network there are a variety of other ways people can access the countryside, including using open access land and permissive routes on private land as well as that owned by public and charitable bodies. To meet the needs of a wide range of users, including walkers, cyclists and equestrians, as well as those with mobility problems, the full access network must be considered.

2 What is a Rights of Way Improvement Plan?

- 2.1 A RoWIP is a 10-year strategic document that is required to contain:
- an assessment of the extent to which the local rights of way meet the present and likely future needs of the public
 - an assessment of the opportunities provided by local rights of way for exercise and other forms of outdoor recreation and enjoyment
 - an assessment of the accessibility of the local rights of way to blind and partially sighted people and others with mobility problems
 - a statement of action proposed for the management of local rights of way and for securing an improved network of local rights of way, with particular regard to the matters dealt with in the assessment.
- 2.2 Section 60(5) of the CRoW Act 2000 defines 'local rights of way' as including footpaths, cycle tracks¹, bridleways, restricted byways and byways open to all traffic.
- 2.3 Defra's Rights of Way Improvement Plans; Statutory Guidance to Local Highway Authorities in England states that the plan should not contain information on site-specific assessments but draw broader, generic conclusions that can be used to draw up an action plan for delivery on the ground.
- 2.4 Highway authorities, such as WSCC, have a duty to consult with any Local Access Forum (LAF) established for their area before preparing their RoWIP. The CRoW Act 2000 placed a duty on each authority to set up a LAF with a wide role in advising on strategic access and recreational issues. The guidance states that the role of local access forums in relation to RoWIPs may include, for example:
- commenting on opportunities for access to open countryside especially where new linear routes may be desirable
 - assisting local highway authorities in setting priorities for implementing their plans
 - commenting on published draft plans.
- 2.5 The West Sussex RoWIP will be used to shape the future management of countryside access and to prioritise access projects throughout the county. It is important that others contribute to its delivery if real benefits are to be achieved. The County Council will work pro-actively with partners to bring about actions to improve access on foot, cycle and on horse-back despite there being no statutory duty to deliver the RoWIP. In fact projects are already being delivered on the ground by many organisations and funding and opportunities are continually being sought to deliver a better access network.

¹ Cycle tracks; in this context a cycle track means a way over which the public has the right of way on pedal cycles, with or without a right of way on foot, but does not include a way in, or by the side of, a made-up carriage way.

- 2.6 Legislation dictates that the RoWIP should be updated at least once every ten years. It also specifies that by 2010 the RoWIP should be fully integrated into the Local Transport Plan² (LTP) and guidance stresses the importance of making links between the two documents.

² Local Transport Plans are public documents that set out the highway authority's policies, strategies, objectives and targets for improving transport in their communities.

3 A Rights of Way Improvement Plan for West Sussex

3.1 Vision

A county where there are maximum opportunities for people to enjoy the countryside on foot, by horse and by bicycle for health, recreation and to access services, while recognising the need to balance this with the interests of those who live and work in the countryside and the management of special landscapes.

To realise this vision we need to: -

- Maintain the existing rights of way network to a high standard (seeking constant improvement)
- Improve path links so that the countryside is accessible directly from where people live, work and visit, to provide circular routes, and to link between communities
- Improve links to create safe routes for both leisure and utility journeys, by minimising the need to cross and use busy roads
- Provide a path network that enables appropriate access without barriers for as many people and different types of users as possible
- Promote countryside access opportunities to all sections of the community to enable people to confidently use and enjoy the countryside responsibly.

3.2 Countryside Access Forum for West Sussex

- 3.2.1 The Countryside Access Forum for West Sussex (the county's local access forum) has been closely involved throughout the preparation of the RoWIP. It has provided guidance on the approach taken and research methods used as well as detailed information on access issues and potential actions needed to address them.
- 3.2.2 Four Sub-forums, representing the Coastal Plain, South Downs, Low and High Weald areas of West Sussex, have supported the Countryside Access Forum for West Sussex by providing local knowledge and expertise concerning access issues in their areas.

- 3.2.3 The Forum's membership is balanced between those who use the countryside for recreation, those who own and manage the land, and those with wider interests such as wildlife conservation, the landscape, heritage and working for the disabled.
- 3.2.4 The Forum will continue to play an important role advising on delivery of the plan.

3.3 Scope

- 3.3.1 The county's first RoWIP builds on 'The Milestones Statement for West Sussex' document that has been the adopted policy for delivering the rights of way service in West Sussex since it was published in February 1996. The key aim of the Milestones approach was to achieve the national target for getting rights of way legally defined, properly maintained and well publicised by the year 2000.
- 3.3.2 The West Sussex RoWIP will complement the Milestones approach by identifying the actions needed to provide a rights of way network that meets the needs of users and land managers today, as well as those anticipated of future generations.
- 3.3.3 The rights of way network is the most popular means of accessing the countryside in the county but in isolation it does not represent the full picture. There are many other areas and routes that the public can use for informal countryside access including land owned by public and charitable organisations, as well as private landowners. The road network, particularly quiet country lanes, also plays a significant role in connecting routes. All these make up the full 'countryside access network' and enable people to enjoy the heart of the Sussex countryside. The West Sussex RoWIP, although primarily focusing on the rights of way network, will also consider the whole access network.
- 3.3.4 The intention is to deliver actions to improve access arising from the plan findings where funding and resources allow. This will be in addition to current service delivery. An **Annual Action Plan** will be produced each year that will identify actions for delivery, and will also report on progress after the first year and each subsequent year. This Action Plan will be produced in partnership with stakeholders and will identify projects to be delivered by a range of organisations, in addition to the County Council. Additional resources will be sought wherever opportunities arise.
- 3.3.5 As well as detailing the vision for the future of countryside access in the county, the West Sussex RoWIP is also intended to be an informative document setting the rights of way and other countryside access within the county in context.

3.4 RoWIP methodology

- 3.4.1 Consultation and joint working have been central to the development of the West Sussex RoWIP. To better understand people's needs and aspirations for the access network both today and in the future, considerable research has been carried out towards identifying issues relating to the provision and use of the rights of way network as well as the wider countryside access network. This has been achieved by consulting widely with:
- the Countryside Access Forum for West Sussex, and its four Sub-forums which provides a local focus, through meetings and workshops
 - users, land managers and the general public, via questionnaires
 - access providers through workshops and meetings (including WSCC managers responsible for countryside sites, rights of way, highways and transportation and tourism; neighbouring highway authorities; District/Borough Councils; AONB units (South Downs Joint Committee (SDJC), Chichester Harbour Conservancy (CHC), High Weald Unit); the Highways Agency; large landed estates; National Trust; Sussex Wildlife Trust; Forestry Commission)
 - Parish Councils, through a series of roadshows.
- 3.4.2 A desk study of existing relevant research, both at a national and local level, has been carried out.
- 3.4.3 The existing provision of access has been analysed and gaps in the network identified.
- 3.4.4 During preparation of the RoWIP many suggestions for specific access improvements have been identified. A significant number of these have been put forward by the Sub-forums, with others suggested by parish councils, the public and a variety of organisations. These have been scrutinised, and together with other research, have been used to develop the Statement of Action in this plan. All suggestions received, along with any that may be received in the future, are being recorded on a database that will be a valuable tool in prioritising work for inclusion in the Annual Action Plans.

3.5 Policy context

- 3.5.1 There are various plans, policies and strategies that impact on rights of way and access to the countryside. Of these the West Sussex Transport Plan 2006-2016 (the Local Transport Plan (LTP) for the county) is perhaps the most important in terms of the Rights of Way Improvement Plan; this is discussed further in paragraph 3.6. Outlined below are other significant policy documents, together with a short summary of relevant access objectives.
- 3.5.2 **South East Plan (South East England Regional Assembly)**
- Rights of way facilitating access within, to, and from the countryside
 - Reducing car use for shorter journeys
 - New routes will be multi-functional where possible.

- 3.5.3 **West Sussex County Strategy (WSCC)**
- Keeping you safe on the roads - encouraging people to travel off-road, including travel to school, work and to local services
 - Healthier communities - encouraging and giving people the opportunities to walk and cycle more
 - Protecting and enhancing our heritage and countryside.
- 3.5.4 **A Cultural Strategy for West Sussex (WSCC)**
- Improving health and well being by providing opportunities for, and encouraging, walking and cycling
 - Protecting, sustaining and promoting the county's unique environment and heritage.
- 3.5.5 **A Strategic Framework for the West Sussex Visitor Economy: Priorities and Delivery (WSCC)**
- Supporting green tourism/sustainable initiatives including walking and cycling
 - Improving the transport infrastructure for visitors
 - Improving visitor information, at planning stage and during the visit.
- 3.5.6 **Management Plans for Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB)**
- There are three AONBs that fall partly within West Sussex: Chichester Harbour, Sussex Downs and the High Weald. Each has a management plan that includes policies on improving and promoting access for walkers, cyclists and horse-riders in particular, while retaining the character and tranquillity of the areas. As well as looking to improve opportunities for non-motorised vehicle users they also promote sustainable travel and the reduction/management of visits using cars.
 - The SDJC is aiming to complete its **Access and Recreation Strategy for the South Downs** in 2008, which will link closely with its management plan as well as the RoWIPs and LTPs of the authorities that cover the area, namely Brighton and Hove, Hampshire and East and West Sussex.
- 3.5.7 **South Downs Way National Trail Management Plan 2008 - 2013**
- The South Downs Way National Trail Management Plan 2008 – 2013 will provide a framework for the management and development of the trail, to meet the needs of users and landmanagers.
- 3.5.8 **Local Development Frameworks (LDFs) - District and Borough Councils**
- The seven District and Borough Councils within West Sussex are in various stages of producing their LDFs. They generally include the aspiration that new developments should, wherever possible, create and enhance opportunities for people to enjoy countryside recreation as well to enable sustainable travel on foot and cycle.
- 3.5.9 **Parish Plans**
- Many communities have produced Parish Plans, most of which include sections on access to the local countryside and travelling on foot and cycle around their areas.

3.5.10 **Accessible Natural Greenspace in South East England (SE AONBs, FC, NE)**

- This study identifies the availability of accessible natural greenspace (such as country parks, open woodland, access land etc) to local residents and highlights population centres where there is a lack of natural accessible greenspace.
- The results highlight the rural area between Horsham and Haywards Heath, and urban areas with Worthing as being poorly served by open space, however linear access is not considered in the report. The study will be useful in identifying areas of the county where future provision of and these areas may need to be targeted for future provision of open space may need to be targeted.

3.5.11 **Other policy documents**

There are many other policy documents that are relevant to the RoWIP that have been consulted during its preparation and these, in addition to those mentioned above, are listed in Appendix A.

3.6 The West Sussex Transport Plan 2006 - 2016

3.6.1 The West Sussex Transport Plan sets out a clear long-term vision for transport in the county for the period from 2006 to 2016. The West Sussex RoWIP will contribute towards this vision and will in due course form a distinct strand of the LTP. The statutory guidance for both LTPs and RoWIPs stresses the importance of making links between the two documents and the current published LTP, includes a RoWIP progress update, and its future annual reports will include further updates on the RoWIP and its delivery. It is a legal requirement that a RoWIP is reviewed at least every 10 years, and it is intended that the timing of the first review of the RoWIP will coincide with the review of the West Sussex Transport Plan, and that this will be the time to achieve full integration.

3.6.2 The shared priorities for transport, as identified in the LTP, are:

- delivering better accessibility to services and improving public transport, in particular bus services
- achieving safer roads
- reducing pollution
- tackling congestion.

Minimising car use and promoting alternatives is a major theme of the West Sussex Transport Plan.

All these can to some extent be addressed by delivering a more user-friendly, needs based rights of way and wider countryside access network that provides for people walking, cycling and horse riding for leisure or utility purposes. The rights of way network already plays a significant role in achieving a better quality of life for residents of the county, particularly by improving physical health and general well-being, allowing people to both reduce and avoid traffic congestion and pollution.

- 3.6.3 The LTP may provide one way of bidding for funding for delivery of the RoWIP from central government, however funding through the LTP process cannot be guaranteed. There may be opportunities where some projects that deliver actions identified in the RoWIP Annual Action Plans that share common aims with the LTP can be delivered directly through the LTP team or, funding may become available to deliver RoWIP projects separately.
- 3.6.4 There are three main supporting documents to the LTP that will contribute to making strong and robust links between the LTP and the RoWIP. These are Stepping Ahead, Peddling Ahead and the Accessibility Strategy (see sections 3.6.8 to 3.6.10).
- 3.6.5 The LTP and associated documents have historically tended to concentrate on the needs of users for utility purposes, such as routes to school, to shopping areas and to work, often focussing on the road network and associated footways with little thought of other routes people may use for recreation, although this is changing.
- 3.6.6 In many places the rights of way network, together with other routes through the countryside or open spaces, will play a vital role in delivering the aims and objectives of the Local Transport Plan.

3.6.7 Stepping Ahead in West Sussex

- 3.6.7.1 Stepping Ahead is WSCC's strategy for walking. It is currently in the process of being revised and officers responsible for the RoWIP, as well as the Countryside Access Forum for West Sussex, are being consulted at all stages of the process. The revised document will consider the needs of users for both recreational and utility journeys and will provide a strong link between the LTP and RoWIP.
- 3.6.7.2 The aims and objectives anticipated to be in the revised document include:
- promoting walking as an alternative form of transport
 - making services and facilities more accessible (including through school and work Travel Plans)
 - encouraging people to walk more for their health and wellbeing
 - considering the needs of pedestrians in new developments
 - increasing the quality of experience for pedestrians
 - creating a safe environment for pedestrians
 - publicising and promoting walking
 - increasing walking for utility and recreation
 - improving town to countryside access to reduce the need for people to drive to countryside further afield.

3.6.8 Pedalling Ahead

- 3.6.8.1 Pedalling Ahead is the County Council's cycling strategy and sets out how the Council will work towards ensuring that cycling is promoted as a realistic alternative to motor transport. Principle aims and objectives include:
- making cycling more attractive
 - promoting cycling as normal and acceptable behaviour in West Sussex

- providing cycle networks, including the National Cycling Network, to increase safety for cyclists
- promoting the health benefits of cycling
- working with organisations such as public transport operators to improve integration between modes of transport
- developing Safer Routes to School initiatives
- ensuring that new developments promote cycling and all are accessible by cycle
- promoting cycling as part of the TravelWise initiative and travel plan development
- promoting road user safety
- reducing road casualties.

3.6.8.2 Policies for cycling using the road network and cycle tracks/ways are well developed within the LTP framework and therefore the RoWIP will concentrate mainly on off-road riding for recreational, leisure and utility purposes.

3.6.9 Accessibility Strategy

3.6.9.1 West Sussex’s Accessibility Strategy, in line with government guidelines, focuses on access to education, health care, food shops and to work. Amongst other issues considered, the Strategy looks at:

- getting to services at a reasonable cost, in reasonable time and with reasonable ease
- accessing services within reasonable distance
- getting to and from services safely

3.6.9.2 The Strategy also looks at how public transport can be improved to make services more accessible, in particular bus services

3.6.9.3 As with all aspects of delivering the LTP, partnership working is essential to successful implementation of the accessibility strategy. District and Borough Councils, in particular, are key partners.

3.7 Characteristics of the County

3.7.1 Four management areas, based broadly on landscape characteristics, are referred to throughout this plan: the Coastal Plain, the South Downs (which covers the Sussex Downs AONB within West Sussex), the Low Weald and the High Weald. Figure 1 shows these areas, along with the major settlements in the county and the neighbouring highway authority areas. The characteristics of these areas are covered later on in the chapter.

3.7.2 The county of West Sussex is predominantly rural in nature, covers nearly 2,000 square kilometres (1,250 square miles) and has a population of over 750,000. More than half of the county is farmland and nearly a fifth is woodland, making it one of the most heavily wooded counties in the country.

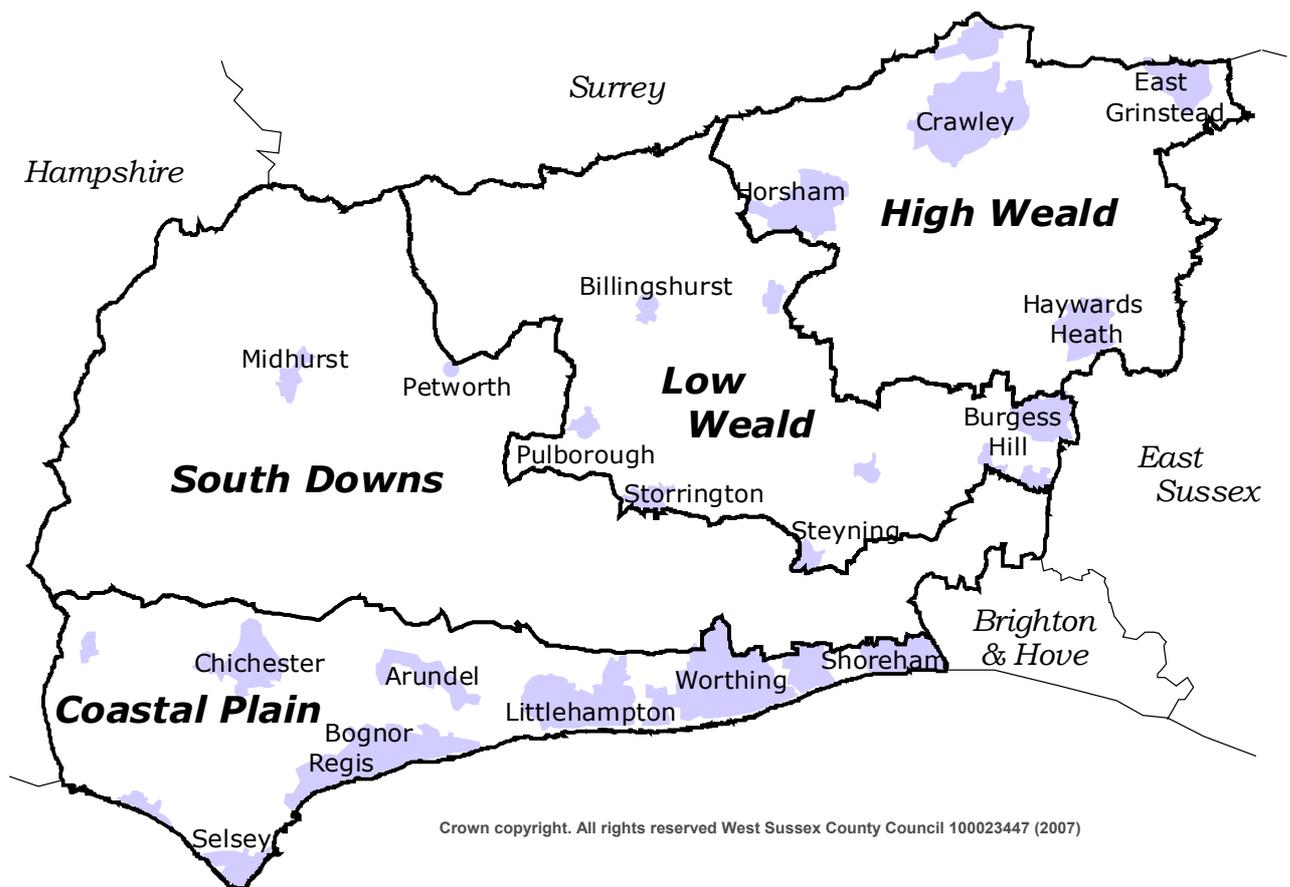


Figure 1. Landscape areas, settlements and neighbouring highway authorities

- 3.7.3 Such is the quality of the countryside and landscape that over half of the county is designated as Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB), namely Chichester Harbour, the Sussex Downs and the High Weald. There are also 3 country parks, over 50 nature reserves and 82 Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSIs).
- 3.7.4 The Government is working towards creating a new National Park for the South Downs (primarily encompassing the East Hampshire and the Sussex Downs AONBs). The process of designation began in 2000 although, as yet, a final decision is still to be taken.
- 3.7.5 The population of West Sussex is centred in the main towns of Horsham, Crawley, East Grinstead and Burgess Hill in the north and east of the county, and Chichester, Bognor Regis, Littlehampton, Worthing and Shoreham along the south coast. Elsewhere, in the rural heartland of the county, there is a scattering of small towns and villages.
- 3.7.6 Census data shows that 94% of the population in West Sussex describe themselves as white British and that only 3.4% are non-white. Crawley and Worthing are home to the main concentrations of ethnic minorities.
- 3.7.7 20% of the population in West Sussex is aged 65 and over. In line with national trends the average age is rising as people are living longer and, as a result, the number of older people is expected to rise significantly over the next 10 years. This is likely to have an impact on how people want to access

the countryside (the expectation is that people will have more time but less mobility) and therefore the management required to meet their needs.

- 3.7.8 As stated in the South East Local Plan (submitted to government in March 2006) 58,000 new homes are scheduled to be built in West Sussex between 2006 and 2026. Although exact sites and locations are still being identified, strategic development is likely to be concentrated in the north east (around Crawley, East Grinstead and Horsham) and in the south of the county (around Chichester and west of the River Arun).
- 3.7.9 An extensive network of public rights of way gives access throughout the county, ranging through the sandstone hills of the High Weald, across the patchwork of pasture and woodland that makes up the Low Weald, and over the rolling Sussex Downs to the Coastal Plain, with its wooded harbours and open beaches.
- 3.7.10 The county is dissected by a number of main roads, notably the M23, A23, A24, A29, A285 and A286 which all run north south, and the A272 and A27 which traverse the county east west. These are linked by a network of other A and B roads and increasingly busy C roads. With a steady growth in the amount and speed of traffic using the road network, West Sussex, like much of the South East, has a problem with congestion. Many of the once quiet country lanes are being used increasingly by motorised vehicles.

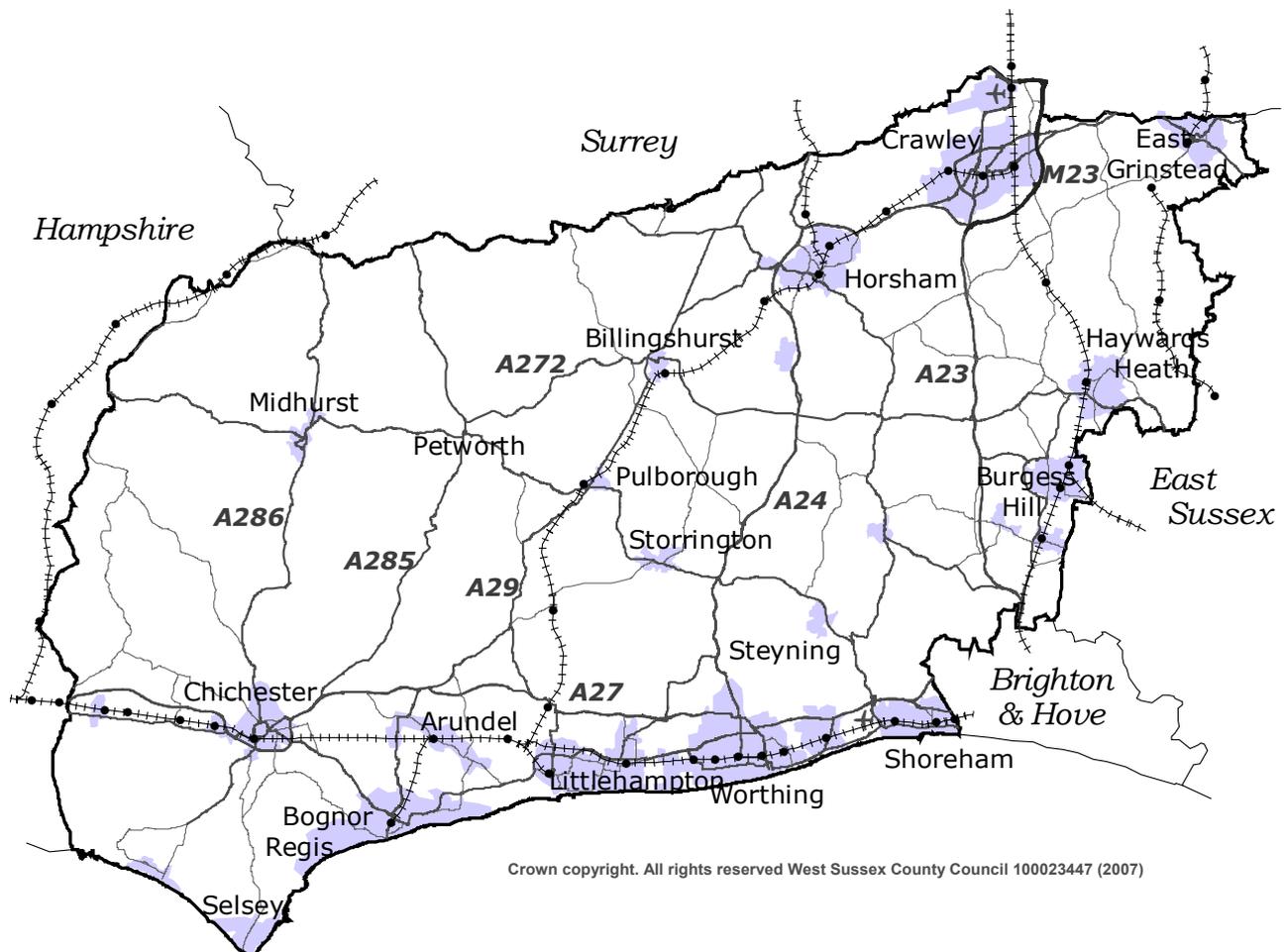


Figure 2. Main roads, railways and airports

- 3.7.11 West Sussex is reasonably served by trains, with routes running across the whole county and good links to London. There are also a number of bus services providing for both urban and rural communities. It has one of the country's major international airports at Gatwick, north of Crawley.

3.8 Characteristics of the four management areas

3.8.1 Coastal Plain

- 3.8.1.1 The Coastal Plain is characterised by its flat open landscape and large coastal towns of Bognor Regis, Littlehampton, Worthing and Shoreham and city of Chichester, all linked by the A27 corridor.
- 3.8.1.2 It is a diverse landscape of inlets and harbours, narrow tidal creeks, mudflats, dunes, shingle beaches, grazing marshes and paddocks. Chichester Harbour AONB and Pagham Harbour Nature Reserve are worthy of special note for their international wildlife importance. Arable fields, defined by low hedgerows, are often interspersed by horticultural glasshouse 'estates' and paddocks. Trees are not a dominant feature - there are some small woods and a few windswept individual trees in the farmland or the occasional poplar shelter belt. From the Downs and Coastal Plain edge there are long views towards the sea and the Isle of Wight beyond.
- 3.8.1.3 Being home to many people there is a great demand on the access network for recreation and utility needs, though the paths are mainly footpaths, so there are very limited opportunities for users other than walkers. The roads are busy and, despite the flat terrain, off-road cycling or horse-riding opportunities are very limited. The soils are predominately alluvial deposits over gravel, with occasional pockets of clay and sand. The lowest areas are often seasonally waterlogged.

3.8.2 South Downs

- 3.8.2.1 The West Sussex area of the Sussex Downs AONB is characterised by two distinctive landscapes – the chalk ridge that cuts across the full width of the county and beyond, and the greensand belt in the north west of the county. Both areas are lightly settled with scattered villages and hamlets, with higher concentrations of people in the towns of Midhurst and Petworth.
- 3.8.2.2 The prominent chalk outcrop, which rises gently from the Coastal Plain in the south and has a dramatic north-facing scarp, is topped by rolling arable fields and close-cropped grassland. Woodlands, both coniferous and broadleaf, are a distinctive feature of the western Downs as are large estates. Further east there are fewer trees and hedgerows and the River Adur cuts through the Downs with its alluvial floodplains - a contrast to the dry uplands.
- 3.8.2.3 Roman roads and drove roads are common and characteristic along the whole Downs ridge and form the basis of the extensive rights of way network which offers excellent opportunities for walkers, riders, cyclists and, to a lesser extent for carriage drivers and those carrying out other outdoor activities. There is generally good drainage on the Downs so the rights of way network does not suffer from the waterlogged surface conditions experienced elsewhere in the county, although there are some pockets of clay overlying

the chalk that cause localised problems. The exposed chalk does become very slippery when wet, creating problems for all users.

- 3.8.2.4 The Downs are the most popular destination in the county for outdoor recreation for both local people and visitors. In West Sussex there are a number of 'honey-pot' sites, including Chanctonbury Ring and Devil's Dyke.
- 3.8.2.5 It is likely that if National Park status is achieved it will bring additional pressures for access and recreation management and may require a different approach to rights of way improvement planning.
- 3.8.2.6 The Wealden Greensand area, in the north west of the Sussex Downs, is a mosaic of extensive belts of ancient mixed woodland together with more recent coniferous plantations, open heath, rough grazing and river valleys.
- 3.8.2.7 The geology is complex with well-drained sandy heaths contrasting with the heavy soils of the River Rother valley. The scattered settlements are linked by deep, overhanging, winding lanes and are generally quieter than other areas of the county.

3.8.3 Low Weald

- 3.8.3.1 The Low Weald is the low-lying clay landscape found between the chalk of the South Downs, the higher sandstone areas of the Surrey Hills and the High Weald to the north and east.
- 3.8.3.2 Its small-scale intimate landscape includes an intricate mix of small woodlands, patchwork fields, tall hedgerows and small stream valleys with wet woodlands. The settlements are generally small and scattered.
- 3.8.3.3 The Low Weald has the highest concentration of rights of way in the county but they, in particular the bridleways, suffer from poor drainage conditions due to the heavy clay soils. Connectivity and severance of the access network by roads is a problem in the Low Weald as it is elsewhere in the county.

3.8.4 High Weald

- 3.8.4.1 The High Weald is a landscape of rolling hills incised by deep valleys covered by small irregular fields, abundant ancient woodland and hedges. The area is further enriched by locally and nationally important features including sandstone outcrops, historic gardens, deer parks and veteran trees. Large reservoirs are significant features within the High Weald landscape adding to the area's interest and variety.
- 3.8.4.2 Main roads and settlements are sited along the prominent ridge-lines with a dense network of small, narrow, and winding lanes linking scattered villages, hamlets and farms. The urban settlements associated with Gatwick Airport and the large town of Crawley contrast with the rural character of the rest of the area. The soils are predominately clay leading to some surface issues on rights of way. There are several large developments proposed for this area, which may alter the character of parts of the High Weald.

4 Current access provision - what have we got?

4.1 The rights of way network

- 4.1.1 There are over 4,000 kilometres (2,500 miles) of public rights of way in West Sussex, which include footpaths, bridleways, restricted byways and byways open to all traffic (BOATs). This network enables people to experience and enjoy the outdoors whilst at the same time providing an alternative to pavements in more urban areas. All public rights of way are highways in law.
- 4.1.2 Restricted byways came into being when Sections 47-51 of the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000 were enacted, on 2 May 2006, re-designating paths recorded as roads used as public paths (RUPPs). The public has no right to take a mechanically propelled vehicle along a restricted byway.

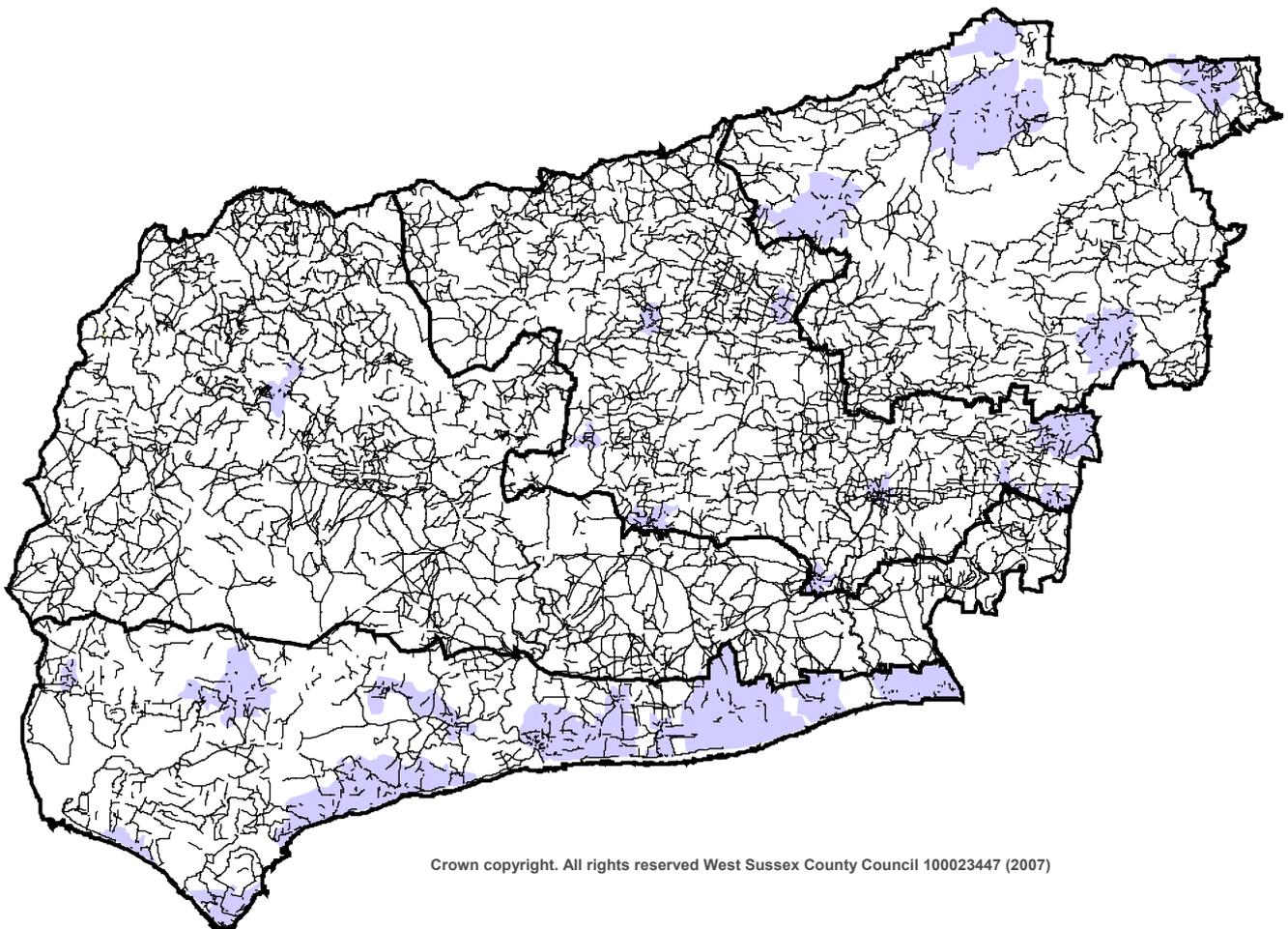


Figure 3. The rights of way network

- 4.1.3 Figure 3 shows the entire public rights of way network in West Sussex as recorded on the Definitive Map, the legal record of public rights of way, in November 2007. Rights of way can also be viewed using WSCC's web-based map (www.westsussex.gov.uk/imap). Figure 3 also shows the boundaries of the landscape areas.
- 4.1.4 Generally the coverage of rights of way network across the county is good, with a few notable exceptions, including an area to the south of Crawley in the north east of the county, together with some patchy coverage around Chichester in the south west. The fragmentation of the network exists in many places.
- 4.1.5 Deeper analysis of the rights of way network identifies that the Low Weald has the highest density of path, but here, like elsewhere in the county, local fragmentation and severance is a problem, making continuous safe routes often difficult to find.

Right of way type	Permitted use	Kilo-metres	Miles
Footpath	On foot only	2,742	1,714
Bridleway	On foot, horseback and bicycle	1,151	719
Restricted byway	On foot, horseback, bicycle and horse-drawn carriage	132	83
BOAT	On foot, horseback, bicycle, horse-drawn carriage and motor vehicle	10	6
Total		4,035	2,522

Table 1. Length of right of way by type (November 2007)

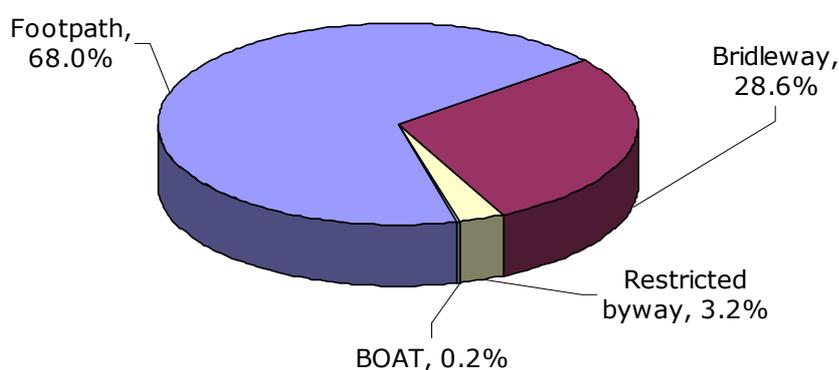


Figure 4. Types of right of way as a percentage of the whole network

- 4.1.6 The table and figure above show the lengths of the different classes of rights of way. Figures 5 to 8 on the following pages show the distribution of each of these path types.

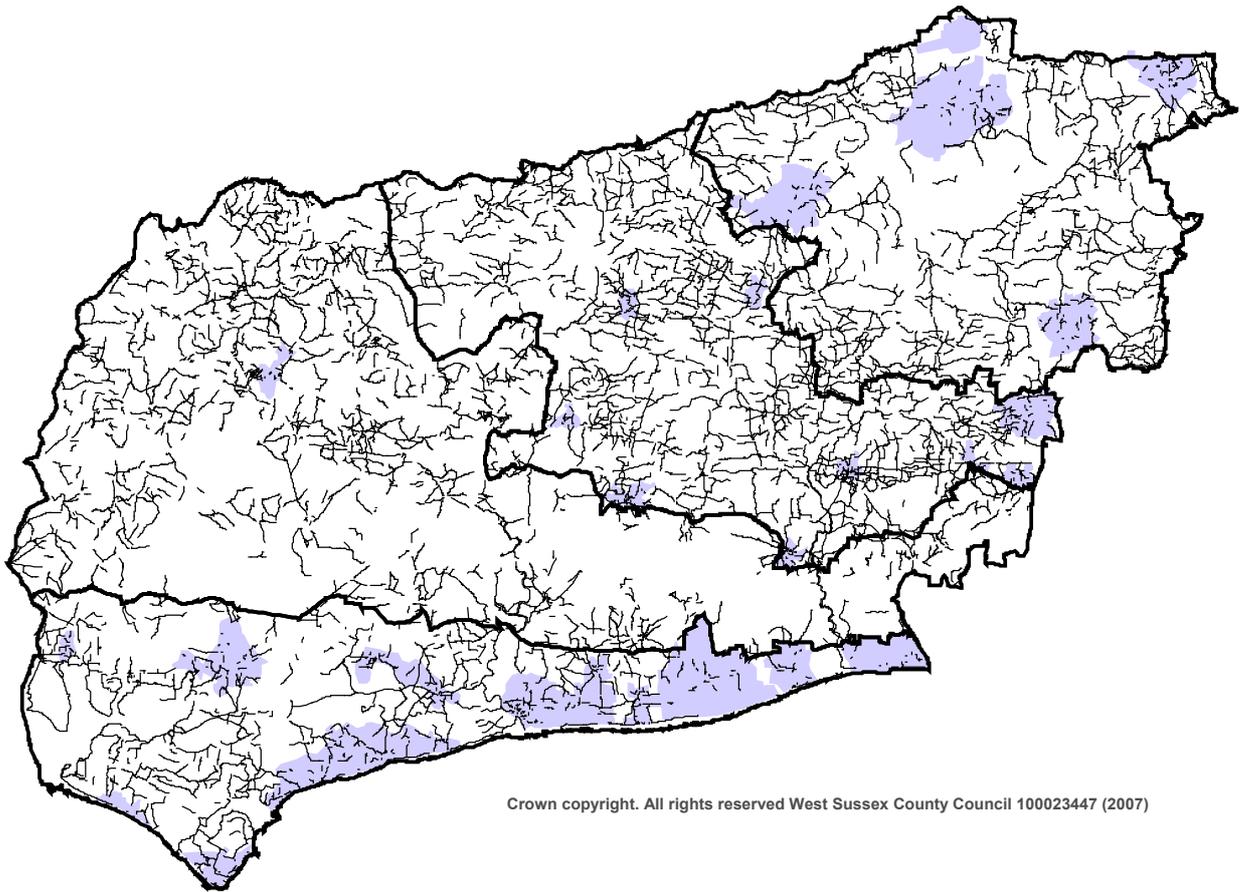


Figure 5. The footpath network

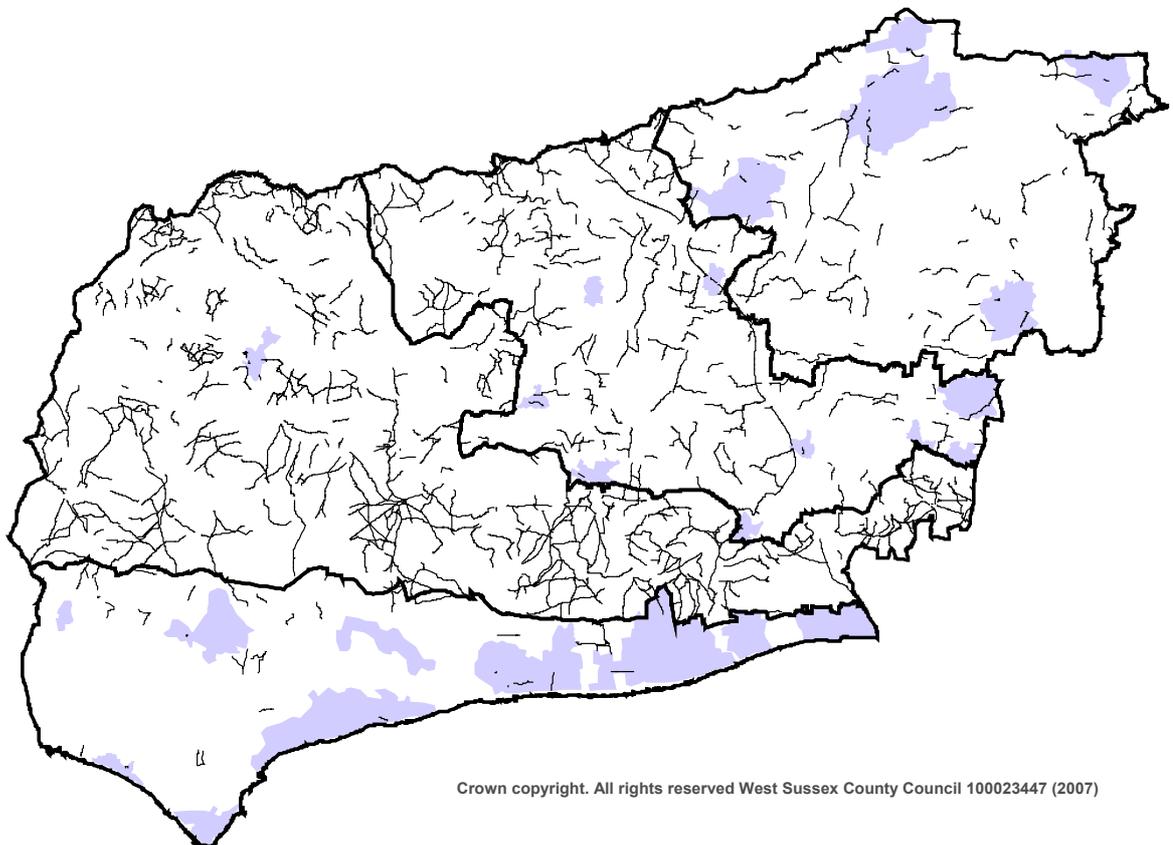


Figure 6. The bridleway network

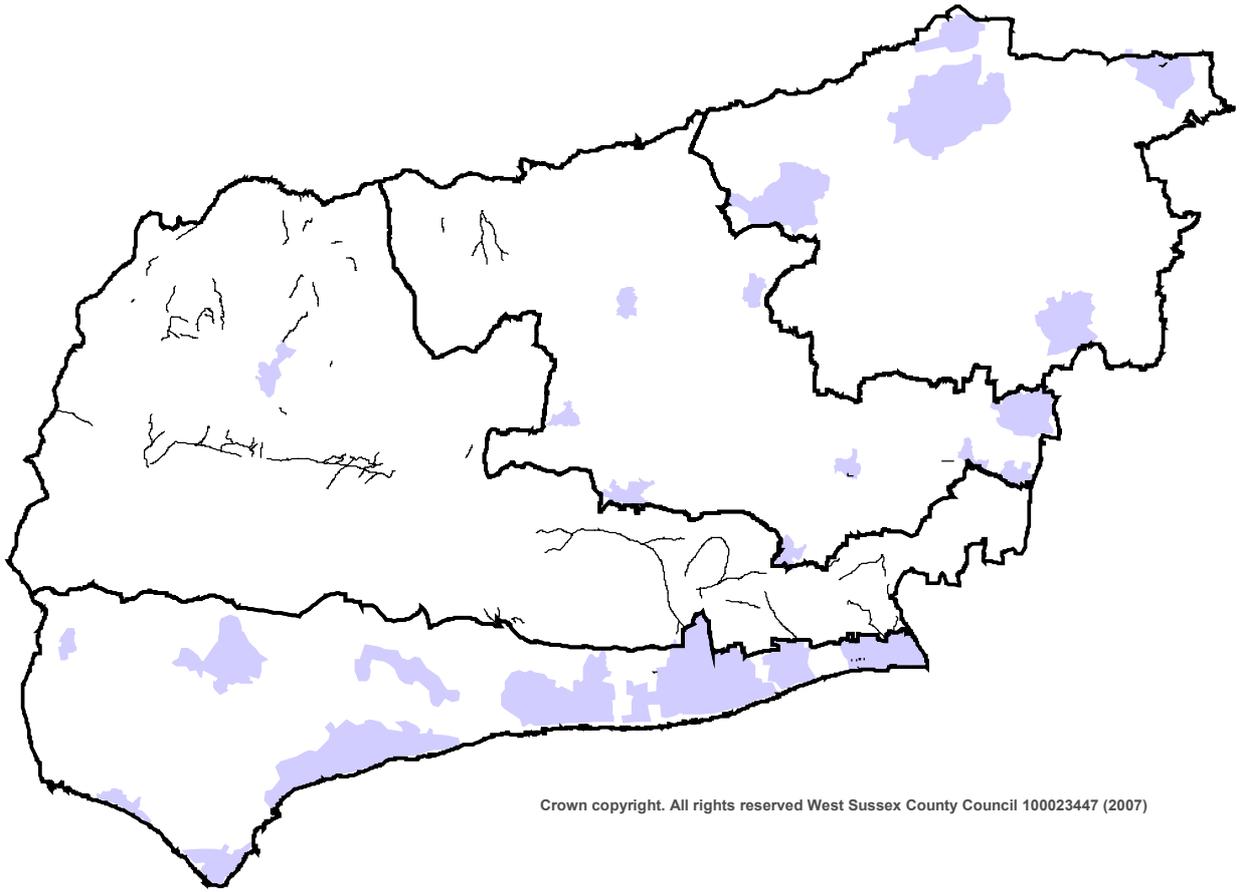


Figure 7. The restricted byway network

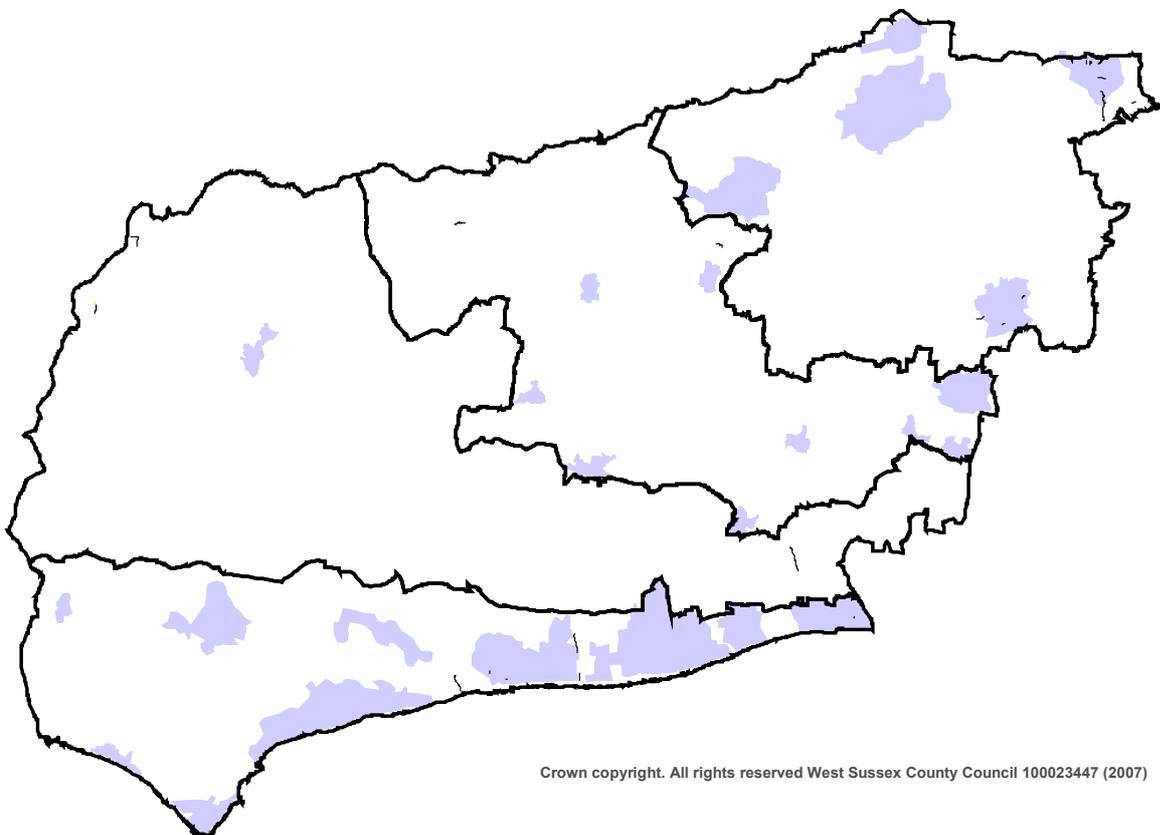


Figure 8. The byway open to all traffic (BOAT) network

4.1.7 It takes only cursory examination of the figures to identify that the distribution of rights of way, by type, is not uniform across the county. For example the Coastal Plain has very few bridleways, and those that do exist in the High Weald are very fragmented. The majority of restricted byways are in the South Downs.

4.2 Open access

4.2.1 Since September 2004, when the relevant sections of the CRoW Act 2000 commenced, the public has had a right of access, on foot, to mapped areas of heathland, downland and registered common land in West Sussex. The majority of this access land falls within the South Downs area. Figure 9 shows the distribution of CRoW open access land in the county.

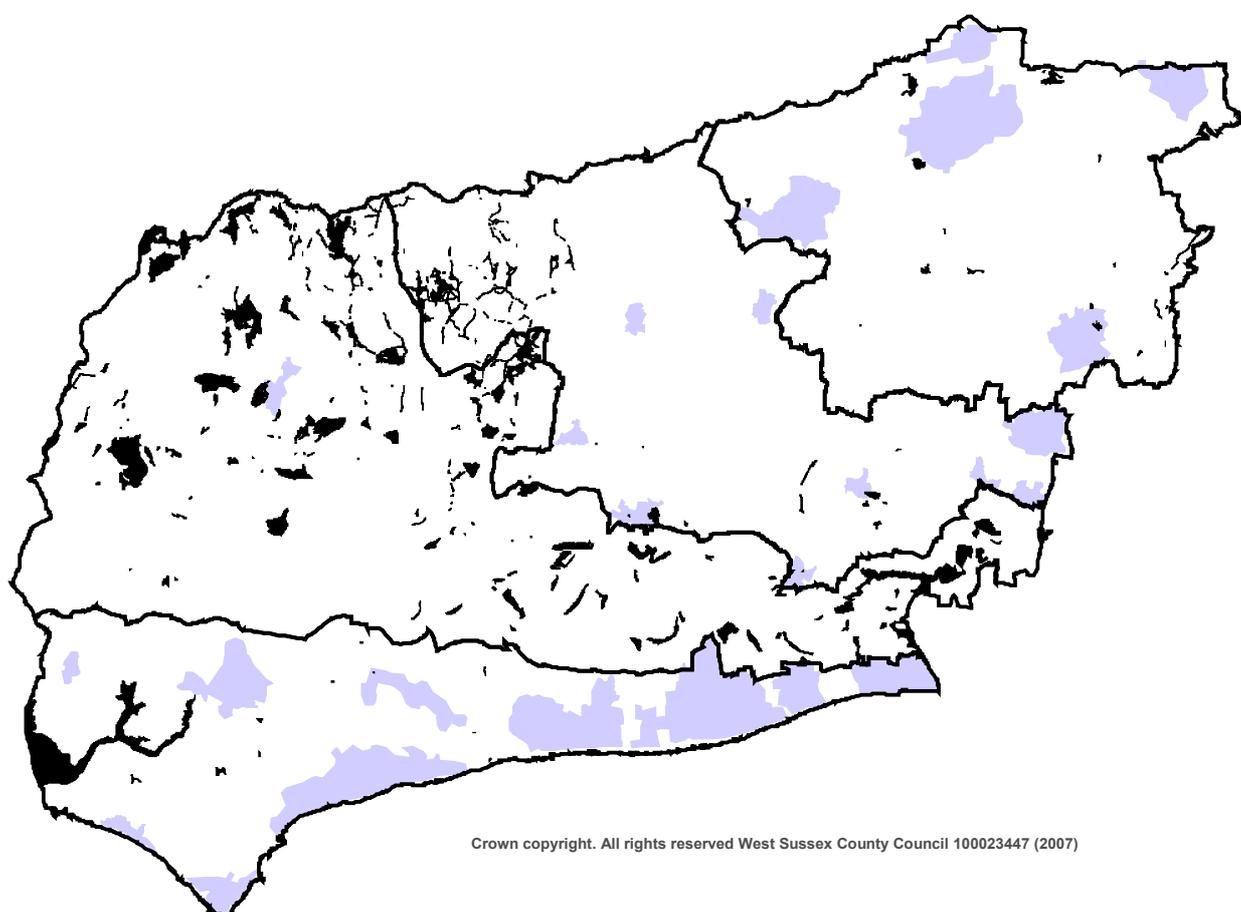


Figure 9. CRoW Open access land (heathland, downland and registered common land)

4.2.2 All CRoW open access land can be viewed at www.countrysideaccess.gov.uk, along with details of any restrictions or closures that may apply. Newer Ordnance Survey Explorer maps (1:25,000) also show CRoW open access land, which includes the freehold woodland areas that the Forestry Commission has dedicated as open access land under provisions in the CRoW Act 2000. These woods are in the north of the county and include St Leonard's and Tilgate Forests. The British Mountaineering Council has also dedicated a small parcel at Stone Hill Rocks (in the north east of the county)

allowing access for the general public as well as for climbers. Some other areas with permissive access (such as that provided by the National Trust and other organisations) are also shown on the OS maps.

- 4.2.3 Much of the land that was made available for access through the CRoW Act 2000 was already open and being used by the public on a permissive basis. This said, the CRoW Act 2000 introduced some new sites that are now available to the public for the first time. Much work has been carried out by WSCC and the South Downs joint Committee (SDJC) to make many sites more accessible and user-friendly, with the assistance of the relevant landowners. This has included the installation of kissing gates, stiles, information boards and signs, creating a new surfaced path through one area, making it accessible for use by those with mobility difficulties, and securing routes to link isolated 'island' sites to the wider access network. Almost every parcel of access land in the county now has at least one access point.

4.3 Access to the English coast

- 4.3.1 Most of the coast in West Sussex is already accessible to the public on foot, as it is serviced by a good network of footpaths, promenades and roads, as well as a good number of accessible beaches. However, there are a few notable gaps preventing continuous access along the West Sussex coast.
- 4.3.2 In the summer of 2007 the Government consulted on proposals to improve access to the English coast. In September 2007 it was announced that the Government intends to legislate so that the public will have the right to walk around the English coast for the first time. Detail of the legislation is currently being developed and expected to be included in the Marine Bill. The main areas of concern that came out of the consultation include issues of liability, costs, compensation, nature conservation, estuaries and higher rights. Such legislation should help plug the few gaps along the county's coast, allowing a continuous path to be created. Formalising the existing de facto access to beaches would give certainty to the public using these areas. Once the legislation is in place it is expected that it will take 10 years to provide a continuous path around the English coast.

4.4 Permissive access

- 4.4.1 There are many areas and routes to which the public has permissive access, including land owned or managed by a range of charitable and public organisations, such as the Forestry Commission, National Trust, Sussex Wildlife Trust and County, District and Parish Councils. There is also a variety of permissive access provided on private land. Some of this access has been made available through schemes such as Environmental Stewardship or English Woodland Grant Scheme, some through legal agreements with WSCC or the AONB Units, and some without any formal agreements being in place. Where agreements exist they are normally for a set period of time (often 5 or 10 years). However, where agreements do not exist permission may be withdrawn at any time. Most of this is for access on foot although some permissive routes and areas are provided for other users.

- 4.4.2 It can be difficult for the public to know where permissive access exists as it is not always well publicised and there is no single place where this information is available. Additionally, some landowners do not wish permissive access on their land to be widely promoted, providing it purely for local use. To begin to address this, areas with permissive access (not linear routes) within the Sussex Downs AONB have been mapped and currently the SDJC is working with Ordnance Survey to show these areas on their maps, with permission of the landowner. It would be desirable for this to be repeated for the whole of West Sussex, as well as for linear routes.

4.5 The highways network

- 4.5.1 Minor roads, including the unsealed and unclassified county roads (sometimes referred to as 'green lanes' or UCRs), play a significant part in connecting off-road routes in rural areas. However, major roads, including the A23, A24 and A27, and even some B and C roads that are becoming increasingly busy, have a negative effect, and sever the countryside access network in a number of places, resulting in a fragmented access network in many areas.

4.6 Long distance trails and promoted routes

- 4.6.1 There are many long distance trails in West Sussex. The most well known of these is the South Downs Way National Trail, which connects Winchester in Hampshire, to Eastbourne in East Sussex, traversing the full width of West Sussex. Other regionally important routes that are available to walkers, cyclists and horse riders include the Downs Link (which has incorporated the Coastal Link since 2007) and Worth Way, which in turn links with the Forest Way in East Sussex. These routes receive some additional maintenance due to their importance. Links to long distance promoted routes must be well maintained to enable people to access these flagship routes, or use sections to create circular routes.
- 4.6.2 Other linear, promoted or themed routes available to walkers include the Serpents Trail, the High Weald Landscape Trail, the Centurion Way (cyclists as well as walkers), the Literary Trail, the Sussex Border Path, the Monarch's Way, the Sussex Ouse Valley Way, the Sussex Diamond Way and the Wey-South Path. These promoted trails do not all necessarily receive higher maintenance than other rights of way due to resource limitations. Parts of some of these routes use paths that are not rights of way and this can lead to confusion over maintenance responsibilities. Most of these routes, as well as the regionally important routes above, are shown on Ordnance Survey Explorer (1:50,000 scale) and Landranger (1:25,000 scale) maps. Route guides exist for many of these trails produced by the County Council, AONB Units or by the voluntary and commercial sector.
- 4.6.3 Sustrans, the sustainable transport charity, is working to achieve a continuous safe cycling route along the south coast (National Cycle Route 2). Sections between Worthing and Brighton in the east of the county, and between Hunston and Bosham in the west are now open.

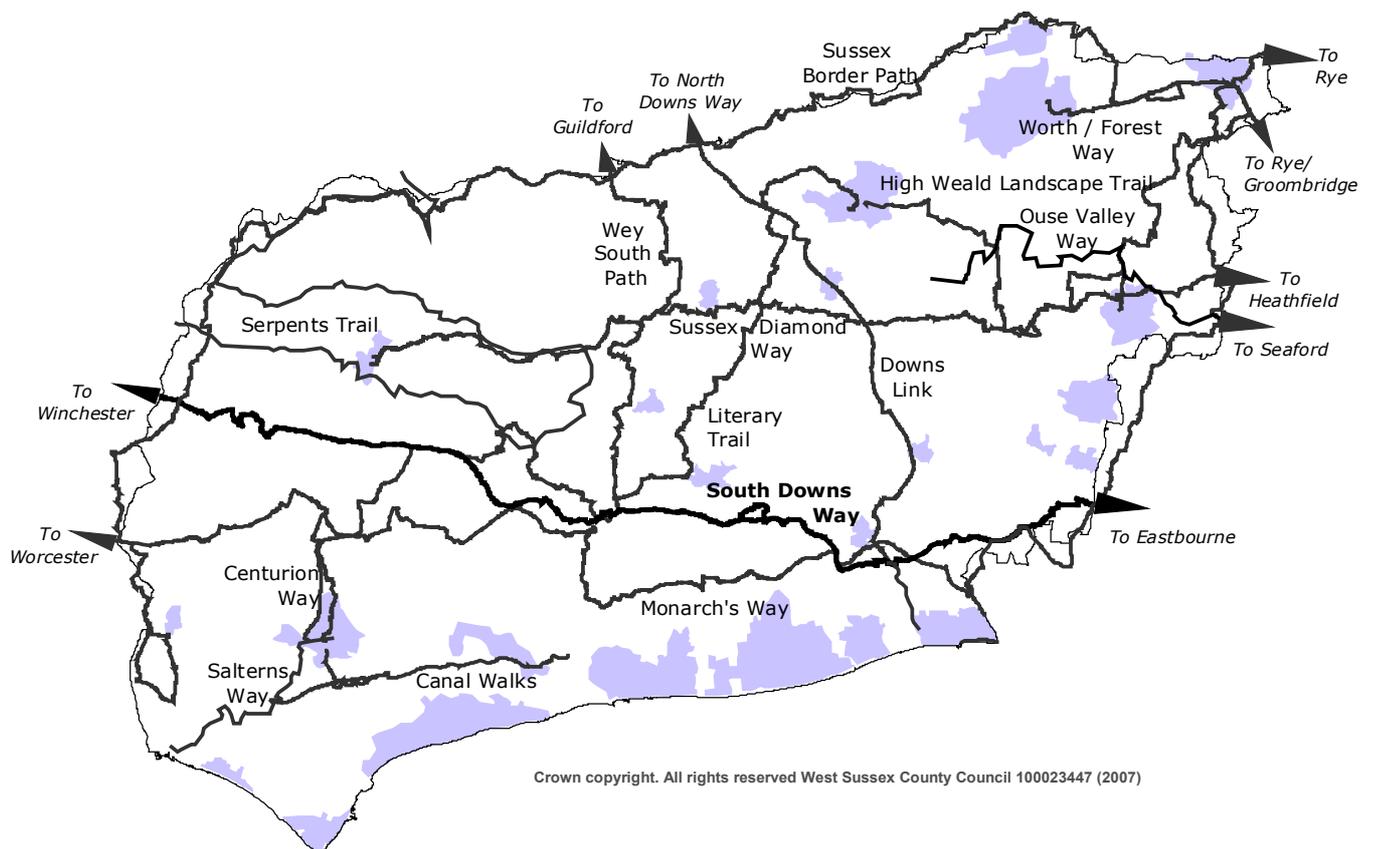


Figure 10. Long distance promoted routes

- 4.6.4 There is also a plethora of short circular promoted routes, mainly aimed at walkers, which are very popular. These are created and promoted by a range of organisations, including County, District/Borough and Parish Councils, AONB Units, charitable bodies such as National Trust and Wildlife Trust as well as by community groups and commercial enterprises.
- 4.6.5 The County Council will revise its very popular Wheelchair Walks booklet during 2008. This provides information on routes without barriers, which are suitable for all, including users of wheelchairs, pushchairs and those with mobility impairments. The AONB Units all promote easy access trails, including the recently opened Salterns Way (created and promoted by Chichester Harbour Conservancy (CHC)), which provides a flat, well surfaced route from Chichester to West Wittering. It is also available for cyclists.
- 4.6.6 Promotional literature often includes interesting facts about the area along with information on responsible access, aiming to encourage people who do not normally have the confidence to use the wider rights of way network to explore the countryside.

4.7 The complete access network

- 4.7.1 Although the rights of way network forms the foundation of access to the countryside, it does not stand alone and is not complete without the other forms of access. It is only when they are combined that they make up the full countryside access network, enabling people to fully enjoy the West Sussex countryside.

5 How the rights of way network is managed

5.1 Management responsibilities

- 5.1.1 WSCC, as the highway authority, has a statutory duty for recording, protecting and maintaining public rights of way within its boundary. The official record of public rights of way is the Definitive Map and Statement, which can be inspected at the County Council's Offices. It is kept under continuous review.
- 5.1.2 Since 1993, the SDJC, formerly the Sussex Downs Conservation Board, has acted as agent of the County Council to manage and maintain the 40% of the rights of way in West Sussex that fall within the Sussex Downs AONB (shown as South Downs in Figure 1). However, the County Council, in its capacity as highway authority, continues to take responsibility for the legal aspects associated with rights of way, the majority of major capital works and for overseeing the quality of the network. As the boundary of AONB passes through some parishes the day-to-day management of rights of way in these parishes, is carried out by two different bodies, which occasionally causes some confusion. A similar arrangement operates between SDJC and East Sussex County Council (ESCC).
- 5.1.3 Contrary to popular belief, neither the land occupied by, nor crossed by, public rights of way is owned by the County Council (unless, of course, it happens to be the landowner). Responsibility for rights of way is shared between the landowner and the County Council. The latter is responsible for the protection, maintenance and improvement of each path, with the landowner being responsible for keeping them free from obstruction, and for the maintenance of structures such as stiles and gates (but excluding most bridges which are the responsibility of the highway authority). Failure on the part of either the highway authority or the landowner to fulfil their duties may result in legal action.
- 5.1.4 Some organisations and landowners carry out more than their statutory duties, helping to ensure that rights of way and other access routes in the county are well managed and easy to use.
- 5.1.5 The public, whilst having the right to access the countryside, also have responsibilities which are set out in the Countryside Code. The Code was revised in 2004 to reflect changes in the needs of users and land managers. It is broken into five sections dedicated to helping members of the public respect, protect and enjoy the countryside.
- Be safe, plan ahead and follow any signs
 - Leave gates and property as you find them
 - Protect plants and animals and take your litter home
 - Keep dogs under close control
 - Consider other people.

Full details can be found by visiting www.countrysideaccess.gov.uk.

5.2 Rights of way maintenance

- 5.2.1 Over 98% of rights of way in the county outside the South Downs (see 5.2.2) are open and available to use at any time (excluding those which are on the unavailable paths list or are temporarily closed as discussed in 5.5). A fundamental aspect of the current service is the delivery of a routine inspection and maintenance programme that operates on a 9 month cycle. This excellent level of availability has been achieved through using the 'Milestones' approach to manage the rights of way network, as detailed in 'The Milestones Statement for West Sussex' and has resulted in improved maintenance and fewer problems being reported.
- 5.2.2 Within the South Downs area a staggered 12 month inspection and maintenance programme is carried out by SDJC officers with assistance from volunteers. Here 95% of paths are open and easy to use, although a slightly different method is used to determine this figure by the two organisations.

5.3 Improvement works

- 5.3.1 Underpinning the routine maintenance programme is the delivery of 'minor' and 'major' programmes which include schemes to maintain, improve and replace bridleways and bridges. These programmes offer vital investment in the network's infrastructure. Further works programmes include the delivery of a number of initiatives relating to 'Access for All' improvements, such as gaps and gates to replace stiles, and equestrian-friendly bridle gate latches.

5.4 Policies

- 5.4.1 There are several policies that guide rights of way management within West Sussex:
- Milestones Statement for West Sussex (1996); WSCC
 - The Management of Public Rights of Way and Traffic Regulation Orders (amended 2005); WSCC
 - West Sussex policy on coastal and riverside paths subject to erosion (2004); WSCC
 - Strategy document for the consideration and application of the Disability Discrimination Act 1995 within management of public rights of way within West Sussex (2003); WSCC
 - SDJC procedure for improving accessibility on rights of way using the principle of the least restrictive option when selecting structures (November 2005); SDJC

5.5 Unavailable routes

- 5.5.1 At any time a small number of paths are not available for the public to use. This may be because of long term issues such as obstruction by development or technical and/or legal problems, in which case they are referred to as unavailable paths, or it may be they have to be temporarily closed, for

example when a bridge has become unsafe, until improvements works are carried out or when works are being carried out making it unsafe to use. Every effort is made to ensure paths are available for use and it is only as a last resort, and when there are concerns for public safety, that routes are closed.

- 5.5.2 In 1996, when the Milestones Statement was written, there were 110 paths identified as being unavailable for various reasons. This number is now down to 47 (October 2007). The nature and complexity of the remaining problems will mean that considerable amount of officer time and effort will be required to reduce the list further. However the County Council will take opportunities as and when they arise to make such route available for the public to use.
- 5.5.3 Details of unavailable paths and paths that are temporarily closed can be found on the unavailable path list on the County Council's website www.westsussex.gov.uk/prow

5.6 Traffic Regulation Orders

- 5.6.1 Conflict, or the perception of conflict, can exist between the different types of user entitled to use public rights of way. The type of conflict that has given rise to most publicity and concern is the use of motorised vehicles on rights of way that were formerly RUPPs, particularly in the Sussex Downs AONB. Damage to the surface and the impact on the environment have been of particular concern. Since being redesignated as restricted byways in 2006, it is a criminal offence to drive a motorised vehicle without lawful authority on routes carrying this status.
- 5.6.2 In recognition of these concerns the County Council produced a policy statement 'The Management of Public Rights of Way and Traffic Regulation Orders' in 1995. The Policy document was revised in 2005 and considers the options available for managing problems. Under the policy, the use of a Traffic Regulation Order (TRO) would normally be for environmental and safety reasons, though only after other means of management have been tried and considered inadequate.
- 5.6.3 With the difficulty of enforcing TROs in remote country areas they can only be really effective where practical measures are in place that result in self-enforcement. Enforcement of TROs also relies on working in partnership with the police, local communities and other interested parties. In recognition of this, and to help to reduce the wider misuse of the countryside by motorised vehicles, the Sussex Pathwatch Scheme was launched in May 2006. Led by SDJC and Sussex Police, in partnership with WSCC and other organisations, the scheme was initially piloted in Chichester District. It encourages people to report inappropriate behaviour by motorised vehicle users to the police, so they can concentrate their efforts where the problems are greatest. It has already reported successes and other districts have expressed an interest in having the Scheme roll out in their areas.
- 5.6.4 At the time of writing there are only three paths in West Sussex that have permanent TROs on them, two of these being to prohibit motorised vehicles using restricted byways.

5.7 Claims for rights of way to be added to the Definitive Map

- 5.7.1 Most, if not all Definitive Maps countrywide are incomplete, since not all routes for which there is historic or user evidence have been recorded. The County Council's Legal Services Unit deals with the research and investigation of claim applications made for new rights of way to be added to the Definitive Map, or for the status of existing paths to be changed (e.g. footpath to bridleway). The claim process is based on evidence (user and/or historical) and is an important, though time consuming, means of developing the rights of way network. Applications have to satisfy strict legal tests, and when Definitive Map Modification Orders (DMMOs) are made they are very often contentious, leading to public inquiries. There is a backlog of claims awaiting investigation.
- 5.7.2 To try to ensure 'lost ways' are recorded on the Definitive Map, the CRoW Act 2000 set a deadline of 1st January 2026 to register omitted 'historic' routes. The introduction of this cut-off date is aimed at bringing certainty to users of the countryside and landowners and managers about those rights that actually exist. There is currently no way of knowing how many such routes may exist in West Sussex, but it is expected to be a long and time consuming process to get them correctly added to the Definitive Map.

5.8 Changes to the network including diversions/upgrades/dedications/permissive agreements

- 5.8.1 WSCC has for many years exercised its power to consider applications for diversions from landowners. Before alterations are made to the Definitive Map, applications have to meet strict legal requirements. In the early years applications made by private landowners were often made to improve agricultural efficiency but in more recent years grounds relating to privacy and security are more common. Only applications that do not result in a net loss of enjoyment and convenience for users are considered and opportunities are always taken to enhance the network wherever possible. The current target is to deal with applications within 14 months of receipt, and approximately 20 are dealt with each year. WSCC is a statutory consultee on diversions and extinguishments that District/Borough councils consider in connection with new development.
- 5.8.2 Comparatively few offers are received from landowners to dedicate or upgrade (for example, from a footpath to a bridleway) a right of way. Where an owner does put forward a proposal, routes are inspected and assessed to ensure they are suitable and will add value to the network before being added to the Definitive Map. It is more common for new paths to be created on a permissive basis. Where these are considered to be in the public interest the County Council may enter into a legal agreement with the landowner. Other bodies such as the AONB Units sometimes negotiate additional access with landowners.
- 5.8.3 WSCC responds to planning consultations from all the local planning authorities where development affects rights of way. Where possible, opportunities are taken to improve both rights of way and the wider access network. Good routes are required in and through the large new developments that will be required if West Sussex is to provide the housing numbers stated in the South East Local Plan, both for accessing services and

for recreation purposes. The Countryside Access Forum for West Sussex has been very proactive in engaging with planning authorities to ensure opportunities are maximised.

5.9 Highways on which limited maintenance is carried out ('green lanes' or UCRs)

5.9.1 There are many unsealed and unclassified county roads in West Sussex, frequently referred to as 'green lanes' or UCRs. Often there is uncertainty about whether the public can use these routes and who is responsible for maintaining them. Many provide useful links within the rights of way network but require improvement if they are to be fully incorporated into the countryside access network. Some of these routes are shown on recent versions of Ordnance Survey maps as 'other routes with public access (ORPAs)' but it is not always clear whether you can cycle, ride or even drive along them.

5.10 Volunteer involvement

5.10.1 To varying degrees volunteers across the county play a role in maintaining the access network. The SDJC makes use of volunteers in carrying out a variety of tasks including practical work, surveying and monitoring. Outside the SDJC area the use of volunteers is less extensive, but valuable work is achieved through their involvement.

5.10.2 Volunteers also contribute in other ways, for example by offering advice and expertise to the County Council. An example of this would be the advice given through the Countryside Access Forum.

5.11 Promotion of access

5.11.1 To encourage the public to enjoy the West Sussex countryside a variety of organisations, including the County Council, AONB Units, National Trust, Sussex Wildlife Trust, District/Borough and Parish Councils and the Primary Care Trust deliver a range of activities and publications including:

- a wide variety of guided walks and rides including the Walking West Sussex Festival, and those promoted in the Exploring West Sussex booklet (Spring/Summer and Autumn/Winter) and led by various organisations and individuals
- health walks in most Districts/Boroughs
- countryside events programmes, including map reading, bush-crafts, talks and a variety of other access related countryside events
- promoting all aspects of countryside access on websites including an interactive map (iMap) showing all rights of way and some other access opportunities in the county (available through www.westsussex.gov.uk). Other organisations also have web pages dedicated to countryside access
- various publications and leaflets on a wide range of routes.

6 What is available for different users and what are their needs?

	Pop- ulation ¹ (thousands)	Walkers ²		Cyclists and Horse riders ³		Carriage drivers ⁴		Motorised vehicles ⁵	
		km	miles	km	miles	km	miles	km	miles
Coastal Plain	363	509	318	44	28	4	3	2	1
South Downs	47	1,648	1,030	809	506	119	74	3	2
Low Weald	103	1,155	722	309	193	13	8	1	1
High Weald	241	723	452	131	82	6	4	4	3
Total	754	4,035	2,522	1,293	808	142	89	10	6
% of network		100		32		3.3		0.2	

- 1 Population figures from 2002 census by parish (note some parishes are split over the areas so some small inaccuracies may result)
- 2 Footpaths, bridleways, restricted byways and byways open to all traffic
- 3 Bridleways, restricted byways and byways open to all traffic
- 4 Restricted byways and byways open to all traffic
- 5 Byways open to all traffic only.

Table 2. The length of recorded rights of way available to users by area

6.1 Walkers

- 6.1.1 Only walkers have the legal right to access the entire rights of way network. In addition walkers can also exclusively enjoy CRoW access land as well as the majority of access made available on a permissive basis. There is extensive access for walkers, both on linear routes and open access areas. However, there is some fragmentation of the access network. Severance of routes by roads makes some paths difficult or dangerous to use.
- 6.1.2 The majority of access information available is provided for walkers. Many organisations co-ordinate guided walk programmes. There are several commercial companies that offer walkers the opportunity to complete long distance walks over several days along promoted routes. The most notable of these is the South Downs Way Walk held annually over 9 days in June.
- 6.1.3 According to the research, walking is the most popular recreational countryside activity in West Sussex. It is the easiest activity in which to

participate as little specialist equipment or expertise is required. However, exploring unfamiliar areas requires the knowledge of where to go, how to behave and the confidence that these routes are safe to use.

- 6.1.4 Walking for recreation takes many forms, ranging from exercising dogs on familiar paths to a tourist exploring a new area, from a stroll with a young family to a long distance hike by a rambling group. Their needs therefore vary considerably from short-ish, easy to use circular routes from towns and settlements to more challenging paths in the rural heartland of the county.
- 6.1.5 Walking is an important means of transport to access services, work, education, and to visit friends and family, over short distances. It is also an essential part of many journeys made by public transport, in particular by the young, elderly and disadvantaged. Everyone has different needs and these must all be taken into consideration.
- 6.1.6 Walkers, like cyclists and horse riders, are vulnerable users and ideally require a traffic-free environment. In urban settings walkers are usually well provided for through footways (pavements) and managed road crossing points. Where rights of way meet highways, particularly in rural areas, walkers are often faced with having to cross busy roads or walking along the carriageway in the absence of verge, or pavement, to connect with an onward route.
- 6.1.7 Dog walking is a popular activity and often the only occasion that some people go walking. Dog walkers need areas close to where they live where they can exercise their dogs on a daily basis, which can either be open spaces or short circular routes where their activity will not interfere with land management practices, and dog bins and dog latches are provided where appropriate. It is important that dog owners respect other users and land managers and are aware they need to be able to keep their dogs under close control or on a lead. Many dog walkers also enjoy the opportunity to go for longer walks when the opportunity arises, and this may take them through areas with livestock and other animals (such as pheasants and deer), and being able to control their dogs in such environments is particularly important.

6.2 Horse riders

- 6.2.1 Horse riders have the right to use bridleways, restricted byways and BOATs, giving them access to nearly a third of the county's rights of way network. Table 2 shows the distribution of access for horse riders across the county, and confirms a number of inconsistencies, eg only 44 km of bridleway are available to use in the Coastal Plain compared to 809 km in the South Downs. A small amount of additional permissive access is available to riders in the county, including a 'pay to use' permit system in Forestry Commission managed woodlands in the north. Some of this is available to local riders only.
- 6.2.2 Horse ownership and riding is a growing and popular activity in the county with many commercial stables and private paddocks in existence, often concentrated on the urban fringe. Many do not have direct access to off-road routes. In parts of the South Downs there is good connectivity of routes but elsewhere in the county it can be difficult to complete a circuit without using

significant lengths of road. Virtually all horse riding is undertaken as a recreational activity and not for accessing services.

- 6.2.3 Horse riders are, perhaps, the most vulnerable users due to the unpredictable nature of their mounts. This is particularly emphasised when using or crossing roads where they are close to vehicles.
- 6.2.4 Survey results show that the majority of riders have no access to horse transportation, so are limited to riding locally. The number of people who do 'box' and travel with their horses is greatest in the Coastal Plain, which reflects the poor provision of bridleways in that area and the fact that getting to the riding network in the Downs is extremely hazardous without transport. In an attempt to reduce illegitimate or unlawful use, some car parks have had barriers installed that prevent box access making it difficult for riders to find areas suitable for unloading their horses.
- 6.2.5 Information promoting access for horse riders is limited and generally only available where it is part of shared use (such as Downs Link, Worth Way and the South Downs Way). The SDJC has some information available on its website, and the British Horse Society has published route information in the past.

6.3 Cyclists

- 6.3.1 Cyclists are the second most numerous user group after walkers. They have similar rights to horse riders when using the rights of way network, though they must give way to walkers and horse riders. In addition to being able to use the bridleways, restricted byways and byways open to all traffic there are a number of other routes, both on and off-road, available to cyclists that are not available to horse riders. These are often part of long distance or promoted routes or are dedicated cycle routes, often by the side of made up carriageways, based in urban areas.
- 6.3.2 Cycling is a form of transport accessible to many people, including the young, and has a significant role in enabling people to travel to school, work and to access services without relying on cars or public transport. It has the potential to reduce road congestion and hence pollution. However, without a continuous and safe network with appropriate road crossings, many people are reluctant to cycle. This is particularly the case in the Coastal Plain where, although relatively flat, there are few opportunities to cycle away from the increasingly busy roads. However this is also the case in many other areas where cycling could provide young people with a degree of independence to get to school, shops and visit friends. There are already well developed policies in the West Sussex Transport Plan directed at utility cycling and there is therefore no need for this RoWIP to identify any more, other than to state that opportunities to improve the rights of way network for cycling will be considered to increase accessibility, tackle congestion and improve safety.
- 6.3.3 The needs of recreational cyclists are diverse, from the least experienced family groups and casual cyclists who enjoy short, level waymarked trails through to highly technical riders who like challenging long distance routes such as can be provided by the South Downs. In particular getting young

people, and those returning to cycling, to cycle more is an ambition of the LTP.

- 6.3.4 The information available for cyclists generally relates to long distance routes or access that has been provided as part of the highways network. There are a number of commercial books that detail cycling routes routes in Sussex.

6.4 Carriage drivers

- 6.4.1 Within the rights of way network carriage drivers have the right to use only restricted byways and byways open to all traffic. This restricts their use to just 132 km of rights of way within West Sussex. There is an uneven distribution of routes throughout the county, with the majority of available routes being on the chalk uplands of the South Downs and very few routes elsewhere. There are some areas of permissive access that carriage drivers have use of, notably on Forestry Commission managed sites. 'Green lanes' (unclassified county roads) (see 5.9) are particularly important to carriage drivers in light of the small network they have to use. Carriage drivers are minority users of the rights of way network and it is rare for new access to be created specifically for them.
- 6.4.2 Crossing or joining roads is particularly hazardous for carriage drivers due to the driver being located several metres behind the horse, resulting in very poor sight lines. Measures taken to restrict illegal or irresponsible use of routes by motorised vehicles often disadvantage carriage drivers.
- 6.4.3 There is very little information published for carriage drivers.

6.5 Motorised vehicle users

- 6.5.1 With only 10km of recorded byway open to all traffic available within the county for motorised vehicular use, much of which is in urban areas, opportunities for lawful off-road recreational driving using the rights of way network are virtually non-existent.
- 6.5.2 Prior to May 2006 motorised vehicles regularly used RUPPs, but their re-designation to restricted byway has effectively extinguished any rights that might have existed on these routes. There are some claims awaiting determination for BOATs to be added to the Definitive Map but there is no certainty that these will be successful and, where circumstances justify, a Traffic Regulation Order could subsequently be put in place to exclude motorised vehicles.
- 6.5.3 The network of BOATs just over the county boundary, in Hampshire and Surrey is far more extensive and better connected than that in West Sussex; it is possible that motorised vehicle users may choose to use these areas given the negligible opportunities offered in West Sussex.
- 6.5.4 There is little, if any, information available aimed at promoting the rights of way network to motorised vehicle users in West Sussex. User groups such as the Trail Riders Fellowship do promote responsible use of vehicles in the countryside.

6.6 People with mobility problems

- 6.6.1 Mobility difficulties can be interpreted as many things including:
- people with disabilities limiting their walking ability (including those with illnesses, those who have had accidents and the elderly)
 - people in motorised buggies
 - people with small children or pushchairs
 - blind or partially-sighted people
 - people with other conditions that limit their ability or confidence to move about as they would wish
- 6.6.2 Each person who suffers with mobility impairment has different abilities and attitudes, and as a result it is very difficult to know if the network presently caters for their needs or not. Although it is believed much of the network is inaccessible to those with a variety of disabilities, the actual extent to which it is inaccessible has not been assessed, as it is too difficult to do so meaningfully, within current resources.
- 6.6.3 'Access for All' encompasses an approach towards improving countryside access for people with mobility impairments, enabling everyone to have the opportunity to enjoy the countryside without barriers, whether physical or otherwise.
- 6.6.4 Wheelchairs and motorised scooters/buggies for use by those with mobility impairments that meet certain criteria are permitted on all rights of way. However, this is often not possible in practice due to the presence of stiles, kissing gates or other barriers, or due to the nature of the terrain. As stated, there are no figures available on what percentage of the network is actually usable by those with mobility impairments, and indeed as their needs vary widely any data would necessarily be very generalised. The County Council has a positive approach towards securing improved access and the principle of providing improved access for all will continue to be a priority. The nature of the terrain in many parts of the countryside will, however, inevitably mean that some areas remain inaccessible to all and it is not the intention, even if the resources were available, to 'urbanise' the countryside by surfacing all rights of way.
- 6.6.5 Access for those with mobility problems is not restricted to 'walking'. Horse riding and carriage driving are valued methods to enable less mobile people to experience the countryside. However, the limited network that can be accessed without the need to use roads restricts the locations where these can be enjoyed. Motorised vehicles, using BOATs, could have a role in getting less mobile people deep into the countryside, but with the extremely limited, almost non-existent, BOAT network in West Sussex this form of countryside access is essentially not available, except by using the established road network.
- 6.6.6 Facilities such as car parking, toilets and benches have all been identified through the research as important for people with reduced mobility.
- 6.6.7 There is some information available for this group but there is a demand for more. The provision of clear information is particularly important for those

with mobility problems, to enable them to make informed decisions on where and how to explore the countryside. Some guided walks cater for those with disabilities.

6.7 Infrequent and non-users

- 6.7.1 Many of the people who responded to the RoWIP questionnaire were existing users. This is likely to be because they already have an interest and often belong to user groups so are easy to make contact with. As a result, much of the focus in the RoWIP is building upon or on improving access for existing user groups. However, this Plan also considers those who traditionally have not made use of the network.
- 6.7.2 There are many people who use the countryside access network infrequently or not at all, though the exact number is not known due to the difficulty of gathering this information. The Leisure Visits Survey 2005 carried out by the Countryside Agency (now Natural England) shows that of those who would like to use the countryside more, the two main reasons were work reasons (40%) or health reasons (22%). These are beyond the scope of the RoWIP but there may be some barriers preventing use that are as yet unknown, and further research is required. Particular groups that could be targeted include young people, ethnic minorities and those who are unaware of the opportunities that exist.
- 6.7.3 National research shows that the main reasons for young people and ethnic minorities not visiting the countryside are a lack of readily available information and that they do not find the countryside to be a welcoming place to visit. The issue is very complex and there are many factors that determine if a person feels comfortable using the countryside.

6.8 Other recreational users

- 6.8.1 The number of recreation activities carried out in the countryside are many and varied, and in addition to walking, cycling, horse riding and carriage driving include hang/para gliding, orienteering, climbing, fishing and canoeing to name a few. Whilst improving access specifically for such users is likely to be beyond the scope of this plan and the resources likely to be available to deliver it, the general access improvements that will be delivered through the RoWIP process are likely to benefit participants in these activities. Any specific projects put forward by these users groups will be carefully considered for delivery where appropriate.

7 Key issues from research

7.1 Key issues

7.1.1 The key issues have been identified from all the information gathered as part of the research. They are not listed in any particular order. The Statement of Action identifies actions to address the main areas of these issues.

Summary of key issues
A. Maintenance of the existing network
B. Information provision and confidence in using the countryside
C. Difficulty in getting to the countryside
D. Safety using the countryside including using and crossing busy roads to link off-road access
E. Crime and misuse of the countryside
F. More off-road multi-use routes are needed to link centres of population with the countryside and to facilities and amenities
G. There are missing links
H. Off-road access opportunities for horse riders, carriage drivers and cyclists is limited or fragmented, particularly outside the South Downs
I. The erosion of coastal/riverside paths
J. Conflict arising from use of the rights of way access network
K. New development and road schemes

Table 3. Summary of key issues

7.2 Issue A – Maintenance of the existing network

7.2.1 There is much positive feedback on the condition of rights of way throughout West Sussex from all sources of research: 9 in 10 people who responded to the questionnaire feel maintenance has improved or stayed the same over recent years.

7.2.2 Overall the questionnaire revealed that ensuring the existing network remains well maintained is people's top priority. There was some concern that providing additional access may dilute the resources available for routine maintenance.

7.2.3 Surfacing was the aspect of path maintenance that users were most concerned about: the majority of respondents reported they had encountered paths that are muddy, rutted or eroded, making them difficult to use. This is particularly a problem on the heavy, clay based soils found in some parts of

the county, particularly the Low Weald area. Horses, bicycles and vehicles were all cited as causing damage. Research shows that some people feel that the surface of selected paths around settlements needs to be of a better standard than those in the deep countryside, as they can play an important role in encouraging people out of their cars to access local services.

- 7.2.4 Stiles being difficult to use was mentioned by a significant number of people. Two main reasons were given: limited mobility of the user and poor design/condition of the stile. Removal, replacement with gaps/gates/kissing gates or improved design, such as lower steps and/or provision of turning posts, were suggested as desired improvements.
- 7.2.5 Horse riders, in particular, were concerned about overhead vegetation and bridle gates being difficult to open while mounted.
- 7.2.6 The areas identified for improvement include:
- control of summer vegetation
 - drainage and surfacing of bridleways and, to a lesser extent, footpaths
 - maintenance of bridges
 - stile and gate removal/maintenance/replacement.
- 7.2.7 Research identified that people expect a higher standard of maintenance on promoted and long distance paths although users did not specifically identify routes that needed improved maintenance. There are a few long distance routes where different people are responsible for maintenance on different sections with little overall co-ordination of route management.

7.3 Issue B – Information provision and confidence in using the countryside

- 7.3.1 Around one third of respondents to the questionnaire felt more information was needed on where and how they could access the countryside to enable them to explore with confidence. The Countryside Access Forum for West Sussex strongly endorses the view that there is a need for better promotion of access opportunities.
- 7.3.2 The information that people feel is needed includes:
- general information on access
 - better access information shown on maps (OS and internet), particularly relating to permissive access, 'white roads' (as shown on those OS maps, which may or may not be available for public use) and open access land
 - map boards with access information at key locations (specifically at a parish level)
 - information on local circular routes/routes to places of interest of varying distances, ranging from short easy access trails to more demanding longer routes
 - more readily available information on long distance/promoted routes
 - information on off-road opportunities for cyclists

- information on where to ride/drive for horse riders and carriage drivers
- destination/distance information on fingerposts.

7.3.3 It appears from analysis of the research and discussions with land managers, that there are issues regarding some sections of the community lacking the confidence and knowledge of how to use the countryside. Further research will be required to explore this issue further.

7.4 Issue C – Difficulty in getting to the countryside

7.4.1 Research shows that most people who use the countryside get there, at least for some of their visits, by car and so require somewhere to park. Many people, particularly the less mobile, value being able to park in areas with facilities, views, and good connections to easy access trails. Many of the larger countryside sites with these facilities have car parks and there is a scattering of other smaller car parks throughout the county. Finding a suitable place to park, without blocking access, can be difficult in some of the more remote areas. The use of cars to access the countryside, and the associated provision of parking, is in conflict with policies to promote sustainable travel, encourage people to use their cars less and to protect the landscape and tranquillity levels. Until better and easier alternatives are available it is very unlikely that a significant modal shift away from car use can be expected. Ensuring there is access to quality countryside close to where people live and work may reduce the need for parking further afield.

7.4.2 Analysis of the questionnaire shows that 90% of carriage drivers and the majority of riders who transport their horses would like to see more provision of horse box parking near to the routes they can use, as they find negotiating the roads dangerous. This applies equally to groups catering for disabled users.

7.4.3 Few of those consulted access the countryside regularly by public transport, although several expressed a desire for more buses and trains, but it is not clear if they would use these themselves. Access to/from the countryside by bus and rail is important for recreational purposes; as well as allowing more sustainable access, public transport is essential for improving equality and providing opportunities for disadvantaged groups. It also enables walkers and cyclists to complete linear routes that otherwise they may not be able to enjoy. West Sussex is fairly well served by railways with a reasonable number of stations in, or near, rural areas, thereby providing good links between town and country. Several people expressed concern that recent changes to rolling stock had reduced the capacity of trains to be able to carry bicycles.

7.4.4 There are also a number of good rural bus services, although they do tend to be more limited on Sundays when many people may wish to access the countryside. Literature research shows that schemes to provide public transport for recreational purposes to access dispersed countryside sites, similar to those in much of West Sussex, have met with very limited success. It seems dedicated public transport services are most likely to be feasible where a 'honey pot site' is only a short trip from a large conurbation (such as the Downs from Brighton), but even these are rarely self-financing. There are a number of leaflets promoting walks and rides accessible by public transport.

- 7.4.5 Public transport can provide an enjoyable alternative to using cars and reduces traffic in sensitive areas and congestion 'honey pot sites', which will increase in importance if the South Downs acquires national park status.
- 7.4.6 Knowledge of what already exists is fairly poor amongst the general public.

7.5 Issue D – Safety using the countryside including using and crossing busy roads to link off-road access

- 7.5.1 Nearly all users consulted felt that safety in using and getting to the countryside is a very significant issue. In particular, concerns associated with using and crossing roads to link up rights of way were raised by all types of user. Notably, nearly all horse riders and carriage drivers surveyed reported being involved in at least one accident or near miss with vehicles. Representatives of all user groups felt that having to cross or use certain sections of roads presented such a barrier to using rights of way, and that only the daring, or foolhardy, would consider using some paths even where they could form a significant link in the network.
- 7.5.2 Improving sight lines, providing safe crossings, better verge management and making additions to the network (either with new links or, in some cases, by upgrading footpaths to bridleways) were all identified as ways that access could be made safer.
- 7.5.3 Some women reported being concerned for their personal safety when using the countryside, an issue that prevents some from exploring as far as they would like to or even using the countryside at all.

7.6 Issue E – Crime and misuse of the countryside

- 7.6.1 Both users and land managers suffer as a result of a small section of society misbehaving in the countryside, whether maliciously or unintentionally. Issues mentioned that have an obvious effect on access include uncontrolled dogs/dog mess, litter, 'joy riding', vandalism and obstructed accesses. Other actions, such as gates left open, or the fear of theft, have a more indirect effect by making land managers less willing to provide access. In some cases, measures to minimise misuse of the countryside can have a detrimental effect on responsible users, for example, barriers to restrict use by motor vehicles can discriminate against carriage drivers, horse riders or users of wheel and push chairs. The fear of traveller encampments and fly tipping has led the Forestry Commission to erect height barriers on its car parks, thereby restricting access for horse boxes.
- 7.6.2 Users accessing routes and areas that they do not have either permission or a legal right to use are also a concern. This includes users exceeding their public rights, for example, cyclists and horse riders using footpaths, or motor vehicles using restricted byways.
- 7.6.3 The majority of landowners and farmers have some access on their land, however, unsurprisingly, for nearly all increasing access is a very low priority

compared to running a viable business. Nonetheless there are a number of landowners who do provide and manage additional access.

- 7.6.4 Recreational use of the countryside in motor vehicles can be controversial, with people disliking the short-term noise and pollution, and the longer-term surface damage that can result. As detailed in Table 1/Figure 8 there are few opportunities in West Sussex for motor vehicles to use the rights of way network legally, however, there are areas that are used illegally by a small, but significant, number of users. Damage to path surfaces inconveniences other users and is usually expensive to repair, often beyond the budgets available. Restricting access for vehicles while allowing access to others is essentially impossible to achieve through physical means, and it is often inappropriate to use Traffic Regulation Orders. Enforcement is the key, but adequate resources are essential for it to be effectual.
- 7.6.5 User groups, such as the Trail Riders Fellowship, promote responsible vehicular access to all.

7.7 Issue F – More off-road multi-use routes are needed to link centres of population with the countryside and to facilities and amenities

- 7.7.1 Research shows that people want the opportunity to be able to walk or cycle between neighbouring settlements, to nearby facilities or into the wider countryside, but that a lack of suitable quiet lanes or off-road routes (whether rights of way, cycle ways or pavements) prevents them from doing so. This seemed to be a particular issue for people with children, the less mobile, for cyclists and for those without access to a motor vehicle.
- 7.7.2 For cyclists and horse riders the upgrading of footpaths to higher status may provide a solution but routes would need to be selected carefully to avoid conflict with walkers, and landowner consent would also be required. The questionnaire asked people how they felt about rights of way being upgraded to accommodate other users, particularly footpaths being upgraded to bridleway status. There was a big divide of opinion, with the majority of people either strongly agreeing or strongly disagreeing that this would be a good idea. In general, as may be expected, riders of bikes and horses would like to see paths upgraded wherever possible while walkers and landowners felt it would lead to conflict and maintenance issues.

7.8 Issue G – There are missing links

- 7.8.1 The survey carried out as part of the RoWIP research shows that there is a demand for more circular routes of a variety of lengths and choice for all categories of users. In particular more routes starting from settlements, from car parks and from public transport hubs are needed. CAFWS also identifies this as an area where it feels major gains could be made. In places the network is fragmented and requires new links to connect between existing paths to provide the desired choice of circular routes. Creation of circular routes needs to be coupled with good publicity enabling people to make choices that suit their needs and abilities.

- 7.8.2 Many people consulted were concerned about access for those with mobility problems, and believe there is a need to establish standards for paths and apply these to whole routes or mini-networks. Removing or replacing stiles with gaps or gates, and ensuring surface conditions are appropriate on carefully selected routes is seen as a way to make the countryside more accessible to these and all other users.
- 7.8.3 An aspiration of the Ramblers' Association and the Coastal Plain Sub-forum is to have a continuous path along the entire West Sussex coastline. Currently it is possible to access much of the coast and only a few missing links need to be made for this to be realised. As well as being a tourist attraction, such a path would be of benefit to the large number of people who live in the urban areas along the coast.

7.9 Issue H – Off-road access opportunities for horse riders, carriage drivers and cyclists is limited or fragmented, particularly outside the South Downs

- 7.9.1 Cyclists and horse riders in particular felt there is a real need for more off-road routes to enable them to access the wider network without the need to drive.
- 7.9.2 The Coastal Plain has few routes that horse riders can use and the roads are busy, meaning that riders who keep their horses on the Coastal Plain have little choice other than to 'box' their horses further afield for recreation purposes or to brave the increasingly busy road network. The A27 in particular is a barrier to getting to the routes on the Downs.
- 7.9.3 The bridleway network available in the Low and High Weald is fragmented, and even within the South Downs there are road crossings or sections of road that have to be negotiated to link bridleways.
- 7.9.4 Throughout the county over 50% of horse riders who responded reported it dangerous to get from where they keep their horses to their nearest right of way. Carriage drivers reported that they are finding it increasingly difficult to locate places to drive and there are few places they can go in safety. Many riders and cyclists would like to see footpaths upgraded to bridleways where local conditions allow.

7.10 Issue I – The erosion of coastal/riverside paths

- 7.10.1 Some coastal paths have been heavily eroded to the extent that the definitive route has been lost or, in some cases, has required extensive and expensive works. This has led to the County Council producing a policy on coastal and riverside paths subject to erosion. The Coastal Plain Sub-forum identified the monitoring and management of coastal paths susceptible to erosion as a high priority.
- 7.10.2 There are currently 6 rights of way considered to be under threat from coastal erosion, but this number is expected to increase with predicted sea level rise.

Riverside paths are also expected to be under threat from the increased risk of flooding.

- 7.10.3 The coastline of West Sussex is mostly developed, which means that should the line of some paths become eroded and become unusable in the future, there may be no options for realignment. Some paths may also become tidal routes that are available only at low tide.
- 7.10.4 Coastal management is often expensive and in places it may be desirable, particularly from a nature conservation view, to let the coastline find a more natural profile. This is likely to present future access challenges and may result in longer routes contouring round newly formed estuaries and inlets.
- 7.10.5 The Government is proposing to introduce new legislation to enable an access corridor to be created around the English Coast. This legislation is expected to make provisions to allow the route to be rolled back as the coast erodes.

7.11 Issue J – Conflict arising from use of the rights of way access network

- 7.11.1 Conflict between users was fairly frequently mentioned as a concern. Several distinct types of conflict were identified during the research, which included cyclists speeding; users not being aware of others, particularly of cyclists approaching from behind without warning; horses, bicycles and motorised vehicles damaging the surfaces; motorised vehicles breaking the tranquillity of the countryside; and dogs not under control. Generally it is only a minority of users who lack the basic courtesy that leads to most conflict situations. The actions of a few can however give the whole user group a bad name, even to the extent of reducing landowner willingness to increase or improve access opportunities.
- 7.11.2 Reports of cases of conflict between users and land owners/managers are mainly anecdotal. Straying from paths, either deliberately or inadvertently, appears to be the main cause, although there are other issues such as uncontrolled dogs, dog mess and riders on footpaths that lead to conflict. Encounters of this nature often leave both parties distressed.
- 7.11.3 Design can be an important aspect in reducing conflict. All new routes or improvements to existing routes should be designed to minimise conflict, for example, by ensuring widths, surfaces, furniture (including way marking) and sight lines enable permitted users to use the path in harmony and with confidence.
- 7.11.4 Studies have shown conflict is often more perceived than actual but, where it does exist, it can have a negative impact on people's enjoyment of the countryside.
- 7.11.5 Research shows that many people, particularly land managers, feel there is a need for more information to be available about how to behave responsibly in the countryside.

7.12 Issue K – New development and road schemes

- 7.12.1 The countryside immediately surrounding the large urban areas of West Sussex is already under pressure from the number of people using it. With additional developments this pressure is expected to increase. Many of those consulted, including members of the Countryside Access Forum for West Sussex, are concerned that the major new developments currently being planned will have a detrimental effect on the quality and availability of local access to the countryside.
- 7.12.2 Concerns regarding access and new development include:
- loss of opportunities to access local countryside by existing residents
 - access through/within the new development not meeting the needs of new and existing residents for sustainable transport or recreation
 - the ‘urbanisation’ of country paths which, after being subsumed into new developments, all too often become narrow alleyways enclosed between high garden fences, becoming unpleasant to use and, in some cases, attracting unsocial behaviour
 - the impact of increased numbers of people on neighbouring agricultural/forestry businesses, including trespassing, dog mess uncontrolled dogs and fly tipping.
- 7.12.3 It is important to maximise access opportunities in, through and beyond new developments for all users. To achieve this it is essential that integrated access is considered from the very beginning of the planning process and funding is made available from the planning process to implement improvements.

8 Factors to be considered when delivering access

8.1 Sustainable travel

- 8.1.1 There is a growing awareness of the need to promote sustainable forms of travel at both a local and national level. A variety of organisations, including the Government, Sustrans, AONB Units and WSCC, are making significant efforts to encourage both residents and visitors to choose alternative forms of travel to the car. Walking and cycling can contribute to this aim, particularly for short journeys. The LTP, together with its associated documents, is the main mechanism for delivering benefits.
- 8.1.2 Rights of way, and other off-road routes, can often be the key to encouraging people to find alternative modes of travel to using the car but, for this to happen, the condition of routes is important. Factors such as good maintenance and surface condition are essential, particularly for journeys that meet people's communication needs, such as travelling to school, work or to reach local services.

8.2 Rural economy/tourism

- 8.2.1 Encouraging people to visit the countryside, to buy local produce, and to use local services can play a role in keeping the rural economy buoyant. The closure of the public rights of way network as a containment measure of Foot and Mouth Disease in 2001 demonstrated the link between public rights of way and the rural economy. Many tourism-based businesses reported losses of income because of the reduced numbers of people using rights of way.
- 8.2.2 Access can have an impact on land management, both positive and negative. A sustainable and viable agricultural sector is important to the conservation of the landscape as well as rural communities and associated services. Access to the countryside has an important role in getting people into the countryside to learn more about how it is managed, and can potentially help farmers and land managers to develop new viable businesses.
- 8.2.3 The beauty and tranquillity of the West Sussex countryside attracts people to visit, both to stay and for day trips. In particular, the South Downs and the coast attract visitors from near and far, and must be considered as major assets that require special visitor management to ensure the qualities people value are preserved.
- 8.2.4 London will host the Olympics and Paralympics in 2012. Although none of the sporting venues is to be in West Sussex, the county is in a good position to benefit from this major event, given its good transport connections with the capital. Visitors will be encouraged to stay in the county, and exploring the countryside will add to their experience. There may be opportunities to achieve a sustainable legacy in the form of an improved access network. The

County Council is already considering how best to take advantage of opportunities that may arise.

8.3 Healthy living

- 8.3.1 The physical and mental health benefits of an active lifestyle are widely recognised and there is a strong and well-documented connection between health and access to the countryside. Walking and cycling, in particular, are popular ways in which people can enjoy exercising and have the advantage that they require relatively little specialist equipment. In addition the countryside is generally free to use and the rights of way network is available 24 hours a day. People can pick up the skills required, along with the confidence needed, to use the countryside responsibly at various events and guided walks, including health walks, which are run by a wide range of organisations. The county access network must not be overlooked in its role in tackling obesity and keeping the nation healthy and partnerships should be developed to meet common aims.

8.4 Long term maintenance

- 8.4.1 Making improvements to the access network is very worthy. However, to bring lasting benefits to users it is essential that there are sufficient resources in place to ensure long-term maintenance and investment in the infrastructure.
- 8.4.2 Several people who responded to the questionnaire were concerned that creating more access may result in maintenance resources being spread too thinly.

8.5 Biodiversity, conservation, archaeology and landscape

- 8.5.1 Before new paths are created, or improvements to existing routes are carried out, an assessment of the environmental impact of the work should be conducted.
- 8.5.2 This will include consideration of designations including Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSIs), National/Local Nature Reserves, Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONBs), Sites of Nature Conservation Importance (SNCIs) and Scheduled Ancient Monuments (SAMs). Consideration should also be given towards materials used and distances they are transported. Where appropriate access managers should work closely with relevant experts to eliminate or reduce any potential negative impacts, and maximise possible benefits, to the landscape and wildlife.

8.6 Climate change

- 8.6.1 There is much scientific evidence that our climate is changing. However, it is unclear what, if any, effect this will have on how people want to access the

countryside. The main effect is likely to result from sea level rise and the consequences of this on coastal paths.

8.7 Social inclusion

- 8.7.1 People are not all the same: they have different backgrounds, experiences and needs. When planning improvements to the access network it will be necessary to consider everybody as a user or potential user of the network to maximise opportunities for all.

9 Statement of Action

9.1 Access for All

9.1.1 An overarching element of future delivery of all actions identified in the Statement of Action table will be the need to provide 'access for all'. This applies to new access as well as to improvements to existing routes. This approach will be taken as widely as possible to ensure the greatest number of users can enjoy the access network and the countryside as a whole. While all improvements should maximise accessibility, there are some locations where it will be impossible to provide routes that are accessible to all.

9.2 The Statement of Action table

9.2.1 The Statement of Action table identifies work that is needed to achieve an improved access network in West Sussex. It has been compiled using all the information that has been gathered and evaluated as part of the RoWIP process. The activities are broad and more detail will be set out in the annual action plans. Actions are arranged under the issue they aim to resolve, though in many instances one action may go towards addressing more than one issue and these are also identified.

9.2.2 Additional resources (staff and estimated scale of cost) required to deliver the action are identified in the table, as are potential delivery partners.

9.3 Key to tables

9.3.1 Estimated additional resources required

Human resources:

e	Within existing staffing levels but higher levels of staffing would probably improve the service
†	Some required (possibly within capacity of existing staff but will need to wait until staff have capacity)
† †	Significant increase required
† † †	Major increase required

Funding:

e	Within existing budgets but more funding would probably improve the service
£	< £5,000
££	£5,000 - £25,000
£££	£25,000 - £100,000
££££	> £100,000

9.3.2 **Partners – acronyms used**

AONB	AONB Units (SDJC, CHC and High Weald)	FC	Forestry Commission
CAFWS	Countryside Access Forum for West Sussex	HA	Highways Agency
CHC	Chichester Harbour Conservancy	NE	Natural England
CLA	Country Land and Business Association	NFU	National Farmers' Union
DC	District or Borough Council	NT	National Trust
EA	Environment Agency	PC	Parish Council
Defra	Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs	PCT	Primary Care Trust
		SDJC	South Downs Joint Committee
		WSCC	West Sussex County Council

9.3.3 **Timescale**

9.3.4 Timescales have not been included at this stage as many actions depend on additional resources becoming available and therefore it is difficult to accurately predict when work may take place and there is no wish to raise expectations unrealistically. However much work already being undertaken by a wide range of organisations is already delivering enhanced access improvements across the county, and further opportunities will be maximised when they arise. Detailed timescales will be shown in the Annual Action Plans.

Recommended Action	Additional resources required		Key Partners	Other issues addressed
	†	£		
Issue A. Maintenance of the existing network				
A1. Routine maintenance; a) Continue with current inspection and maintenance programme b) Continue with summer vegetation clearance programme (piloted in 2006/07 and 07/08)	e e	e e	WSCC, SDJC WSCC	
A2. Improvements to the current network: a) Deliver annual 'minor' work programme b) Deliver annual 'major' works programme – bridleway refurbishment c) Deliver annual 'major' works programme – structures refurbishment/replacement (until 2009/10) d) Deliver annual gate for stile and gate latch initiative.	e e e e	e e (££££ beyond 09/10) e e	WSCC, AONB, landowners WSCC, SDJC As above As above	
A3. Assert and protect the network: a) Adopt a proactive approach towards securing landowner cooperation through the implementation of campaigns b) Promote landowner cooperation through NFU and CLA publications, CAFWS, and via the web c) To offer assistance to farmers and landowners to maintain stiles and gates, explain other statutory duties and help resolve conflict d) Through enforcement as appropriate. e) Identify RoWs waymarked but not on legal line and resolve issues so paths are routed along correct line	e e e e †	e e e e £	WSCC, SDJC, NFU, CLA, landowners As above As above As above As above	
A4. Improve drainage and surfacing of strategic routes, including footpaths, where appropriate: a) Identify routes that need surfacing and prioritise work programme b) Implement work programme	e †	e £££	WSCC, SDJC As above	
A5. Promoted/long distance routes: a) Agree list of routes to be promoted at county level b) Prepare and implement a maintenance schedule for above routes.	e †	e ££	WSCC, SDJC, + others As above	

Recommended Action	Additional resources required		Key Partners	Other issues addressed
	†	£		
A6. Use of volunteers: a) Maintain current levels of use of local volunteers and develop as appropriate.	†	£	WSCC, AONB, user groups, other organisations	
A7. WSCC TRO policy: a) Follow TRO policy guidance as required.	†	£	WSCC, SDJC	E, J
A8. WSCC strategy document relating to DDA within management of RoW; a) Revise policy following the commencement of Section 69 of the CRow Act 2000 b) Follow policy guidance as required	e †	e £	WSCC, CAFWS, disabled/user groups WSCC	E, J
A9. RoW protocols a) Complete protocol between WSCC and SDJC b) Revise protocol between WSCC and CHC c) Ensure protocols are followed as required	e e e	e e e	WSCC, SDJC WSCC, CHC WSCC, SDJC, CHC	A,D,E,F, G,J
A10. Definitive Map work: a) Continue ongoing maintenance of the Definitive Map b) Consider prioritising claims by needs identified through the RoWIP process c) Work to ensure 'lost routes' are shown on the Definitive Map	† † † †	£ £ £	WSCC WSCC WSCC, Natural England, CAFWS, user groups	
A11. CRow open access land a) Monitor to ensure open access land is available for public use on foot b) Identify and implement priority projects to enhance the value of access land eg to provide through routes and create circular routes	† † †	£ ££	WSCC, SDJC, user groups WSCC, SDJC, NE, CAFWS, user groups	

Recommended Action	Additional resources required		Key Partners	Other issues addressed
	⦿	£		
Issue B. Information provision and confidence in using the countryside				
B1. Improve promotion of the access network: a) on web b) through talks/walks c) using local media d) providing promotional leaflets and interpretation boards e) on publicly available mapping.	⦿ ⦿ ⦿ ⦿ ⦿	£ £ £ £ £	WSCC, AONB, CAFWS, PCs, Ordnance Survey, PCT, user groups, other organisations (including commercial access companies)	J
B2. Provide new/updated information on promoted themes routes: a) Downs Link b) Wheelchair Walks c) New Lipchis Way d) Bill Way (Sustrans route 88) e) Others identified in A5 or in the future.	⦿ ⦿ ⦿ ⦿ ⦿	££ ££ £ £ £	WSCC WSCC, CAFWS, disabled groups WSCC, Footprints Sustrans, WSCC, DC As required	J
B3. Promotion of local routes: a) Encourage others to publish and promote quality local walks guides and parish maps b) Publish a good practice guide for the production of walks and rides leaflets and parish map boards.	⦿ ⦿	£ ££	WSCC, SDJC, DCs, PCs, interest groups WSCC, AONB	J
B4. Provide destination and distance signs on selected priority/popular routes: a) Identify suitable area and implement pilot scheme.	⦿	£	WSCC, PCs, SDJC	

Recommended Action	Additional resources required		Key Partners	Other issues addressed
	Person	£		
B5. Access for All (social inclusion): a) Determine what additional information is required by different user/non-user groups b) Endeavour to identify sectors of society who seldom use the countryside and assess appropriate action (particularly youth, mobility impaired, ethnic minorities, lone users) c) More fully explore the needs of people with disabilities, reduced mobility and visual impairments d) Liaise with tourism and other interests to develop complementary programmes and attract alternative funding for route development, including new links where appropriate, and promotion	Person Person Person Person	£ £ ££ ££	WSCC, AONB, disability & community groups, PCT As above As above + CAFWS WSCC, AONB, tourism officers, PCT	
B6. Permissive access a) Create a database of permissive linear and open access b) Promote to the public as appropriate	Person Person	££ £	{ WSCC, AONB, Ordnance Survey, DC, PC, FC, NT, Defra,	
B7. Healthy Lifestyles a) Develop countryside access schemes to encourage people to lead a healthy lifestyle and to tackle obesity	Person	££	WSCC, DC, PCT, NE	
Issue C. Difficulty in getting to the countryside				
C1. Identify opportunities to improve car parking without damaging the environment: a) Audit existing car parking provision in the countryside b) Carry out feasibility into making more effective use of existing car parking facilities in villages, eg village halls, schools, pubs and businesses.	Person Person	£ £	WSCC, SDJC, DCs, PCs, CAFWS As above	

Recommended Action	Additional resources required		Key Partners	Other issues addressed
	†	£		
C2. Support existing and new initiatives to enable people to access the countryside other than using the car: a) Promote use of existing bus and train services to countryside sites and where they link with promotional routes b) Encourage walks (guided and self-guided using leaflets) to start at points with public transport and to promote this information.	†	££	WSCC, AONB, National Trust, public transport operators	
	†	£	WSCC, AONB, access operators, DC, PC, interest groups	
C3. Accommodation: a) Support provision of low cost accommodation on the South Downs Way National Trail.	†	£	CAFWS, SDJC	C
Issue D. Safety using the countryside including using and crossing busy roads to link off-road access				
D1. Road crossings: a) Identify and prioritise locations where improvements are required b) Work with managers and landowners to i. improve sight lines (vegetation clearance and re-location/removal of signage) ii. provide appropriate signage to warn road users of crossing locations and vice versa iii. encourage highway organisations to provide safe crossings on existing roads.	e	e	WSCC, SDJC, CAFWS, Users, PC, DC	
	†	££	WSCC, SDJC, landowners, HA	
	†	££	WSCC, HA, CAFWS	
	†	££££	WSCC, HA, CAFWS	
D2. Linear road use: a) Identify locations where improvements are required b) Work with managers and landowners i. maintain verges and sightlines ii. provide parallel routes (field edges, etc) iii. consider route diversions iv. consider traffic calming.	†	£	WSCC, CAFWS, AONB, users, PC, DC	
	†	£	WSCC, SDJC, HA, landowners	
	†	££	WSCC, AONB, landowners	
	†	££	WSCC, SDJC, landowners	
	†	££	WSCC, HA	

Recommended Action	Additional resources required		Key Partners	Other issues addressed
	†	£		
D3. Road improvements: a) Ensure needs of non-motorised vehicle users are considered when new roads are planned or existing roads are 'improved'.	†	£	WSCC, HA, CAFWS, DC	K
Issue E. Crime and misuse of the countryside				
E1. Crime and misuse of the countryside: a) In high crime/misuse areas establish a close working relationship with land managers and other interested parties to seek resolution of issues on both sides	†	£	WSCC, AONB, land managers, Police, NFU, CLA, user groups	J
b) Support and promote Sussex Pathwatch Scheme aimed at reducing illegal and misuse of the countryside by vehicle users.	†	££	WSCC, SDJC, land managers, Police, PC, user groups	J
E2. Reduce crime by design: a) Design out crime wherever possible for new and improved access.	†	£	WSCC, AONB, NT, FC, Police, DC	J,K
Issue F. More off-road multi-use routes are needed to link centres of population with the countryside and to facilities and amenities				
F1. Develop and promote routes that provide links into the countryside and to facilities: a) Carry out a feasibility study into the routes identified through the RoWIP research and prioritise for future investigation/implementation	† †	£	WSCC, AONB, Sustrans, Defra, CAFWS	B,C
b) Continue to develop the following routes: i. Bognor to Barnham cycle and easy access route ii. Selsey to Chichester cycle and easy access route iii. National Cycle Network 2 along the West Sussex coast	† †	£££	WSCC, Sustrans, DC, landowners	
F2. Develop and promote schemes to provide safer cycling and walking to school and places of work using the rights of way network (working in partnership where required eg Burgess Hill Paths Partnership, Safe routes to Schools).	† †	£££	WSCC, schools, work places, DC, PC, Sustrans	

Recommended Action	Additional resources required ‡ £		Key Partners	Other issues addressed
Issue G. There are missing links				
G1. Easy access circular routes: a) Carry out a study to identify suitable routes/mini-networks to improve accessibility for all users, particularly the less mobile. b) Prioritise routes to be investigated and implemented.	‡	£	WSCC, DC, PC, CAFWS, AONB, disability groups WSCC, landowners As above	J,K
G2. Missing links that prevent circular routes for walkers, cyclists, horse riders, carriage drivers: a) Carry out a feasibility study of the routes identified through the RoWIP research and prioritise for future investigation b) Investigate and implement priority routes (including upgrade of footpath where appropriate, new access through schemes such as Environmental Stewardship).	‡ ‡	£	WSCC, CAFWS, AONB WSCC, DCs, PCs, NE, AONB, landowners, user groups	J, H
G3. Continuous route along the coast a) Work to create a continuous route along the West Sussex coast	‡ ‡	££	WSCC, EA, landowners, CHC, DC, PC, NE	
G4. Highways on which limited maintenance is carried out: a) Identify 'green lanes' that are significant within the network and prioritise for maintenance and improvement b) Promote these to the public (possible by adding them to the Definitive Map)	‡ ‡	££	WSCC, user groups	F
	‡ ‡	££	WSCC, AONB	F
Issue H. Off-road access opportunities for horse riders, carriage drivers and cyclists is limited or fragmented, particularly outside the South Downs				
H1. Infrastructure: a) Ensure access providers/managers are aware of equestrian needs to ensure existing network is available to use i.e. installation/maintenance of bridle gates, clearance heights, 'box' parking requirements.	‡	£	WSCC, AONB, FC, landowners, CAFWS, user groups	A

Recommended Action	Additional resources required		Key Partners	Other issues addressed
	†	£		
H2. Wider access: a) Investigate opportunities to improve horse, carriage and cyclist access through schemes such as Environmental Stewardship, and working with landowners to create new routes/upgrade routes & toll rides.	†	££	WSCC, AONB, Defra, landowners, FC, toll rides	G, J, K
Issue I. The erosion of coastal/riverside paths				
I1. Coastal and Riverside Access: a) Work with Environment Agency, NE, landowners, relevant agencies, interested parties to ensure access is seen as an important issue on the coast and along rivers and is considered in policy documents such as Shoreline Management Plans b) Monitor condition of coastal access paths c) Implement the West Sussex policy on coastal and riverside paths subject to erosion as required d) Use proposed new legislation relating to Access to the English Coast to ensure coastal paths are useable	†	£	WSCC, EA, NE, CHC, DC, landowners, CAFWS	
	†	£££	WSCC, EA, CHC, users	
	†	££	WSCC, EA, landowners, DC	
	†	££	WSCC, NE, landowners	
Issue J. Conflict arising from use of the rights of way access network				
J1. Promote responsible use of the countryside through: a) Educational and local events b) Codes of conduct and information (leaflets and web) (including Countryside Code) c) Media opportunities.	†	££	WSCC, NE, Defra, CAFWS, AONB, FC, NT, DC, PC, user groups, commercial access orgs	B
J2. Design of routes: a) Design out conflict wherever possible for new and improved access schemes.	†	£	WSCC, SDJC, Police, access managers	E, K

Recommended Action	Additional resources required		Key Partners	Other issues addressed
	⦿	£		
Issue K. New development and road schemes				
K1. Ensure access benefits are maximised within, through and beyond new developments/new road scheme/improvements:				
a) Ensure relevant access policies are in LDF documents and associated documents	⦿	£	WSCC, DCs, CAFWS, users	E,J
b) Improve liaison with planners throughout the planning process and ensure access infrastructure is included in S106 agreements	⦿	£	WSCC, DCs, CAFWS	E,J
c) Respond to all planning consultations affecting access	⦿		WSCC, DC, CAFWS, AONB, users	E,J
d) Develop a policy on open space and rights of way provision in and around new developments	⦿	£	WSCC, DCs, CAFWS, AONB, users	E,J
e) Ensure detailed design meets the needs of users and managers	⦿	£	WSCC, DCs, CAFWS, AONB, users	E,J
f) Ensure planners have relevant knowledge to ensure access benefits are maximised throughout the development process	⦿	£	WSCC, DCs	J
Other				
O1. Take advantage of any suitable grant funding for public rights of way and countryside access initiatives	⦿	£	WSCC + all partners	
O2. Develop and continuously update a database of RoWIP projects	⦿	£	WSCC with input from all partners	

10 Delivery and funding

10.1 Delivery

- 10.1.1 WSCC, along with many other access providers, is committed to improving access on foot, by cycle and on horse throughout the county. During the time taken to prepare the RoWIP many projects that deliver real benefits to users have been carried out. Examples, many of which have been carried by organisations other than WSCC, include:
- the initiation of the Pathwatch Scheme
 - improvements to a footpath in East Grinstead with funding through the LTP via the Safe Routes to School Initiative
 - the creation of the Salterns Way, Serpents Trail and Literary Trail
 - legal work to enable cyclists to use a number of footpaths on a permissive basis in a variety of locations
 - implementation work and opening of Worthing to Shoreham section of the coastal cycle route
 - boardwalks installed at Pagham over the shingle to enable less mobile people, including wheel and push chair users, to access the beach
 - surfacing of a path through open access land to enable it to be used for health walks.

This good work will be built on over the period the RoWIP covers.

- 10.1.2 As well as continuing delivery of access improvements through well-proven means, a variety of innovative and imaginative solutions need to be conceived and explored. Despite a willingness to improve access it is recognised that in preparing the Statement of Action that not all actions identified will be capable of being delivered in the short to medium term. Many of these will require partnership working between organisations, and even then it is recognised and accepted that not everything that is hoped for will be able to be achieved. Delivery of many projects will often rely on the goodwill of landowners/land managers to create new access either by dedication or by permissive agreement. The use of compulsory powers for this purpose will be seen as a last resort to be used only in extreme cases with the support of County Councillors.

10.2 Annual Action Plans

- 10.2.1 Annual Action Plans will prioritise projects to be delivered in the subsequent year, and will also report on progress made during the previous year. These will draw on the database of projects compiled as part of the RoWIP process. The database identifies a variety of information for each project suggestion including:
- where known: brief project description
 - location

- likelihood of being a quick win
- what issues from the RoWIP they will address, and what action from the Statement of Action they deliver against
- potential partners (including lead partner)
- an indication of cost and staff resources required
- priority (as assessed by WSCC, CAFWS and SDJC as appropriate)
- beneficiaries (ie walkers, cyclists, etc)
- the originator of the initial suggestion.

10.2.2 The Annual Action Plans will need to be deliverable and achievable but what improvements are carried out will depend on available funding and resources.

10.3 Funding and resources

10.3.1 The delivery of projects will be linked to available funding and resources. Current funding for rights of way management will be used for the continued delivery of maintenance and other works programmes (e.g. bridleway resurfacing and structures), and as a result will partly address some of the issues identified. Funding will be sought through the West Sussex Local Transport Plan for delivery of RoWIP projects that meet shared aims. However no extra LTP funding is available from Government specifically for delivery of RoWIPs through the LTP process, or through any other initiatives.

10.3.2 These funding streams will however be insufficient to meet the aspirations contained in the RoWIP. Other sources of funding and delivery will also need to be sought if the RoWIP is to result in significant improvements to the rights of way and wider countryside access, network. WSCC will work closely with partners including Natural England, District, Borough and Parish Councils, SDJC, access providers (e.g. AONB units, Sustrans, Forestry Commission, National Trust, other organisations), user groups as well as private landowners and grant providers to ensure real public access benefits are achieved. For example other organisations that perhaps traditionally have not been associated with the access agenda will also be approached to help deliver projects that meet joint aims, such as the Primary Care Trust to encourage more people to exercise for the associated health benefits. Work will also focus on ensuring access through the planning process is maximised, for example through section 106 agreements.

10.3.3 Where possible, and resources allow, a selection of projects will be worked up in advance so if and when funding opportunities present themselves maximum access benefits can be achieved.

Appendix A

Documents that are relevant to the RoWIP
Rights of Way Improvement Plans, Statutory Guidance to Local Highway Authorities in England (November 2002) – Defra
The South East Plan (draft 2006); South East England Regional Assembly
Country Strategy 2005 – 2009; WSCC
West Sussex Transport Plan 2006 – 2016; WSCC
Area Transport Plans; WSCC
Pedalling Ahead – cycling strategy for West Sussex; W
Stepping Ahead in West Sussex – A pedestrian strategy; WSCC
Milestones Statement for West Sussex; WSCC (1996)
Guide to the Law for the Rights of Way Committee; WSCC
The Management of Public Rights of Way and Traffic Regulation Orders (amended 2005); WSCC
West Sussex policy on coastal and riverside paths subject to erosion (2004); WSCC
Strategy document for the consideration and application of the Disability Discrimination Act 1995 within management of public rights of way within West Sussex (2003); WSCC
A strategic framework for the West Sussex Visitor Economy; WSCC
West Sussex Sustainability Strategy 2005 – 2010; WSCC
West Sussex Cultural Strategy; WSCC
A Community Strategy for West Sussex and Community Strategy Plans; WSCC
West Sussex Rural Strategy 2007 - 2017; WSCC
Local Development Frameworks; all District Councils
South Downs Management Plan (draft); SDJC
Chichester Harbour Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) Management Plan 2004 – 2009; Chichester Harbour Conservancy
The High Weald AONB Management Plan 2004, a 20 year strategy; High Weald AONB Unit
Towards a Rights of Way Protocol between South Downs Joint Committee and East Sussex County Council and WSCC; (draft)
SDJC procedure for improving accessibility on rights of way using the principle of the least restrictive option when selecting structures (revised 28/11/05); SDJC
A Strategy for the West Sussex Landscape (2005); WSCC
South Downs Way National Trail Management Plan 2008-2013 (Consultation Draft 2007); South Downs Way Steering Group
Accessible Natural Greenspace in South East England (2007); SE AONBs, FC, NE

Appendix B

Glossary of Terms	
Access Land	Land mapped as Open Country (downland, heathland, mountain or moor) or Registered Common Land under CRoW Act 2000 (sometimes referred to as Open Access Land)
Adopted highway	A road which has been adopted by the highway authority to maintain; usually with a sealed surface
Annual Action Plan	A plan that will detail projects to be delivered to address issues raised in the RoWIP, and report on delivery after the first and subsequent years
AONB	Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty
BC	Borough Council
BHS	British Horse Society
BOAT	Byway open to all traffic (right of way for all users, including motorised vehicles, but used primarily on foot, by horse and by bicycle)
Bridleway	Right of way for walkers, horse-riders and cyclists
CAFWS	Countryside Access Forum for West Sussex
CHC	Chichester Harbour Conservancy
CLA	Country Land and Business Association
CRoW Act 2000	Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000
CTC	Cyclists' Touring Club
Cycle track/ way/ lane	A route usually only open to cyclists and possibly pedestrians, and not shown on the Definitive Map
DC	District Council
DDA	Disability Discrimination Act 1995
Dedication	Legal creation of a public right of way
De facto access	Where there is access 'in practice' but not spelled out by law, for example to many beaches
Definitive Map	The legal record of public rights of way, accompanied by the Definitive Statement
Definitive Statement	A conclusive written description of public rights of way, which accompanies the Definitive Map
Defra	Government Department of the Environment, Food and Rural Affairs
Diversion	Legally altering the line of a public right of way
DMMO	Definitive Map Modification Order
EA	Environment Agency
ESCC	East Sussex County Council
Extinguishment	Legal removal of a public right of way from the Definitive Map

Footpath	Public right of way with access on foot
FC	Forestry Commission
Green lane	An unofficial term often used for a lane or track that does not have a sealed surface
HA	Highway Authority (WSSCC for West Sussex)
HA	Highways Agency
Highway	Any road, track or path over which the public has the right to pass or re-pass (includes rights of way)
LAF	Local Access Forum
LARA	Land Access and Recreation Association
LTP	Local Transport Plan
NE	Natural England (formerly Countryside Agency)
NFU	National Farmers' Union
NT	National Trust
ORPA	Other route with public access (used on OS maps)
OS	Ordnance Survey
OSS	Open Spaces Society
Permissive access	Access that is granted by permission of the land owner – this may be with a formal agreement with a body such as Defra or WSSCC or without
PC	Parish Council
PCT	Primary Care Trust
PRoW	Public right of way - a route over which the public has the right to pass and re-pass
RA	Ramblers' Association
Restricted byway	Right of way with access on foot, horse, cycle, horse-drawn carriage but not mechanically propelled vehicles (formerly RUPP)
RoW	Right of Way (same as PRoW)
RoWIP	Rights of Way Improvement Plan
RUPP	Road Used as a Public Path (re-designated as Restricted Byway in 2006)
SALC	Sussex Association of Local Councils
SDJC	South Downs Joint Committee
SWT	Sussex Wildlife Trust
TRF	Trail Riders' Fellowship
TRO	Traffic Regulation Order
UCR	Unclassified county road
Unsealed routes	Routes that are not tarmac'ed, asphalted or similar
White Road	Road shown 'white' on OS maps – may or may not have public access
WSSCC	West Sussex County Council