

CET/24/56

Public Rights of Way Committee
11 July 2024

Rights of Way Improvement Plan

Report of the Director of Climate Change, Environment and Transport

Please note that the following recommendation is subject to consideration and determination by the Committee before taking effect.

1) Recommendation

It is recommended that the objectives and policies for the Devon Rights of Way Improvement Plan be updated as set out in appendix to this report (Devon on the move, Rights of Way Improvement Plan Version 3, Objectives and Policies).

2) Introduction

This report provides an update on progress in reviewing The Rights of Way Improvement Plan (Devon on the Move, Rights of Way Improvement Plan Version 3). This follows on from previous reports considered at the meetings held on 9th March 2023 and 23 November 2023.

The review of objectives and policies has been undertaken in consultation with relevant organisations and groups, with the subsequent document endorsed by the Devon Countryside Access Forum at their meeting held on 22 April 2024.

3) Background

Introduction

The Rights of Way Improvement Plan (RoWIP) is produced by Devon County Council in accordance with the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000, and related guidance from the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, and Natural England.

As set out in guidance published on GOV.UK by the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, the key purpose is to encourage and guide improvements to the public rights of way network to provide a better experience for *'walkers, cyclists, horse riders, horse and carriage drivers, people with mobility problems, and people using motorised vehicles, for example, motorbikes.'*

The initial Rights of Way Improvement Plan (Devon on the move) was published in 2005. This was reviewed, with a summary document published in 2012.

Review

A review of the 2012 version of the RoWIP commenced in 2022, initially co-ordinated alongside an update the Public Rights of Way Annex to the Highway Asset Management Plan. The Highway Asset Management Plan was subsequently approved and is now published on the Devon County Council website.

Initial consultation included workshop sessions with local partners participating in the Parish Paths Partnership Scheme, with discussion focused on what has changed within the last 10 years which did or could impact on use and management of the Public Rights of Way network. Suggestions for potential priority actions were also invited for consideration within the updated RoWIP.

Internal and external stakeholders have also contributed, including representatives for transport planning, ecology, landscape, heritage, agriculture, rural economy, protected landscapes (National Landscapes (formerly Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty) and National Parks), and interest groups.

The plan has been subject to further consultation, including being publicly available via the Devon County Council website at Have Your Say. Initial consultees, and other relevant stakeholders were also be contacted, providing opportunity for additional input.

Drafting of the revised objectives and policies has been co-ordinated through a Devon Countryside Access Forum (DCAF) working group, reporting back through the full forum, with the review also considered by this Committee. DCAF endorsement of the revisions was agreed at their most recent meeting held on 22 April.

The recommendation is that resolution now be made by this committee for the objectives and policies of the Devon Rights of Way Improvement Plan be updated as set out in appendix to this report (Devon on the move, Rights of Way Improvement Plan Version 3, Objectives and Policies).

4) Options

The main alternative option would be to continue working based on the existing RoWIP. This is considered inappropriate as information informing priorities and actions is out of date, with resource allocation not necessarily reflecting relevant needs.

5) Consultations

The review has been carried out in consultation with key partners and stakeholders including parish and town councils participating in the Parish Paths Partnership, and the Devon Countryside Access Forum.

6) Strategic Plan

The Devon Rights of Way Improvement Plan (RoWIP) fits well with the Devon Strategic Plan – Best Place (2021 – 25) and actions to be fairer, healthier, caring, greener, and prosperous. At the strategic level, public rights of way and access are of great importance to:

- connecting people and places (including Active Travel),
- the local economy (with the network providing essential infrastructure in support of recreation, leisure, and tourism),
- carbon reduction, biodiversity, landscape, and heritage (particularly provision for non-car based travel, contribution to climate change avoidance and mitigation measures, and as a key component of green infrastructure), and
- physical and mental health and wellbeing (with benefits directly attributable to exercising outdoors and contact with nature).

Directly relevant priorities set out within the Devon Strategic Plan include:

Responding to the climate emergency, especially:

- More opportunities for cycling and walking,
- Helping wildlife and landscapes to recover,
- Encourage sustainable lifestyles, and
- Continue to reduce carbon emissions across all our services.

Supporting recovery and growth, especially:

- Secure investment in transport infrastructure, and
- Maintain, and where necessary, improve our highway network and improve sustainable transport options

Tackling poverty and inequality, especially:

- Promote community cohesion.

Improve health and wellbeing, especially:

- Give people greater opportunities for walking and cycling to increase their physical activity.

Supporting people and communities, especially:

- Continue to support our vibrant community and voluntary sector,
- Enable a range of transport options, including public transport, and
- Engage directly with people in meaningful ways and encourage participation in decisions that affect them.

7) Financial Considerations

Updating the plan is cost neutral, being led by existing PROW staff. The plan will inform work priorities and resource allocation, with potential to support external funding bids.

8) Legal Considerations

The review has been carried out in accordance with the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000, and related guidance from the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, and Natural England. There are no other specific legal considerations.

9) Environmental Impact Considerations (including Climate Change, Sustainability and Socio Economic)

Consultation on the RoWIP includes taking account of impacts, with inclusion of policies to ensure associated actions have either a neutral or positive effect.

10) Equality Considerations

The revised objectives and policies include measures to better identify and address issues impacting on equity of access, enabling greater opportunity for participation by underrepresented and excluded people, and in improving physical and mental health and wellbeing. Accordingly, overall impact will be positive. An outline, draft impact assessment is included as an annex to this report. Should the committee resolve to make the recommendation, this impact assessment will be reviewed, updated, and published.

11) Risk Management Considerations

No risks have been identified.

12) Conclusion

The RoWIP is an important, statutory plan used to inform and guide work to manage, maintain and enhance the public rights of way and wider access network. Accordingly, it is recommended that the objectives and policies be updated as set out in the appendix to this report.

Meg Booth

Director of Climate Change, Environment and Transport

Electoral Divisions: All

Local Government Act 1972: List of background papers

Background Paper Nil

Date

File Reference

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sc/cr/Rights of Way Improvement Plan

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Appendix 1 to CET/24/56

Devon on the move

Rights of Way Improvement Plan Version 3

(Objectives and Policies)

Draft (July 2024)

Contents

1. Introduction and Background
2. Strategic Context
3. Consultation
4. Objectives and Policies

Appendices

- i) Glossary of Terms (*N.B to be completed*)
- ii) Summary of Supporting Documents and Strategies
- iii) Summary of Topics, Issues, and Activities/Priorities from initial consultation

1. Introduction and Background

The Rights of Way Improvement Plan (RoWIP) is produced by Devon County Council in accordance with the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000, and related guidance from the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, and Natural England. The key purpose is to encourage and guide improvements to the public rights of way network to provide a better experience for *walkers, cyclists, horse riders, horse and carriage drivers, people with mobility problems, and people using motorised vehicles, for example, motorbikes.*

The initial Rights of Way Improvement Plan (Devon on the move) was published in 2005. This was reviewed, with a summary document published in 2012.

The legislation sets out that the RoWIP should be reviewed every 10 years. This includes considering the role of the plan in:

- (a) *meeting the present and likely future needs of the public*
- (b) *opportunities provided for exercise and other forms of open-air recreation and enjoyment*
- (c) *accessibility to blind or partially sighted persons and others with mobility problems*
- (d) *such other matters relating to local rights of way as the Secretary of State may direct.*

This document (once completed) will replace the 2012 summary. Initial consultation was instigated in 2022, alongside work to update the Public Rights of Way Annex to the Highway Asset Management Plan. The Highway Asset Management Plan has subsequently been approved and is now published on the Devon County Council website at [Highway Infrastructure Asset Management Plan - Roads and transport \(devon.gov.uk\)](https://www.devon.gov.uk/highway-asset-management-plan-roads-and-transport).

Early feedback has directly informed the format for this new RoWIP document, with a focus on updating key policies, rather than a full rewrite of the initial plan. The intention is that this updated version of the objectives and policies for the RoWIP will be reviewed in five years' time (2029).

The main purpose of this document is to set out the key principles to inform and steer maintenance and improvement of the public rights of way and wider access network across Devon. These objectives and policies subsequently influence service priorities, day-to-day working practices, and action plans to extend and enhance the network. Relevance and effectiveness will be periodically monitored and reported through the Devon Countryside Access Forum and Devon County Council Public Rights of Way Committee.

With regards to the network maintained by Devon County Council, this comprises of approximately 5,000km of public rights of way, 560km of unsurfaced Unclassified County Roads, and 225km of off-road recreational trails (such as the Exe Estuary Trail, the Granite Way and Tarka Trail). The network also includes Devon sections of 2 National Trails (the South West Coast Path and King Charles III England Coast Path), and Access Land (for example access on foot to moors, heaths, downs, commons and some coastal areas).

It is important that the RoWIP is not considered in isolation, and that associated actions reflect, influence, and benefit from relevant experience, knowledge and initiatives drawn from wide ranging sources. Examples of this are summarised within Appendix ii), referencing guidance documents from wide ranging organisations including local authorities, Government, third sector, user groups, and stakeholders. Related topics include sustainable transport, environment, design guidance, research, and practicable measures to improve equity of access. These examples do not provide a definitive list, and there is a need to monitor and review to ensure that related actions continue to be relevant and informed by good practice.

Social inclusion is of particular significance, including in relation to (c) above. A core principle is the British Standard 5709:2018 Gaps, gates and stiles, and 'the least restrictive option' for accessibility of structures on public rights of way. Added to this, Outdoor Accessibility Guidance commissioned by Paths for All and published by the Sensory Trust in 2023 provides an important reference point in informing more inclusive outdoor experiences (available to download at [outdoor-accessibility-guidance-18April2023.pdf \(sensorytrust.org.uk\)](https://www.sensorytrust.org.uk/outdoor-accessibility-guidance-18April2023.pdf)).

2. Strategic Context

The Devon Rights of Way Improvement Plan (RoWIP) fits well with the Devon Strategic Plan – Best Place (2021 – 25), and action to be fairer, healthier, caring, greener, and prosperous. At a strategic level, public rights of way and access are of great importance to:

- *connecting people and places (including Active Travel),*
- *the local economy (with the network providing essential infrastructure in support of recreation, leisure, and tourism),*
- *carbon reduction, biodiversity, landscape, and heritage (particularly provision for non-car based travel, contribution to climate change avoidance and mitigation measures, and as a key component of green infrastructure), and*
- *physical and mental health and wellbeing (with benefits directly attributable to exercising outdoors and contact with nature).*

Directly relevant priorities set out within the Devon Strategic Plan include:

Responding to the climate emergency, especially:

- *More opportunities for cycling and walking,*
- *Helping wildlife and landscapes to recover,*
- *Encourage sustainable lifestyles, and*
- *Continue to reduce carbon emissions across all our services.*

Supporting recovery and growth, especially:

- *Secure investment in transport infrastructure, and*
- *Maintain, and where necessary, improve our highway network and improve sustainable transport options*

Tackling poverty and inequality, especially:

- *Promote community cohesion.*

Improve health and wellbeing, especially:

- *Give people greater opportunities for walking and cycling to increase their physical activity.*

Supporting people and communities, especially:

- *Continue to support our vibrant community and voluntary sector,*
- *Enable a range of transport options, including public transport, and*
- *Engage directly with people in meaningful ways and encourage participation in decisions that affect them.*

Management and maintenance priorities reflect, and support delivery of the objectives highlighted above, with onus on providing a network which is safe, reliable, and fit for purpose (within any necessary funding and resource constraints). This takes into consideration current statutory duties and maintenance regimes, as well as the responsibilities of landowners. A key related document is the Highway Infrastructure Asset Management Plan (2023 – 25), which relates to and supports the Devon and Torbay Local Transport Plan 3 2011 – 26.

At the national level, public rights of way and countryside access are also of importance in supporting delivery of the HM Government's A Green Future, 25 Year Environment Plan (published in 2018). Of particular significance are policies relating to '*Connecting people with the environment to improve health and wellbeing*' and goals for '*Enhancing beauty, heritage and engagement with the natural environment*'. This sets out that the UK Government will conserve and enhance the beauty of our natural environment, and make sure it can be enjoyed, used by and cared for by everyone. This will be done by:

- *safeguarding and enhancing the beauty of our natural scenery and improving its environmental value while being sensitive to considerations of its heritage.*
- *making sure that there are high quality, accessible, natural spaces close to where people live and work, particularly in urban areas, and encouraging more people to spend time in them to benefit their health and wellbeing*
- *focusing on increasing action to improve the environment from all sectors of society.*

A related target is the '*Accessible Greenspace Standard – promote access to good quality green and blue space within 15 minutes' walk from home*'.

The importance of public rights of way is also recognised within the National Planning policy Framework, which states;
100. Planning policies and decisions should protect and enhance public rights of way and access, including taking opportunities to provide better facilities for users, for example by adding links to existing rights of way networks including National Trails.

3. Consultation

Review of the RoWIP was instigated in 2022.

Initial consultation has included workshop sessions, held during the Autumn, involving local partners from the Parish Paths Partnership Scheme (also known as the P3 scheme). P3 is an initiative to encourage and support community involvement in managing and maintaining the public rights of way network. Devon County Council works in partnership with parish/town councils, landowners, and local voluntary groups to improve the condition of the local rights of way and to keep paths open and enjoyed - as outlined on the Devon County Council website at [Parish Paths Partnership scheme - Public Rights of Way \(devon.gov.uk\)](https://www.devon.gov.uk/parish-paths-partnership-scheme-public-rights-of-way).

Workshop discussions focused on considering issues and trends over the previous plan period (2012-2022) which may have impacted on use and management of the Public Rights of Way network; and inviting suggestions for priority actions to be included within the updated plan. Feedback was subsequently collated into topics, issues, and activities/priorities which were reviewed via a working group of the Devon Countryside Access Forum (DCAF) [Devon Countryside Access Forum - Public Rights of Way](https://www.devon.gov.uk/devon-countryside-access-forum-public-rights-of-way). A related summary table is included within Appendix iii) of this plan.

Whilst much of the 2012 RoWIP remains valid, there have been some notable changes to consider, including:

- designation of the King Charles III England Coast Path National Trail (and new opportunities through Coastal Access Rights);
- awareness of and urgency to mitigate and avoid the impacts of climate change (including in choice of design and materials, significance of public rights of way and the wider access network for non-car based travel, and loss of path through riverbank and coastal erosion); and
- greater understanding of the physical and mental health benefits of outdoor recreation (for example, as experienced through 'lockdown' arrangements during the Covid 19 pandemic).

This is reflected in some new and revised policies – for example relating to carbon reduction and climate change, biodiversity, and establishing the new National Trail. Approximately two-thirds of the objectives and policies have been carried forward from the 2012 RoWIP (with some amended wording), and one-third new policies to reflect changes over the last ten years.

Initial consultation also involved inviting representative internal and external interests to review and inform the draft topics, issues, and activities/priorities. This has included individuals and organisations with expertise and experience in protected landscapes (National Landscapes – previously known as Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty, and National Parks), transport planning, landscape, wildlife, heritage, public access, recreation (including walking, horse riding, cycling, and trail riding), landowners and land managers, and agriculture.

The respective responses have informed this draft plan.

This also includes carrying out additional Impact Assessment to properly consider actual and potential effects on people, the economy, and the environment.

Oversight of this review is through the Devon Countryside Access Forum and the Devon County Council Public Rights of Way Committee ([Committee details - Public Rights of Way Committee - Democracy in Devon](#)).

4. Objectives and Policies

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G4

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A. LEGAL STATUS: Definitive Map and Statement

Ref:	Topic:	Objective:	Policy:	Key Dates and Targets (where applicable)
A1	Definitive Map and Statement	Ensure that the Definitive Map and Statement provides an accurate record of public rights of way	<p>Continue the parish-by-parish review, with all parishes assessed by the end of 2025.</p> <p>This will include liaison with relevant groups such as the Ramblers and BHS on 'Don't Lose Your Way' and related initiatives.</p>	<p>January 2026</p> <p>(N.B. The cut-off date in the Countryside and Rights of Way Act is now extended to 1 January 2031)</p>
A2			<p>Schedule 14 applications and related claims will be prioritised on an area basis as part of the parish-by-parish review.</p> <p>Exceptions to this will be considered where the route offers significant public benefit – for example where there is no nearby alternative path available; where a path will help address road safety concerns; if there is a high public profile supported by a substantive user evidence; if the path provides a strategic link; or where a route is likely to be affected by development.</p> <p>These factors will also inform prioritisation of applications post completion of the parish-by-parish review.</p> <p>In determining applications, negotiation with the landowner(s) will be assessed to establish whether an alternative solution is available, for example, express dedication.</p>	<p>To be assessed in accordance with the Deregulation Act and implementation of associated regulations</p>

Ref:	Topic:	Objective:	Policy:	Key Dates and Targets (where applicable)
A3			New claims which arise in a parish where the review has been completed will be deferred until the whole of that particular District has been reviewed. However, exceptions may be made in line with the criteria in policy A2 above.	
A4			On completion of the parish-by-parish review, necessary legal event modification orders will be made; and the multiple Definitive Maps and Statements will be consolidated to either form a single Definitive Map and Statement for the whole county, or one per District.	January 2026 onwards
A5			Where paths have been added to the Definitive Map by Modification Order on historical evidential grounds and require significant works for them to be re-opened, or negatively impact on land management activities, or have an unacceptable environmental impact, consideration will be given to the use of Public Path Orders to divert the routes onto a more appropriate alignment.	
A6			On-line information and registers relevant to progress of the Definitive Map Review, Schedule 14 applications and deposits under Section 31(6) will be kept up to date.	
A7			<p>In processing Orders;</p> <p>Priority in the Definitive Map Review will be given to opportunities to create routes through landowner Creation Agreements.</p> <p>Orders will normally be made within 6 months of the relevant Committee decision.</p>	

Ref:	Topic:	Objective:	Policy:	Key Dates and Targets (where applicable)
			<p>Opposed Orders will normally be sent to the Secretary of State within 6 months of the end of the objection period.</p> <p>Witnesses will be advised to make statutory declarations where claims may not be dealt with for some years.</p>	

A. LEGAL STATUS: Public Path Orders

Ref:	Topic:	Objective:	Policy:	Key Dates and Targets (where applicable)
A8	Public Path Orders (Diversion, Creations and Extinguishments)	Utilise appropriate legal powers to enable new routes, path diversions and related extinguishments to enhance the public rights of way network.	<p>Making of diversion orders in the interests of path users and/or landowners will be considered, with priority placed on proposals which provide greatest strategic benefit to the public rights of way network, including addressing route anomalies.</p> <p>Examples of diversions in the interest of the public are those which will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • achieve a direct improvement in road / path safety for users, • will improve equity of access, • achieve a direct improvement in provision of a circular route and / or connectivity between locations, • provide access to a National Trail, Recreational Route, attraction, or viewpoint. <p>Examples of diversions in the interest of landowners are those which will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • improve privacy to residential buildings, • relocate paths away from working farmyards and farm buildings for safety reasons, or • positively contribute to tangible improvements in farming operations. 	To be assessed in accordance with the Deregulation Act (including Right to Apply) and implementation of associated regulations
A9			Sharing, or defraying of costs will be considered where a diversion will be of benefit to the public, and/or enable management and maintenance efficiencies.	

Ref:	Topic:	Objective:	Policy:	Key Dates and Targets (where applicable)
A10			Concurrent creation and extinguishment orders will be considered in situations where diversion orders might not be feasible.	
A11			<p>Use of creation agreements will be considered where this will meet public need or result in public benefit, for example:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • addressing a road or path safety concern, • providing improvement in provision of a circular route and / or connectivity between locations, • providing or improving access to a National Trail, Recreational Route, attraction, or viewpoint, • providing links or improved access to Access Land, • improving equity of access and / or increasing the range of users able to enjoy a route. 	
A12			Priority will be given to paths which are affected by natural erosion, enabling routes to continue with the new lie of the land.	
A13			Anomalies, cul-de-sacs, and routes which change status along their length, including those crossing the county boundary, will be investigated and resolution sought as part of the parish-by-parish Definitive Map Review.	
A14			Neighbouring authorities will be encouraged and supported in the creation of appropriate links where it falls to them to resolve a route anomaly.	
A15			<p>Extinguishment of a public right of way will be given consideration where requisite legal tests are met. However, this will not be a high priority, and may require that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the applicant meets monitoring costs to show that the route is not needed for public use; and 	

Ref:	Topic:	Objective:	Policy:	Key Dates and Targets (where applicable)
			<ul style="list-style-type: none">the route is physically available to the public, signposted and/or waymarked throughout the monitoring period.	

A. LEGAL STATUS: Access Land and Coastal Access

Ref:	Topic:	Objective:	Policy:	Key Dates and Targets (where applicable)
A16	Access Land and Coastal Access	Seek opportunities to extend Access Land, and to improve connectivity and integration with the wider rights of way network	Landowners will be encouraged and supported in considering dedication of horse-riding and cycling rights on Access Land, or along a particular route across such land.	Actions to be considered alongside Defra policy including the Agricultural Transition Period and Environmental Land Management measures
A17			Landowners will be encouraged to dedicate additional Access Land (under Section 16 of the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000).	
A18			Close working will be encouraged with Natural England and local partners and stakeholders to complete the designation process for the King Charles III England Coast Path and associated Coastal Access Rights. This includes delivery of implementation works for the National Trail, associated access improvements to coastal margin, and potential use of 'roll back' arrangements.	31 December 2024

A. LEGAL STATUS: Permissive Paths and Alternative Routes

Ref:	Topic:	Objective:	Policy:	Key Dates and Targets (where applicable)
A19	Permissive Access	Permissive agreements, leases, and licences will be actively considered where this provides the most realistic opportunity to enhance the public access network	Emphasis will be placed on securing permanent access rights; however, permissive access arrangements will be supported, especially where such access is unlikely to be achieved through making of legal orders.	
A20			Collaborative working with Defra, Natural England, other appropriate agencies, and landowners and land managers will be encouraged and supported to develop and deliver new and enhanced public access provision. This includes through Environmental Land Management and Countryside Stewardship schemes.	
A21			Close working arrangements will be sought with major public landowners, for example, the Forestry Commission, in the development of public access provision.	
A22			The inclusion of walkers, horse riders and cyclists will be encouraged when negotiating appropriate permissive access arrangements.	
A23			Equity of access will be actively sought when negotiating permissive access provision, with emphasis on achieving the least restrictive option (i.e., gap, then gate, then kissing gate, then stile).	

A. MANAGEMENT AND MAINTENANCE: Quality Standards

Ref:	Topic:	Objective:	Policy:	Key Dates and Targets (where applicable)
B1	Quality Standards	Ensure that the public rights of way network is maintained to appropriate standards	<p>Maintenance will be carried out to recognised, established standards, and with regards to statutory responsibilities, and relevant strategies and plans. This includes recognising wider responsibilities to different user groups, environment factors (including climate change), wildlife, landscape, and heritage.</p> <p>Of particular relevance are National Trail Quality Standards and the Devon County Council Public Rights of Way Condition Criteria.</p>	
B2			<p>Management of the rights of way network will be achieved through a pro-active approach based on the classification of routes, regular inspection, implementation of routine work programmes, and carrying out targeted improvements.</p>	<p>Annual inspection for National Trail paths and shared use trails</p> <p>Every three years for other public rights of way and uUCRs</p>
B3			<p>Management and maintenance standards will be periodically reviewed, including benchmarking with relevant authorities to take account of good working practice and innovations in technology.</p> <p>Appropriate guidance notes will be produced to support and inform local standards.</p>	

Ref:	Topic:	Objective:	Policy:	Key Dates and Targets (where applicable)
			Of particular relevance will be measures to reflect and address the impacts of climate change with paths becoming more at risk from adverse weather including excessive surface water and high winds.	
B4			Priority will be placed on working cooperatively with landowners and land managers; however, enforcement procedures will be utilised to assert and protect the rights of the public where agreement cannot be reached through discussion and negotiation.	
B5			Equity of access will be actively pursued, with emphasis on the Least Restrictive Option. Wherever practicable, access measures will reflect current good practice – for example the British Standard for Gaps, Gates and Stiles (BS:5709:2018) and guidance such as By All Reasonable Means 2020 and Outdoor Accessibility Guidance 2023 (Sensory Trust).	
B6			Unsurfaced Unclassified County Roads (uUCRs) form an important part of the wider access network. Priority for management and maintenance will be placed on uUCRs where they provide access to and / or along strategic recreational and Active Travel routes.	
B7			<p>Multi-use trail design and surfacing will take account of environmental considerations, user needs, costs (including future maintenance) and guidance from relevant sources – for example, the good practice guide Surface Requirements for Shared Use Routes published by the former Countryside Agency (now Natural England), and BHS advice notes.</p> <p>Over reliance and/or assumptions about use of tarmacadam will be challenged.</p>	Cross Asset Innovation funded capital work in 2024-25 and 2025-26 to trial alternative surface materials

B. MANAGEMENT AND MAINTENANCE: Signing and Waymarking

Ref:	Topic:	Objective:	Policy:	Key Dates and Targets (where applicable)
B8	Signing and Waymarking	Ensure that all public rights of way are signed and waymarked appropriately to identify status and to support navigation	Public rights of way will be signed where they leave the metalled road (unless such signing is identified as being unnecessary in accordance with relevant legislation).	Assessed as part of routine inspections
B9			<p>Continuity, consistency, and accuracy of signage will be encouraged.</p> <p>Green and white pointers will be used as the default specification for signposts. However, use of locally distinctive signposts – for example wooden signs, will be supported in certain circumstances such as National Parks, National Landscapes, and National Trails.</p>	Review of signage terminology, the information provided, and designs to aid awareness and to improve consistency (2025-2027)
B10			Consideration will be given to adding route-specific information (for example, distance and destination) where this is cost effective, will provide notable public benefit, and/or forms part of a promoted route.	
B11			Additional funding sources will be investigated to improve signpost information, particularly in high profile locations - for example, nationally and regionally promoted routes, protected landscapes, and in World Heritage Sites.	
B12			Improvements to signing of uUCRs will be considered where they provide direct access to and from existing	

Ref:	Topic:	Objective:	Policy:	Key Dates and Targets (where applicable)
			rights of way, form part of a promoted or circular route, and/or provide the primary unsurfaced route within an area.	
B13			Waymarking improvements will be carried out to help users find their way and to reduce the risk of people inadvertently trespassing onto private land.	
B14			Parish Paths Partnership arrangements will be utilised to encourage local community representatives to liaise with landowners to help identify appropriate locations for waymarks.	
B15			Misleading and/or inappropriate, unauthorised signs and waymarks will be removed. If required, enforcement action may be undertaken.	
B16			Inclusion of appropriate branding to a signpost will be considered where the path is within a protected landscape such as a National Landscape, or forms part of an approved promoted route such as the National Cycle Network.	

B. MANAGEMENT AND MAINTENANCE: Collaborative Working, Funding, and Resources

Ref:	Topic:	Objective:	Policy:	Key Dates and Targets (where applicable)
B17	Collaborative Working Funding, and Resources (Local Access Forums)	<p>Encourage cooperation, respect, and understanding between users, landowners, and land managers.</p> <p>Promote and support cooperative working, partnerships, and agreements to share expertise, actively engage local communities, and optimise resources.</p>	Local Access Forums (Devon Countryside Access Forum, Dartmoor Access Forum and Exmoor Local Access Forum) will continue to have a key role in providing advice and guidance, and in identifying priorities to improve public access to land for the purposes of open-air recreation.	
B18	Collaborative Working Funding, and Resources (Partnerships)		<p>Partnerships, joint working arrangements and agency agreements will be actively encouraged. This includes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • South West Coast Path National Trail Partnership • National Park Authority Agency Agreements • Parish Paths Partnership Scheme • Initiatives with National Landscape teams 	
B19	Collaborative Working Funding, and Resources (Participation and Involvement)		Support will be given to extending the ways in which individuals and groups can directly participate and contribute to maintaining and improving recreation and access; particularly with regards to promoted routes and trails. This includes through volunteering, work experience, apprenticeships, education, training, and skills development.	

Ref:	Topic:	Objective:	Policy:	Key Dates and Targets (where applicable)
			<p>Opportunities will also be sought to encourage and extend joint working with representative organisations such as Sustrans, Ramblers, British Horse Society, Disabled Ramblers, Trail Riders Fellowship, Slow Ways, the NFU, and the CLA.</p> <p>Internally, opportunities will also be sought to engage with the Devon County Council Corporate Parenting Team to encourage and support participation by children and young people in care.</p>	
B20	Collaborative Working, Funding, and Resources (Visitor Payback/Visitor Giving and Sponsorship)		<p>Consideration will be given to encouraging corporate and community volunteering days.</p> <p>Opportunities will also be considered for people and business to contribute financially - for example as outlined in Visit England guidance at visitor_giving_helpsheets.pdf (visitengland.com).</p>	
B21	Collaborative Working, Funding, and Resources (Community Payback)		<p>Opportunities will be investigated to include routine path maintenance and improvement work as part of Community Payback activities.</p>	
B22	Collaborative Working, Funding, and Resources (External Grants)		<p>Identify, and where feasible, seek joint funding and external grant opportunities to support delivery of improvements to public rights of way, Access Land, and other outdoor recreational provision.</p> <p>This includes mechanisms such as management agreements (e.g., through the Town and Country</p>	

Ref:	Topic:	Objective:	Policy:	Key Dates and Targets (where applicable)
			Planning Act 1990 or the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981).	
B23	Collaborative Working, Funding, and Resources (Facilities)		Opportunities will be sought to enable the use of existing private facilities by the public and encourage public/private partnerships, for example, the use of public house facilities in return for a small payment or purchase of goods, as already successfully developed in some places in Devon.	

B. MANAGEMENT AND MAINTENANCE: Safety

Ref:	Topic:	Objective:	Policy:	Key Dates and Targets (where applicable)
B24	Safety (Roads)	<p>Improve safety for non-vehicular users, including along and when crossing roads</p> <p>Identify and implement measures to improve perceived and actual public safety issues relating to crime and anti-social behaviour</p>	Development of off-road links that provide a safer environment for all users will be pursued.	
B25			Priority will be given to the development of off-road links for travel to shops, schools, and workplaces in key congestion areas (e.g., Barnstaple, Exeter, Kingskerswell, Newton Abbot and Totnes)	
B26			The development of off-road links between communities, in particular within market and coastal towns, will be encouraged.	
B27			Work with National Highways and other agencies to identify and implement improvements for vulnerable road users on and crossing trunk and other busy roads, for example, by raising the height of parapets on over-bridges that are used by horse-riders, inclusion of respite/rest areas on pedestrian and shared use bridges, and provision of controlled crossings.	
B28			Undertake safety analysis of key rights of way that connect to busy roads. This will be prioritised in	

Ref:	Topic:	Objective:	Policy:	Key Dates and Targets (where applicable)
			<p>conjunction with potential route management strategies for promoted trails.</p>	
B29	Safety (Crime and Anti-social Behaviour)		<p>Links will continue to be developed with the Police, supporting and sharing advice and information relating to public rights of way, access, and issues such as trespass, criminal damage and rural crime.</p> <p>Guidance and support will also be provided to landowners – for example use of signage to increase awareness about considerate behaviour by path users.</p>	
B30			<p>Data supplied in relation to reported crime and accident statistics will be used to help identify potential problem areas and associated solutions (in liaison with Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnerships).</p>	
B31			<p>Where sufficient evidence is available, appropriate enforcement action will be pursued – for example if a dog intimidates a person or injures them or their animal(s).</p> <p>The use of powers (e.g., the Road Traffic Act 1988) will be supported in exceptional circumstances to require dogs to be kept on leads, in consultation with the appropriate Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnership.</p>	
B32	Public and Animal Health		<p>Bio-security contingency procedures will be monitored and reviewed in liaison with all relevant organisations, ensuring that respective organisations are aware of roles and responsibilities.</p>	

C. Accessibility, Social Inclusion, Health, and Wellbeing:

Ref:	Topic:	Objective:	Policy:	Key Dates and Targets (where applicable)
C1	Accessibility (Equity of Access)	Improve rights of way and access for blind or partially sighted people and others with limited mobility, including users of mobility scooters and powered wheelchairs	Links will continue to be developed and improved with people that are blind, partially sighted or have limited mobility, to understand clearly any specific needs and how best to meet them.	
C2			<p>Research, data, and good practice from partner organisations and other relevant bodies will be supported and utilised to inform improvements in the Devon- wide network, for example, the improvements in accessibility previously trialled by the East Devon AONB Team (now the East Devon National Landscape), Countryside Mobility South West, Disabled Ramblers and the South West Coast Path team.</p> <p>This will include identifying and better promoting information to support blind or partially sighted people and others with limited mobility to make informed choices.</p>	
C3			Equity of access will be actively pursued, with emphasis on the Least Restrictive Option (i.e., gap, then gate, then kissing gate, then stile). Wherever practicable, access measures will reflect current good practice – for example the British Standard for Gaps, Gates and Stiles (BS:5709:2018) and guidance such	

Ref:	Topic:	Objective:	Policy:	Key Dates and Targets (where applicable)
			<p>as By All Reasonable Means 2020 and Outdoor Accessibility Guidance 2023 (Sensory Trust).</p> <p>Priority will be given to minimising restrictive structures on routes within and between towns and villages linking destinations such as shops, places of worship, community facilities, schools, and recreational areas.</p> <p>Close liaison will be required with landowners and managers to consider and address livestock management requirements.</p> <p>Inappropriate new structures placed on public rights of way without authorisation will be removed.</p>	
C4	Social Inclusion	Improve opportunities for under-represented and socially excluded audiences to use public rights of way and wider access networks – including with regards to the Equalities Act 2010	<p>Identify physical and other barriers that restrict access opportunities for socially excluded and under-represented audiences and seek positive actions so that these are addressed.</p> <p>This should include (but not be limited to) measures to improve representation for young people, women, ethnic minorities, those on low incomes, and people with limited mobility.</p>	From April 2024 onwards: Review and update inspection criteria, records, and research to collate more accurate information. This will be used to inform targeted policies and associated action plans to improve accessibility.

Ref:	Topic:	Objective:	Policy:	Key Dates and Targets (where applicable)
C5	User Groups (Walking)	Improve opportunities for walking – including mobility scooters and powered wheelchairs	<p>The development of walking in towns, villages and other urban areas will continue to be supported:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • for utility use, to encourage people to switch from car use to sustainable transport • for health benefits; and • for the economic benefits accruing from tourism and day trips <p>Actions will include improving off-road links between destinations such as shops, schools and workplaces. This can be achieved through a combination of physical works, creation agreements and orders.</p>	
C6			<p>Priority will be given to the development of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • short routes and circular links of between 3km and 8km • routes linking towns, villages and attractions and providing a substantive off-road network for utility and leisure; and • appropriate links to and from the wider promoted recreational trail network • opportunities for longer routes for mobility scooters and powered wheelchairs. <p>This includes collaborative working with relevant groups and initiatives including Slow Ways (Slow Ways - help create a network of walking routes connecting Great Britain - Home page).</p>	
C7			<p>Improvements will continue to be sought in the alignment of the National Trail(s) and promoted recreational route network, including potential use of diversion orders and creation agreements and orders.</p>	

Ref:	Topic:	Objective:	Policy:	Key Dates and Targets (where applicable)
C8	Horse Riding and Carriage Driving	Improve opportunities for horse-riders and carriage-drivers	<p>Opportunities will be sought to improve and extend bridleway provision to create a more strategic network.</p> <p>This includes seeking to develop short routes and circuits for horse-riders of between 4km and 11km.</p>	
C9			Opportunities to develop off-road links for horse-riders to reach areas with better riding facilities, for example, on Dartmoor and Exmoor, will be investigated in liaison with respective landowners and occupiers.	
C10			Upgrading of existing routes to public bridleway or restricted byway status will be supported where this can be achieved in accordance with related RoWIP objectives and policies, and in liaison with respective landowners and occupiers.	
C11			Opportunities will be sought to increase opportunity to utilise canal tow paths and former railway lines for equestrian use as part of multi-use provision.	
C12			Recreational use for health benefits will continue to be supported, and opportunities sought to build upon the existing economic benefits accruing from horse tourism.	
C13			The promotion of horse-riding will continue to be explored, with due regard to the environment, as part of increasing Devon's potential as an outdoor activity destination (for example linked to initiatives such as Discover Devon Naturally).	
C14			Inclusion of horse riding as part multi-use trails will be encouraged. This should be the starting position in planning and improving routes.	

Ref:	Topic:	Objective:	Policy:	Key Dates and Targets (where applicable)
			<p>Where horse riding is currently restricted on existing cycle and walking trails, this will be reviewed to identify where access for horse riding can be safely added.</p> <p>Should it not be feasible to include horse riding on new and/or exiting routes, the reasons for this should be recorded, and the information made available to interested parties.</p>	
C15	Cycling	Improve opportunities for cycling	<p>The development of cycling in urban areas will continue to be supported:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • for utility use, to encourage people to switch from car use to sustainable transport • for health benefits; and • for the economic benefits accruing from tourism and day trips <p>Actions will include improving off-road links between destinations such as shops, schools and workplaces.</p> <p>This can be achieved through a combination of physical works, creation agreements and orders.</p>	
C16			Opportunities will be sought to develop former railway lines for cycle use and multi-use where appropriate.	
C17			Opportunities will be sought to develop circular cycle routes, in addition and connecting to the long-distance National Cycle Network	
C18			Public transport links will continue to be sought through transport policies and projects to help deliver circular and linear routes, for example, encouraging and supporting bike carriage on trains and buses.	

Ref:	Topic:	Objective:	Policy:	Key Dates and Targets (where applicable)
C19			Provision for multi-use (including horse riding) will be encouraged where new routes are developed, with use of restrictive covenants only agreed in exceptional circumstances.	
C20			The upgrading of existing public footpaths to public bridleway status will be considered where they are to be used as part of the cycle network. Within some urban settings, consideration may be given to use of Cycle Track Orders.	
C21			Partnerships with organisations which have a particular interest in mountain-biking will continue to be developed, for example with the Forestry Commission in their facility development (which includes mountain-biking).	
C22			Opportunities will be sought to develop off-road links for mountain-bikers to reach specialist facilities without the need to drive.	
C23			The promotion of mountain-biking to tourists will continue to be explored, with due regard to the environment, as part of increasing Devon's potential as an outdoor activity destination, particularly the Discover Devon Naturally initiative.	
C24	Motorised Vehicles	Improve opportunities for recreational vehicular users	Work will continue to ensure that the correct legal status of vehicular routes is recorded.	
C25			Work will continue with relevant groups and the wider public to improve information and education for both motorised and non- motorised users, about the rights	

Ref:	Topic:	Objective:	Policy:	Key Dates and Targets (where applicable)
			and responsibilities to help reduce actual or perceived conflict.	
C26			Work will be undertaken with user groups, landowners and the Police (through the appropriate Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnership) to combat illegal use, such as vehicular use of public footpaths or bridleways without a private right or the permission of the landowner.	
C27			Where use is causing physical or environmental damage to a route, the latest Government guidance will be followed with regard to the implementation of Traffic Regulation Orders	
C28			Opportunities will be sought to carry out improvements to surfacing, drainage and signage of the unsurfaced Unclassified County Roads and Byways Open to All Traffic.	

D. Network Development: Planning Policy and Plans, Recreational Infrastructure Improvements, Active Travel

Ref:	Topic:	Objective:	Policy:	Key Dates and Targets (where applicable)
D1	Planning Policy and Plans	Ensure that the planning process properly considers existing public rights of way and access, and that opportunities are optimised to protect and enhance the network	<p>Influence and inform land use planning policy and development management to optimise and improve public rights of way and access as an important part of green space and green infrastructure, and to support social inclusion.</p> <p>This includes contributing to delivery of local and national guidance e.g., National design guide - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk)</p>	
D2			<p>Ensure that development management arrangements recognise and protect public rights of way in the planning process.</p> <p>This includes objecting to or recommending deferral in determination of any planning application which fails to adequately take account of existing public rights of way until appropriate protection and/or mitigation measures are identified.</p> <p>Advice and guidance will continue to be provided to landowners and developers in relation to developments affecting public rights of way.</p> <p>If Temporary Traffic Regulation Orders (TTROs) are required for schemes with planning permission, these should not be processed until appropriate measures are agreed to protect or enhance public rights of way.</p>	

Ref:	Topic:	Objective:	Policy:	Key Dates and Targets (where applicable)
D3			<p>Proposals for mineral development which affect rights of way will not be supported unless provision can be made for an appropriate alternative route.</p> <p>In considering applications for mineral development, the County Council will seek opportunities for the provision of new rights of way and safe access to the countryside.</p>	
D4	Accessible Green Space, Public Rights of Way and Access Provision		<p>Public Rights of Way should not be absorbed within estate roads. Path character should be protected and improved.</p> <p>In considering development proposals, opportunities will be sought to identify strategic links and gaps in the path network.</p> <p>Local Planning Authorities and developers should seek to create new routes and enhance the quality of existing paths to meet existing needs and to mitigate impacts arising from new development.</p>	
D5			<p>Encourage, carry out, and collate research to identify deficiencies and gaps in access provision.</p> <p>Seek opportunities to enhance provision through planning and transportation policies and associated funding mechanisms.</p>	
D6	Active Travel		Create new routes and enhance quality of existing paths, including as part of greenways and greenspaces to support and encourage non-car based travel. This includes improving connectivity between residential	Seek to influence and inform Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure

Ref:	Topic:	Objective:	Policy:	Key Dates and Targets (where applicable)
			<p>areas, recreational destinations, places of work, public transport, and other local facilities.</p> <p>Design, materials, and construction should respect local character and avoid urbanising rural locations. The assumption should not be that tarmacadam provides the default option.</p>	<p>Plans and Local Transport Plan 4</p> <p>Surface type trials as part of Cross Asset Innovation Capital funded work in 2024-25 and 2025-26</p>

E. Information, Education and Technology: Communication, Community Engagement and Campaigns, Information and Guidance

Ref:	Topic:	Objective:	Policy:	Key Dates and Targets (where applicable)
E1	Communication	Improve quality, relevance, and availability of information and communication relating to management, development, and use of the rights of way network, including national guidance such as the Countryside Code	<p>Regular review and improvements in quality and availability of information (including on-line information) and communication will be sought, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • rights and responsibilities of landowners and users • legal matters • countryside access and public transport • countryside access and tourism • local facilities, including refreshments, carparks, toilets and accessible toilets • other means of access including Access Land, cycle tracks, uUCRs and permissive access. • strategic routes • routes identified as being particularly suitable for people with restricted mobility, to include information on the presence or absence of gates or stiles, the nature of the terrain and the surface type • targeted information and advice for other under-represented and socially excluded groups, and • temporary closures or restrictions 	
E2			<p>A range of media will be utilised to optimise understanding and awareness of</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Delivering the RoWIP • Accessing the countryside • Feeding back and reporting 	

Ref:	Topic:	Objective:	Policy:	Key Dates and Targets (where applicable)
			This includes utilising ranger, warden, and community networks.	
E3	Community Engagement and Campaigns		Collaborative working will be encouraged and supported in identifying and communicating key messages – for example veterinary practices and The Kennel Club on guidelines for safe, enjoyable, and responsible dog walking.	
E4			Provision of appropriate information about walking dogs in the countryside will be encouraged, particularly when in the vicinity of livestock and where there is potential disturbance to wildlife, for example, ground nesting birds. This should include encouraging and supporting the production of consistent local and national guidance across different organisations.	Grand Western Canal Country Park guidance to be published by 31 December 2024
E5			Joint working with user and interest groups, and other organisations including schools, colleges and youth service providers will be encouraged and supported.	Liaison with the Trail Riders Fellowship in 2024 to improve uUCR mapping and inclusion of this as a layer on publicly accessible online maps
E6			Social / green prescribing will be supported alongside promoting research opportunities with universities and other further education establishments. This should include adding to the evidence base to demonstrate the physical and mental health benefits of outdoor	

Ref:	Topic:	Objective:	Policy:	Key Dates and Targets (where applicable)
			<p>recreation and impacts from actions delivered as part of the RoWIP.</p> <p>Good examples are work commissioned by the South West Coast Path Association with the University of Exeter; and research carried out on the health and wellbeing value of the Pebblebed Heaths.</p>	
E7			<p>Educational information which encourages responsible, safe and courteous path and road use by all users will be developed, working closely with Safer Travel teams.</p> <p>Development of multi-user path and road safety publicity campaign using appropriate media and covering utility and recreational use will be investigated.</p>	
E8	Information and Guidance		<p>Support and influence production of easily accessible, effective guidance on accessing and enjoying the countryside, and minimising associated impacts. Where practicable, this should be compatible with the national curriculum, and made available in a range of formats, including interactive maps.</p>	
E9			<p>Identify and promote guidance on and for different categories of mobility scooter (with examples).</p>	
E10			<p>Targeted information will be encouraged to enable greater use by under-represented and excluded people e.g., looked after children, children with additional educational needs, people with disabilities, mental health needs, and blind and partially sighted people.</p>	
E11			<p>Utilise community and other facilities for distributing information, including working with Tourist Information Centres.</p>	

Ref:	Topic:	Objective:	Policy:	Key Dates and Targets (where applicable)
E12			Parish Paths Partnership and other groups will continue to be supported in their production of local route leaflets, including in making these available on-line.	
E13			Development and provision of parish maps and notice boards in consultation with parish councils will be supported, and sponsorship will be sought to support production cost. This includes physical and/or digital provision, appropriate to local needs.	
E14	Adapting to Technological Advances		Work flexibly to optimise opportunities arising from technological advances over the plan period.	
E15	Research and Data		<p>Research will continue into the use of public rights of way and permissive routes to understand any physical and psychological barriers that may hinder use in order to plan and prioritise future improvements.</p> <p>Other access providers will be encouraged to monitor and share information that may assist this research.</p>	
E16			<p>Research will be undertaken to determine areas which are particularly suitable for specific activities (for example, horse-riding or mountain-biking).</p> <p>Targeted information will be considered for appropriate areas.</p>	
E17			An ongoing process of public consultation will be undertaken to identify common issues and current trends.	
E18			Actively encourage and promote sharing of information and data.	

F. Environment and Climate: Climate Change, Protected Landscapes, Biodiversity and Heritage

Ref:	Topic:	Objective:	Policy:	Key Dates and Targets (where applicable)
F1	Climate Change Protected Landscapes Biodiversity and Heritage	Ensure that the management of public rights of way and access respects Devon's environment and positively contributes to carbon reduction measures	Ensure that design, materials and works for path creation and improvements are sensitive to local character, heritage and biodiversity; and positively contribute to Devon County Council's target to reach net zero carbon by 2030.	
F2			The integrity, conservation objectives and sustainable use of protected landscapes and designated sites (International, National and Local Designations including other non-statutory environmental designations) will be supported and promoted in partnership with the relevant land managers and associated organisations.	
F3			Opportunities will be sought to improve the environment and appreciation of it through works and promotional information, for example, seeking to improve the landscape corridor along National Trails and promoted recreation routes.	
F4			The diversion or creation of public rights of way which afford links to and/or enhancement of appropriate environmental, geological, or historical sites will be supported, in consultation with relevant bodies and with due regard to the relevant legislation.	
F5			The diversion of public rights of way will be considered where there is evidence that they adversely affect or may adversely affect very sensitive environmental, geological, or historical sites, in consultation with	

Ref:	Topic:	Objective:	Policy:	Key Dates and Targets (where applicable)
			relevant bodies and in accordance with relevant legislation and protective policies.	

G. Land Use and Economy: Tourism, Agriculture and Land Management, Contractors and Businesses

Ref:	Topic:	Objective:	Policy:	Key Dates and Targets (where applicable)
G1	Tourism	Ensure that the management of public rights of way and access positively contributes to the Devon economy	Sustainable tourism such as walking, horse-riding and cycling will be promoted by working with tourism providers and other partners, including to encourage and support Devon as a year round destination.	
G2			<p>Opportunities to enhance and promote access in areas of little or no current tourism will be encouraged, and existing opportunities to extend Devon's attractiveness to tourists will be developed.</p> <p>Schemes which have added benefit of providing local access for Devon's residents, address gaps in accessibility provision standards, and/or aid dispersal from more intensively used locations will be prioritised (for example Suitable Alternative Natural Greenspaces).</p>	
G3			Development of access and car-free links to/from existing visitor attractions will be supported and developers of new attractions will be encouraged to consider such access from the outset of their business development.	
G4	Contractors and Businesses		Opportunities will be sought in accordance with relevant policy, regulation, and legislation to support the economy through use of local contractors and suppliers; and by providing appropriate business opportunities linked to management of Council owned recreational facilities.	

Ref:	Topic:	Objective:	Policy:	Key Dates and Targets (where applicable)
G5	Agriculture / Land Management	Encourage and support a positive attitude and understanding between path users, local residents, and landowners / land managers	<p>Work cooperatively with landowners and occupiers to identify opportunities for additional temporary permissive routes to enable people to bypass sensitive locations.</p> <p>This can only be done if the legally defined route remains available, and there is no misleading signage, intimidation, or obstruction.</p>	
G6			Liaison will continue with landowners and representative organisations such as the National Farmers Union and the Country Land and Business Association, to ensure best practice, the sharing of information and practical management advice.	
G7			<p>Opportunities will be sought to enhance access opportunities through Environmental Land Management schemes and other relevant initiatives.</p> <p>Appropriate cross compliance requirements will be supported and promoted by working with Defra and landowners/land managers.</p>	
G8			Appropriate access management measures will be supported to enable landowners and land managers to carry out legitimate actions to help address issues such as Ash Dieback, forestry operations, people and dogs straying from paths, and cycling on footpaths – for example through use of Public Path Orders, Temporary Traffic Regulation Orders, alternative routes, waymarking, and signage.	

i) **Glossary of Terms**

To be inserted

ii) **Supporting Documents and Strategies**

Strategy / Plan / Topic	Organisation	Link
Strategic Plan, 2021-2025	Devon County Council	The best place - Strategic Plan (devon.gov.uk)
Highway Infrastructure Asset Management Plan, 2023-2025	Devon County Council	Highway Infrastructure Asset Management Plan - Roads and transport (devon.gov.uk)
Devon and Torbay Local Transport Plan 3, 2011-2026	Devon County Council /	Devon and Torbay Local Transport Plan 3, 2011-2026 - Roads and transport
Cycling and Multi-use Network Strategy, 2015	Devon County Council	Cycling and Multi-use Trail Network Strategy
'A Green Future: Our 25 Year Plan to Improve the Environment'	Department for Environment, Food & Rural Affairs	25 Year Environment Plan - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk)
National Planning Policy Framework	Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities	National Planning Policy Framework - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk)
Equalities Act 2010: guidance	Government Equalities Office and Equalities and Human Rights Commission	Equality Act 2010: guidance - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk)
Impact Assessment	Devon County Council	Home - Impact Assessment (devon.gov.uk)

Strategy / Plan / Topic	Organisation	Link
By All Reasonable Means, Least restrictive access to the outdoors	Sensory Trust on behalf of Natural England, and in collaboration with Natural Resources Wales	ByAllReasonableMeansEnglandAug2020.pdf (sensorytrust.org.uk)
Outdoor Accessibility Guidance	Paths for All and Sensory Trust	outdoor-accessibility-guidance-18April2023.pdf (sensorytrust.org.uk)
King Charles III England Coast Path: improving public access to the coast	Natural England	King Charles III England Coast Path: improving public access to the coast - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk)
Cycle infrastructure design (LTN 1/20)	Department for Transport	Cycle infrastructure design (LTN 1/20) - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk)
Advice on bridleways and other access	The British Horse Society	Access and bridleways advice The British Horse Society (bhs.org.uk)
On the right track: surface requirements for shared use routes	The Countryside Agency (now Natural England)	On the Right Track Surface Requirements for Shared Use Tracks
Visitor Giving: A toolkit for Destination Organisations	Visit England and nurture lakeland	visitor_giving_helpsheets.pdf (visitengland.com)
National design guide	Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities and	National design guide - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk)

Strategy / Plan / Topic	Organisation	Link
	Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government	
The South West Coast Path Health and Wellbeing Assessment Report, 2020	South West Coast Path Association, Natural England, University of Exeter	The South West Coast Path Health & Wellbeing Assessment Report 2020 by southwestcoastpath - Issuu
Valuing Nature Report, 2018	Valuing Nature, University of Exeter, Clinton Devon Estates, European Centre for Environment & Human Health, University of Exeter Medical School	Understanding-and-quantifying-the-health-and-wellbeing-value-of-the-East-Devon-Pebblebed-Heaths-and-exploring-the-potential-of-partnership-working-involving-private-sector-organisations.pdf (pebblebedheaths.org.uk)
Naturally Healthy Forum	Devon Local Nature Partnership	Naturally Healthy - Forum - Devon Local Nature Partnership (devonlnp.org.uk)
Countryside Code	Natural England and Natural Resource Wales	The Countryside Code - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk)
Position Statements and Good Practice	Devon Countryside Access Forum	Newsletters and reports - Public Rights of Way (devon.gov.uk)
	Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities and	Open space, sports and recreation facilities, public rights of way and local green space - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk)

Strategy / Plan / Topic	Organisation	Link
Open space, sports and recreation facilities, public rights of way and local green space	Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government	
Inspections and Maintenance	Devon County Council	Inspections and maintenance - Public Rights of Way (devon.gov.uk)
National Trail Quality Standards	Natural England	National Trails: management standards - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk)

iii) Summary of Topics, Issues, and Activities/Priorities from initial consultation

Topic	Issue (summary examples)	Activity/Priorities
Development/ Housing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Population growth • Landscape character • Demand/levels of use • Impact on existing infrastructure • Opportunities for new/improved paths • Risks re. negatively impacting on character and use of existing paths • Traffic 	<p>Active Travel: create new routes and enhance quality of existing paths to support and encourage non-car based travel. This includes improving connectivity between residential areas, recreational destinations, places of work, public transport, and other local facilities</p> <p>Recreational Infrastructure Improvements: create new routes and enhance quality of existing paths to meet existing needs and to mitigate impacts arising from new development. This should seek to optimise the contribution that paths provide to green infrastructure, and social inclusion</p> <p>Design and Materials: ensure that path creation and improvements are sensitive to local character, heritage and biodiversity; and positively contribute to Devon County Council's target to reach net zero carbon by 2030</p> <p>Planning Policy and Plans: influence and inform development management to optimise and improve access as an important part of green space and green infrastructure. This includes contributing to delivery of local and national guidance e.g., National design guide - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk)</p>
Information, Education and Technology	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Social Media • Smart Phones • GIS • Webpages • Information provision • E-bikes • Attitudes 	<p>Communication: utilise a range of media to optimise understanding and awareness of</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Delivering the RoWIP ❖ Accessing the countryside ❖ Feeding back and reporting

Topic	Issue (summary examples)	Activity/Priorities
		<p>Community Engagement and Campaigns: work collaboratively in identifying and communicating key messages – for example veterinary practices and The Kennel Club on guidelines for safe, enjoyable, and responsible dog walking</p> <p>Information and Guidance: support and influence production of easily accessible, effective guidance on accessing and enjoying the countryside, and minimising associated impacts</p> <p>Adapting to Technological Advances: work flexibly to optimise opportunities arising from technological advances over the plan period</p>
Agriculture/ Land Management	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Farm traffic – volume and size of vehicles • Livestock and crops – restricting access • Shoots and hunts • Working landscapes – impact of dogs straying and trespass • Carbon offsetting e.g., tree planting etc. • Land use changes – loss of farmland to development 	<p>Community Engagement and Campaigns</p> <p>Information and Guidance</p> <p>Planning Policy and Plans</p> <p>Recreational Infrastructure Improvements</p> <p>Alternative Routes: work cooperatively with landowners and occupiers to identify opportunities for additional temporary permissive routes to enable people to bypass sensitive locations. This can only be done if the legally defined route remains available, and there is no misleading signage, intimidation, or obstruction</p>
Population Profiles	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increase in dog ownership • Ageing population 	<p>Information and Guidance</p> <p>Recreational Infrastructure Improvements</p>

Topic	Issue (summary examples)	Activity/Priorities
Accessibility/ Social Inclusion	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improvements in mobility scooters – importance of recognising the advancement in size, length, and range of mobility scooters • Growth in range and availability of E-bikes • Better understanding of need, including the importance of protected characteristics and tackling issues such as racism • Gaps gates and stiles – least restrictive • Aging population • Blind and partially sighted people • Importance / value of the unsurfaced Unclassified County Road (uUCR) network – ‘Green Lanes’/Quiet Lanes • Availability (or lack of) public transport connections to green spaces 	<p>Information and Guidance: including identifying and promoting guidance on and for different categories of mobility scooter (with examples)</p> <p>Recreational Infrastructure Improvements</p> <p>Communication: including uUCRs: as a layer on interactive maps</p> <p>Community Engagement and Campaigns: including a potential project with the Trail Riders Fellowship re. uUCR mapping</p> <p>Adapting to Technological Advances</p>
Public/ Animal Health	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ash Dieback • Covid • Avian Flu • Increase in awareness and appreciation of the value of local path networks (particularly during periods of restrictions on movement due to the Covid pandemic) 	<p>Alternative Routes</p> <p>Community Engagement and Campaigns</p> <p>Communication</p> <p>Information and Guidance</p>
Climate	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Vegetation growth – longer growing season and increasing number of cuts • Surface water/flooding 	<p>Planning Policy and Plans</p> <p>Active Travel</p>

Topic	Issue (summary examples)	Activity/Priorities
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Storm damage • Erosion/cliff falls 	<p>Design and Materials</p> <p>Recreational Infrastructure Improvements</p> <p>Communication</p> <p>Information and Guidance</p> <p>Community Engagement and Campaigns</p> <p>Alternative Routes</p> <p>Adapting to Technological Advances</p>
<p>Biodiversity, Landscape and Heritage</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Nature Recovery • Rural landscapes • Pollution/littering • Invasive species • Suitable Alternative Natural Green Spaces 	<p>Planning Policy and Plans</p> <p>Design and Materials</p> <p>Recreational Infrastructure Improvements</p> <p>Communication</p> <p>Information and Guidance</p> <p>Community Engagement and Campaigns</p> <p>Alternative Routes</p>
<p>Health and wellbeing</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increase in demand for walking, cycling and equestrian provision – but is this a long-term trend • Connection to nature 	<p>Planning Policy and Plans</p> <p>Active Travel</p>

Topic	Issue (summary examples)	Activity/Priorities
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Multi/shared use paths 	<p>Design and Materials</p> <p>Recreational Infrastructure Improvements</p> <p>Communication</p> <p>Information and Guidance: including targeted information to encourage greater use by under-represented and excluded people e.g., looked after children, children with special educational needs and disabilities, and blind and partially sighted people</p> <p>Community Engagement and Campaigns: including supporting social / green prescribing; and promoting research opportunities with universities and other further education establishments. This should include adding to the evidence base to demonstrate the physical and mental health benefits of outdoor recreation and impacts from actions delivered as part of the RoWIP.</p> <p>A good example is work commissioned by the South West Coast Path Association with the University of Exeter – available to read at The South West Coast Path Health & Wellbeing Assessment Report 2020 by southwestcoastpath - Issuu</p> <p>Another example is research carried out on the health and wellbeing value of the Pebblebed Heaths (ref. Understanding-and-quantifying-the-health-and-wellbeing-value-of-the-East-Devon-Pebblebed-Heaths-and-exploring-the-potential-of-partnership-working-involving-private-sector-organisations.pdf (pebblebedheaths.org.uk))</p>
Local Economy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Active Travel Growth in holiday accommodation – inexperienced and less well-informed path users 	<p>Planning Policy and Plans</p> <p>Active Travel</p>

Topic	Issue (summary examples)	Activity/Priorities
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Recreation and leisure/demand for trails • Increase in home working • Importance of the network to local business involved in management and maintenance activities (Framework Contractors) 	<p>Design and Materials</p> <p>Recreational Infrastructure Improvements</p> <p>Communication</p> <p>Information and Guidance: including working with Tourist Information Centres</p> <p>Community Engagement and Campaigns</p> <p>Adapting to Technological Advances</p>
Funding	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Austerity • Reduced public transport (especially rural buses) • Partnership working • Volunteers • Corporate Social Responsibility • Grants 	<p>Visitor Payback/Visitor Giving and Sponsorship: identify opportunities to encourage and enable people and business to contribute financially - for example as outlined in Visit England guidance at visitor_giving_helpsheets.pdf (visitengland.com)</p> <p>Participation and Involvement: support and extend the ways in which individuals and groups can directly participate and contribute to maintaining and improving recreation and access. This includes through volunteering, work experience, apprenticeships, education, training, and skills development.</p>
Legislation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • England Coast Path/Coastal Margin • Deregulation – ‘right to apply’ • 2026 Cut-off/lost paths • Brexit and changes to agri-environment policy 	<p>Coastal Access: work closely with Natural England and local partners and stakeholders to complete the designation process for the England Coast Path. This includes delivery of implementation works for the National Trail and associated access improvements to coastal margin</p> <p>Planning Policy and Plans</p>

Topic	Issue (summary examples)	Activity/Priorities
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li data-bbox="1055 225 2033 288">Active Travel<li data-bbox="1055 288 2033 352">Design and Materials<li data-bbox="1055 352 2033 416">Recreational Infrastructure Improvements<li data-bbox="1055 416 2033 480">Alternative Routes<li data-bbox="1055 480 2033 544">Communication<li data-bbox="1055 544 2033 608">Information and Guidance<li data-bbox="1055 608 2033 671">Community Engagement and Campaigns<li data-bbox="1055 671 2033 783">Adapting to Technological Advances