

REPORT TO RIGHTS OF WAY AND HIGHWAY LICENSING PANEL

Title: **PUBLIC RIGHTS OF WAY “MILESTONES STATEMENT 2011/12”**

Date: **4th APRIL 2011**

Officer Reporting: **Anthony Hurst, Principal Rights of Way Officer**

Wards affected: **All**

1. **SUMMARY**

- 1.1 This report seeks the Panel's approval for the “Milestones Statement and Public Rights of Way Improvement Plan Annual Review 2011/12”, which sets out the Council's objectives, priorities, targets and service standards for public rights of way work in the coming year.

2. **RECOMMENDATION**

That the Panel approve the “Milestones Statement and Public Rights of Way Improvement Plan Annual Review 2011/12” as attached at Appendix 1.

What will be different for residents as a result of this decision?
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The approved Milestones Statement will ensure that the Council's Public Rights of Way team will have a clear set of objectives, priorities, targets and service standards for the coming year. This will assist in the effective management of the borough's public rights of way network for the benefit of residents and visitors to the borough.

3. **SUPPORTING INFORMATION**

3.1 **Background**

- 3.1.1 The Council produces a “Milestones Statement and Public Rights of Way Improvement Plan annual review”: copies are supplied to Parish and Town Councils, the Borough's Local Access Forum and other interested groups. The document is also published on the Borough website and placed in all borough libraries.
- 3.1.2 A key element of the ‘Milestones Statement’ approach is the setting of individual, realistic targets for the completion of tasks, taking into account the available resources, both in terms of staff time and works budgets.
- 3.1.3 **Resources** available for public rights of way work in 2011/12 are set out on page 4 of the Milestones Statement.

Staffing.

The Council employs 2 full-time and 1 part-time Rights of Way Officers (total 2.5 fte).

Administrative support is provided from within the Highways and Engineering Service, legal support is provided by the Council's Legal Services team and the Council's Democratic Services team provide support in administering the borough's statutory Local Access Forum.

Works budgets.

The approved capital budget for public rights of way works in 2011/12 is **£51,000** (*the 2010/11 capital works budget was £35,000.*)

The approved revenue budget for public rights of way work in 2011/12 is **£45,000** (*the 2010/11 revenue works budget was £44,000.*)

Additionally, a capital budget of **£19,000** has been allocated to the Millennium Walk project at Henley Road in Hurley (this figure includes partnership funding of £1,750 from the East Berks Ramblers and £750 from Maidenhead Civic Society)

3.1.4 **Targets** and priorities for 2011/12 are listed on page 6 of the Milestones Statement.

3.1.5 **Performance indicator (former BVPI 178):**

This is one of a number of Local performance indicators included in the borough's Local Transport Plan, and measures: ***“the percentage of the total length of footpaths and other rights of way which were easy to use by members of the public”***. The indicator result for 2010/11 is **94.6 %**.

3.1.6 Previously, officers from the Council's Public Rights of Way team undertook surveys in spring and autumn each year to gather the information upon which the indicator is based. However, it is proposed that for the coming year and future years the indicator figure is derived from condition surveys undertaken on the Council's behalf by the East Berks Ramblers (EBR). The EBR currently survey a third of the path network each year on a rolling programme, and by deriving the performance indicator figure from these surveys, rather than undertaking the surveys 'in-house', this will free up officer time to focus on resolving problems on the path network. Other Councils around the country are increasingly adopting the practice of using volunteers for collecting path condition information rather than carrying out the surveys 'in-house'.

4. OPTIONS AVAILABLE AND RISK ASSESSMENT

4.1 Options

	Option	Comments	Financial Implications
1.	Approve the “Milestones Statement ” as set out in Appendix 1.	Recommended option	See para. 3.1.3
2.	Approve the “Milestones Statement ” with any amendments.		See para. 3.1.3
3.	Do not approve the “Milestones Statement		See para. 3.1.3

4.2 Risk assessment

- 4.2.1 Options 1 and 2: The Milestones Statement approach is an efficient and effective way of planning, prioritising and monitoring public rights of way work. Many other Highway Authorities adopt a similar approach
- 4.2.2 Option 3: Without an approved set of objectives, priorities, targets and service standards for the coming year there is a risk that the quality of service delivery would decline.

5. CONSULTATIONS CARRIED OUT

5.1.1 The following organisations were consulted on the objectives, priorities, targets and service standards contained in the “Milestones Statement 2011/12”:

- RBWM Local Access Forum
- All Parish and Town Councils in the borough
- Disabled Ramblers
- East Berkshire Ramblers’ Association
- British Horse Society
- British Driving Society
- Cyclists’ Touring Club
- Sustrans
- Open Spaces Society
- Thames Path National Trails Office
- Council for the Protection of Rural England
- Crown Estate
- National Trust
- Woodland Trust
- National Farmers’ Union
- Country Landowners and Business Association

5.1.2 The **Local Access Forum** considered the consultation at its meeting on 30th November 2010 and recommended that the targets for 2011/12 remain unchanged from the targets that were set for 2010/11.

5.1.3 **Cookham Parish Council** made the following comments (officer comments follow in *italics*):

“Cookham Parish Council is pleased to support the objectives and priorities detailed in the consultation document. We would, however, like to add 3 items for your consideration:

1) Join the Green Way to the Thames Path (no. 55) at south Widbrook, continuing

the permitted path over the A4094.

See update on this project in Appendix 7 of the Milestones Statement (project 2.15).

2) Reinstate the towpath as a footpath from Bridge Gardens to the Thames Path towards Boulters Lock.

See update on this project in Appendix 7 of the Milestones Statement (project 2.21).

3) Improve disabled access for paths e.g. problems with stiles.”

See target “AC 2” on page 5 of the Milestones Statement.

6. IMPLICATIONS

6.1.1 The following implications have been addressed where indicated below.

Financial	Legal	Human Rights Act	Planning	Sustainable Development	Diversity & Equality
✓	N/A	N/A	N/A	✓	✓

6.1.2 Financial: Resources for public rights of way work are discussed in para. 3.1.3 above and on page 4 of the Milestones Statement.

6.1.3 Sustainable development: Effective management of the rights of way network has a positive impact on sustainable transport by encouraging alternative forms of transport to the car, and a positive impact on health by encouraging walking and cycling.

6.1.4 Diversity and Equality: An Equality Impact Assessment has been carried out on the recommendations in this report. The Milestones Statement includes a number of initiatives aimed at improving access to the countryside for people with disabilities or restricted mobility, the elderly and people with young children or pushchairs.

Background Papers: Milestones Statement 2010/11.

Consultation responses from Local Access Forum and Cookham Parish Council.

Authorisation:

	Legal	Finance	Planning	Property	Procurement	DMT
Name:						
Date Approved:						

	Directors Group	Lead Member	Ward Cllrs (if Appropriate)	Leader's Office	Scrutiny Panel
Name:					
Date Approved:					