

PUBLIC RIGHTS OF WAY MANAGEMENT AND IMPROVEMENT PLAN 2016-26

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

To consult the Forum on the outcome of the “*Draft Royal Borough of Windsor and Maidenhead Public Rights of Way Management and Improvement Plan 2016-26*” public consultation and to seek the Forum’s endorsement of the Final Plan.

2. SUPPORTING INFORMATION

2.1 Background

Under the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000 all local highway authorities have a statutory duty to publish and review their Public Rights of Way Improvement Plans every ten years. The Royal Borough’s current Plan runs from 2005-2015 and the replacement Plan will cover the period 2016-2026. The Plan sets out the Council’s strategy for managing and improving the public rights of way network and other accessible routes in the Royal Borough over the next ten years.

The 2016-2026 Plan is called a “*Public Rights of Way Management and Improvement Plan*”, as it covers the management and improvement of the existing path network as well as seeking new or upgraded routes where possible. Unlike the 2005-2015 Plan, the new Plan includes maps showing the existing path networks and proposed new routes.

Annual “*Milestones Statements*” will be published each April as a mechanism for planning and monitoring the implementation of the ten year Plan.

The consultation draft Rights of Way Management and Improvement Plan 2016-2016 was endorsed by the Forum on 24th June 2015 with the following recommended changes:

1.8 The Local Access Forum considers that this section should be removed. Quiet Lane schemes that have been attempted in neighbouring authorities have not been successful in achieving their stated aims and have been shown to raise objections from local residents. In addition to this, different schemes such as off-road shared use paths may be more desirable.

1.12 The Local Access Forum consider that businesses, schools and the Community Payback scheme should be added to the lists of volunteers.

3.3 The Local Access Forum agreed with Bisham Parish Council that the health benefits of Horse Riding should also be added to this list.

The draft plan, including the changes suggested above, was approved by the Rights of Way and Highways Licensing Panel on 20th July 2015. A copy of the Draft Plan is included as Appendix A to this report.

The public consultation on the Draft Plan was launched on 6th August 2015 and ended on 15th October 2015.

2.2 Responses received to the Draft Plan

The responses to the public consultation are included in Appendix B to this report.

2.3 Next steps

It is proposed that all the suggestions received should be included in the Final Plan. The forum is invited to review the comments received and consider whether it wishes to endorse this proposal and recommend to the Council that the Final Plan be published.

2.4 Timescales

Following consideration by the Forum on 11th November, the Final Plan will be submitted to the Council's Rights of Way and Highway Licensing Panel for approval on 7th December. The Plan will then come into effect from 1st January 2016.