

COMMITTEE	COMMUNITIES SCRUTINY COMMITTEE
DATE	25 February 2021
TITLE	SUBMISSION OF THE DRAFT RIGHTS OF WAY IMPROVEMENT PLAN (ROWIP)
CABINET MEMBER	Councillor Gareth W Griffith
AUTHOR	Dafydd Williams, Head of Environment Department
PURPOSE	To receive feedback and observations from the Scrutiny Committee on a draft version of the Rights of Way Improvement Plan and to approve its use for public consultation.

1. BACKGROUND

- 1.1 The Rights of Way Improvement Plan (RoWIP) is a strategic document to be used by Local Authorities in order to plan for the management, development and promotion of their rights of way network. Gwynedd's original RoWIP was prepared between 2004 and 2007, and was adopted by the Council and published in October 2007.
- 1.2 The Welsh Government has instructed Local Authorities to review their RoWIP and have set a timetable to prepare the review. In Gwynedd's case, the process of preparing the review should have been completed early in 2019. Gwynedd and several other Authorities have not been able to complete the process within the set timetable. The delay was as a result of work pressure within the Countryside Service including the emphasis placed on the Ffordd Gwynedd review.
- 1.3 It was intended to bring the Draft RoWIP to this Committee on the 2nd of April 2020, this was not possible due to Covid restrictions.

2. NEXT STEPS

- 2.1 A draft version of the RoWIP is enclosed, the document's structure corresponds to Government guidance and in several ways, it is similar to the original RoWIP available on the Council's website.

<https://www.gwynedd.llyw.cymru/cy/Cyngor/Strategaethau-a-pholisïau/Cynllunio-ac-amgylchedd/Cynllun-Gwella-Hawliau-Tramwy.aspx>

- 2.2 Nevertheless, the Review is different to the original Plan:
- The Review is not required to include detailed work programmes with estimates of costs. Instead, Statements of Action are presented that convey the aims and direction for the work area for a period of up to ten years. It would be unwise for any Authority to present detailed programmes and ambitious targets in light of the continuous uncertainty regarding Local Authority budgets. Instead, work programmes for a period of a year or two will be prepared that reflect the Authority's priorities and the levels of resources available.

- The Review presents three main themes rather than six, as in the Original Plan. These are the themes of the draft document:

Theme A: Maintenance and management of the Rights of Way Network and access to the Countryside

Theme B: The Definitive Map and Statement

Theme C: Assess and meet with users' needs

- 2.3 The Committee is requested for its feedback and observations on the content of the draft document and I wish to suggest that consideration is given to the following:
- Are there any areas that have not been considered or have not sufficiently been considered?
 - Do the Action Statements convey the requirements and aspirations of the people of Gwynedd regarding access to the Countryside for the next decade?
- 2.4 The draft document will be subject to a public consultation for a period of no less than 12 weeks. Prior to circulating the document the Committee's observations will be incorporated and the format and appearance of the document will be modified.

3. RECOMMENDATION

- 3.1 The Communities Scrutiny Committee is asked to offer observations on the draft Rights of Way Improvement Plan and subject to incorporating the observations, to authorise the Environment Department to use it for the purpose of public consultation. The Department will consider the observations received and will submit a final version of the RoWIP following the consultation period.

4. APPENDICES

- 4.1 Appendix 1: Draft Gwynedd Rights of Way Improvement Plan