

Dorset Rights of Way Improvement Plan (ROWIP) Consultation Survey

Completed paper surveys can be returned to County Hall reception or posted to **'Russell Goff - Greenspace Manager, Countryside Team, County Hall, Colliton Park, Dorchester, Dorset, DT1 1XJ'** by the closing date on **Monday, 12 October 2026**.

Overview

This is the formal 3-month consultation for the draft Dorset's Rights of Way Improvement Plan (ROWIP) 2026 to 2036. The ROWIP sets out how Dorset Council will develop a modern, accessible and better-connected network of public rights of way that supports everyday walking, cycling and access to natural green and blue spaces.

Dorset Council, as the Local Highway Authority, has a statutory duty under the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000 to produce a Rights of Way Improvement Plan. This plan fulfils that duty while setting a broader and more ambitious vision for how Dorset's public rights of way (PROW) network will contribute to the county's communities, economy and environment over the next decade.

Read the full Draft Dorset's Rights of Way Improvement Plan (ROWIP) 2026 to 2036 (<https://www.dorsetcouncil.gov.uk/w/dorset-s-rights-of-way-improvement-plan-rowip-2026-to-2036-draft#foreword>)

All information you provide will be treated confidentially and in line with Dorset Council's privacy policy (<https://www.dorsetcouncil.gov.uk/w/dorset-council-privacy-notice>)

Why your views matter

The Rights of Way Improvement Plan will help guide future priorities and investment in Dorset's rights of way network. Your feedback will help us understand what is working well, what needs improvement, and where our efforts should be focused over the coming years.

Section 1: About you

Q1. I am responding as:

Please tick one option

****Please go to page 2 for more options***

☐	Member of the public
☐	On behalf of an organisation - please specify below
☐	Business
☐	Town or Parish Council - please specify below
☐	Elected Member

	Other – please specify below
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If “Other”, please specify: _____

If you are a town/parish council or an organisation, please specify here:

Q2. How often, if at all, do you use public rights of way in Dorset?

Please tick one option

	Daily
	A few times a week
	A few times a month
	Rarely
	Never

Section 2: Vision

***You can read the summary vision statement on page 15**

For more information read the full Vision of Dorset's Rights of Way Improvement Plan (ROWIP) 2026-2036 (<https://www.dorsetcouncil.gov.uk/w/dorset-s-rights-of-way-improvement-plan-rowip-2026-to-2036-draft#vision-for-rowip2>)

Q3. The vision of the plan is to create a modern, accessible and well-connected rights of way network that supports health, communities, the economy and the environment.

To what extent do you agree or disagree with the vision?

Please tick one option

	Strongly agree
	Agree
	Neither agree nor disagree
	Disagree
	Strongly disagree
	Don't know

Q4. Do you have any other comments about the vision?

Please tell us in the box below

Section 3: Policies

Below are the proposed policies for Dorset's Rights of Way Improvement Plan.

In the next section, you can share your views on each policy. You can comment on the policies that matter to you or where you have concerns.

All questions are optional. You do not need to respond to every policy and can choose to provide feedback only on those that are most important to you.

Note: Throughout this survey, any reference to **PROW** refers to **Public Rights of Way**.

Policy 1 – Maintaining and improving the existing Public Rights of Way Network

***You can read the Policy 1 summary on pages 15 and 16**

The council will prioritise maintaining and improving the existing rights of way network, focusing on the routes that are most important for local communities and everyday use.

Q5. To what extent do you agree or disagree with this proposed policy?

Please tick one option

☐	Strongly agree
☐	Agree
☐	Neither agree nor disagree
☐	Disagree
☐	Strongly disagree
☐	Don't know

Q6. Do you have any other comments about this proposed policy?

Please tell us in the box below

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Policy 2 – Raise awareness of Public Rights of Way

***You can read the Policy 2 summary from pages 16 and 17**

The council will improve how people find, understand and use rights of way by enhancing signage, local information, and digital tools such as online mapping.

Q7. To what extent do you agree or disagree with this proposed policy?

Please tick one option

	Strongly agree
	Agree
	Neither agree nor disagree
	Disagree
	Strongly disagree
	Don't know

Q8. Do you have any other comments about this proposed policy?

Please tell us in the box below

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Policy 3 – Making our network more accessible

***You can read the Policy 3 summary on page 17**

The council will improve accessibility across the network by reducing physical barriers and providing better information, so more people can use and enjoy rights of way.

Q9. To what extent do you agree or disagree with this proposed policy?

Please tick one option

****Please go to page 5 for more options***

	Strongly agree
	Agree
	Neither agree nor disagree
	Disagree

	Strongly disagree
	Don't know

Q10. Do you have any other comments this proposed policy?

Please tell us in the box below

Policy 4 – Empowering Communities to help improve their Public Rights of Way Network

***You can read the Policy 4 summary on page 18**

The council will work more closely with local communities, volunteers and organisations to maintain, improve and promote rights of way.

Q11. To what extent do you agree or disagree with this proposed policy?

Please tick one option

	Strongly agree
	Agree
	Neither agree nor disagree
	Disagree
	Strongly disagree
	Don't know

Q12. Do you have any other comments about this proposed policy?

Please tell us in the box below

Policy 5 – Building the Dorset Economy through our Public Rights of Way Network

***You can read the Policy 5 summary from pages 18 and 19**

The council will use the rights of way network to support the local economy by improving access to destinations and promoting Dorset for walking, cycling and outdoor recreation.

Q13. To what extent do you agree or disagree with this proposed policy?

Please tick one option

☐	Strongly agree
☐	Agree
☐	Neither agree nor disagree
☐	Disagree
☐	Strongly disagree
☐	Don't know

Q14. Do you have any other comments about this proposed policy?

Please tell us in the box below

Policy 6 – Ensuring the Countryside Code and access legislation is followed, and Landowners are respected

***You can read the Policy 6 summary from pages 19 and 20**

The council will promote responsible use of the network, including following the Countryside Code, while working with landowners to manage access and reduce conflict.

Q15. To what extent do you agree or disagree with this proposed policy?

Please tick one option

****Please go to page 7 for more options***

☐	Strongly agree
☐	Agree

	Neither agree nor disagree
	Disagree
	Strongly disagree
	Don't know

Q16. Do you have any other comments about this proposed policy?

Please tell us in the box below

Policy 7 – Using our new housing development and the Local Plan to enhance Public Rights of Way

***You can read the Policy 7 summary from pages 20 and 21**

The council will use new housing and development opportunities to protect, improve and connect the rights of way network.

Q17. To what extent do you agree or disagree with this proposed policy?

Please tick one option

	Strongly agree
	Agree
	Neither agree nor disagree
	Disagree
	Strongly disagree
	Don't know

Q18. Do you have any other comments about this proposed policy? (Open text)

Policy 8 – Maximise the PROW network's contribution to health and wellbeing

***You can read the Policy 8 summary from pages 21 and 22**

The council will support health and wellbeing by encouraging more people to use rights of way for physical activity and access to nature.

Q19. To what extent do you agree or disagree with this proposed policy?

Please tick one option

	Strongly agree
	Agree
	Neither agree nor disagree
	Disagree
	Strongly disagree
	Don't know

Q20. Do you have any other comments about this proposed policy?

Please tell us in the box below

Policy 9 – Maximise our PROW for Sustainable transport linking communities and active travel

***You can read the Policy 9 summary from pages 22 and 23**

The council will improve connections between communities so rights of way can be used more for everyday journeys such as walking, cycling and accessing local services.

Q21. To what extent do you agree or disagree with this proposed policy?

Please tick one option

****Please go to page 9 for more options***

	Strongly agree
	Agree
	Neither agree nor disagree
	Disagree
	Strongly disagree

	Don't know
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Q22. Do you have any other comments this proposed policy?

Please tell us in the box below

Policy 10 – To uphold the council's legal duties to provide an up-to-date definitive map and statement which is accessible to the public

***You can read the Policy 10 summary on page 23**

The council will maintain and improve access to the Definitive Map and legal records so people can easily understand and use the rights of way network.

Q23. To what extent do you agree or disagree with this proposed policy?

Please tick one option

	Strongly agree
	Agree
	Neither agree nor disagree
	Disagree
	Strongly disagree
	Don't know

Q24. Do you have any other comments about this proposed policy?

Please tell us in the box below

Section 4: Priorities

Q25. Which of the following are most important to you? (Rank up to 3)

Please choose your three most important priorities.

Rank them by writing:

- **1 = Most important**
- **2 = Second most important**
- **3 = Third most important**

Only three options should be numbered. Leave all other boxes blank.

	Maintaining and improving the existing Public Rights of Way network
	Raise awareness of Public Rights of Way
	Making our network more accessible
	Empowering Communities to help improve their Public Rights of Way Network
	Building the Dorset Economy through our Public Rights of Way Network
	Ensuring the Countryside Code and access legislation is followed, and Landowners are respected
	Using new housing development and the Local Plan to enhance Public Rights of Way
	Maximise the PROW network's contribution to health and wellbeing
	Maximise our PROW Sustainable transport linking communities and active travel
	To uphold the council's legal duties to provide an up-to-date definitive map and statement which is accessible to the public

Section 5: Your experience of the network

Q26a. How easy or difficult is it to use rights of way in Dorset?

Please tick one option

	Very easy
	Easy
	Neither easy nor difficult
	Difficult
	Very difficult
	Don't know

Q26b. If you answered "Difficult" or "Very difficult" above, which area(s) of Dorset were you thinking about?

Please tick all that apply

***Please go to page 11 to tick your options**

	North Dorset
	Weymouth and Portland
	Dorchester area
	Purbeck
	East Dorset
	West Dorset
	Bournemouth, Christchurch and Poole area Across Dorset generally
	Other (please specify)

If other, please specify here: _____

Q27. How easy or difficult is it to find information about routes?

Please tick one option

	Very easy
	Easy
	Neither easy nor difficult
	Difficult
	Very difficult
	Don't know

Q28. What is your level of confidence when navigating public paths and routes?

Please tick one option

	Very confident
	Fairly confident
	Neither confident nor unconfident
	Not very confident
	Not at all confident
	Don't know

Q29. How easy or difficult is it to report a problem to on a path Dorset Council?

Please tick one option

	Very easy
	Easy
	Neither easy nor difficult
	Difficult
	Very difficult
	I am not aware of how to report a problem
	Don't know

Section 6: Final comments

Q30. What barriers, if any, do you experience when using rights of way in Dorset?

Please tick all that apply

☐	Poor path condition
☐	Poor signage or information
☐	Accessibility barriers for disabled users (for example: stiles, rough or uneven surfaces, steep slopes)
☐	Blocked or restricted access to paths (for example: locked gates, closed paths, overgrown routes)
☐	Safety concerns
☐	Lack of local routes
☐	I do not face any barriers
☐	Other (please specify)

If other, please specify here: _____

Q31. Do you have any comments Dorset Rights of Way Improvement Plan (ROWIP)?

Please tell us in the box below

Section 7: Demographics

This section is optional. We use it to collect diversity information. This helps to ensure any changes do not unfairly impact specific sectors of the community. It also helps to make sure our consultation response comes from a representative sample of residents.

Q32. Please select your age group.

Please tick one option

****Please go to page 13 for more options***

☐	Under 18
☐	18 to 24
☐	25 to 39
☐	40 to 49
☐	50 to 59

	60 to 64
	65+
	Prefer not to say

Q33. What is your sex?

Please tick one option

	Female
	Male
	Prefer not to say

Q34. Is the gender you identify with the same as your sex registered at birth?

Please tick one option

	Yes
	No
	Prefer not to say

Q35. The Equality Act 2010 describes a person as disabled if they have a longstanding physical or mental condition that has lasted or is likely to last 12 months; and this condition has a substantial adverse effect on their ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities. People with some conditions (cancer, multiple sclerosis and HIV/AIDS for example) are considered to be disabled from the point that they are diagnosed.

Do you consider yourself to be disabled as set out in the Equality Act 2010?

Please tick one option

	Yes – <i>go to Q36</i>
	No – <i>go to Q37</i>
	Prefer not to say

Q36. If at the previous question you stated you consider yourself to have a disability. Please state the type of disability which applies to you.

Please tick all that apply

****Please go to page 14 for more options***

	Attention Deficit Disorder (ADD)
	Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD)
	Autistic Spectrum Conditions
	Blind
	Dyscalculia
	Dyslexia

	Dyspraxia
	Deaf
	Hearing loss
	Long term health condition
	Mental health issues
	Physical impairment
	Sign Language User
	Visually impaired
	Medical conditions
	Mobility issues
	Learning disability
	Specific learning differences
	Wheelchair user
	Prefer not to say

If you prefer to use another term, please write in: _____

Q37. What is your ethnic group?

Please tick one option

	White: British
	White: Irish
	White: Gypsy
	White: Irish Traveller
	White: Other
	Mixed: White and Black Caribbean
	Mixed: White and Black African
	Mixed: White and Asian
	Mixed: Other
	Asian or Asian British: Indian
	Asian or Asian British: Pakistan
	Asian or Asian British: Chinese
	Asian or Asian British: Other
	Black or Black British:
	Arab
	Other ethnic group
	Prefer not to say

If other, please specify here: _____

****Thank you for your time. End of survey. ****

Summary of policies available in the Appendix below.

Appendix

Vision statement- summary

The vision of Dorset's Rights of Way Improvement Plan (ROWIP2) is to maximise the value of the county's 3,000-mile network of footpaths, bridleways, restricted byways, byways and former railway routes by:

- connecting communities and supporting sustainable travel, recreation and access to nature
- improving health and wellbeing by encouraging more people to walk, cycle, ride and spend time outdoors
- supporting Dorset's economy by enhancing the visitor experience and promoting countryside access
- building on Dorset's exceptional natural assets, including the Jurassic Coast World Heritage Site and National Landscapes, to establish Dorset as a leading destination for countryside access and walking
- improving infrastructure, accessibility, signage and digital route information to make the network easier to use and enjoy
- supporting local communities to develop and promote circular routes that meet local needs
- promoting inclusive access, enabling people of all ages, abilities and backgrounds to enjoy the network with confidence
- integrating high-quality rights of way into new developments through planning policies and developer contributions
- ensuring the network is accessible, resilient and well maintained for current and future generations
- delivering long-term benefits for residents, visitors, sustainable travel, health and wellbeing, and the local economy

Policy 1 – Maintaining and improving the existing Public Rights of Way Network

To maintain and improve the existing Public Rights of Way network, Dorset Council proposes to:

- resolve maintenance issues reported by the public in a timely manner through reports submitted via our online portal Report a problem on a Public Right of Way (<https://gi.dorsetcouncil.gov.uk/rightsofway/reportproblem>)

- protect and maintain access by asserting and safeguarding the public's rights to use the network, supported by sustained investment in maintenance
- use GIS and digital tools to identify need, monitor condition and prioritise improvements, supported by mobile technology that enables staff to update information in real time while on site
- maintain and develop our GIS systems to support efficient management of the network and provide the public with a simple way to report issues and access up-to-date information
- enhance key routes through surfacing improvements, mainly using locally sourced natural stone, to support year-round use for recreation and sustainable travel
- upgrade infrastructure to improve durability and accessibility, including replacing stepped bridges with step-free designs wherever possible and replacing stiles with gaps or gates using robust, inclusive designs
- improve waymarking across the network, including signs showing destinations and distances, to increase public confidence and ease of use
- strengthen connections between communities, services and green spaces, including investment in bridleways and multi-user routes
- support the delivery of trailways that provide safe and attractive corridors for active travel, including along former railway lines
- work collaboratively with town and parish councils, partners and landowners to prioritise improvements and resolve issues locally

Policy 2 – Raise awareness of Public Rights of Way

To raise awareness of Dorset's Public Rights of Way network and encourage more people to use and enjoy it, Dorset Council proposes to:

- promote Dorset Explorer through communications campaigns, helping people easily find and follow routes across the county using built-in GPS functionality
- make digital tools simple and accessible to use, including providing short guides and videos to help people confidently use Dorset Explorer
(<https://gi.dorsetcouncil.gov.uk/dorsetexplorer#map=11.53/50.79691/-2.31539/0&basemap=1/100/100>) mapping and report network issues
- develop inclusive virtual experiences that allow people to explore Dorset's rights of way remotely, helping those who cannot visit in person to experience routes and gain a sense of place
- improve confidence in the network by ensuring routes are clearly signed and easy to navigate, both on the ground and through digital mapping
- work with town and parish councils to promote local routes and improve signage, supporting communities to showcase accessible walks and rides

- support the creation of community-led "Walkabout" routes, encouraging short, circular walks that are easy to follow, well connected and appealing to residents and visitors
- promote the network through social media, local networks and partner organisations to highlight routes, encourage use and support local businesses
- encourage real-time feedback from users by making it easy to report issues online, helping to keep the network up to date and well maintained
- encourage more people to explore Dorset's natural and cultural heritage by improving awareness of how the Public Rights of Way network can be used to access it
- build confidence through supported introductory activities, such as Dorset Council's Health and Activity programme
(<https://www.dorsetcouncil.gov.uk/sport-leisure/getting-active-schemes-and-groups/health-and-activity>)
- work with schools to promote active travel and help young people understand the recreational and transport opportunities available through the Public Rights of Way network

Policy 3 – Making our network more accessible

To make Dorset's Public Rights of Way network more accessible and inclusive for a wider range of users, Dorset Council proposes to:

- develop and promote accessible routes, including creating a dedicated layer on Dorset Explorer showcasing at least 10 high-quality accessible circular routes across the county
- improve physical accessibility by removing or reducing barriers where possible, including replacing stiles with accessible gates, improving bridge access and addressing restrictive infrastructure
- promote inclusive access to the network by working with communities and partners to understand and address barriers faced by underrepresented groups, including people from ethnic minority backgrounds, and encouraging wider and more confident use of the network
- provide clearer information to users, including route descriptions, gradients, surfaces, distances and potential obstacles, enabling people to make informed decisions about route suitability
- improve links to supporting infrastructure, including accessible parking, signage and connections to facilities such as toilets, seating and refreshment points
- maximise the use of trailways and well-surfaced routes to create accessible circular routes linking communities, services and green spaces

- target investment in surfacing and infrastructure improvements, using internal and external funding to support year-round use and expand opportunities for everyday journeys such as walking and cycling to school
- work with partners and landowners to improve access across the network, supporting practical and deliverable solutions that benefit a wide range of users

Policy 4 – Empowering Communities to help improve their Public Rights of Way Network

To empower communities to play a greater role in improving and promoting Dorset's Public Rights of Way network, Dorset Council proposes to:

- work in partnership with parish and town councils to improve and promote local routes, including maintenance and capital improvements that reflect local priorities, supported by a ROWIP roadshow to engage councils and promote joint working
- support the role of Rights of Way Liaison Officers (RoWLOs), strengthening links between communities and the Ranger Team, helping to identify local issues and opportunities, and supporting condition surveys
- expand Service Level Agreements (SLAs) and the development of local "Walkabout" routes, enabling communities to take an active role in maintaining and promoting well-used routes
- grow and support a strong volunteer network, providing opportunities for people to contribute to path maintenance, vegetation clearance, waymarking and route condition monitoring. Volunteers currently work on PRow across Dorset everyday; this will be expanded to maximise the benefit
- provide training, guidance and support to volunteers, parish councils and community groups, ensuring work is delivered safely, effectively and to a consistent standard
- encourage community-led improvements, supporting local groups to identify missing links, enhance circular routes and develop projects that improve access and connectivity, such as replacing stiles with accessible gates
- support access to funding and external grants, working with partners to help communities develop and deliver projects that improve the network
- promote local stewardship of the network, encouraging a sense of ownership and pride in Dorset's rights of way as a shared community asset
- provide training opportunities for volunteers and students, encouraging participation and promoting countryside access as a potential career path
- deliver webinars and engagement events for Dorset councillors and stakeholders to promote the ROWIP and highlight opportunities for joint working

Policy 5 – Building the Dorset Economy through our Public Rights of Way Network

To support Dorset's economy through increased use and promotion of the Public Rights of Way network, Dorset Council proposes to:

- promote Dorset as a leading destination for walking, cycling and riding, working in partnership with Visit Dorset and other organisations to showcase the county's network and landscapes
- improve access to key destinations, ensuring routes link towns, villages, visitor attractions and local businesses such as cafés, pubs and accommodation providers
- encourage greater use of the network, supporting local economies by increasing visitor spend and footfall in rural communities and market towns
- develop and promote themed and circular routes, including heritage trails, coastal walks and local "Walkabout" routes that encourage visitors to explore more of Dorset and stay longer
- support local businesses by encouraging stronger links between the Public Rights of Way network and services that enhance the visitor experience
- promote the network through digital and physical channels, including Dorset Explorer, social media, printed materials and partnerships with tourism organisations
- align with the actions set out in Policy 2, raising awareness of Public Rights of Way through consistent, high-quality information, mapping and signage that improve navigation and user confidence

Policy 6 – Ensuring the Countryside Code and access legislation is followed, and Landowners are respected

To promote responsible use of Dorset's Public Rights of Way network, support compliance with access legislation and foster positive relationships with landowners, Dorset Council proposes to:

- promote the Countryside Code through clear and consistent messaging for residents and visitors using signage, digital platforms and promotional materials
- provide simple and accessible guidance for users and landowners, including a concise summary of the Countryside Code supported by videos and online resources
- promote responsible dog ownership, encouraging users to keep dogs under effective control, particularly around livestock and wildlife, and to follow

Countryside Code guidance, including using leads where required and taking dog waste home

- work with schools, colleges and community groups to raise awareness of responsible behaviour when using the network, helping to establish good practice from an early age
- support positive relationships with landowners, recognising their important role in managing the landscape and maintaining access across the network
- provide advice and guidance to landowners on their rights and responsibilities, including vegetation management, obstruction removal and maintaining routes to the required standard
- reduce conflict between users and land managers by supporting appropriate route diversions away from farmyards, working areas and sensitive locations where there are clear benefits
- work in partnership with the police and other agencies to address anti-social behaviour and misuse of the network, including illegal vehicle use and other forms of disturbance
- use proportionate enforcement where necessary to ensure rights of way remain open, safe and available for public use
- encourage shared use of the network by promoting awareness of different user groups and supporting respectful behaviour between walkers, cyclists, horse riders and others

Policy 7 – Using our new housing development and the Local Plan to enhance Public Rights of Way

To ensure new development protects, improves and enhances Dorset's Public Rights of Way network, Dorset Council proposes to:

- protect existing Public Rights of Way, ensuring they are retained and appropriately integrated within development proposals in accordance with Dorset Council guidance for developers
(<https://www.dorsetcouncil.gov.uk/w/public-rights-of-way-and-new-development-a-guide-for-developers-in-dorset>)
- require a Public Rights of Way Management Plan for developments above an agreed threshold, ensuring access is considered at an early stage of design and not treated as an afterthought, with plans including:
 - existing definitive and permissive routes within and adjacent to the development site
 - proposals for appropriate temporary diversions during construction
 - proposals to retain, improve or divert existing Public Rights of Way

- measures to minimise road severance and, where possible, address historic severance
 - measures to ensure user safety where routes remain open during construction works
 - details of temporary route provision, including surfacing, signage and management arrangements
 - landscaping proposals that affect or enhance Public Rights of Way
 - the design and construction of new routes, including the dedication of new Public Rights of Way where appropriate
 - proposed path widths, surfacing and long-term maintenance standards
 - timescales for closures, diversions and associated legal processes
- ensure developers understand that planning permission does not grant the right to alter or obstruct Public Rights of Way and that separate legal processes are required for diversions or closures
- secure appropriate financial contributions through Section 106 agreements and the Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) to protect, improve and extend the network for the benefit of both new and existing communities
- provide clear design standards and specifications to ensure routes delivered through development are durable, accessible, fit for purpose and dedicated as Public Rights of Way where appropriate
- require strong connectivity between new developments, the existing rights of way network, local services, schools, employment areas and green spaces, supporting everyday walking, cycling and riding
- promote sustainable travel by using the rights of way network to reduce reliance on private cars and support healthier, more active lifestyles
- use digital tools and mapping (as set out in Policy 2) to help developers identify opportunities to connect to the wider network and understand local access priorities
- support the delivery of multifunctional green infrastructure, ensuring Public Rights of Way form an integral part of wider green infrastructure networks that provide benefits for recreation, biodiversity, climate resilience and community wellbeing

Policy 8 – Maximise the PROW network's contribution to health and wellbeing

To maximise the contribution of Dorset's Public Rights of Way network to health and wellbeing, Dorset Council proposes to:

- improve access to high-quality routes and green spaces, ensuring the network is well maintained, clearly signposted and usable throughout the year
- reduce barriers to participation by prioritising improvements in areas with limited access to green spaces or higher levels of health inequality
- promote everyday use of the network, encouraging walking and cycling for journeys to school, work and local services
- support targeted engagement, working with communities and partners to increase use of the network by all members of the community
- embed the network within health and wellbeing initiatives, including social prescribing and community-based activity programmes, helping residents to be more active through initiatives such as Dorset Council's Health and Activity programme (<https://www.dorsetcouncil.gov.uk/sport-leisure/getting-active-schemes-and-groups/health-and-activity>)
- support community-led activities, such as walking groups, wellbeing routes and local challenges that encourage regular use of the network
- integrate with wider strategies, including the Local Transport Plan, Active Travel Infrastructure Plan and public health programmes, supporting a joined-up approach to increasing physical activity
- improve access to information through digital mapping and tools that highlight routes suitable for everyday use, recreation and physical activity
- work with schools and employers to promote use of the Public Rights of Way network for active travel and daily movement
- develop a better understanding of network use and barriers to access by working with partners to gather data, improve monitoring and target interventions effectively

Policy 9 – Maximise our PROW for Sustainable transport linking communities and active travel

To maximise the contribution of Dorset's Public Rights of Way network to sustainable transport and active travel, Dorset Council proposes to:

- integrate the Public Rights of Way network with active travel routes, linking footpaths, bridleways and trailways to walking and cycling corridors, including those delivered through programmes such as the Transforming Cities Fund and Active Travel Infrastructure Plan
- create continuous, safe and attractive routes that connect housing areas with schools, workplaces, town centres and public transport hubs
- improve accessibility and connectivity by upgrading surfaces, drainage and signage to support a range of users and ensure routes are appropriate for their most common use

- develop green corridors that connect rural and urban areas, reduce reliance on private cars and deliver wider benefits for biodiversity and climate resilience
- promote sustainable travel by encouraging more short journeys to be made on foot or by cycle through a well-maintained and connected network
- support active travel to school and work by integrating Public Rights of Way into school travel plans and commuter routes, helping to reduce congestion and emissions
- provide high-quality digital tools and mapping that enable users to identify routes connecting with cycle networks, public transport and key destinations, including accessibility information where available
- align delivery with wider transport and climate strategies, ensuring rights of way improvements contribute to reducing car use and supporting Dorset's environmental objectives
- secure funding and partnerships, making effective use of external funding opportunities such as the Active Travel Fund and partnership working with health and transport organisations
- work with communities and stakeholders to support co-designed routes, encourage local use and promote walking and cycling initiatives that increase uptake of active travel options

Policy 10 – To uphold the council's legal duties to provide an up-to-date definitive map and statement which is accessible to the public

To uphold the council's legal duties to maintain an up-to-date Definitive Map and Statement and ensure it is accessible to the public, Dorset Council proposes to:

- maintain the Definitive Map and Statement as the legal record of Public Rights of Way, keeping it under continuous review and updating it through statutory processes
- process Definitive Map Modification Orders (DMMOs) to record additions, deletions and changes to the status of routes based on user and documentary evidence, while seeking to reduce the backlog of applications by increasing capacity within the team where possible
- process Public Path Orders (PPOs) to manage route diversions, creations and extinguishments where appropriate
- ensure the Definitive Map and Statement are accessible to the public through:
 - access to the legal record at County Hall, Dorchester, by appointment
 - digital access through Dorset Explorer, providing an up-to-date working copy for general use, although this is not the legally conclusive record

- provide a transparent and accountable service by publishing legal orders and decisions and maintaining a public register of applications
- investigate applications and claims in accordance with statutory requirements, ensuring a fair and evidence-based approach
- provide clear guidance and support to help members of the public, applicants and landowners understand legal processes and their rights and responsibilities
- consult with stakeholders and the public on proposed changes to the network, ensuring appropriate engagement in decision-making
- continue to improve digital access and usability, making it easier for people to view and understand the rights of way network
- work to manage applications efficiently, recognising the importance of maintaining an accurate and up-to-date legal record
- provide guidance to landowners on protecting their land from Public Rights of Way claims, including advice on legal mechanisms such as landowner deposits, helping to provide clarity and prevent the unintended dedication of routes