

Responses to the public consultation on the draft Hampshire Countryside Access Plan 2015-25 (April 2015)

APPENDIX 1

Action codes: A=accept point and change CAP; R=reject; N=note (no change to CAP; information provided will be used during implementation and/or passed to Area Teams, along with requests for additional information)

Responses are largely reproduced in full but, for brevity only, have been condensed to avoid re-stating the content of the plan or reproducing details of specific issues. Responses that solely requested specific improvements have been omitted from the table below, and these requests have been forwarded to local Area Teams. There were 39 responses in total, comprising 6 from Borough/District Councils, 16 from Parish/Town Councils, 2 from Local Access Forums, 5 from other local and national organisations and 10 from individuals.

Response from	Response	Action	Details/Comments
Individual (New Forest Access Forum member)	[with reference to statistics in the introduction on page 1 of the draft] Walking and cycling do not reduce death or mortality. They may reduce premature deaths - in under 65s or under 70s, the report does not say. They may delay the onset of ill-health. The paragraph needs to explain what is meant by the claims which are made	A	Amend text to give greater clarity (p1).
Rushmoor Borough Cncl	The Council is content it reflects the views we have previously submitted from interested stakeholders	N	
Winchester City Council	It is considered that the draft Plan is a useful strategic document which sets clear policy objectives for the development of the PROW network over the next 10 years which will be used to prioritise the allocation of financial, staff and other resources within the County's Countryside Service. The City Council therefore supports the draft Plan but makes the following comments: • It is noted that the area plans are to be retained only as reference documents. If the Plan is to achieve the best outcomes it will need a local dimension in order to help identify and deliver improvements on the ground in particular areas of the county. The Plan should therefore explain how this will be delivered if area plans are not being reviewed and up-dated. • The Plan talks about partnership working and refers to parish/town councils, district councils and the national parks. There may also be potential to work with other organisations such as the Forestry Commission or Hampshire and Isle of Wight Wildlife Trust.	N A A	 Add statement concerning area plans (p4). This was intended but should be made more explicit; add to text (p5).
Natural England	Natural England recognises it is a statutory consultee for Rights of Way Improvement Plans and their reviews under the Crow Act 200S61(f) and it is responding to the Hampshire Countryside Access Plan 2015-2025 in this capacity.		

Response from	Response	Action	Details/Comments
	Natural England recognises and endorses the Authority's approach, having undertaken a thorough public consultation exercise in carrying of this review, and having incorporated the feedback into the document. Natural England further supports the Plan, which seeks to prioritise actions under three key policies (Developing a strategic approach to network management, Working with other organisations and volunteers and Listening, informing and education) whilst maintaining reference to the original seven area CAPs.	N	
	The plan, at twelve pages length, represents a good and effective summary written under the umbrella of three key policies, whilst retaining the original eight county-wide issues, and will help steer priorities for access across the County up until 2025 in a positive way. We support the conclusions and the ranking of the two issues: condition and connectivity, as the most important. The key actions that have been drawn out from these e.g. audit strategic routes and develop a strategy to pro-actively manage them, is to be endorsed, especially in these times of financial austerity. However the plan is flexible enough to make effective use of resources, whether they become smaller or bigger within this time period. The recognition of the role of partners and volunteers is prudent and alongside two-way communication should stand the Plan approach in good stead with community buy-in.	N	
	We especially welcome the involvement of LAFs, LEPS, Health Boards, Nature Partnerships to provide a balanced approach. If you feel Natural England can answer specific queries e.g. on MENE, biodiversity and protected sites, LEPS, health, strategic access management approaches associated with development, green infrastructure opportunities for access etc, we may be able to offer additional advice.	N	Offer noted with thanks.
	Indeed, whilst the recent Minister's request for the consideration of woodland access (alongside the needs of disabled people, horse riders and cyclist) has been picked up in the Plan, biodiversity as such is not mentioned. We recognise it is covered in the original area CAPs, however it does need to be considered. Certainly, if protected areas in Hampshire are involved then we would encourage an early dialogue with ourselves to consider options, consents etc. Also, I am unsure whether the original ROWIP has an impact assessment carried out. Certainly, if set in context with Local Transport Plans it may fall within the scope of an SEA.	A	Work policies do meet conservation requirements but this needs to be more explicit in CAP; add statement (p4).
	The creation of a completed coastal access path within the time frame of this plan is a bonus, thanks to the additional Government funding being made available to Natural England and we see its creation along the Hampshire coastline will fit neatly beside your strategic priorities. Our coastal team will certainly be contacting	N	Appropriate assessments will be carried out for specific

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	everyone soon through the accelerated programme. Whilst there is no statutory duty to implement ROWIPS, we hope the Hampshire Countryside Access Plan 2015-2025 will be taken forward and people living and visiting the county will benefit greatly from the improved access provisions it seeks to provide.	N	projects where necessary, as with the original ROWIP.
Liss Parish Council	Quiet Roads • Liss Parish Council is broadly supportive of the draft Countryside Access Plan but regrets that the plan does not seem to have a specific policy for developing protection for quiet roads. • As is acknowledged in the plan, in many parts of the County the small back roads form an essential part of the local walking network. However as is also acknowledged these quiet, narrow and often windy roads fall under the normal national speed limit of 60mph. This means that the pedestrians, horse riders and bike riders that use the roads can be put at risk by speeding motorists who are unfamiliar with the roads and the appropriate speed and unaware that they are used by non motorised users. • In Liss this is an issue of particular concern to villagers as the local backroad network, which is narrow and has no pavement or grass verges, is an essential part of the local walking network. The Shipwrights Way passes down this backroad network. One of the recommendations of the Liss Parish Plan which responded to the concerns raised by villagers was to extend the 30 mph speed limit to roads which are used by walkers. • It is of regret that the Countryside Access plan has no policy to implement such quiet roads despite this point having been explicitly raised in the consultation by the New Forest Access Forum. Implementation of lower speed limits covered by a specific “quiet road” warning to motorists would raise awareness and increase safe usage of this means of access to the countryside. Assistance to Parishes • Liss Parish Council welcomes the plan to provide more assistance to local Parish Councils and to local groups to enable local people to take more responsibility for ensuring the condition of local paths. • However it notes that local groups will need training and will still need the assistance of the County Council in dealing with maintenance of paths where specialised knowledge and equipment is needed. Arrangements will also have to be in place to ensure that any local groups are properly insured for any work that they undertake on local paths with the County Council’s approval	A N N	Action added to explicitly include measures to ‘quieten’ roads (p6). (Note: HCC is currently investigating with the NPAs the feasibility of a ‘quiet lanes’ style initiative) Provision of greater support is included in the actions (p8).

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South Downs Society	From the viewpoint of the South Downs Society the fact that 'Maintaining and improving the condition of the rights of way network' features so strongly is of paramount importance. Similarly improving the connectivity of the network, especially in areas where 'circular' routes of a modest length are hard to come by. The Society would add that integration of CRoW Open Access Land including commons into the network where links are weak would also be beneficial. The 'stiles to gates' initiative is also welcome and should continue especially on the more well-used routes and those close to urban areas.	N	Intention is to incorporate access land/commons in strategic routes where appropriate.
	The issue of motorised vehicles on BOATs or Green Lanes continues to be a problem. The introduction of TROs tends to put pressure on the remaining by-ways. The damage created in some areas is considerable and the LA, although having a responsibility to maintain such routes, is likely to find costs prohibitive. There may be a case for encouraging users to help with maintenance as well as landowners that for example, run motor bike trials on their land and that require access over a local by-way.	N	Users of all types including motorised vehicle users do help with maintenance and actions in the CAP seek to increase this.
	The Society sees no reason not to have a single concise county-wide plan but would also support the existence of a small number of 'area plans' which interpret the wider plan to the needs of clearly defined contrasting sub-regions within the county. It is much appreciated that the staff are reported as keen to be more proactive with targeted responses and to offer support to those who would wish to help maintain or improve paths. To this end the Society would expect to see staff engaging with local parishes and volunteer organisations. There is no mention of the "Accord for the management of Rights of Way and Access in the South Downs National Park" The Society would expect this to be featured in the Plan particularly in any sub-region which includes the National Park i.e. South Downs (Hampshire).	A	Add the accord to the appendix 'Areas of Influence'.
	The draft mentions the potential to generate income through partnerships with the private sector and to maximise opportunities for financial sustainability. It is becoming apparent that some parishes are able to raise funding and use local firms to repair and resurface small stretches of rights of way relevant to their communities at considerably less cost than prices quoted by contractors working for HCC. This should be further explored.	N	HCC welcomes Parishes using local businesses and facilitates this through the Small Grants Scheme (p8).
	There is an emphasis on 'strategic routes' which of necessity requires prioritisation of issues. While this is a common sense approach, 'less important' rights of way should not therefore be ignored. The draft plan does not make it clear what is to happen to these. Currently there is little or no feedback following reporting of problems with these routes much to the frustration of those who report them. It should be possible to let the reporter know	N	There is an action to improve provision of information on reported issues (p10); whilst

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	where in the system their request lies and over what timescale it might be resolved. Even the least 'important' route should have its place in the system otherwise that right of way may be ignored entirely and gradually disappear through lack of use. This should not be allowed to happen. There is an opportunity for new housing developments to include routes which will add value to the network and increase the accessibility of the rural network from the urban. Such paths should be designated as rights of way and on-going maintenance agreed with the developers or local council in order to avoid adhoc closure or obstruction by local residents, excessive littering and dog fouling. There is no mention of accountability. How is the work of the Hampshire Rights of Way department to be evaluated? There should be a proposal to use key performance indicators on an annual basis in order to measure the proportion of rights of way that are easy to use. A small random sample of routes might be assessed by a voluntary team other than that from HCC in order to make annual comparisons. Merely reviewing 'customer satisfaction' is not objective enough when considering the whole network. The Society applauds the intention to ensure that information on finding paths and using them responsibly is a main objective. With the decline of tourist information offices it is not always easy for members of the public to access such information in leaflet form and such can become dated quite quickly. It may be better to invest in online technology and mobile phone apps. Maps and route descriptions are no substitute for properly signed routes. The use of maps and written routes are not something that everyone finds easy to use. The decision to 'go for a walk' is often taken on the spur of the moment on a sunny Sunday afternoon! Given the stated importance of improving the connectivity of rights of way, it is a major omission that this document makes no mention of the provision in the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000 of the deadline to have all paths recorded on the definitive map by 2026. After this date it will be too late to record any historic or lost paths which were in existence before 1949 but have not been recorded. PATHH (Providing Access To	N N N R	resources for improvements will be mostly targeted at strategic routes, all ROWs will remain subject to statutory maintenance responsibilities. Text (p5/6) refers to working with planners and developers to secure access in the most appropriate way. There is an action (p10) to provide annual monitoring; we already benefit from annual volunteer route assessments of 'ease of use'. This is mentioned (p5) and there is an action (p6) to examine policies and processes which will

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	Hampshire's Heritage) completed a lot of research on this topic but it is not clear how Hampshire RoW intend to make use of it or whether the department is actively supporting initiatives to get such rights of way recorded in time. What preparations for the 2026 cut off date are being made? The Society congratulates the Hampshire RoW department on seeking policies and actions to improve countryside access in Hampshire during what are difficult times financially. The draft document is full of good intentions and it is hoped that they can be carried to successful conclusions.	N	address the '2026' issue. The use of data held by the PATHH data is that group's decision; HCC must remain neutral.
Church Crookham Parish Council	The Church Crookham Parish Council is broadly supportive of the updates to the draft Hampshire Countryside Access Plan, and we appreciate the hard work that has clearly been made in its preparation. In reviewing the document we identified three points for consideration and potential inclusion: • SANGS provide an important opportunity for maintaining or even developing public access to open spaces. It would be helpful if the Access Plan laid out what it expected to see in the SANGS. It could help guide the future development and quality of SANGS. Our experience of SANG development certainly would suggest that guidelines could have provided an important lever to ensure the SANGS were developed to meet agreed standards and requirements. • Partnering is identified as a priority. This we fully support, but would appreciate MoD being included as a named partner. MoD is a major land owner, and working with MoD could provide significant opportunities. • A policy for the disabled, or those with pushchairs and mobility scooters should be provided within the plan. Kissing gates are a nightmare and several of the styles on our local MoD land (they seem to be designed for those with long legs who are fully agile)	N A A	SANGs can offer significant benefits to access; they form part of 'green infrastructure', which is included (p5). Insert reference (p5). Our policies seek to incorporate the needs of people with disabilities throughout; a statement to this effect has included (p4). Action A2 (p6) refers to removal of structures that limit access.
Badger Farm Parish Council	I have looked at the new draft plan and found the appendices on the web. The consultations look like they have been thorough and the findings taken into account in the draft plan. I am a new councillor and am on a steep learning curve. I therefore feel unable to comment in detail but my general impression is that it looks good.	N	

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Stroud Parish Council	Most of the eight countryside priority issues that are deemed important seem correct; in particular the condition of the Rights of Way network and connectivity of routes. This latter and the question of access to the countryside from urban areas flag up the need for safe cycle routes (for example from Stroud to Petersfield, linking the town with the South Downs Natural Park).	N	Motor vehicles have a legal right of access to around 6% of Hampshire's network. The Plan includes an action (p6) to review the policy on the Management of Vehicles. New national legislation is intended to streamline and simplify the process for altering Rights of Way.
	It is a good idea to aim to consider all users of public paths in terms of improving access, and we would support including horse riders in this, with consideration being given to upgrading some footpaths to bridleways where this can help keep horses off the road, or provide a link or circuit. The idea of 'meeting the needs of all users' is splendid in principle, but it is debatable as to whether the minority of users should be permitted to spoil the network for the minority. There is only a brief mention (page 3) of provision for motorised vehicles. The report stipulated that 'many respondents saw this as inappropriate and some objected to devoting resources' to this.	N	
	Why has this important finding not been explored further? There is no point spending precious funds on improving the condition of rights of way if this is to be wrecked by a minority whose idea of fun is to churn up green lanes with motorised vehicles. We would support some form of policing of this, such as seasonal TROs or even reclassification. Lateral thinking with the 'fun for all' strategy in mind could involve approaching the MoD or other landowner to create skid pans etc for four wheel drive people, to offer them an alternative to destroying country paths and tracks. Needless to say, there are safety implications here too, where vehicles meet walkers, riders and cyclists.	N	
	It is a very moot point that 'off roaders' would benefit from improvements at all, as their enjoyment centres around mud and ruts, which they do not hesitate to try to reinstate in instances where improvements have been made. It is clear that changing the status of tracks from RUPPs to BOATs some years ago has resulted in destruction and degrading of much of the network. West Sussex kept its bridleways as they were, and their rights of way are on the whole much more usable than those in Hampshire.	N	
	How about a more common sense and pragmatic approach to slight alterations to Definitive Routes, where the new route offers a safer way for the public with less hindrance to the landowner? Currently it does not seem possible to obtain funding for resurfacing for one particular footpath in Stroud which is slightly off the Definitive Route, but has been in use like this for about 25 years. The process by which Rights of Way can be altered is enormously cumbersome at present – streamlining and simplifying the system would be a refreshing improvement.	N	

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	Support for local people who wish to help is a very good idea, and one which has worked well in the past with the community work which has been done on the 'Five Ways' tracks' in East Meon, for example. This sort of collaboration between local people and the Council should be encouraged; let us hope that Health and Safety continues to allow it!	N	
Longstock Parish Council	It is quite clear that a great deal of work has gone into producing this draft and you are to be congratulated both on the scope of your draft and the detail. It all appears very comprehensive. It is also transparent that you have a very tricky row to hoe with so many worthy and laudable demands which will have to be set against what is almost certain to be a reducing budget. Whilst we would of course wish all our footpaths to be properly maintained thus meeting the needs of our many users, we also recognise that we must also as a Parish make a contribution. This we endeavour to do by encouraging landowners to play their proper part. One small criticism if I may. Over the last couple of years I have sent in requests for finger posts to be replaced and prioritising which footpaths we would like to be cut within your budget. I have not received a response to any of these emails and would ask that your staff please acknowledge receipt when emails are received. Notwithstanding this small criticism, thank you for including us in your request for comment and we look forward to seeing the confirmed plan in due course.	N N	Support welcomed. Our updated on-line reporting system allows people to track progress of requests and reports.
Kingsclere Parish Council	Our Parish Paths Team have had a through good look at the document and by and large think it is all very positive and well thought out. The only concerns they expressed were in relation to Page 3, starting ".....more paths which can be used by cyclists and horse-riders and improved road connections between them." we feel that where there is multiple use of these paths the walkers are often disadvantaged by the surfaces being broken up by cyclists and horse-riders, none of which help towards the maintenance of the paths as the walkers do. Probably nothing we can do here but it is an observation the team thought they would like to make.	N N	We aware of the need to consider the needs of all users when surfacing shared use paths.
Chineham Parish Council	Please note that Chineham Parish Council supports the draft Hampshire Countryside Access Plan 2015-25.	N	

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Odiham Parish Council	Further to your recent email , Odiham Parish Council have recently reviewed the Hampshire Countryside Access Plan 2015-2025 and would like to make the following comments. Whilst OPC recognises the benefit of encouraging a wider involvement in the improvement and management of access by parish councils, they do not have the finances to do it.	N	It is recognised that some Parishes will have the interest and funding whilst others will not; funding and assistance is being offered and will be enhanced through actions in the CAP (p8)
Tadley Town Council	Tadley Town Council is supportive of the eight county-wide issues as identified in the 2008 plan to still be the most relevant issues, with condition of the rights of way network and connectivity of routes being the items of most priority. Tadley Town Council supports the expansion of the issue 'meeting the needs of all users' to be expanded to incorporate initiatives promoting the awareness of the perspectives of other users, particularly on shared use paths and on roads, and of the needs of landowners and also the removal of limitations such as stiles to assist those with mobility difficulties including the elderly and people with pushchairs. Tadley Town Council welcomes that Hampshire County Council will give support for other organisations and/or volunteers who wish to maintain or improve paths, will highlight more explicit links to new areas of policy such as health and well-being strategies and show more emphasis on initiatives to improve confidence of users and accessibility e.g. good signage and changing stiles to gates. Tadley Town Council is pleased that the Countryside Service will seek to build on good established relationships with Parish and Town Councils to enable them to tackle local issues directly where they are willing to do so, through regular liaison, toolkits and funding. However Tadley Town Council finds the generic comment regarding communication 'given the inevitably high turnover of Parish/Town clerks' a little unfair. Tadley Town Council is very supportive that information on finding paths and using them responsibly, and on managing public access, is to be made widely available and easy to understand.	N N N A N	Text amended (p7).

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Individual (Ramblers member)	I especially welcome the following: • Seek to work with volunteers to map infrastructure such as gates, stiles, steps and bridges, both for public information and to assist in asset and network management; commencing with the strategically important routes. and, particularly: • Seek to remove structures which limit use by people with mobility difficulties. • Continue to develop existing initiatives such as Stiles to Gates, the Small Grants Scheme and the Waymarking scheme, and seek to expand this where appropriate. • Explore the potential for further Parish & Town Council involvement in network management and improvement, e.g. extending the Lengthsman scheme, wardening, the formation of voluntary Parish working groups, path problem report protocols and providing information for 'new homeowner' packs. • Explore possibilities for improving understanding among children of how to find and use the countryside access network, working through existing channels such as school visits to Country Parks, the Trailblazer programme and supporting Parish and Town Councils who are interested in doing so. • Develop and make available to schools and other education providers a modular lesson plan, with links to the National Curriculum, about access to the countryside. • Develop online mapping to show path issues which have been reported and progress in resolving them. and, with regard to: • Using roads as part of the access network Suggest, the exploration of the possibility of utilising (speed-restricted) countryside lanes as part of the network, to resemble the 'Quiet Lanes' introduced in the Channel Islands to serve a similar purpose.	N A	Add new action to explicitly include measures to 'quieten' roads (p6).
MOD	I am emailing to inform you that the MOD / DIO do not have any comments to make regarding the draft Hampshire Countryside Action Plan 2015-25. In the previous 2008 incarnation you addressed regional actions across the county, one area being the Forest of Eversley. Within this you covered actions associated with use of MOD land for the purposes of recreation. I corresponded with Matt Beal in 2012, highlighting the fact that this document would require updating to better reflect the current use of the MOD estate. Could you clarify whether it is your intention to redraft the regional documents or will the CAP consist purely of the one overarching document?	N N	The original area plans remain as reference documents as originally drafted.

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Hampshire & IOW Wildlife Trust	The Wildlife Trust has responded to previous stages in the development of the plan. The Trust is the owner of a considerable length of public rights of way in the countryside as well as land which is statutorily, or permissive, access land. We have led the restoration of the strategic access corridor along the Itchen Navigation and are prominent in seeking the better management of the impacts of informal recreation on Natura 2000 sites. The introduction to the draft access plan may be improved by clarifying the remit of the plan. This is helpfully summarised in the 'legal background' annex. Should this clarification be included in the introduction it will assist in managing expectations as to what the plan may deliver. The comments on health and mortality in the introduction (paragraph 3) may be improved by removing the suggestions that walking reduces deaths 'from all causes'. Similarly the author of the report may be overly harsh in their analysis that the 2008 plan has led to a 'plethora of partnership working'. Whilst we recognise partnership working is demanding on all partners we do not regard it as having become an unhealthy excess. The focus of the draft plan is very much that expected from a review under Section 60 of the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000. The emphasis is on rights of way and their condition rather than access to open spaces. In our earlier representations the Trust expressed a desire that the plan should seek to address the provision of new accessible open spaces around the Thames Basin Heaths and is an important feature in delivering change in countryside access. We are disappointed that this has not formed a part of the plan particularly as these broader access issues were raised in the Ministerial guidance of 2014. The draft plan seeks to set priorities for the period up until 2025. During this period we may expect acceleration in urban growth, growing tensions between land managers and informal recreation, the challenges of safeguarding Natura 2000 sites from adverse impacts of informal recreation together with the likely application of the provisions of the Marine and Coastal Access Act 2009 regarding coastal access. We are disappointed the draft plan has not looked ahead to establish structures to address these challenges.	A A R N	Text 'see legal background appendix' added (p1). Text on mortality amended; 'Plethora' changed to 'wealth' (p1) The Plan does not address specific geographic locations. Open spaces are included within the term "countryside access" (p1), and the Plan refers to the importance of working with local planning authorities on the provision of green infrastructure. Greater demand through urban growth forms part of the rationale for the 'Strategic approach'

Response from	Response	Action	Details/Comments
	The evidence base supporting the plan reflects the perceptions of various groups of people. These perceptions reflect the demands of user groups as well as the experience of a broader public and stakeholders. Having contributed quantitative evidence to the review on the open space provision we are disappointed that the analysis offered in the draft is based solely on perception. Whilst perception is important it needs to be complemented by the analysis of objective data. Hampshire is a large and diverse county. We therefore see the benefits of retaining local area plans. These plans however do need updating with plans written before 2008 becoming progressively outdated as the county changes. In conclusion we welcome the production of the draft plan. The plan reflects some, but not all, of the requirements of the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000. We look to the final plan reflecting the Ministerial guidance on access to woodland, and other land types. In doing so we look to the County Council to look forward to the challenges of the period up to 2025 and have a plan to address those challenges.	N A R	policy area and actions (p5/6). Coastal access is welcomed and we expect to be a partner in NE's delivery. Natura 2000 sites are protected by existing legislation and other strategies. Text amended to further explain use of area plans (p4). The needs assessment included access to woodland and other land types as per the Ministerial Guidance, and showed that in Hampshire there is no significantly greater need to improve access in any of the major land types, including woodland (p3).

Response from	Response	Action	Details/Comments
Individual (equestrian)	[Two respondents made the following comments] There is a growing equestrian community in and around [named location] and we feel we are constantly being told we cannot ride here, and there, and are forced more and more to ride on the roads, which neither the road-users or we ourselves want. Please consider opening up some Bridleways or giving us some permissive routes so that we can ride off road in the locality?	N	Location specific comments forwarded to Area Team; general sentiment noted.
Ellingham, Harbridge and Ibsley Parish Council	In 2012, the parish produced a Community Plan. Among its key findings were: • greater access to the network for users of pushchairs and wheelchairs; • more circular footpath routes and connectivity; • better management of paths; • more cycle ways; • better access to the River Avon. Since the Hampshire Countryside Access Plan of 2008 significant recreational changes have taken place in the parish: • recorded visitor numbers to the Blashford Lakes have averaged between 15 and 20 thousand pa; • horse-keeping and livery has increased substantially, with riding into the New Forest and Ringwood Forest. • cycling has increased dramatically, using the local highway network to access the New Forest (added to the growth of commercial cycling events) [This response then usefully covered some specific needs in the local network] The Parish Council holds some funds which could contribute towards the cost of new or improvement projects within the Blashford Lakes area.	N N N N	Full information passed to area team.
Eastleigh Borough Council	In terms of content, there is little in the draft strategy or in the three policy areas and related actions that could be disagreed with, however many of the actions outlined are rather general- not surprising as the County is a big place, but it is difficult to provide particularly meaningful comments when there are no specifics on what the strategy's proposals could translate into for rights of way in the Borough itself. The consultation exercise appears to have been thorough and the key priorities- maintenance and improving	N N	

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	connectivity- seem reasonable. Maintenance is a particular issue currently - some key “strategic” routes eg the Itchen Way have been “written off” for some time with slow repairs. Outside of the Borough there has been a similar long term closure on part of the Basingstoke canal due to weather damage that has taken a long time to repair. These issues effectively take major parts of the RoW network out of use. If the strategy’s proposals results in more rapid attention to these kinds of issue (which may become more likely if more extreme weather conditions become more commonplace, as some climate models predict) this is a good thing. It is good to see that the requests/ needs of bike users and less mobile users also appear to be considered. As we well know, some parts of the rights of way network offer considerable potential as alternative cycle routes to congested roads where “retrofitting” a cycle facility may not be possible, and whilst the law and land ownership places constraints on what is feasible, the strategy does at least appear to state that HCC will work where possible to progress suitable requests/ proposals. Locally this could benefit schemes such as Botley-Bishops Waltham rail trail, improvements to parts of the Strawberry trail etc. I suspect that cycle access on the Itchen Way would probably remain too controversial though, although this would be very desirable for an access/ recreation and commuting point of view on the Winchester-Eastleigh-Southampton axis. The document does make reference to the increased importance of external funding but doesn’t directly reference CIL (although our CIL infrastructure delivery plan does include various rights of way improvements). Finally, as far as proposals for improvements to mapping/ wayfinding goes - all well and good, but missing is any reference to provision of these on mobile devices. Online (and offline downloadable for low signal areas) route mapping for phones/ tablets could have potential. Some trails elsewhere (eg on the IoW “dinosaur trail”) have made trails interactive through use of QR codes or RFID tags at interpretation points to provide more info/ interactivity. Some thought could be given about where this might be beneficial in Hampshire. Digital mapping for PCs is a start but the market today is very much more about mobile devices. Providing a “digital dimension” to some rights of way might help make these more relevant to the current and future generations who are more likely to find [email cuts off at this point]	N N A N	Reference to CIL added (p5). Hampshire ROW data is provided free of charge in a digital format which can be used by third parties for applications such as those described.

Response from	Response	Action	Details/Comments
New Forest Access Forum	This letter constitutes formal advice from the New Forest Access Forum in response to the consultation on the draft Countryside Access Plan 2015-2025. The Forum is overall pleased with the scope of the document and supports the three policy areas. Comments on specific sections of the plan are provided below. Rationale and Overview (pg. 4): This section notes the ‘potential to generate income through the private sector’. It is recommended that examples are provided here to better demonstrate the scope of this statement. Policy Area: Developing a strategic approach to network management (pg. 5-6): The Forum supports the broad principle of a strategic network, however it is recommended that more explicit mention is given to the need for multi-user routes, and to the potential for these routes to be suitable for use by carriage drivers as well. In doing so it would also be useful to recognise the cost of providing routes with a suitable surface, that will stand up to the level of use the routes are likely to endure. Policy Area: Working with other organisations and with volunteers (pg. 7-8): The Forum welcomes the strong emphasis on working with others, in particular the action to enable and support a community or group ‘to maintain specific routes/parts of the network’. The Forum would like to see this principle extended to include a means for businesses to sponsor specific rights of way or provide furniture (e.g. similar to the ‘Donate a Gate’ scheme on the Isle of Wight). Policy Area: Listening, informing, education (pg. 9-10) • The Forum is pleased that there is a great emphasis on the provision of information within the Plan. Members would particularly stress the importance of helping to build peoples confidence in using the network and in ensuring suitable information is available in advance of visiting the countryside/using the rights of way network. Appropriate pre-visit information is particularly important for people with mobility, sensory and/or learning difficulties. Thought should be given to the level of information provided (e.g. an indication of route difficulty would be useful) and how the information is presented (e.g. making it accessible and understandable. • The update to the Countryside Access web-pages is welcomed, including the proposal to ensure appropriate, timely updates are provided. The Forum would also like to ensure appropriate links to and from partner websites (e.g. New Forest National Park Authority) are provided. • The Forum supports the development of online mapping to show path issues which have been reported and progress in resolving them. • It is positive to see ‘improving understanding among children’ is features in the Plan. It would however be useful	N A A N N N A	Example added (p4) Text amended (p5) The suggestion will be considered during delivery. D of E added to text (p9)

Response from	Response	Action	Details/Comments
	to include reference to ‘future-proofed’ non-Hampshire County Council led projects such as the Duke of Edinburgh Award, and educational access from Countryside Stewardship schemes. • The action to ‘Develop mechanisms to enable annual monitoring and reporting against the Countryside Access Plan objectives’ is welcomed. With this in mind, the Forum would also like to see in the Plan some reference to what has been achieved since the first Plan was published. Other • It would be useful to included reference to how the public can keep informed about the Plan and its implementation and who they can contact about this. • It should be borne in mind that there are lots of other policy and strategy documents in place and Forum would encourage a strong emphasis on joined up working to ensure the best use of money and resources in delivering the Plan.	N A A	/ p10) This information will be given on the webpage. ‘Areas of Influence’ section has been added to CAP (p11)
East Hampshire District Council	As a District Council we are keen to promote the use of the Rights of Way (ROW) network in order to access facilities and to explore the surrounding countryside. Having an overarching Strategic Plan that is county-wide is supported as previously East Hampshire has been split between two area plans. One plan that outlines a clear direction would be more useful to help guide work in the District than having different plans which may outline conflicting priorities. The seven county-wide issues that have been identified are still supported as being relevant for the Hampshire area. The East Hampshire Joint Core Strategy (June 2014) outlines the requirement to protect and provide safe and convenient cycle and pedestrian links which reflect the amenity and rural character of the area. We welcome the objectives identified in the new Countryside Access Plan and would like to make the following comments: Developing a strategic approach to network management: In support of prioritising strategically important routes for maintenance in order to target available funds, especially for promoted routes in the District such as Shipwrights Way, South Downs Way, Hangers Way etc. The draft East Hampshire District Local Plan: Housing and Employment Allocations (Dec 2014) outlines the potential new development sites in East Hampshire, this will need to be considered as part of the process for identifying strategic routes as these areas will experience a population growth and will influence what strategic routes are required. As a District Council we have worked with HCC on previous strategic schemes to improve the access network by providing financial contributions. We would be keen to continue this partnership working as and where possible.	N N N	Document noted for delivery purposes; HCC welcomes the continued opportunity to work with EHDC.

Response from	Response	Action	Details/Comments
	Working with other organisations and with volunteers: In support of empowering local groups and volunteers to help with small-scale projects and maintenance works along routes which are unlikely to be identified as part of the Strategic network. This will ensure that non strategic routes are not left to deteriorate. This type of work can provide local groups with a sense of ownership of these paths which mean they are often best placed to identify and respond quickly to issues that may occur. Town and Parish Councils are also well placed to assist with such work and a number in East Hampshire have been very keen to help on previous projects. Small amounts of funding are often required for such small-scale works so it is important that funding streams such as the Small Grants Scheme continue in order to support this work. Listening, Informing, Educating: In support of signage improvements along routes to ensure that people are confident in using their Right of Way network, many people want to explore the countryside without the need of a map and sufficient signage would help to enable this. It is then also important that information is easily available on the web about the routes including a function that allows a reporting mechanism of any defects or issues. An online mapping system would be supported which provides information and updates regarding condition of the paths. This would help to reduce the possible enquiries generated and create a central database that all partner organisations can refer to. Thank you for the opportunity to comment on these proposals. Population growth is likely to continue in the area and it is vital that the access network is fit for future generations in order to enable continued access to the countryside, a facility that provides leisure opportunities and options for sustainable travel.	N N N	Online mapping and problem reporting is available and will be upgraded to enable tracking of reported problems.

Response from	Response	Action	Details/Comments
Bursledon Parish Council	1 Bursledon Parish Council (BPC) welcomes sight of the proposed policies and actions to improve countryside access in Hampshire and the accompanying documents. It approves in particular: • the expressed need for HCC to work with district council planners to promote and ensure easy access routes from urban areas to the countryside, especially in new housing developments; • the intention to develop networks of footpaths and cycleways as preferred alternatives to transport by other means for local journeys and leisure exercise; • HCC's appreciation of the contribution that may be offered by parish councils and community groups in maintaining, claiming and dedicating new routes and its offer of partnership working; • the offer of support measures to local councils in maintaining access routes, especially the contractor services and small grants; • the establishment of connectivity of routes as a priority issue; • the intention to ensure that more information about access to the countryside is made available to the general public. 2 BPC regrets the omission of support for the English coastal path and its extension to Bursledon Bridge as the means of improving access to the River Hamble and would have welcomed a policy specifically relating to access to the Solent and the River Hamble , especially for those wishing to use small craft.	N N	The coastal path is welcomed. It is not specifically included in the Plan as NE will implement coastal access.

Response from	Response	Action	Details/Comments
New Forest District Council	Thank you for consulting with New Forest District Council on the Hampshire Countryside Access Plan 2015-2025. Our main issue with the document as drafted in that it omits to pick up on the role which the Countryside Access Plan can have in helping to manage the recreational impacts arising from new residential development on European sites. Developer's contributions towards the funding of appropriate countryside access projects could be a major source of future funding and influence where resources are directed. As you are aware, in June 2014 New Forest District Council adopted a Mitigation Strategy for European sites (Recreation Pressure from Residential Development) Supplementary Planning Document (SPD). This document sets out the District Council's approach to addressing recreational impacts on the protected SPAs from proposed development and as HCC are already involved in the delivery of such mitigation projects for the New Forest and Solent areas, this ought to be reflected in this plan. Therefore, in our opinion it would seem appropriate that a new policy area should be included with the plan to address recreational habitat mitigation / Habitat Regulations. The District Council also has some concerns over the removal of specific area based plans from the plan. Whilst it is noted that the existing area based plans from 2008 are to be retained for information, as each of the 7 areas has its own unique characteristics which presents their own constraints/opportunities it is felt that it is important that these are not lost within the context of one succinct document, therefore at the very least the District Council would like to see a chapter summarising the different issues faced in each area. Despite these points, it is good to see that a lot of the issues addressed in the District Council's SPD can be seen throughout your plan including: • Improving connectivity to the network; • Removal of limitations such as stiles; • Working in partnership to deliver initiatives; and • Recognition of the importance of circular routes. It is also good to see the Policy Area: Listening, Informing, Educating is there as another key part of our Mitigation Strategy relates to access management and addressing these specific issues.	N N N N N	The Plan states that HCC will work with planners to seek access and funding. The document referred to is noted for delivery purposes. Text amended (p4) to clarify that we work within conservation legislation. Text amended to further explain use of area plans (p4).

Response from	Response	Action	Details/Comments
Buriton Parish Council	Thank you for consulting the Parish Council on this matter and we note that this plan will direct and focus the work of the countryside service over the next ten years. We believe that we have a good track record with regard to Rights of Way in the parish. In recent years we have: • removed over 20 stiles to make paths more attractive for families and for those with mobility difficulties • improved the surfaces of a number of paths in critical places • produced leaflets to promote local walks – particularly short circular routes from the village. The Parish Council agrees with most of the main policy areas and objectives in the plan, but has a number of important comments. In addition to the main policy areas identified in the plan, we would ask that greater attention is paid to the following points: 1. Motorised users (particularly 4x4s) are ruining the quality of a number of Rights of Way in the parish, posing a safety risk to other users (walkers and horse-riders) and discouraging families from accessing the countryside in case they should meet a convoy of vehicles slithering down the scarp slope of the South Downs. There may be places for 'all users' to enjoy the countryside but the sensitive locations in this parish are not such places. 2. There appear to be a high concentration of BOATs in East Hampshire, just across the border from West Sussex where there is little or no provision for motorised users. We therefore suffer relatively high numbers of motorised users as people have driven many miles, from outside the county, to damage our Rights of Way and spoil the rural tranquillity of a National Park. We believe that the number of BOATs in this parish should be reduced as this would help address all the County Council's priority issues: condition of rights of way, maintaining and improving a strategic network, connectivity of routes for walkers and responsible use of paths. 3. The County Council should also ensure that short circular routes from villages are protected and adequately maintained as part of a priority network. Such paths/routes often provide young families with their first, formative tastes of the countryside (without having to drive elsewhere in cars) and they also offer a valuable resource to those at the older end of the age spectrum – helping to keep people fit and healthy. 4. Given the stated importance in the draft Plan of improving the connectivity of rights of way, it is a major omission that there is no reference to the threats inherent in the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000 which has introduced a deadline for all paths to be recorded on the definitive map (by 2026). After this date it will simply be too late and any historic paths (ones which came into existence before 1949, that are not registered)	N N N N	The law generally precludes reduction of the number of BOATs. However, there is a policy in place to manage access by motorised users. The Plan includes an action (p6) to review this policy. The value of such routes is recognised and improvements will be supported through the 'working with others' actions; strategic routes are intended to be links between centres of

Response from	Response	Action	Details/Comments
	will be extinguished forever. There are a number of paths shown on old maps of Buriton which are not registered as rights of way. These could significantly improve connectivity. It is already difficult to get these registered, but it will become impossible after the deadline imposed by the Act. An Action Point in the Countryside Access Plan should commit the County Council to working with community groups and others to increase the size and scope of the network before the 2026 deadline by exploring the inclusion of more historic paths. A project known as PATHH (Providing Access to Hampshire's Heritage) undertook a lot of research on this topic until 2013. If the information gained is to have any value it needs to be actively taken forward. The Parish Council would be grateful if the County Council could let us know if this project identified any potential extra paths in this parish. We welcome the proposals to provide small grants, for the Department to seek more external funding and for good relationships to be maintained with Parish Councils and other voluntary partners. We hope that this response is helpful to you in fine-tuning the draft plan so as to take greater account of the points identified above.	R N	populations and attractions. This has been referenced (p5) and there is an action to update our policies and processes which will cover this. PATHH data is held by the project group. It is not appropriate for HCC, which must remain neutral on the matter, to work with others in the way described to identify historic paths.
New Forest National Park Authority	Thank you for the opportunity to respond to the updated Hampshire Countryside Access Plan. We support this plan. It is a well-written and evidenced based document which reflects changes to the local government landscape. We also value the productive relationship we have with Hampshire County Council's Countryside Service. These are comments from the New Forest National Park Authority (NPA); our comments include feedback on the document itself and suggestions for how the NPA may be able to support the delivery of this revised plan. The New Forest Access Forum has already given its initial feedback and we understand they will have further opportunity to comment shortly. We note that the seven area plans produced for the previous Plan are not being updated. Whilst this makes sense for the reasons expressed, we would not want to the special nature of the New Forest to be forgotten as the new Plan is finalised and implemented. Some of the comments below may be specific to the New Forest and as such may not be explicitly reflected in new actions, but they are nevertheless important to local delivery.	N N N	This response provides many helpful and practical suggestions for delivery of the plan and is welcomed; we look forward to continuing to work in partnership with the NPA.

Response from	Response	Action	Details/Comments
	Developing a strategic approach to network management. • The NPA welcomes a more strategic approach to network management. The rights of way network is a very important part of facilitating door-to-door journeys by sustainable transport in the National Park. • The County Council will be aware that the NPA started to develop a project in 2013 called New Forest Community Routes, with the aim of identifying well-maintained and easy to use existing paths and other connecting routes that people can use to walk, cycle and ride between settlements and countryside areas within the New Forest National Park. This network would then inform prioritisation of investment in the rights of way network. In response to concerns from Natural England and various conservation bodies the NPA currently has the concept on hold and the rationale may need to be modified. However, we are currently looking at interim ways to promote selected routes away from sensitive areas, to encourage walking as a mode of transport between settlements, attractions and popular countryside sites. • Hampshire County Council (HCC) is a key participant in discussions to progress a wider recreation management strategy for the New Forest. The agreed Priority Taste of the Recreation Management Strategy Steering and Advisory Groups is: to agree an overall plan for where within and around the National Park we should encourage people to go to enjoy outdoor recreation, and how this should be achieved. The aim would be to both improve the New Forest's recreational experience and enhance the other special qualities, including its rich wildlife, tranquillity and commoning tradition, and to avoid inadvertently damaging the special qualities which people come to the New Forest to enjoy. Whilst this is a New Forest-specific piece of work, it fits well with various aspects of the draft Countryside Access Plan, including the condition, connectivity and promotion of routes. • The New Forest has a large area of open access land at its core but many people access this by first driving into the Forest in their car. To reduce this and to encourage more people to benefit from outdoor recreation, rights of way leading from where people live should be prioritised for improvement, and barriers removed where possible. Priority should also be given to routes which link people's homes to other recreational areas (such as SANGS identified by local councils as part of their recreation mitigation strategies). • External funding – The Authority is aware that the M3 Local Enterprise Partnership has been awarded capital funds for sustainable transport. We support the action to develop costed schemes in readiness for such funding; the possibility of new, safe, beside-road cycle routes should be investigated as part of this initiative. • Health agenda and National Parks – we expect interest in this area to grow over the coming years and we are investigating possible future projects associated with public health. • Work on reviewing the NPA's local plan will commence in the autumn. We welcome the action to proactively engage with the planning system and will ensure that the County Council is engaged in the plan making process in	N N N N N N	

Response from	Response	Action	Details/Comments
	the New Forest. Working with other organisations and with volunteers • We welcome that National Park Authorities are referenced. • We welcome supporting local groups and parish and town councils. • We also suggest that the County Council looks to work with other local Authorities (such as district councils and National Park Authorities) in ways in which they can be more useful in scheme delivery. Perhaps through delivering improvement schemes on the network under licence, to an agreed methodology. Examples of where this would be useful could be when partner Authorities are in receipt of external funding (for example LSTF or HLF). • The New Forest has a considerable area of protected habitats (SSSI, SAC, SPA) including many road verges. This creates particular challenges when trying to increase public access or promote specific routes. NPA staff would welcome the opportunity to work with HCC to achieve both the protection of these special areas and benefits to people. • We welcome the suggestion of working with parish and town councils in the provision of information for 'new homeowner' packs. The NPA is currently in liaison with New Forest councils to streamline the provision of information to people moving into the area and we would welcome such input from HCC. As part of the HLF Landscape Partnership Scheme (LPS) programme, Our Past, Our Future, we have developed a volunteer framework for the National park. Some of the LPS partners have been involved with the creation of the Framework (NFNPA, Forestry Commission, National Trust, Hampshire & Isle of Wight Wildlife Trust) and have adopted the principles it sets out, they will also be involved in its regular review and updating. The Framework will be tested by the partners and will ultimately aim to become a legacy platform for future New Forest volunteering by being adopted New Forest wide by all organisations using volunteers for the benefit of the Forest. • We are happy to continue to support the small grants scheme, providing additional funding for projects within the New Forest. Listening, Informing, Educating • In light of reduced resources, perhaps a greater partnership approach should be developed in this area particularly with National Park Authorities and Education to avoid duplication at a local level. We note the intention to develop a National Curriculum-linked lesson plan about access to the countryside and suggest that this could be done in conjunction with NPA Education staff so that it can dovetail with resources being made	N N N N N N N N	This on-going commitment to the SGS is particularly welcomed.

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	available through the New Forest Curriculum website. • The NPA may also be able to help with developing a multichannel approach to delivering key messages (for example, using combined social media channels of NPAs, HCC, district councils, local sport and recreation groups). • The NPA is currently recruiting a new wildlife ranger, funded by NFDC, who will work with people travelling from their homes into the forest and countryside areas close to where they live. • We welcome the intention to work with the Local Access Forum to improve understanding among user groups. The NPA is currently working with the LAF to develop a Local Sustainable Transport Fund project which encourages responsible use of roads and routes within the National Park. There is no explicit mention of the development of a coastal path. Whilst not easy to achieve, the principle of enabling people to access the coast in sustainable ways is positive and we hope that HCC will give its support to this programme as it is rolled out by Defra and Natural England. Natural England has indicated that work will start on the New Forest stretch of coastline in 2015/2016	N N N N	Coastal access is welcomed and we expect to be a partner in NE's delivery.
Godshill Parish Council	I am writing on behalf of the members of Godshill Parish Council to thank you for the opportunity to respond to the consultation on the above-mentioned document. The Parish Council cannot be concerned with the whole of Hampshire, so please accept its comments as making reference to the New Forest and its immediate surrounds. They are as follows: • It agrees that the development of mapping is required whilst taking account of routes through sensitive areas. • It is supportive of the updating of the website/mapping so that people using the footpaths can be kept up to date on any issues. • With regard to Item 3 on Actions: It is important to agree on which routes are strategically important as a first priority. • It is very supportive of continuing the Small Grants Scheme and being advised of any other available grants. • It would support a route from Hyde, through Godshill to Fordingbridge, for instance. • It strongly agrees with the idea of developing a suite of costed schemes to call on when responding to short-term funding opportunities. • It is very supportive of using volunteers and Community Payback workers. • It is not clear from the Action points how local community groups and volunteers as well as parish and town councils will be 'enabled' and 'supported' by the Countryside Service. It would like more details.	N N N	Details will be agreed with input from those involved.

Response from	Response	Action	Details/Comments
	It supports the proposed short term investment to address reported signage issues, followed by a longer term approach through volunteer assistance, where possible. Could it be also be made clear where parish clerks should apply to get this work done? Much of the document contains laudable aims but it should be borne in mind that particularly vulnerable areas of Hampshire, such as the New Forest National Park, need to be treated with extreme caution when considering the expansion of strategic networks. The First Purpose of the national park should always be borne in mind. The Parish Council's overall impression of the document is that the future plans for the Service are for it to pass the responsibility and cost for maintenance and promotion onto parish and town councils as well as other stakeholders/volunteers, whilst the overall control and decision-making on the footpaths will remain with the County Council. It would ask therefore that local people be given more powers in the decision-making process.	N N	Request forwarded to Area Team. The intention is to work with communities to resolve local issues and to support local aspirations for improvements. Legal maintenance responsibilities will remain with the County Council.
Individual	I support this plan, looks like a good set of ideas. In addition I would suggest that the paths and cycle paths be created to link up towns and villages without motor vehicle access on these paths. This would have a good economic impact as well as health etc. I suggest these paths be lined with new hedgerows to replace the thousands that have been lost over the last century to intensive farming: benefit wild life, keep people off farmers land. I don't support removal of stiles though on existing tracks. These have been part of the countryside charm for generations. Perhaps by pass them if you must for increased access. Look forward to seeing the results.	N R	Identifying traffic-free links where possible is the intention and project-specific benefits to biodiversity will be considered. The removal of enables more people, including the elderly, to enjoy our countryside.
Test Valley BC	Thank you for consulting Test Valley Borough Council on the above document. It is noted that the plan is to be read in conjunction with the seven detailed plans. The following comments relate to the three policy areas identified : 1 Policy Area : developing a strategic approach to network management 1.1 Pleased to see that the main issues have been identified as maintaining and improving condition and	N	

Response from	Response	Action	Details/Comments
	improving connectivity. Consider it is important to focus and target resources appropriately to improve access. 1.2 TVBC would like to be involved in identifying the strategically important routes within Test Valley and in identifying and focussing where improvements should occur. 1.3 The 5th row of the table [deliver improvements to strategically-important routes] should relate to all routes, and not just the strategically important routes. When there is a choice for funding then it is right the strategically important routes should be prioritised but should opportunities arise, where the landowner is willing to assist or opportunities arise through planning, then the most should be made of these, regardless of whether they are strategically important routes or not. 2 Policy area : Working with other organisations and with volunteers 2.1 Test Valley are already working with Hampshire County Council to promote visitors using the rights of way network by preparing leaflets etc and will continue to do so. 2.2 Working collaboratively with other organisations and volunteers is considered important if the most is to be made of the limited resources available. There may also be a need to proactively encourage volunteer groups to be set up where these are not in place at the moment, particularly on strategic routes. Volunteers can offer local knowledge, new ideas and enthusiasm as well as being a useful resource. 3 Policy area : listening, informing , educating 3.1 This section should perhaps clarify that the strategic routes will be prioritised for signage improvements and promotion of routes as well as for the mapping of infrastructure which specifies the strategic routes will be done first. Online mapping is useful but good signage on the ground is particularly important if printed mapping is reduced. 3.2 Whilst it is important to monitor the effectiveness of the actions in the plan and monitor customer satisfaction it is important that the most cost effective ways of doing this are sought, so that more funding remains available to implement the required improvements.	N A N N N A	Text amended (p8) to include landowners. Strategically important routes will be prioritised, as describe (p6/7) Text amended (p10)
Owslebury Parish Council	Owslebury Parish has over 60 Rights of Way enjoyed by many people from within and outside the Parish and the Council welcomes most of the policies and goals set out in the Plan. Nonetheless, in relation to cycle routes the Council does have material concerns. The Council understands and supports such proposals for those who ride bikes for leisurely rides in the countryside. However there is an increasing problem with individual or group cycle races of one sort or another- by travelling too fast and by being a danger to horse riders and walkers. The Council strongly encourages HCC to take account of this trend and endeavour to discourage such behaviour through	N	Action C8 (p10) is intended to address issues of conflict

Response from	Response	Action	Details/Comments
	better and clearer signage or through by-laws.		
South Wonston Parish Council	HCC Countryside Service has made a thorough study of its consultation results and arrived at three defined policy areas - Strategic Approach to Network Management, Working with Other Organisations and Volunteers and Listening, Informing and Educating - each with detailed comments and actions, a good reflection of input. The original eight issues of 2008 have been retained as they are still germane and addressed comprehensively within the policy areas. The two most important issues, ROW maintenance and route connectivity improvements, should remain paramount. Focussing on routes of best value is realistic. A flexible financial and workforce strategy is necessary in the current climate. Parish Councils may indeed have to take a larger role in path maintenance and we will do what we can, gratefully receiving offers of guidance, assistance and a possible extension of the Lengthsman scheme. It is vital that the Countryside Service continues to work with Parish Councils and other bodies to keep our ROW open, safe and accessible and to expand them where possible for the benefit of all legitimate users. An improved fault reporting/problem resolution system would be welcome[this is proposed]. We would support seeking improved relations between landowners and users; co-operation is essential to the success of any scheme such as our cycleway to Winchester. Finally, monitoring of CAP policies would be a crucial gauge of progress and the findings of the monitors should be reported regularly [again, this is proposed].	N	
Minstead Parish Council	In general we support the conclusions of this draft plan. We strongly support the conclusions under the policy area Developing a strategic approach to network management, that the highest priority must be given to maintaining the existing network, and improving connectivity. This is by far the most important part of the whole Countryside Access Plan, which should get the vast majority of available resources. We have seriously struggled to maintain existing paths and bridleways, and one in particular is currently un-useable due to lack of funding at HCC for essential re-surfacing. There is little point in encouraging people to use the network if it cannot be maintained in a reasonable state. Under the policy area Listening, Informing, Educating we would ask that you ensure that any maps and leaflets available online are in an easily printable format.	N	
Hampshire Countryside Access Forum	This letter constitutes formal advice from the Hampshire Countryside Access Forum in response to the consultation on the draft Countryside Access Plan 2015-2025. The Forum is overall pleased with the scope of the Plan and supports the three policy areas, which provide some very clear and achievable steps for future working and development of countryside access. Comments on specific sections of the Plan are provided below.	N	

Response from	Response	Action	Details/Comments
	Introduction (pg. 1) The Forum is pleased that health benefits are acknowledged; however this is only with reference to walking and cycling. Research commissioned by the British Horse Society in 2010 has also found that recreational horse riding has significant health benefits (see 'The health benefits of horse riding in the UK') and it is recommended that reference to this is included in the Plan. The officer perspective (pg. 3) The Forum welcomed the statement suggesting that more recognition should be given to the fact that 'circular routes from villages and urban centres are often the most important to people' for every day activity and access to nature. This also supports many recent health reports suggesting that small amounts of frequent activity/ exercise are more beneficial. Rationale and Overview (pg. 4) The seven area plans and the first county wide plan are recognised as important reference documents to provide guidance on how the strategic policies may be implemented at a more local level. The Forum agrees that this work should not be forgotten but would also like to see reference to the GIS 'CAP layer' of suggested improvements to the network, particularly as part of the work to develop the strategic network. Policy Area: Developing a strategic approach to network management (pg. 5-6) • The Forum supports the broad principle of a strategic network, however the wording of the Plan suggests that this will inevitably lead to a two-tier system of public rights of way in the county, with the lesser tier (i.e. those routes that do not sit within the strategic network) being allowed to slip into disrepair, which is of obvious concern to the Forum. Clarification is needed within the Plan that this will not be the case. • The Forum welcomes the proposals to forge connections with planning authorities and to ensure more proactive interaction with the planning system for the delivery of strategically important routes. It must also be acknowledged however that often access commitments made as part of the planning process are not implemented at the development stage or, in the case of housing developments for example, a path may be	N N A N N	It is agreed that all physical exercise, including horse riding, results in health benefits. The walking and cycling statistics quoted in the document are illustrative, and are not intended to be exclusive. Text amended (p4) All ROWs will remain subject to statutory maintenance responsibilities. The plan focusses our resources on improvements to routes of strategic importance.

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	created by the developer but attempts will then be made to close it because it was not dedicated as a public right of way. The Forum would like the Plan to acknowledge the need for such access commitments to be fully implemented/enforced. • Whilst it is understood that the first paragraph of this section refers to research results, reference to the potential benefit of the strategic network for carriage drivers should also be noted (e.g. change the last sentence to read 'Such improvements will benefit all users, including people with mobility difficulties, families and where possible carriage drivers'). • Increased use of verges and quiet lanes and the creation of new routes are welcomed, particularly in areas with little bridleway or byway access that would otherwise force more vulnerable users onto rural roads. It is recommended however that more explicit mention is given in the Plan to the need for multi-user routes, as a cost effective way of providing access for all users. • The draft Plan acknowledges that the access resource is used for both utility and recreational purposes. Hampshire is seeing an increase in urbanisation and an increasing demand for off-carriageway solutions for cyclists. Whilst in rural areas, it is wholly appropriate that routes shared by walkers, horse riders, cyclists (bridleways) and carriage drivers (restricted byways) have a soft surface, in existing urban and newly urbanised areas and where the dominant user is the utility cyclist, this will usually mean a hard surface. If a route primarily intended for utility purposes has inappropriate surfacing and drainage, it will not attract the required use and will not encourage the modal shift from the car to cycle sought by both central and local governments. The Forum would therefore advise that the Plan recognise the need for urban routes and those primarily used for utility purposes, to be treated differently to rural and primarily recreational routes, especially in the development of the strategic network and when considering any network improvements. • The Forum welcomes the actions to update policies and processes in response to new legislation and to ensure the Service operates efficiently and responsively. It would also be useful to recognise within the Plan, the importance of having processes in place to allow a flexible approach to network and route management to be adopted, that will allow paths to be created, modified, diverted and extinguished where necessary. This will help to provide a more 21st Century network which meets the needs of landowners/managers as well as users. Policy Area: Working with other organisations and with volunteers (pg. 7-8) • The Forum welcomes the strong emphasis on working with others, in particular the focus on working with Parish Councils and local organisations/volunteers. Consideration should also be given to partnership working with the not-for-profit sector, including charities, which are able to attract funding.	A A N N A	Text amended (p5) Text amended (p5) It is recognised that different approaches are appropriate for different paths; officers will treat each on their own merits (no change made to the document). New national legislation is intended to permit the more flexible approach suggested. Text amended (p7)

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	- Greater use of the Lengthsmen scheme and promotion of the Small Grants Scheme is supported. Processes should however be reviewed to ensure they are user friendly. - The Forum strongly supports the action to provide 'toolkits enabling partnership solutions to local issues', particularly to ensure there is a universal way of working with volunteer groups, as currently guidance across the Countryside Service varies greatly. Policy Area: Listening, informing, educating (pg. 9-10) - The Forum is pleased that there is a great emphasis on the provision of information within the Plan. It is important to provide clear information about where people can go in the countryside, and reference to ORPA's should be included in this (especially considering the pending investigation to add this information to the online rights of way mapping system, as requested by HCAF). - The proposed involvement of Parish and Town Councils in improving understanding among children of how to find and use the countryside access network is welcomed. The Forum would also encourage wider involvement from Parish and Town Councils, for example including access information in local publications, on websites and noticeboards. - The Forum supports the action to 'explore the potential for partnerships with other organisations' in the promotion of routes and would also encourage this approach in the provision of information about access in general (e.g. the Ramblers and the British Horse Society have a wealth of printed and online information about access, as well as training courses). - The Forum supports the action to 'Work with groups such as the Local Access Forums to increase understanding between different types of user and increase understanding of landowner perspectives' and would stress the importance of working with landowners and organisations representing landowners/managers to help achieve this. Relationship between county-wide issues and the policy areas (pg. 11) - The Countryside Access Plan 2008-2013 County Overview (pg. 8-9) highlights the critical role of the road network, explicitly identifying issues relating to loss of connectivity and setting a strong case for the Highway Authority as a whole to address the problem. Although the new Plan acknowledges these issues, it does not sufficiently address them in framing policies for action and change. These are fundamental challenges for countryside access and need to be spelt out more clearly. In particular it would be useful to include reference to influencing the implementation of the Local Transport Plan in the main document (in addition to its inclusion in the appendix entitled 'Areas of Influence').	N N N N N N A	The on-line mapping facility now includes roads, as requested. Action added to explicitly include measures to 'quieten' roads (p6). 'Areas of Influence' section now forms part of main CAP document.

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	The county-wide issue 'Using roads as part of the access network' is noted to be addressed within the policy area 'Developing a strategic approach'. It would be useful to see acknowledged within the Plan, the need for greater consideration to be given to the effect of road schemes on the use of rights of way; and in general a greater need for Highways to work more closely with the Countryside Service and understand its needs.	N	The importance of working with partners is noted in the CAP; this includes internal HCC partners.