

Annex 3:

Proposed changes to the Aims and a summary of key changes to the Rights of Way Management Plan document and list of representations made to the consultation draft.

1. Proposed changes to Rights of Way management Plan Aims made as a result of the consultation responses

	Aim as proposed in consultation document	Proposed revised Aim	Reason for change
1	Public rights of way are recorded, protected, maintained and promoted	Public rights of way are recorded, protected, maintained, promoted, and improved when opportunities arise	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Takes account of representation by the Local Access Forum for Oxfordshire to include improvements at a high level in the plan
2	A public rights of way and countryside access network that adapts to balance the current and future needs of communities and users, farmers and landowners and the natural environment	A public rights of way and countryside access network that adapts to balance the current and future needs of communities and users, farmers and landowners and the natural and historic environment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Takes account of representation from English Heritage to include the historic environment in the plan
3	A public rights of way and countryside access network which is as accessible as reasonably as possible to those with limited mobility, vision or understanding	A public rights of way and countryside access network which is reasonably accessible to those with limited mobility, vision or understanding	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Takes account of representation by the Local Access Forum for Oxfordshire to make the wording of the aim clearer
4	Countryside access contributes to a thriving local economy and communities are able to be actively involved in caring for and promoting responsible walking and riding in their area.	no change	

2. The key proposed amendments to the draft Rights of Way Management Plan made as a result of the consultation process

Page	Change proposed
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(in original draft RoWMP)

Cover - Validity period changed from 2014/24 to 2015/25

2 - Figure 1 (policy context) diagram changed

4 - Local Transport Plan text revised

6 - List of activities added

7 - Population figures altered and dog section added

10 - Biodiversity and archaeology information added

13 - Network-by-user-type maps removed

24 - RoWIP1 achievements section now moved to after introduction

26 - New stakeholder duties, rights and powers section added

27 - Aims 1,2,3 slightly altered

28 - Oxfordshire Rights of Way Management Framework diagrams altered

29 - Definitive Map section text altered

31 - Countryside Access Management section text altered

34 - Countryside access and development planning text altered

36 - Table of current and future stakeholder roles amended

39 - Communities text altered to clarify statutory duty

- Appendix A (district maps of accessible greenspace) and B (increased size 'easy to use' map) removed as respondents didn't find them very useful and only broadly indicative
- Appendix C removed (flowcharts of Creation Agreement and DMMO processes) as the area of work is expected to be subject to significant change when rights of way legislation changes in early 2015
- Appendix D (Countryside Access and development) amended to make it easier to understand and integrate more in the body of the RoWMP. Example conditions moved to main document. Text and area maps are now **Appendix B**
- Appendix E amended (Rights of way network connectivity tables and maps). Table of networks removed as respondents didn't find them useful. Network connectivity maps are now in **Appendix A**

3. List of individual representation comments made to the draft Rights of Way Management Plan consultation, ordered into subject area, together with proposed action and additional commentary

Key to action on the comment

Accept – address in final draft through changes
Noted – considered but no change required
Reject - Incorrect or not realistic

	Comment or part-comment submitted	Action • <i>Accept</i> • <i>Noted</i> • <i>Reject</i>	Commentary where necessary
Foreword and overall strategy			
1	The Forum takes issue with the title of the document as a ‘management’ plan instead of an ‘improvement’ plan. Although the statutory guidance does require the document to set out the strategy for management and improvement of access, the public perception is that legislation intended RoWIPs to be aspirational and focus on improving access. The current document seems to have gone to the other extreme. This may be understandable in the current financial climate but it should only be for the time-being. The Forum advises that the document and any associated delivery plans include improvements equally alongside management and maintenance issues.	<i>Noted</i>	The document includes aspirations and improvements in the area maps, and the council will seek to implement these and others as opportunities arise. Supporting communities and volunteer groups to make improvements is also an important part of the authority’s rights of way work. All of this complements the council’s statutory maintenance and management activities.
2	...we are concerned that OCC will not be able to maintain rights of way to the same standard (the Plan shows fewer stiles, gates and bridges were useable in 2013 than in 2006) and we welcome the statement that OCC will seek sources of external funding to help carry out this work. The previous Plan was essentially a plan to improve rights of way and we regret that the need to improve rights of way does not appear to be an important aim of the new Plan. We would therefore suggest that external funding such as Places for People provided by TOE under the old Plan should be sought from TOE2 and other funders in order that improvements can continue to be made during the period of the new Plan.	<i>Noted</i>	The document includes improvements alongside management as reflected in the statutory guidance so this plan just finds more of a balance. Maintenance will always be a priority and best use of available resources will be made. External funds and other opportunities to add to statutory work will continue to be sought. It should be noted that the charitable funding environment has changed since ‘Places for People’ operated.
3	The Foreword could include the wording ‘For the period of this ROWMP we have had to alter our model in view of reduced resources, but hope to revert to more aspirational improvement-seeking model in the future.’	<i>Noted</i>	The document includes improvements alongside statutory activities. The plan includes aspirations in the vision and aims and contains maps of new routes identified in the area maps as well as specifying how new developments can contribute to better access

			and how communities and volunteer groups can also add to the quality and extent of the network
4	With regard to the Summary (p45) - As an additional and overall comment, the Forum has expressed dismay at the large budgetary cuts faced by the CA Team, and noted that these are greater than those in other council departments. This is one reason why the Forum is worried about the use of the term 'management' rather than 'improvement' in the ROWIP title, as 'improvement' meets our aspirations and carries the assumption of adequate resourcing, whereas 'management' could connote scraping by with minimal resources. The Forum strongly feels that Oxfordshire's RoW are a vital part of the county's economic and social fabric, and need to be respected, maintained – and improved.	<i>Noted</i>	All public sector areas have to manage the effect of budget restrictions. The document still includes improvements alongside management, as reflected in the statutory guidance
Assessment of Need			
5	The table on page two should refer to the 'Statutory Duty' of the county council and this should feature throughout the document. The Forum advises that the county council needs to define what the statutory duty is and how it will carry out these functions in order to give clarity to the public, and also enable measurement of its performance in meeting or failing to meet these duties	<i>Accept</i>	Table wording amended and a summary of the statutory duties included
6	On page two and throughout the document. The use of the word 'path' should be replaced by 'public right of way' or 'PRoW' for brevity. This is because legally, the word path does not include all public rights of way.	<i>Accept</i>	Text changed
7	On page six the Forum advises that a more complete list of activities that take place on PRoW and the countryside access network is compiled to show the intrinsic value of the network and the wide range of users.	<i>Accept</i>	Text changed, although the list of activities will never be conclusive
8	Under the publication and demographic section (p7) and in the statement of action, the Forum advises that the county council should adopt the use of mounting blocks in key locations where riders have to dismount as part of its compliance with the Equalities Act. Alongside this should be a commitment to ensuring that all gates are made usable from the mounted position by riders and cyclists as this will increase safety and reduce likelihood of injury. In addition, the document should also encourage people with disabilities or mobility impairments to challenge their boundaries with regard to access to the countryside like the approach taken in Snowdonia National Park.	<i>Accept (part)</i> <i>Noted</i>	The council seeks all gates are made usable from mounted position – whether on horse or bicycle. Demand for mounting blocks is expected to be very low and in a few locations like low underpasses. These will be considered on a case by case basis. Although the RoWMP isn't a person-centred strategy (in terms of challenging any user to widen their boundaries), landowners are encouraged to make routes across their land more accessible and OCC follows the least-restrictive access principle where it can. Accessibility information is currently provided, although at a fairly basic level, and OCC would welcome and consider any suggestions for ways that information or operations could be improved to meet the

			needs of people with disabilities.
9	We would comment that Green Infrastructure also includes archaeological and historic sites, cemeteries and parks and gardens, including formal gardens.	<i>Accept</i>	Text changed
10	need should take into account consequences	<i>Noted</i>	
11	Increased walking a priority in the town centres	<i>Noted</i>	
12	No mention is made of how a landowner can prevent rights of way becoming established on his or her land by the regular submission of a 316 Highways declaration statement	<i>Noted</i>	Oxfordshire County Council and DEFRA publish guidance on this process. Further information is available on our website.
13	Further to on-line questionnaire re RoWMP 2014-24 consultation: Assessment of Need states (p 9, Table 4: Implications): "Poor health and old age are cited as the main reason [recte reasons] for not accessing green spaces – yet these two groups could benefit greatly from this access." This is a good point, and a troubling one. However, the report then goes on to suggest that: "Easier and more pleasant to access green spaces, especially in company, and better communication of the health benefits could reduce these figures." This despite the fact that the survey results themselves show that no respondents cited lack of access or information as reasons for not visiting the natural environment more often. Suggest: correct grammar of first sentence, "Poor health ... access" and -delete second sentence, "Easier ... figures", and replace with "This conundrum may be beyond the remit of this report, as no respondents cited lack of access or information as reasons for not visiting the natural environment more often."	<i>Grammar points – Accept</i> <i>Health point Noted</i>	Document amended for grammar and to make the point that it is important to have good quality and easily accessible green spaces close to where people live and that people know about them and feel confident using them. The aim is that making better provision and finding ways to help with accessing green spaces (in company or independently) helps overcome a person's perception that he/she is 'too old' or 'too ill' to be able to access and enjoy green spaces.
14	Publicity is key for ensuring that paths are used. All the benefits outlined in the needs assessment flow from that. e.g. leaflets, QR codes, sign boards, signposts, websites.	<i>Noted</i>	
115	Direct contact with local walking or activity groups, campaign groups, festival organisers, schools, Duke of Edinburgh organisers, youth organisations.	<i>Noted</i>	
16	The table in the section on the state of the network clearly shows that the percentage of gates, stiles and bridges that are usable has fallen and the percentage of 'easy to use' links that would benefit from waymarking has risen since 2006. This shows that the current implementation strategy is not addressing one of the main aims – to maintain the network. One of the main needs is therefore to address this.	<i>Noted</i>	The document includes improvements alongside management and maintenance as reflected in the statutory guidance. Maintenance will always be a priority and best use of available resources will be made
17	<u>p4 Reducing Casualties</u> : Reference should be made to desirability of maintaining roadside verges usable wherever possible to connect rights of way outside settlements. In many cases this could be done relatively cheaply by rolling uneven ground, mowing vegetation or cutting back encroaching scrub or hedges	<i>Noted</i>	Outside of the Rights of Way management regime but something to be discussed with roads managers on a case by case basis

18	<p>The chart on page 2 shows the connections to/from the Plan. This appears to be an important summary of the topics for the assessment of need. However, there is no commentary on the purpose of the chart and how it should be used. Furthermore, very few of the topics indicated by the chart are covered in the assessment of need and where they are, it is often not obvious. At the very least, the headings “Community”, “Local Transport Plan” etc should constitute headings for page 3 onwards. Ideally, each individual topic should be used as a heading beneath which the need associated with that topic can be explained.</p>	Accept	Table layout improved
19	<p>...the document could make a clearer commitment to the role that the County Council can play in enhancing biodiversity through the management, and provision of advice on management, of the Rights of Way network. The Natural Environment White Paper (DEFRA 2011), the “biodiversity duty” of the NERC Act 2006, and “Oxfordshire 2030”, the Sustainable Community Strategy for Oxfordshire all give clear signals to the need for every opportunity to be taken for biodiversity enhancement.</p> <p>The Rights of Way network already makes a very significant contribution to the “coherent ecological networks” referred to in the Natural Environment White Paper, but it could provide an even greater contribution. The vegetation along many Rights of Way plays a critical role in linking larger areas of species-rich semi-natural habitat, such as woodlands, lowland meadows and calcareous grassland. Of particular importance are the paths between fields, alongside hedgerows, sunken lanes and green lanes, many of which support a wealth of biodiversity.</p> <p>...[this] could all be taken into account by providing a commitment as follows: “ensuring that the management and improvement of access results in a net gain for biodiversity through protecting and enhancing habitats and species”, followed by a few sentences to briefly explain how through both the management work that the County Council carries out itself, and through advice provided to private landowners, it is possible for biodiversity to be protected and enhanced.”</p>	Accept	Document amended to include suggested section on enhancing biodiversity
20	<p>This review is long overdue and it is clear that OCC is caught between needing to fulfil their statutory requirements and ever increasing budgetary constraints. OCC handing over effective management of the footpath network to the Ramblers Association can lead to potential conflict if for instance a rambler meets somebody cycling on a footpath. I have seen an argument nearly coming to blows not too long ago on one of the paths leading up from the Ridgeway. Fortunately, our local organiser is much more pragmatic.</p>	Noted	Oxfordshire County Council is not handing over any of the management of the public rights of way network to the Ramblers. The Parish Path Warden scheme aims to have a county-wide network of volunteers who check rights of way, monitor outstanding issues and undertake very minor works like wiping down signposts and trimming around gates with secateurs
<p>Vision</p>			

21	There should be a clear statement of how this draft plan fits in to an overall policy on managing our RoW's. From my view I see your draft RoWMP being a statement of future plans & how you will manage them. I fear it is short on plans yet does say a great deal about how you will manage them.	<i>Noted</i>	The Rights of Way Management Plan is a higher level strategy. A bi-annual plan will be produced and is able to reflect contemporary priorities and needs whilst taking account of available budgets. The first one will be produced at the end of the first year of the RoWMP and set out actions for the next two years.
22	The RoWMP should set out to show what you hope to be achieved, I appreciate that funding may be a disincentive to do this. You record on page 4 that LTP3 sets out 4 transport goals for sustainable development of transport but fails to build on objective 9 of that plan, which provides for the development of inter village footpaths & cycleways as one of its key measures to alleviate pressure on roads with sustainable alternatives. This should be a high level policy of the RoWMP and I am surprised that it isn't one of your Vision statements aims set out on page 27. I would suggest the following aim be added: Rectify fragmentation of existing RoW's & establish interconnectedness of new inter village & City / village through routes in accordance with objectives of LTP3.	<i>Noted</i>	This suggested wording is implicit in aim 2 and the section on access and development. Work is underway to develop LTP4 and the RoWMP will link into this.
23	Another link with LTP3 should be the vital consideration of the health and safety issues arising from crossing some of our major trunk roads & also the development of minor road verges for much safer use by walkers & not the assault course they are now with all the cross trenches for road drainage making most of them unusable. The Red Hill crossing of the A40 at Shotover / Forest Hill cannot be allowed to continue & similarly the Thames Path Crossing of the A 4074 at Shillinghurst to name but two. I am sure Oxford Fieldpath Society & the Ramblers could assist you to compile a list of the most serious danger points & lengths of verges to be upgraded that could be prioritised as a longer term objective of the RoWMP. Progress made against such plans would then be measured as part of the RoWIP.	<i>Noted</i>	Crossing measures are pursued as opportunities allow, but for roads this is better to be part of the LTP
24	We believe that the aims are entirely appropriate and desirable. Our concern is that the human resource of OCC's Countryside Access Team (CAT) and its already tiny consumables budget is not sufficient for delivery of the RoWMP. We are confident that the staff of CAT are committed to delivery of the plan and have the necessary skills. We urge OCC not to reduce further either the staffing level or consumables budget of CAT, otherwise the realization of the RoWMP will fall to a completely unacceptable level. Volunteers are now essential to the realization of the RoWMP but are not a substitute for the staff of CAT, who must necessarily manage volunteers. Moreover, materials used by volunteers in maintenance of some PRoW furniture must come from the budget of CAT.	<i>Noted</i>	Oxfordshire County Council recognises the value of countryside access and the current approach of the teams that manage this with other stakeholders. There are no current proposals to significantly reduce staff or budgets – but over the life of the plan it is not possible to guarantee no change as there may be wider changes to the county and national situation that have to be reacted to. Rights of way staff will always try to achieve as much as possible within available resources
25	I feel that the owners of the Rights of Way should have a clear responsibility in the Vision to maintain quality and access	<i>Noted</i>	Legislation and the county council's guidance clearly set out what the owners of land crossed by rights of way need to do.
26	No mention is made of how a landowner can prevent rights of way becoming established on his or her land by the regular submission of a 316 Highways declaration statement	<i>Noted</i>	The Register is referred to on page 30 of the document, but this document is not able to

			describe all Definitive Map processes in detail. Oxfordshire County Council and DEFRA publish comprehensive guidance on this process and further information is available on our website.
27	No mention is made of how landowners are to be compensated for loss and degradation of amenity of their land	<i>Noted</i>	Compensation can be included as part of some PRow creation processes
28	To maintain footpaths as footpaths without bicycles. Keep bicycles to bridleways	<i>Noted</i>	Oxfordshire County Council recognises that there is no automatic right for bicycles to use Footpaths, It is not illegal, but such use is a trespass against the owner of the land where the owner does not permit it. The authority takes measures on individual paths where problems occur. Upgrades to allow cycling and horseriding are carried out on path-specific basis based on surveys and need. This is separate to the process to 'claim' for a route incorrectly recorded as a footpath Where cycle use as been maintained for over 20 years, higher rights may be proved via the Definitive Map Modification Order procedure.
29	Footpaths that have been trodded for over 20 should be recognised as the preferred route	<i>Noted</i>	The Definitive Map and Statement is the legal record of public rights, but without prejudice to higher rights or other ways that are not currently recorded. Further guidance on claiming rights via the Definitive Map Modification Order procedure is available on our website.
30	English Heritage recognises the potentially important role of rights of way in providing access to heritage assets and the historic environment generally, and therefore supports the maintenance of the existing public rights of way and countryside access network and its improvement, particularly where this would facilitate access to and understanding of the historic environment.	<i>Accept</i>	Access to the historic environment included at appropriate points in the document
31	The Management Plan is a statement with a lot of vision and good intentions but the reality is that it will fall short on delivery because of limited resources.	<i>Noted</i>	The document includes aspirations and improvements in the area maps, and the council will seek to implement these and others as opportunities arise. Supporting communities and volunteer groups to make improvements is also an important part of the authority's rights of way work. All of this complements the council's statutory maintenance and management activities

32	I am absolutely amazed to learn that the County Council, one of the major stakeholders in the LEP and in the Strategic Economic Plan (SEP) which the LEP is producing for Oxfordshire, has apparently not consulted all its own departmental specialists about drafting the SEP, but this omission would certainly explain why there is very little in the draft SEP about the economic value of the countryside and the provision of access to it for our urban populations.	<i>Noted</i>	
33	The countryside access plan is politically motivated in an effort to reduce landowner rights and impose burdensome costs and consequences of increased public access to land which the persons promoting these schemes do not necessarily own. The views expressed are naive and in some cases childish demonstrating a complete lack of understanding about the land and land ownership / stewardship responsibilities. For example there is little of no mention of the rights of wildlife and flora / fauna to enjoy a life undisturbed by the impact of human intrusion - trampled wildflowers, soil compaction, litter, urination and defecation, flytipping, etc. Rights of ways were once upon a time simply paths or shortcuts for local people to get from a) to b) and were hence very narrow, unmaintained and low trafficked. Promotion of access to land by defining a right of way by definition can and does result in a huge increase to traffic that is not necessarily locally based and hence by people who might have little or no regard or respect for same.	<i>Noted</i>	Biodiversity protection and enhancement is an intrinsic part of access work
34	We agree with the vision statement and endorse the strategic objectives of the RoWMP summary document (which we understand is the next strategic phase of the RoWIP), especially as regards health and safety and promoting and increasing the amount and location of traffic free routes for walkers, cyclists and horse-riders.	<i>Noted</i>	
35	We welcome the efforts to provide a strategy for the creation and maintenance of a connected network of public rights of way, for the wide range of social, environmental and economic benefits that such a network can bring. We support the vision and objectives of the plan and support the intention to work more closely with community groups to maintain and enhance routes in West Oxfordshire. It will be particularly important to work with Parish and Town Councils, as well as neighbourhood planning groups in this regard, so that there is a mutual understanding of what improvements are required and what resources are available to deliver them.	<i>Noted</i>	
35	The Management Plan is a statement with a lot of vision and good intentions but the reality is that it will fall short on delivery because of limited resources.	<i>Noted</i>	
37	p27 (the achieving better countryside access section) could include the wording 'For the period of this ROWMP we have had to alter our model in view of reduced resources, but hope to revert to more aspirational improvement-seeking model in the future.'	<i>Noted</i>	The document includes improvements alongside statutory activities. The plan includes aspirations in the vision and aims and contains maps of new routes identified in the area maps as well as specifying how new developments can contribute to better access and how communities and volunteer groups can also add to the quality and extent of the network
38	We welcome the statement that recognises that walkers, cyclists and horse riders are legitimate but vulnerable users of the public road network and that safety measures should	<i>Noted</i>	This is part of the overall county council approach to road safety. Identifying a

	be put in place to ensure their proper consideration by other traffic, but disappointed that this this has not been included for action in the next two to five years, particularly in rural areas where this is becoming an increasingly dangerous problem. We strongly urge that this policy is revised to take action in a shorter timescale.		timescale for action doesn't preclude work should opportunities and resources arise
Aim 1			
39	In the vision and aims there is nothing about 'improvement' in any of the aims so there isn't a link to the vision statement. This is unacceptable given the statutory title of the plan. The Forum advises that aim 1 is amended to read 'Public rights of way are recorded, protected and maintained to a reasonable basic standard, and improved where possible'. This will also provide more of a reference standard for the first aim.	<i>Accept</i>	The document includes improvements alongside statutory activities. Aim 1 to be revised to " <i>Public rights of way are recorded, protected, maintained, promoted, and improved where opportunities arise</i> "
40	Aim 1: more funds to bureaucracy, removes local responsibility	<i>Noted</i>	The County Council has statutory duties relating to public rights of way
41	i) public rights of way do not need to be promoted	<i>Rejected</i>	The authority has a statutory duty to promote PRoW by signing rights of way and making Definitive Map information available. Publishing this, and the further promotion of PRoW to increase public awareness and understanding is an important part of PRoW management
42	Concern about the use of 'management' rather than 'improvement'.	<i>Noted</i>	The document includes improvements alongside management, as per statutory guidance
Aim 2			
43	I feel aims ii and iv don't put sufficient responsibility on owners of Rights of Way to maintain access and quality. I don't feel their rights are felt sufficiently by many landowners and this needs to have higher focus.	<i>Noted</i>	The County Council works with landowners and farmers to make them aware of their responsibilities and takes action on non-compliance
44	3ii needs to allow for development and growth as our housing stock increases and public space reduces e.g. around the Coffin Path in Hanborough	<i>Noted</i>	Public open space is a separate consideration (to linear through-routes) in planning applications
45	ii) no mention is made of woodland owners	<i>Noted</i>	Woodland owners are implicitly included under landowners and farmers
46	No to bicycles on footpaths.	<i>Noted</i>	Upgrades to allow cycling and horseriding are carried out on path-specific basis based on surveys and need. This is separate to the process to 'claim' for a route incorrectly recorded as a footpath - as item 29

47	<p>From Blewbury's point of view we would like to see more emphasis on widening access to useful safe cycle paths to cyclists in South Oxfordshire and the Vale and a statement of intent such as the following included.</p> <p><i>'The County council will promote more actively the establishment of a cohesive and safe cycle network across the county within the life of this plan and powers will be afforded to local councils to acquire access to small tracts of land retained with the sole purpose of obstructing this process.'</i></p> <p>This is a reasonable aspiration of local villagers and one that has been ongoing for fifteen years at least</p>	<i>Noted</i>	The County Council will promote and pursue safer cycling opportunities but has no means of granting land acquisition powers to local councils.
48	<p>As you are more than aware, the ROWMP is a constituent part of the Oxfordshire Local Transport Plan whose common objectives include</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Develop and increase cycling and walking for local journeys, recreation and health 2. Reducing casualties and dangers associated with travel 3. Improve accessibility to work, education and services <p>Given the above objectives, the priority afforded in the document to enabling and implementing a safe and connected cycle network across Oxfordshire is very low. Item 4 of the ROWMP summary states that 'figures for cycle networks and bridleways must be taken in the context of a sometimes disjointed, fragmented and obstructed network. Relatively small links or status upgrades could go a long way towards making the network more usable.' In Blewbury's case the short distance from Blewbury to Upton, approximately 1 mile, being upgraded would result in connection to a much wider network of cycle tracks. Connected walking and riding network maps are available at Appendix E of the document but for obvious reasons, little connectivity, there is nothing for cycle networks.</p> <p>No solutions to this problem are offered other than local negotiation and it would be good to see something more concrete appearing in the document.</p>	<i>Noted</i>	Improvements and extensions are part of the overall OCC approach to transport
49	<p>The council is wasting too much of their time and public money, on trying to enforce Footpaths back to the original alignment when for years there are adequate and better routes already established, Then one would only need the expense of a Kissing Gate to replace an existing stile for the benefit of the whole community and Landowners alike.</p>	<i>Noted</i>	The Definitive Map and Statement is the legal record of PRoW and the county council has to work within the legislative framework and what is recorded as the public right of way. Applications can be made by anyone to modify the record if it is believed to be in error or to alter if it the necessary legal tests can be met.
50	<p>Rights of way may provide access to historic sites or may even themselves be of historic significance. Aim ii should therefore say "and the natural and historic environment". (A historic landscape character assessment of Oxfordshire is currently underway and may identify historic routes).</p>	<i>Accept</i>	Aim 2 amended
51	<p>The Vision includes the extension of the network so that should be reflected in an aim. The assessment of need includes considerable data showing deficiencies in the extent of the network in terms of connectivity for walking and riding. In addition, the assessment of need includes aspects relating to road safety. Consequently, the extension of category 1 PRoW is important. Users of public rights of way include people that come from other areas (visitors) and 21% travel by car so, in some circumstances, car-parking facilities should be considered.</p>	<i>Noted</i>	Aim 1 has been amended. Aim 2 and the access and development section/appendices include extensions. Work on refining categorisation as part of issue prioritisation is expected to be undertaken for 2016/17

52	Adaption to meet the needs of the public versus private stakeholders needs to be separated as a landowner might agree with one but not the other.	<i>Noted</i>	Aim 2 is about having a network with the flexibility to adapt to changing needs. Specific proposals will attempt to balance any conflicting matters
53	<p><u>Identifying 'missing links'</u> The crucial statement in the consultation document is on page 14: "Relatively small links or status upgrades could go a long way towards making the network more usable. "</p> <p>One example of this is here in West Oxfordshire, where the Cornbury Park estate has allowed permissive cycle use over a one-mile public footpath (half of which is an unsurfaced field path, the other half an access drive). This has, for the first time, opened up a safe cycle route to the south of Charlbury; and, by doing so, enabled the development of a 68-mile National Cycle Network route from Hanborough to Worcester, which will open in late April. (A further one-mile improvement is required to complete the route to Oxford.)</p> <p>However, other areas are not so lucky. As alluded to on page 29, a 15-mile leisure route, almost entirely traffic-free, from Reading along the Thames Valley to Wallingford is currently stymied by the lack of cycle access on the footpath from South Stoke to Little Stoke (under one mile).</p> <p>In other places, surface quality prevents a usable route: for example, an alternative cycle route between Eynsham and Witney is held up by the poor quality of the bridleway east of South Leigh (just two-thirds of a mile).</p> <p>A small amount of work, with volunteer improvement, could potentially make a large difference to - in particular - the safe cycling network in Oxfordshire.</p>	<i>Noted</i>	OCC can only operate within its powers and according to legislation and available resources. As far as they can, officers will try and support local communities and user groups to make networks easier to use. This includes commenting on the development of Community-Led Plans and Neighbourhood Plans which often contain evidence and aspirations for improving walking and riding.
Aim 3			
54	In the Vision Statement, p27, the Forum feels that there needs to be consistent and less woolly wording in the vision and aims (which are meant to be aspirational) by removing the phrase 'where possible' from the vision and changing aim 3 to 'A public rights of way and countryside access network which is as accessible as possible to those with limited mobility, vision or understanding'.	<i>Accept</i>	Aim 3 reworded to: "A public rights of way and countryside access network which is reasonably accessible to those with limited mobility, vision or understanding"
56	Aim iii a dream for network but good viewing spots near to roads/town centres would be realistic	<i>Noted</i>	
56	Aim 3: A measure of practicality needs to be introduced here , rather than possibility eg " as reasonably as practical" or some such wording.	<i>Noted</i>	See 54
57	Protecting the RoW: they should not be concreted over as a means of making them more accessible	<i>Noted</i>	All upgrades and improvements aim to balance landscape character, ongoing maintenance and needs of users

Aim 4			
58	I feel aims ii and iv don't put sufficient responsibility on owners of Rights of Way to maintain access and quality. I don't feel their rights are felt sufficiently by many landowners and this needs to have higher focus.	<i>Noted</i>	The County Council works with landowners and farmers to make them aware of their responsibilities and takes action on non-compliance
59	iv) no mention is made to the environmental damage that will be done to the countryside due to increased foot, hoof and wheeled traffic.	<i>Noted</i>	All upgrades and improvements aim to balance landscape character, ongoing maintenance and needs of users
60	Ridiculous motherhood and apple pie statement.	<i>Noted</i>	
61	"Countryside access contributes to a thriving local economy and communities are able to be actively involved in caring for and promoting its responsible use for recreational activities including walking and riding in their areas." It is very restrictive to refer only to walking and riding. Other activities might include jogging, shooting, flying kites, carriage driving etc.	<i>Accept</i>	The list of activities will be increased but may never be definitive
62	There is nothing in the draft plan about the two National Trails that pass through Oxfordshire for a great deal of their length. The County Council should be proud and grateful that two iconic routes that mean so much to people are in their area, and that it hosts their management team. As part of achieving this aim 4 the County Council should itself invest in promoting and developing the national trails and links to them in their area (rather than relying on the Trails Team) as well as supporting works outside of Oxfordshire. They should be committing additional funding into making the Oxfordshire Ridgeway and the Oxfordshire Thames Path the best routes of their type and explore ways to maximise social, health and economic benefits from the trails as well as finding ways for money to find its way back to trails management	<i>Accept</i>	Document amended to refer to the presence and importance of the two national trails that pass through the county and the council's pride in hosting the Ridgeway and Thames Path National Trails Team for over 20 years. Additional work to promote the trails and connecting route and facilities in Oxfordshire can feature in ongoing delivery plans
63	...we are concerned about the growing problem of the illegal use of footpaths by cyclists, no doubt due to the recent upsurge in the popularity of cycling. We feel that the Plan will be forced to deal with this problem more and more and it will need to devise a strategy of how best to deal with it. In our view, this should include a campaign of education of cyclists and for that matter of other users of rights of way in general since many instances have been reported to our knowledge that users of rights of way have a poor understanding of which rights of way they can legally use and of the corresponding waymarks and other signs. .	<i>Noted</i>	Oxfordshire County Council appreciates that cycling use is increasing in the county. We clearly wish to encourage this as a sustainable form of transport and a way to keep families and people of all ages healthy. However we recognise that misuse of off-road ways can sometimes cause conflicts with other users and a balance must be struck. We currently deal with these on a case by case basis, but will consider the need for an overarching strategy if it becomes necessary. See also comments on section 28. OCC will seek opportunities for additional provision where appropriate and feasible. OCC will also work with stakeholders to encourage responsible use in

			promotional material and deploy on-site signing and other measures where necessary
Q4. Do you agree or disagree with the content and statement of action targets for the five parts of the new Rights of Way Management Framework?			
64	For each statement of action sections of the Framework (p29-44) and throughout the document, the county council should delete references to 'business as usual' and 'direction of travel' as these are unclear and are unnecessary jargon. The Forum advises that this is replaced with something like 'carry on with statutory duty' and 'short/medium term aims' or something similar.	<i>Accept</i>	Document amended
65	The targets were almost impossible to understand, so no comment. Put simply it is not easy to determine the implications of exactly what is contained within the above statements hence the default position must be to disagree	<i>Noted</i>	The Rights of Way Management Plan is a higher level strategy. A bi-annual plan will be produced and is able to reflect contemporary priorities and needs whilst taking account of available budgets. The first one will be produced at the end of the first year of the RoWMP and set out actions for the next two years.
66	Yet again after reading through the proposes it seems the intention is in pushing the vast majority of costs through to the local Parish Councils. This way the Local and District Council do not raise the Council Tax, but are forcing Parish Councils to raise the precept as Government has not capped the amount by which this can rise yet. Unfortunately in a rural community not everyone is a millionaire yet the vast amount of routes are in rural areas and be subject to the largest increase in cost.	<i>Rejected</i>	We recognise the value that Parish Councils and Local Communities can bring to the PROW network. It is not our intention, nor in our powers, to transfer our statutory duties to Parish Councils. The purpose in this document was to encourage Parish Councils to consider the powers already available to them as a means to further improving PROW. We publish further guidance to assist parish councils in this regard.
67	Many of the actions are of the type 'continue doing what we are already doing' and 'do less as the budget is reduced' but there is no action to try and increase the budget either by transferring money from other areas within the council (e.g. what value does the council give to the increase in health and wellbeing, or economic gains provided by improved countryside access) or increasing income from taxpayers or elsewhere.	<i>Noted</i>	The Countryside Access Team has to work within the available budget allocated by the County Council and there is little scope for budget transference or increase as suggested. The Team seeks opportunities for communities and others to gain access to other sources of funding and also supports volunteer and community group efforts
1. Definitive Map & Statement			

68	There should also be mention of the cut-off date of 2026 for [DMMO] applications.	<i>Accept</i>	Document revised to take this into account.
69	The framework section on the Definitive Map and Statement (p29-30) and the associated statement of action targets need to be expanded to include the involvement of user or community groups and individuals and their work on Definitive Map Modification Order applications and associated research into lost or unrecorded ways. This should include amending the countryside access framework sub-section diagram and text on pages 39 and 43.	<i>Accept (part)</i>	Document amended to include reference to unrecorded ways and amendment to the local community diagram
70	DMS section could include something about the cut-off date of 2026 for recording PRoW routes on the DMS.	<i>Accept</i>	Document revised to take this into account.
71	In Section 9 of the summary document under the heading “Keeping public rights of way available” the document states:- “.....The DMS is conclusive proof of the existence of the recorded rights at the date of its production. However the DMS is conclusive without prejudice to the existence of higher rights and can be changed through due process if evidence is provided that the line or status recorded in the DMS is incorrect.” The Management Plan should make abundantly clear that this includes rights of way where historical evidence can be shown of “long user” but where for whatever reason the RoW has been omitted from the Definitive Map (DMS). In other words, the sentence above should be amended to read: “However the DMS is conclusive without prejudice to the existence of higher rights and can be changed through due process if evidence is provided that a right of way has been omitted from the DMS or that the line or status recorded in the DMS is incorrect.”	<i>Noted</i>	Small section DMS text in the section on countryside access management has been simplified. Page 31 in main DMS section includes the requested information, albeit with different phrasing.
72	<p>The current process for handling DMMOs is not apparent and information on the progress of DMMOs is not available online. This should be improved to make it clear to the community what is happening. This is not addressed in the plan.</p> <p>...the system should be transparent so that it should be possible for a layman to identify and follow cases that have been submitted and understand the stage to which they have progressed. This information is all contained in the DMMO register so the Case List could be a simple guide to what the current status is and provide a link to the DMMO register for more details.</p> <p>Note: as far as I can see the online DMMO Register does not contain any documentation other than the initial application. I think it should also provide the other documentation produced during the application's progression to completion.</p> <p>On your website you have three sources of information; the published procedure, the Case List and the DMMO register.....I think, currently, the DMMO Case list isn't clear and doesn't reflect the current status of the DMMOs.....Finally if it is expected that the public will follow progress by referring to the DMMO register, the Case List should at least contain the DMMO reference number.</p>	<i>Noted</i>	We will examine ways to improve the guidance and information provided as part of normal business process reviews.

73	<p>p30 Diversions: Reference should be made to orders made by other authorities e.g. TCPA orders made by DCs; side roads, railway orders etc. made by central government.</p>	<i>Accept</i>	Document amended
74	<p>Definitive Map Changes There appears to be a general lack of understanding about the process for requesting changes to the definitive map. It might be helpful to include information on this - such as criteria for seeking the change, timescales, likely costs, etc. In some instances, we believe that landowners are not pursuing a change to a right of way (which could well be a benefit to users of the path and the overall network) because of perhaps unfounded concerns about the length of time it will take and possible costs. Providing clarity would, we believe, be widely welcomed.</p>	<i>Noted</i>	The legal process is complex and it is not possible to provide full details in this document . Further guidance on the process is available on our website or by contacting us direct.
75	<p><u>Appendix C: Framework for ROW dedications by agreement:</u> Chadlington FP5 dedication was discontinued without consulting the Parish Council which had promoted it, and this was discovered belatedly by chance. We feel that, to comply with the above objectives, there is a need to write in a requirement to keep the local parish council and other ROW interest groups appraised of progress – particularly when they have had an involvement.</p> <p><u>Appendix C: Flowchart for DMMO Processing:</u> This suggests that, in every case, an applicant submits a case to OCC. However, if information comes to OCC that a ROW is not on the DM&S but should be, we believe OCC itself should in self-evident cases be the applicant and the flowchart should be amended accordingly. We have spent much time searching out members of the public who have used our unrecorded sections of path as of right and, without exception, they believe OCC is there to correct such faults. Indeed, that is their duty imposed by S.36 and S.130 HA80 and S.53 CROW.</p>	<i>Noted</i>	This was an unusual case but we apologise that the Parish Council was not kept sufficiently informed. We will review our consultation procedures in future cases. The flowchart deals with applications made under Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 s53, Schedule 14 only. The law put the onus on an applicant to prove that the DMS is in error. It is worth noting that the DMS was drawn up in the 1950s on the basis of evidence provided by the Parish Councils and in most situations the local community and users will be best placed to provide evidence at the outset. Other cases, where evidence is brought to our attention that the DMS may be in error but not backed up by a formal application, are logged for future investigation but resource levels mean these must necessarily be given a far lower priority.
76	<p><u>P.29:</u> The proposed 2-year plan suggests no change in Definitive Map Modification Order (DMMO) procedure, then a review in the light of possible legislative changes. Legal change is notoriously slow and unpredictable. OCC already have a decade backlog of DMMOs. 2026 is the point when unrecorded paths may be lost as a result of CROW. It is likely the number of DMMO requests will accelerate as this 2026 cut-off point becomes more widely known.</p> <p>Therefore, we believe there is a need to give more priority to DMMOs and more attention to finding and correcting gaps in the recording of ROWs in order to save them from being lost forever.</p> <p>In the course of our gathering ROW evidence, we have discovered there is no automatic attention given to gaps in the ROW network and. also, no automatic comparison of the DM&S with the Map of Streets Maintained at Public Expense (MOS).</p>	<i>Noted</i>	These issues will be fully considered as part of the review of our Statement of Priorities when the proposed legislative reforms Deregulation Bill is enacted and new regulations are enacted.

	With minimal public knowledge of the first and absolutely none of the second, there is every chance that unrecorded ROWs will be lost, even though they are in everyday use by the public as of right.		
77	<p><u>P.33</u>: "For access and management OCC works to information in the Definitive Map and Definitive Map Statement." We see this as a major defect in the management process, as it conflicts both with OCCs objectives and its duty under S.130 HA to protect ROWs.</p> <p>The duty attaches to both highways created by Statutory Inclosure and to 20 year use as of right by the public, rather than whether OCC have as yet got the ROW on the DM&S. The artificial constriction of the ROWs they care for led to the Dean section of the Wychwood Way being undefended by the CS against a planning proposal involving 200,000 vehicle movements per annum, as that section was on the MOS, not the DM&S.</p> <p>It also led to the Spelsbury FP12 fiasco, where frontline staff at the CS were put in the position of misleading the public. People enquiring about SP12 were told incorrectly the route was not a ROW /was at the discretion of the landowner and that the signposting was a mistake. Similar information given to the landowner prior to purchase could give rise to a very large compensation claim for the diminution in land value as a result of the ROW later being validated.</p>	<i>Reject</i>	The DM&S is the legal record of PRoW, and the authority is obliged to adhere to what it shows. Where it is believed a right is missing or shown in error, due legal process is required to prove the right exists. This application process is open to all.
78	You may care to consider adding a note to the Definitive Map statement on pages 29/30 that action is needed to ensure that all footpaths used are included on the Definitive map before the cut off date, is it 2020 something, after which RoW status will be lost.	<i>Noted</i>	This has been added, but it should be pointed out that the 2026 cut-off date refers only to rights based on historic documentary evidence with no significant current user evidence.
79	I would encourage OCC to work with other local authorities' RoW officers to lobby for improvements to the statutory framework on diversions and upgrades, such as the problem identified on page 29 where "a 'quid pro quo' of a diversion of the existing route and corresponding upgrade to allow cycling would likely not meet statutory tests for a diversion".	<i>Noted</i>	Oxfordshire County Council has representatives on both ADEPT Rights of Way Managers Group and IPROW which work to seek improvements to legislation
80	For Figure 11 (p39) we could add a box 'Record rights of way on DMS'.	<i>Accept</i>	Diagram amended to include that
2. Countryside Access Management			
81	At the end of the second paragraph on page 31 the Forum requests that the wording '...unreasonably interfere with agricultural operations' is deleted from the plan. This is because the inclusion of this phrase has the effect of reducing the importance of PRoWs as public highways. Note that this point is not supported by the farming interest member.	<i>Noted</i>	The law requires OCC to take account of the needs of agriculture, forestry and horticulture. Phrasing altered to make this clearer
82	The Forum questions the basic standard of provision of public rights of way on page 32 and asks whether the basic or normal standard of maintenance is actually in a declining state. This ties into the Forum's first point about the available budget being inadequate to support such a vital part of the Oxfordshire social, cultural and transportation landscape. The Forum advises that even a modest increase in budgets could have a significant impact. The	<i>Noted</i>	See response to 4 above

	wording could be altered in the second para on p 32 with an additional sentence after ‘...in accordance with the resources available.’ To read ‘For the period of this ROWMP we have had to alter our model in view of reduced resources, but hope to revert to more aspirational improvement-seeking model in the future.’		
83	There was concern expressed over the categorisation of PROW (P32). While the Forum understands the constraints of the current tight budgets, there is a sense that this categorisation should be set in the context of being a temporary state of affairs, i.e. until proper budgets are restored for this important work.	<i>Noted</i>	Categorisation is a potential new way [concept] of approaching the management of issues on the network, but it is a two stage process with the assessment of the impact/severity of an issue coming first (with the priority placed on safety issues). The categorisation concept would be of greatest benefit when assessing which routes that the County Council, local communities or other stakeholders could improve or ‘add value’ to. The plan includes a timetable for this approach to be researched and then for the decision to implement to be made separately.
84	Why is the National Cycle Network (not PROW) mentioned in this section? It referred to the ‘non-asphalt’ sections, ie bridleways/RBs which suggests that other users will only benefit if that BR/RB is also part of the NCN.	<i>Noted</i>	“Cycletracks” as a discrete entity are not a category of right of way recorded on the DM&S. Some Cycletracks, not just those forming part of the NCN, can also be permissive, some use rights of ways and other public highways routes as well as PRowS. and formal Cycle Tracks. Inclusion of ‘NCN’ is about their role in providing a more integrated countryside access network and there is a separation of maintenance between asphalt and non-asphalt sections.. Category 1 includes all routes that fit that criterion, including designated cycle tracks and rights of way
85	In the Statement of Action Targets, p 33, the Forum feel that attention again needs to be brought to the current budgetary constraints, and their limiting effects. The Forum hopes that in future the action targets can include further expansion and improvement of the network.	<i>Noted</i>	See comments in response to 1 – 4
86	Amongst the RoWIP achievements you record on page 24 is the development of Community Led Plans & the Oxfordshire Local Council Guide to Countryside Access. I fear the draft RoMWP fails to build on this. The only plan I see is the monitoring of RoW’s by Parish Path Wardens. Where is the lead to build on the achievements of the RoWIP?	<i>Noted</i>	The plan contains aspirations for extension of the network and continuing support for communities to improve their local areas.
87	I didn’t feel landowner responsibilities were spelt out strongly enough in the Access Management process - they need to have clear responsibilities and penalties if RoW are	<i>Noted</i>	The table of organisations and the framework altered to include the important part that

	blocked or of poor quality. Equally I feel that promoting volunteer participation is another way of letting owners off their clear responsibilities		occupiers play by fulfilling their statutory obligations and enabling improvements through the granting of permission for access or an improved structure. Volunteer participation is not meant to absolve occupiers of responsibilities but work like replacing stiles with gates makes ongoing maintenance easier as it is harder to fall off of a slippery or loose gate.
88	Action targets: Include commitment to joining up paths where gaps exist, to make the network more coherent and thus more attractive to path users.	<i>Accept</i>	Already included under aim 2 and access development section
89	iib categorisation. Action targets: Include the Wilts and Berks Canal Towpath as a long distance route	<i>Noted</i>	Towpath route will be included once the route is fully available and OCC will work to enable/support the implementation of a complete route where opportunities come forward
90	Mention of 'Statutory duty', ie the Council's duty in maintaining PRow, important in CAMP section.	<i>Accept</i>	Document amended
91	Encourage country livers to enjoy countryside as is, This is mud, farm machinery, animals. Our small village (voting pop under 1000) - approx. 50 villagers walk regularly on permissive paths courtesy of landlord giving circular walk. The public footpath goes from road to road. Negotiations on the basis of common sense should be advocated.	<i>Noted</i>	The County Council recognises that many people are less familiar with farming and rural activities and 'rules' and it needs to work to improve understanding as well as making access suitable for modern users and their changing needs
92	I have to say I think that some of the info in guidelines could be advertised on OCC website for ordinary punters - as we could all get info to pass onto PPW/Field Officer re blocked paths etc and get secateurs out for brambles etc - in fact I do take secateurs out when I remember I'm walking on a very bad path for overhanging hawthorn etc!	<i>Noted</i>	Information is already on the website but it will be improved when we are advised.
93	Create opportunities for circular walks by joining up paths. Provide car parking at start/finish, picnic areas, sign boards, leaflets. Bicycle hire adjacent to cycle routes. Provide for linear walks by linking up public transport to and from start and end of walk. Publicise timetables.	<i>Noted</i>	Most of these are implicitly covered in the aims of the RoWMP, but these are discretionary activities and it will inevitably fall to other partners and stakeholders to take them forward. OCC will support these as much as it can as when opportunities arise – for example when The Ridgeway and Thames Path National Trails developed circular route options. The county council tries to improve the information it provides on its website and links to external information sources .

94	Ploughed fields are a real problem. Need effective sanctions and the resources to enforce them where landowners obstruct paths.	<i>Noted</i>	Prevention and enforcement procedures are in place and used by Field Officers who liaise directly with those responsible. This includes regular reminder letters about ploughing and cropping. The interactive access map and the website enables people to report issues direct to the Team
95	The biggest problem I've seen lately - and one that is growing - is damage to bridleways and RBs by motor vehicles. In this I include both illegal use by the public and legal (but damaging) use by the land owner. Some parts of the Ridgeway have been damaged this past winter by estate traffic. The Plan needs to reference enforcement (for illegal use) and whatever action is most appropriate when legal use is concerned.	<i>Noted</i>	Officers take action on both types of use and any associated damage, including liaison with the Police where illegal vehicle activity occurs
96	The Rights of Way Improvement Plan can show a clear commitment to managing, for example, the hedgerows and grass verges through cutting and mowing regimes that, whilst maintaining a clear route, still maximise the opportunity for biodiversity to flourish. This may already be happening but it is important that the Rights of Way Improvement Plan clearly states an aspiration to achieve "a net gain in biodiversity" by enhancing wildlife through management work, and when providing advice on management work, on the Rights of Way network.	<i>Accept</i>	Document amended to reflect existing commitment to protecting wildlife and habitats as much as possible in operations and advice given
97	We note that the public have identified "greater frequency of summer and winter vegetation cutting" as their highest priority and that certainly confirms views expressed to us. Therefore we hope that in allocating resources the County Council is mindful of this.	<i>Noted</i>	See response 1-4 above. This remains the key maintenance activity to keep the network open
98	Having read the document and the associated appendices, we have identified a number of issues which we feel need to be covered more fully, or more explicitly, in the report. Wherever possible, we believe it would also be helpful if the Council's recommendations or aims for tackling these problems could be incorporated into the Plan. Cycling The vast majority of landowners in the South Chilterns have expressed concern about cyclists and their impact on the rights of way in the area. We believe that many of these problems are the result of poor education on the part of some cyclists about where they are legally allowed to ride, the rights of other path users and the commercial needs of the landowners themselves. Specifically: 1. We are receiving, and have witnessed for ourselves, an increasing number of cyclists using footpaths. Not only is this clearly illegal, it is dangerous for walkers and in periods of bad weather can cause almost irreparable damage to the surface of the path. 2. Several landowners and other path users have reported that they have faced abuse from cyclists when they have sought to speak to them. 3. The most recent edition of the OS maps has exacerbated the problem of cyclists using footpaths believing that they are National Trails. Cyclists see at the bottom of	<i>Noted</i>	See response to 63 above. OCC will work with users, user groups and landowners to limit and tackle specific negative impacts of inappropriate uses, whilst looking to expand and improve networks appropriately for non-motorised users. Re point 3. We have alerted Ordnance Survey to the issue in its map referred to

	<p>the new maps the marking that it is a National Trail and they infer that this means it is open to cyclists. This is further confounded by the fact the National Trail marking on the map often obscures the conventional sign showing whether the route is a footpath or bridleway, Restricted Byway etc. In our area, the Chiltern Way, Ridgeway and Thames Path are a mixture of many different Rights of Way.</p> <p>4. Some damage by cyclists to the infrastructure of rights of way, including removal of waymark discs and knocking down gates, has been reported.</p> <p>5. Problems experienced by landowners from cyclists is, in some cases, causing them to refuse the replacement of stiles with gates and other improvements to the network because of concerns about further increasing or potentially encouraging the number of cyclists on their land. The poor reputation of cyclists – even though some are courteous and understand the need to share the rights of way – is proving damaging to all.</p> <p>In general, many cyclists travel far too fast on bridleways, endangering walkers and their dogs. Any disabled walkers are particularly at risk. Because today's cycles don't have bells, there is no warning of their imminent (rapid arrival) before it is too late.</p>		
99	<p>Verges: Our experience suggests that seeking to make verges more useful as paths is probably best handled on a local parish basis, rather than centrally by the Council. Typically it is local residents who will identify a need to use a verge to link two communities or particular buildings, who know the relevant landowners and who can progress this with the aid of their parish council, and with support from the Council's Highways Department as required</p>	<i>Noted</i>	<p>We recognise the value of parish councils in identifying and making improvements but there should normally be benefits in parishes and the county council working together. See the Management Framework in the main document</p>
100	<p>Right to roam: A number of landowners are reporting problems with walkers who, wrongly, believe that the right to roam allows them to walk anywhere in a woodland without the need to stay on the definitive path. This can result in landowners fencing in woodland paths which in turn create narrow, muddy, environmentally unsympathetic paths. Walkers need to be educated about exactly what the right to roam covers (and what it does not); in return woodland landowners need to be encouraged to ensure their paths are kept clear to ensure that walkers are not forced to stray from the definitive line to get around fallen trees.</p>	<i>Noted</i>	<p>The OCC website makes it clear what is open access land in Oxfordshire and the Team can act to assist where there is a known problem</p>
101	<p><u>P.31</u>: has some laudable numbered Countryside Service (CS) objectives: “6. Considering Equalities Act 2010 when authorising structures”. We believe on such occasions there should also be consultation with local and where appropriate adjoining parish councils. We also believe it should be the norm to allow additional obstructions for time-limited periods only. Two permanent extra gates and an extra stile were permitted for short-term hobby farming on our one path to Dean (technically just into the next parish) resulting in a major drop in the use of a Category 1 walk-to-school/shop path.</p> <p>“1. Investigate issues and take action to ensure paths remain open and available” “5. Working with planners to protect and enhance access” “10. Working with groups and parishes to find local solutions to local challenges”</p>	<i>Noted</i>	<p>Authorisations of gates and stiles are a occupier and the highway authority matter, and are often time-limited due to agricultural requirements which would preclude further consultation. However, consideration will be given as to how processes and any notifications can be improved There is an on-line reporting tool for PRoW issues. The new Parish Path Warden scheme uses volunteers who work closely with parish councils, many are parish council members anyway</p>

	<p>We feel that there is a case for adding to the section of the OCC website for reporting a ROW issue, and an invitation to also inform the local group +/- Parish Council.</p>		
102	<p><u>P.33</u>: "For access and management OCC works to information in the Definitive Map and Definitive Map Statement." We see this as a major defect in the management process, as it conflicts both with OCCs objectives and its duty under S.130 HA to protect ROWs.</p> <p>The duty attaches to both highways created by Statutory Inclosure and to 20 year use as of right by the public, rather than whether OCC have as yet got the ROW on the DM&S. The artificial constriction of the ROWs they care for led to the Dean section of the Wychwood Way being undefended by the CS against a planning proposal involving 200,000 vehicle movements per annum, as that section was on the MOS, not the DM&S.</p> <p>It also led to the Spelsbury FP12 fiasco, where frontline staff at the CS were put in the position of misleading the public. People enquiring about SP12 were told incorrectly the route was not a ROW /was at the discretion of the landowner and that the signposting was a mistake. Similar information given to the landowner prior to purchase could give rise to a very large compensation claim for the diminution in land value as a result of the ROW later being validated.</p>	<i>Noted</i>	See response to point 77 above
103	<p><u>Surface / Furniture Improvements</u> In terms of improvements to surfacing and furniture associated with public rights of way, WODC ask that you pay regard to other local plans and strategies that aim to deliver landscape enhancements and improvements to the area.</p> <p>One particular example would be in relation to the Windrush in Witney project area. There are at least two relevant objectives within this strategy that seek to protect and enhance the landscape character of this corridor:</p> <p>LO1: Ensure that any new development integrates with the landscape character of the study area</p> <p>PA1: Improve the quality of existing public access provision within the study area, while respecting the area's landscape character.</p> <p>Notwithstanding the benefits that improved access to natural area would bring to local communities, it is considered that certain surface treatments such as tarmac would be inappropriate in a natural environment setting and the introduction of such surfacing treatments would be contrary to the objectives of landscape improvement strategies.</p> <p>We therefore seek a commitment through the ROWMP that the District Council and other relevant stakeholders are consulted when determining what surface treatments should be used in different parts of the District.</p>	<i>Noted</i>	All upgrades and improvements aim to balance landscape character, ongoing maintenance and needs of users. Where necessary other organisations will be involved in planning new routes and upgrades.

104	The Parish Council has regularly complained to OCC regarding the condition of many of the footways alongside the main highways. It is appreciated that, whilst the maintenance of these footways is the responsibility of OCC, funding at the present time is limited and consequently many of these footways have fallen into a poor state of repair. This is a major concern for our parishioners who complain about the dangers of walking on these footways. Many are so overgrown it is often impossible to determine the actual path. Also overhanging bushes and branches mean pedestrians, including the elderly and mothers and children, are forced to walk in the busy road. We hope that OCC will soon be able clear these obstructed footways very soon.	<i>Noted</i>	Footways (ie pavements) are the responsibility of Oxfordshire County Council's Highways team and any specific problems should be brought to their attention.
105	I would just like to say that I agree with the Path Protection point on page 4 especially the comments about dog fouling & litter. Surely as a council you are aware of the most popular paths - I actually live in Henley - and as such would it not be out of the question to provide litter/dog bins on stretches of the towpath, for example, near to the town (the rugby club side and the Leander side). It would not eradicate all litter, we know that, but hopefully it would lessen it. Perhaps it would be possible to put up some notices telling people that they would be subject to a fine if found leaving litter/dog waste/full dog waste bags blighting our beautiful landscape.	<i>Noted</i>	Dog fouling and enforcement is a matter for the district council, local council and the Environment Agency. OCC will assist where it can
3. Access and Development Planning			
106	With regard to countryside access and the development planning process, the Forum is concerned that the plan should also include provision for minerals and waste sites, operations and after-use plans. All such development, including hydraulic fracturing, may affect PRoWs and users, and so all minerals and waste developments need to be assessed for the impacts they will have on PRoW and PRoW users.	<i>Noted</i>	Significant Minerals and Waste applications as well as M&W policy are already commented on by the Countryside Access Team
107	Not sure why National cycle network needs is mentioned in a PRoW document.	<i>Noted</i>	See response to comment 84 above.
108	Here's the thing, it isn't joined up. I know Witney best, and the key things we want are linking paths for walking and riding, for example alongside A40 between Oxford Hill and the existing cycleway. Another missing piece is the lack of a path between the two ends of North Leigh along the main road. Connections, new access routes, would be worth their weight in gold and some Section 106 or CIL action.	<i>Noted</i>	A key 'improvement' aim is to make the network better connected. The community should also work with their parish council to press for individual key links with the local landowners, the authority and/or through their Neighbourhood Plan
109	Looking through the proposal the Parish Council of North Newington agrees with most of the comments in principle, however there doesn't seem to be as much substance in how the proposed items will be costed and how is going to pay for them. There doesn't also seem to be any information on what is meant by an upgraded status, which is happening to North Newington, so we are unable to comment on where we agree with this or not	<i>Noted</i>	Upgraded status is usually about enabling cycling and/or horse riding on a route, with or without changes to the surface. The more urban routes are more likely to just have cycling access and a firmer surface (not necessarily asphalt). Funding for the measures is planned to come from developer contributions, Local Transport Plan and other sources of funding.

110	WTC is concerned that significant investment in the National Cycle Network (NCN) Route No 5 between Woodstock and Middle Barton is being jeopardised due to lack of any significant maintenance since its construction in 2000. WTC notes that although the NCN is categorised in the draft management plan as a Category 2 route, in "Appendix D: Oxfordshire key countryside access assets and developer contributions" it is not listed as a West Oxfordshire "Key access route asset that require contribution for investment to meet the challenges of growth and that provide wide ranging economic, health and social benefits" (Table 1). It is suggested that OCC immediately discuss with Sustrans a future maintenance plan for the NCN to ensure its continued accessibility.	<i>Noted</i>	See response to comment 84 above. Cycle Tracks are the normally the responsibility of Oxfordshire County Council's Highways team and any specific problems should be brought to their attention
111	I am concerned about your plans for "Faringdon South links" if this takes people alongside the A420. Children should be kept as far away from the main road as possible.	<i>Noted</i>	Area maps are aspirational and indicative only. All routes usually go through a process of survey, negotiation and discussion
112	Our only route to safe riding, therefore, is via dangerous riding. We have to ride through Kidlington (one bus every fifteen minutes) and out onto the A34 slip road and thence into Hampton Poyle. We have already had one horse returning minus its' rider after an unfortunate meeting with a double decker and we are very keen that our particular needs should be taken into consideration in your planning processes. We would like to be safe, we would like our horses to be safe and we would be pleased if you could help to make us so.	<i>Noted</i>	The particular needs of equestrian users are recognised in the document and OCC will work to improve things as much as possible through the RoWMP and LTP4. In this particular case efforts are being made to secure a link route for equestrians along the cycle track through Sustrans
113	In the Bicester Plan there was the suggestion that there a cycle path could be created from the east side of Stratton Audley towards the roundabout at the junction of Launton Road and Skimmingdish Lane in Bicester. However, I can't see it suggested on the 'Bicester Key Areas' map appendix D. Is this something which can be added?	<i>Noted</i>	The map may be altered – but at this stage is only an indication of public rights of way aspirations in an area. It cannot include all of the urban footways and designated cyclepaths.
114	Residents of this parish are very interested in this consultation process. However, unfortunately we have found the maps included on the website insufficient to review. Map/Appendix 03, even when enlarged greatly on screen, is meaningless without any labelling of at least the villages or roads. Map 06a has a notice superimposed over the area of interest to residents of Kirtlington. We should, therefore, be grateful if you could email to me a version of Map 06a without the superimposed label, and some form of providing points of reference on Map/Appendix 03.	<i>Noted</i>	The county maps are just designed to give a snapshot county picture -not for pinpointing of specific paths, but on request parishes have been supplied with a reference point
115	"Another thing that comes to mind - convenient, secure places to park. Popular as the Ridgeway (in particular) may be, there are few places to park and (other than Bury Down) they have a security problem with cars too often broken into. There is a need for better parking, including space to get a horsebox in, at a number of key places. If these are busy enough, that will help deter thieves too. Plus, better surfaced and more convenient car parks will attract greater legitimate use. I suppose that this would be a longer term aspiration, given funding restrictions and the need to acquire parcels of land."	<i>Noted</i>	It is unlikely that County Council finances will enable the provision of standalone parking on rights of way, but the council will support other initiatives such as rural enterprise parking and will also try to secure provision through partner organisations and where additional funding can be secured
116	Grove Parish Council is glad to see (Appendix D, Science Vale Area) that OCC acknowledges that several PRow in the parish, especially to the north, east and southeast are in need of "surface/furniture improvements". Indeed, we have identified to OCC those PRow that we believe should have priority. More on the last sheet	<i>Noted</i>	Area maps are aspirational and indicative only. All routes usually go through a process of survey, negotiation and discussion

117	<p>p34:1) Responding: While we support the policy as outlined, it is currently sometimes not being fulfilled on the grounds that Rights of Way is not receiving funding to ensure ongoing maintenance of the improved or additional links advocated here. It would seem essential that s106 or some alternative funding be provided to ensure that opportunities are not lost to provide the best possible path network bearing in mind that every new development is already costing an irrevocable loss of open country</p>	<i>Noted</i>	<p>Initial specification of the route and the route's maintenance liabilities are key considerations in deciding whether to accept the dedication of a new public right of way secured through development planning processes. Once routes become public rights of way they are normally maintainable at the public expense unless a 'landowner covenant' to maintain the route is put in place.</p>
118	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We would wish to comment on section iii of part 2, Countryside access and the development planning process. We find the wording of i) responding to individual developments a little unclear and suggest it is considered again. The same wording is used in section A2 of appendix D. The paragraph below may add clarity; <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>Mitigation measures will be sought to limit the impact of development on public rights of way as a result of additional usage in and around an individual development site.</i> <i>Contributions may be sought towards improvements to existing rights of way in the wider area which are likely to be affected by the development in order to ensure that the right of way is of a suitable standard to code with the additional usage.</i> • The section continues by identifying possible measures (also A2 in Appendix D). The measures identify the need to improve routes within the site and to provide new links within and surrounding a development. It does not mention the need for possible improvement beyond the site, unless through CIL and the route is recognised as a key access route. • The need to seek contributions, either through CIL or through a S106 to improve where necessary existing assets near the site which will suffer as a result of the development is not mentioned enough. An example of this would be a stretch of path which is not a key access route near, but outside of the site boundary of a development which will suffer from additional usage as a result of development as a result of an increase in additional recreational or commuter usage. • We are pleased to note that the Key access routes include the Oxford Canal Walk corridor and therefore the document indicates that contributions may be sought but it is recognised that the route will be used by others as well. 	<i>Noted</i>	<p>Section iii and Appendix D amended. The County Council seeks contributions for mitigation measures on routes outside of a development site but any such requests have to meet statutory tests for relevance, reasonableness and scale</p>
119	<p>We note with approval that OCC has in mind to promote new multi-use footpaths within the Grove Airfield development.</p>	<i>Noted</i>	<p>Area maps are aspirational and indicative only. All routes would go through a process of survey, negotiation and discussion</p>
120	<p><u>Appendix D: (& P.34) Developments:</u> We believe it is necessary to protect ROWs where they are vulnerable through not yet being on the DM&S, not least because it currently takes OCC 10 years to get ROWs onto the DM&S.</p> <p>WODC gave consent for building across Spelsbury FP12 at Middle Farm Cottage. The OCC Countryside Service (CS) planning consultation response effectively said that because OCC had failed under its S.36 HA and S.53 CROW obligations to record the ROW, it was then also</p>	<i>Noted</i>	<p>The suggestion for a form of words for use in such cases is appreciated and the Team will look to incorporate this where necessary.</p> <p>Without commenting on this specific case, Oxfordshire County Council does not have the powers to act on paths which are not recorded on the DM&S unless it is a highway and</p>

	<p>going to breach its S.130 HA obligation by not protecting the ROW. This was notwithstanding the fact that for decades the public had used it as of right, OCC had maintained the stile/gate and erected 3 separate signs long-standing clearly showing the route.</p> <p>In our view, the correct OCC response to the planning consultation would have been along the lines of “whilst not yet on the DM&S, a well used path passes the property and should not be obstructed by development being permitted unless there is first a dedication of a route acceptable to OCC.” This would have facilitated the planners in either requiring resolution beforehand or imposing a condition that work was not to start until OCC were satisfied with the arrangements. Instead, the route is blocked and the permissive alternative provided could be withdrawn at any time.</p> <p>The management plan should make it clear that all ROWs fall under the S.130 HA duty to protect, not just those on the DM&S.</p>		<p>undertaking the due legal process is the correct way to establish this. Notwithstanding, where we are aware of such concerns we will draw these to the attention of the developer as it is in the developer’s best interest to accommodate such routes in plans should the route subsequently be proven to be a public right of way. Where communities are aware that paths have been in long term use without permissive but they are not shown on the DM&S, then applications should be lodged to record them to ensure the rights are protected for future generations and prevent such difficulties occurring.</p>
121	<p>It is a shame that the plan only shows improvement maps for those places where development and higher growths in population will take place during the lifetime of the plan. Larger villages too are going to grow, especially those which are key entrance points to the Chilterns AONB such as Chinnor & Watlington, which could do with safe cycling links to Princes Risborough Railway line in the case of Chinnor and the M40 Coach link at Junction 6 in the case of both settlements. Although I do note that you mention routes that go through Chinnor & Watlington parishes, such as the Ridgeway National Trail, Swans Way, Chilterns Way and the Chilterns AONB, which will “require contribution for investment to meet the challenges of growth and that provide wide ranging economic, health and social benefits.”</p>	<i>Noted</i>	<p>Area maps are aspirational and indicative only. All routes would go through a process of survey, negotiation and discussion. Section iii sets out that the County Council will seek contributions for mitigation measures on routes outside of a development site in all areas. Any such request have to meet statutory tests for relevance, reasonableness and scale</p>
122	<p>Having read the draft plan, I have a couple of comments, particularly in relation to the ‘area needs’ identified in the appendices. I think it would be useful to;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide more clarity on how these needs have been identified • Provide details of the costs of implementing these improvements and • What the surface / furniture improvements would entail. <p>In addition to the area improvements identified on the maps, I would also like to query whether there are intentions to deliver improvements or new provision elsewhere in the district?</p> <p>Further information on these particular aspects will help West Oxfordshire District Council improve their Infrastructure Delivery Plan and add greater weight to the Council’s Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) evidence base, to ensure that sufficient funds are being drawn from new development to support local infrastructure projects.</p> <p>It will also help to ensure that the improved routes are meeting the objectives of other local plans and strategies, particularly where the objectives are to mitigate landscape impacts from new development.</p> <p>How have the needs (illustrated on the maps) been identified?</p>	<i>Accept</i>	<p>Document amended related to sources of this information. Area maps in the consultation draft RoWMP were devised as a desk-top process using available map-based information and local knowledge and expressions of need, including from the first RoWIP. Some of these routes, especially in the Lower Windrush Valley, are tied in to the minerals extraction in that area and the need to provide a better integrated leisure network, rather than tying into residential development.</p> <p>More detailed maps of Witney/Carterton/Burford areas have been supplied to the district council for their Green Infrastructure development work.</p> <p>Providing costs for new routes and upgrades this is a more challenging area because of the landowner negotiations and associated costs other than the construction costs. Surfacing and fit with landscape is something that needs to be</p>

	<p>There are two maps included in the appendices of the report with direct relevance to West Oxfordshire, illustrating routes around Witney and Carterton.</p> <p>We would welcome further clarification as to how these routes have been determined as we have some concerns about some of the improvements identified, particularly the Cogges Area Improvements (Appendix D).</p> <p>Some of the routes, particularly in the Windrush Valley don't appear to link with useful destinations such as employment areas or community services and facilities and we would therefore question how useful such routes would be, particularly in meeting the objectives set out in the ROWMP.</p> <p>It would be beneficial to illustrate whether such small routes could realistically be joined up to the rest of the existing network, even where there may be issues of land ownership or where new river crossings may be necessary to complete the routes.</p> <p>We would particularly like to see any new development at Cogges, linked to the town centre via new pedestrian and cycle routes over the River Windrush. This objective was included in Core Policy 28 of the West Oxfordshire Draft Local Plan 2012. It would be beneficial to align the key projects of the RoWMP with the objectives of Local Planning strategies.</p> <p>Has there been an assessment of the costs of delivering the network improvements?</p> <p>Information on the cost of delivering these infrastructure improvements would be useful in order to feed into the Council's Infrastructure Delivery Plan.</p> <p>Green Infrastructure delivery is one of the key elements of the Council's plan, due to the multiple benefits that it can bring to local communities. It is one area however where detailed information on the cost of delivery is lacking from our evidence base.</p> <p>It would be very useful to WODC if information on the cost of delivering the ROWIP was made available, if not through the plan itself but through other appropriate means.</p> <p>We assume that this information will emerge through the annual delivery plans, but any early indication of potential costs would be particularly useful to WODC in preparing its CIL charging schedule.</p>		<p>taken account of but is for later stages in any route's development and associated consultation. All decisions will also have to take account of future maintenance liabilities as well as provision matters.</p>
123	<p><u>Moving forward:</u> Identifying and filling these 'missing links' will be key to the core outcomes of "developing and increasing cycling and walking", and "reducing casualties and dangers" when cyclists and walkers are required to use busy roads because no suitable path exists.</p> <p>Therefore I would suggest that two actions are added to the Statement of Action: Firstly, that</p>	<p><i>Noted</i></p>	<p>See response to comments 1-4.</p>

	<p>there should be a rolling programme of identifying upgrades and other missing links across the country - those upgrades which have the greatest potential for the smallest outlay. The 'area needs' maps in the consultation are a useful starting point, but in reality some of the biggest challenges are in rural areas where</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - motor vehicle speeds are high - roads do not have shared-use roadside paths - large private estates restrict the right of way network <p>There is therefore a need to produce these maps for the whole of the county. Given budget constraints, the largest part of this work could and should be carried out by local community groups and other volunteers - indeed, I suspect most of this knowledge is already "out there".</p> <p>Secondly, that Oxfordshire County Council develops a process for achieving these upgrades. In particular, given the difficulty of achieving statutory diversions and upgrades (page 29), permissive agreements can and should be encouraged. I would suggest that OCC therefore creates an "exemplar agreement" for landowners and local communities to agree access. This could include supporting documentation to allay landowners' fears, and suggestions for work to encourage harmonious access. (For example, Sustrans produces "Share the path" signs which we have installed on the Cornbury Park permissive route.)</p> <p>Similarly, volunteers can help to achieve surface upgrades where access already exists, by carrying out physical improvement work and/or securing third-party funding. A volunteer-led effort to improve a path surface may even be viewed more kindly by landowners than a council upgrade.</p> <p>However, volunteers are unlikely to have detailed knowledge of typical costs, funding, and related regulations (particularly SSSIs, flooding, etc.). OCC could greatly assist by producing and maintaining a guide to upgrading RoW surfaces, and offering officer support to community groups.</p>		
124	<p>The draft Plan highlights the importance of "green infrastructure" and describes the role of the County Council in ensuring that development does not interfere with use and enjoyment of the countryside. We strongly encourage the Council to be proactive in responding to development proposals in this respect. Where improvements to the "green infrastructure" are proposed, whether through Community Infrastructure Levy or otherwise, it is vital that local communities should be consulted.</p> <p>The only specifically local issue identified in the draft Plan on which we wish to comment is reference to the perimeter footpath round Brize Norton air base (the southern portion of which runs through this parish). We would welcome further discussion of the possible upgrading of this path to a cycle way.</p>	<i>Noted</i>	The County Council is not the planning authority except for its own applications and for minerals and waste applications. Area maps are aspirational and indicative only. All routes usually go through a process of survey, negotiation and discussion
125	<p><u>Additional Area Improvements</u> In addition to the area improvements outlined in the RoWMP there may be some additional benefit in considering further improvements in the Chipping Norton area and also across District boundaries.</p>	<i>Noted</i>	Area maps are aspirational and indicative only. All routes usually go through a process of survey, negotiation and discussion. See

	<p>Although Chipping Norton will not be subject to the same level of growth as Witney or Carterton, there will still be significant housing growth focussed on the town. It will be important to ensure that new development is well integrated with the town through the rights of way network and it might be useful to indicate where such opportunities might be available.</p> <p>In addition to the information outlined above, it may be necessary to revisit the demographic projections that have been used in the Assessment of Need. I'm not sure if a significant increase in population will have an impact on the findings of the draft management plan, but the housing growth indicated in Appendix D may be significantly higher, in light of the findings of the Oxfordshire Strategic Housing Market Assessment (SHMA).</p>		response to points 1-4 above
126	<p>I'd like to record that the two Permissive Paths in our Parish (one on each farm) form a valuable recreational facility (when flooding allows of course) and credit should be given to the farmers for allowing and encouraging them. I don't know yet if Permissive Paths form any part of future plans for improving the network.</p>	<i>Noted</i>	<p>It is recognised that permissive paths can be are often an important part of the access network especially for communities, but strictly speaking these are outside of the remit of the authority's statutory duties. There is usually little direct involvement by Rights of Way team unless the route is a strategic link (e.g. to access land areas) and has a formal management regime in place, such as through agri-environmental schemes that include an access component.</p>
127	<p>Appendix D - Science Vale Key Area: Access Measures...The proposed status changes are to footpaths 403/7 and 403/6 to be upgraded to a hard surface to allow cyclists to travel between the villages of Ardington, East and West Hendred without having to use the A417. The parish council objects to these changes as the proposed cycle route is not practical for the following reasons;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • these footpaths cut across a number of fields that are either ploughed or contain livestock. • to implement a cycle path styles would have to be removed; • there will be considerable impact to the working of the land by land owners; • the start of footpath 403/6 is from a private driveway on the Greenway where it is very narrow even for walkers and is totally unsuitable for cyclists <p>West Hendred Parish council supports the proposal for better cycle access between the villages of Ardington, East and West Hendred but would suggest the footpath 108/6 (known as Red Barn) and bridleway 403/17 (known as The Lynch) as a better alternative route for cyclists. The advantages to this alternative route are;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • it uses rights of way that are not ploughed over or in fields with livestock • it is already used by adult cyclists and with the removal or bypassing of obstacles this route could also be used by vulnerable and utility cyclists. • it provides a better link to the two primary schools in East Hendred • it still links the villages of Ardington, East and West Hendred 	<p><i>Noted</i></p> <p><i>Noted</i></p>	<p>Area maps are aspirational and indicative only. All routes would go through a process of survey, negotiation and discussion. However the next version of the maps may be amended to reflect these concerns</p> <p>Passed to area rights of way field officer</p>

	The Council's suggested alternative route would also need a new small stretch of right of way around the north side of West Hendred Parish church boundary		
128	<p>In response to the small article 'paths plan' in the Henley Standard and having just moved to Henley, I'm appalled at the lack of bridleways and shared footways in this area. Henley seems to have none between villages and even Reading. The distances are quite small so if it was easier to get between these places, the number of cars off the roads would increase. It seems it is more important to keep the verges nice and green and tidy than help cyclists and walkers get about. I have moved from Cambridgeshire where bridleways and upgraded footpaths are happening all of the time. We even had a new cycle and foot bridge over the Ouse in the last two years supported by Sustrans.</p> <p>I feel that landowners could be more public spirited and councils could use their power instead of always making life easier for drivers.</p>	<i>Noted</i>	There is an aspiration to make small connections to improve the network
129	Any new access onto the agricultural land around Bradwell Village, for example to secure a link to Bradwell Village with Burford, would be impossible because all of this land is farmed under the Organic Entry Level Scheme. This imposes stringent requirements in terms of management for the benefit of wildlife. The farming policy of the Trustees is designed, inter alia, to benefit native species and these interests are not served by opening up new areas to pedestrians and their dogs, which can only be to the detriment of native flora and fauna.	<i>Noted</i>	Public access with or without dogs doesn't necessarily mean that land cannot be farmed organically. There may be management approaches and/or fencing solutions that mean a route is made possible. Any such route consideration would be subject to site assessment and detailed negotiation anyway.
130	A new multi-use route is suggested to improve the access from Shilton to the A361 crossroad at the Cotswolds Wildlife Park. This will have the effect of increasing the horse traffic across this very dangerous junction; it is hard to think of a more irresponsible proposal. Having myself in the last decade had to deal with the consequences of fatal motorbike accidents and bolting horses being hit and killed at this junction, I think this idea needs to be ruled out.	<i>Noted</i>	Any such route consideration would be subject to site assessment and detailed negotiation anyway.
130a	<p>In relation to the proposed conditions, we have some concerns that some of them would not meet the relevant 6 tests for the use of conditions. We have taken each of the proposed conditions in turn.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. This is currently an Informative added to permissions for development affecting or adjacent to a PROW. If there is no reason why the PROW would be affected we do not consider that this condition would be necessary. It is also imprecise in relation to the use of the wording such as 'may obstruct or dissuade'. This introduces subjective judgments and it would make enforcing the condition difficult. 2. Again we cannot see that this condition would be necessary if no actual changes are proposed or needed in respect of the PROW. Also a condition should not be used to require the applicant to enter into a legal agreement. 3. This condition appears more reasonable. However, the wording would need tightening up in relation to the requirement for agreement by the Countryside Access Team. The condition should refer to this permission being required in writing by OCC. Also the 	<i>Noted</i>	Proposed conditions have been slightly amended and brought into the main body of the document alongside other text changes

	<p>requirement to make good/put right is woolly and there is no timing for this work if required. We can also see debate about how the standard of putting right/making good by OCC is judged.</p> <p>4. Same issues as above.</p> <p>5. How far should the gates be set back from the PROW? It would seem more straightforward just to say something like 'any gates provided in association with the development hereby approved shall not open outwards across the public right of way'.</p> <p>South Oxfordshire District Council welcome continued opportunities to engage in strategic, cross administrative boundary, issues such as these. One of our roles as the Local Planning Authority is to create Local Plans (no longer Local Development Frameworks) and to support these plans; various supporting documents including Infrastructure Delivery Plans (IDP). We are happy to consider the inclusion of PROW within these plans and supporting documents. If and when the viability of a Community Infrastructure Levy is assessed the appropriate inclusion of schemes into spending plans will be considered, and we welcome discussions on what potential infrastructure to include.</p>		
4. Other organisations involvement			
131	Table 6, key organisations and roles has a significant omission in that user and amenity groups are not included. It is recognised that the following section does cover some aspects of communities and volunteers but the Forum feels they should still be included in table 6 and also include involvement with the Definitive Map areas of work.	<i>Accept</i>	Table amended
132	Some People in these Groups are just 'Do Gooders' and cannot see the wider picture and benefits to path walkers.	<i>Reject</i>	OCC greatly values the commitment by volunteers, groups and communities and involvement in public rights of way
133	Add Rights of Way Monitoring Group to OCAF in 5-year action	<i>Accept</i>	'Key partners' added to action point
134	<u>p.35: Table 6: 2nd bullet in RH column:</u> It needs to be made clearer that this refers solely to non-statutory work as local councils see 'maintenance' as OCC responsibility. Any perception that this is buck-passing by OCC would be counter-productive.	<i>Accept</i>	Table amended
135	<u>p.35: Table 6: 3rd bullet point in RH column under DCs:</u> 'One Voice' policy by OCC seems to be proving counter-productive as rights of way issues are frequently missed in submissions. Separate rights of way submissions were preferable	<i>Noted</i>	The 'Single Response' process is for large and major applications. Officers still respond to smaller applications that affect PROW.
136	We own and maintain the Oxford Canal as it runs through the County and we actively encourage and recognise its use as free green infrastructure, available to all and where possible as sustainable transport route. The Trust will continue to work in partnership with the Council to promote the use of the towpath and when possible improve it for the benefit of all types of user. We note that many of your own strategies and policies are closely aligned to our own aims.	<i>Noted</i>	Document amended
	Please also note, on a very minor point that the Canal & River trust is mistitled in the listing within Category 2 on page 32. The Trust will continue to work with the Council to help		

	achieve the aims of the ROWMP and we look forward to its adoption.		
137	Improved parking on commons, open access land: It would be helpful if stewards of common and open access land could be encouraged to provide additional 'rough' parking areas. By this we mean simply clearing scrub or cutting back some bushes – certainly not providing hard-standing or more formal car parks. This would be useful for those leading walks where quite large numbers of people may arrive in cars and it can be challenging to find sufficient, safe parking space.	<i>Noted</i>	Organisers of routes need to manage walks (to encourage car sharing and starting from suitable spots) and receiving routes first to ensure that there is enough parking. Providing additional parking can encourage antisocial behaviours as well as increasing the amount of car traffic in an area - instead of people cycling or walking from settlements into the countryside. OCC encourages the use of 'rural enterprise' parking arrangements at farm shops, pubs etc.
138	Key organisations and rolls Table 6 page 35, could I suggest adding within Associated Groups: Amenity Groups -- Path surveys; light clearance; minor maintenance; funding contribution - plus perhaps one for the future grant applications for route development	<i>Accept</i>	New row added for user and amenity groups
5. Communities and volunteers			
139	For Figure 11 (p39) we could add a box 'Record rights of way on DMS'. The box 'Survey paths and gather information' should read 'Survey PRoW and gather information'.	<i>Accept</i>	Text changed to " <i>Identify key upgrades or provide evidence on Definitive Map Modification Order applications</i> "
140	With regards to the involvement of communities and volunteers on page 44, the Forum is cautious about the scale of works that user groups are undertaking and the levels of control, supervision and the permissions from landowners/highway authority required. The county council needs to maintain quality and safety standards at the same time as encouraging the public to participate.	<i>Accept</i>	All groups that work with OCC are informed about processes and standards and are expected to adhere to them
141	We are afraid that it is unreasonable and impractical to try and devolve responsibility for doing such things as fixing stiles/gates/waysigns, liaising with landowners, and carrying out work for which volunteer individuals (aka PPWs) and groups have neither the technical competence or authority to do the job, nor the necessary insurance. It will only end in tears. It is our experience that they can check and report things to OCC, and do some simple clearing, but not maintain a full network.	<i>Noted</i>	Many communities and volunteer or interest groups, such as the Cotswolds Wardens and the Chilterns Society Path Maintenance Volunteers already undertake these types of 'added-value' activities in full liaison with OCC. This occurs without devolution of responsibilities as the statutory duty for rights of way maintenance remains with OCC.
142	Yet again after reading through the proposes it seems the intention is in pushing the vast majority of costs through to the local Parish Councils. This way the Local and District Council do not raise the Council Tax, but are forcing Parish Councils to raise the precept as Government has not capped the amount by which this can rise yet. Unfortunately in a rural community not everyone is a millionaire yet the vast amount of routes are in rural areas and be subject to the largest increase in cost.	<i>Noted</i>	See above response. There is no intention to devolve responsibilities to volunteer groups or pass costs to local communities

143	Definition of the role of the Parish Path wardens would be difficult for smaller communities possibility to support	<i>Noted</i>	The PPW scheme is Rambler-led and as such means that cross-parish working is practised where possible
144	The overall concept is fine. However, whilst Parish Wardens should be the 'first port of call' for issues relating to Rights of Way and should refer issues to OCC or local councils, we do not agree with the concept that Wardens themselves take up issues with landowners as Wardens have no official authority for this. The discussion with landowners could be confrontational and should come from Parish Councils or OCC if it is not to lead to inappropriate local disputes between individuals.	<i>Noted</i>	See response to comment 141 above. All members of the public are free to ask a landowner to improve things. The scheme does not give authority for any actions outside the limited scope of the scheme. OCC retains overall responsibility and the statutory duty to assert and protect public rights.
145	A lot is depending on voluntary action without backup at a higher level. It's good to involve locals, but they would benefit from more solid support	<i>Noted</i>	The requirement for support is part of the continual monitoring of this kind of work and will form part of business planning
146	The Parish Council precept has not allowed for ROW management and maintenance in the past. With restraints on precept increases there is not much scope for the parish paying more for these activities. We are concerned that reductions in financial support from the county for rights of way will result in their degradation.	<i>Noted</i>	See response to comment 141. OCC does not pay parishes for PROW maintenance
147	A small parish such as ours has neither the financial, technical or manpower resources to carry out the non-starred activities above....we can act as eyes and ears on the ground, but however well intentioned, we can realistically do no more than that.	<i>Noted</i>	Any of the activities in the framework are worthwhile and appreciated by the public as well as OCC staff
148	As a parish we already have Parish Wardens, and do our best to police the rights of way and keep them in good use for everyone. However if this is going to end up being another cost burden for the community, then I can see fewer people being inclined to help out and query what they are actually paying for.	<i>Noted</i>	See response to comments 141 and 145 above
149	<p>As a Parish Councillor in the village of Sydenham and a keen cyclist, I am keen to see the village and surrounding villages benefit from better links to the Phoenix Trail. Many of the local communities would be more receptive to cycling to Thame and to Princes Risborough if they were able to safely use the quiet lanes through the villages of Lewknor, Kingston Blount, Aston Rowant, Postcombe and Tetsworth to then join the Phoenix Trail at either Chinnor or Henton.</p> <p>The challenge is the very small section of footpath from Henton through to the Phoenix Trail past New Close Farm and Penn Farm. This currently has a reasonable surface (equivalent to many of the local bridleways) and yet as a designated footpath is limited to walkers. By opening this relatively small stretch of less than 1km to become bridleway would encourage people to travel to Thame safely on bikes rather than running the gauntlet of the B4445! This footpath section is highlighted on the maps as 'upgraded status' but it would be good to get more information on what this actually means and on timings. Bearing in mind the numerous references to 'Develop and increase cycling and walking for local journeys, recreation and health', 'Reducing congestion', 'Reducing casualties and dangers associated with travel' and 'Improve accessibility to work, education and services' in the documents making this small section of footpath a bridleway would open up safe access to Thame to a wide area of local communities around Sydenham and help address these challenges.</p>	<i>Noted</i>	<p>OCC can improve the information on the document's maps. 'Upgraded status' normally means enabling cycling and/or horse riding on a route, with or without changes to the surface. Any upgrade in legal status (ie from Footpaths to Bridleways would require successful confirmation of legal orders which may entail compensation. Other ways to enable cycling or riding include the use of permissive agreements. The more urban routes are more likely to just have cycling access and a firmer surface (not necessarily asphalt) to enable year-round use, for example to work and school. Funding of access measures is anticipated to come from developer contributions, Local Transport Plan and other sources of funding – but there is no 'pot' of funding currently available.</p> <p>For this particular route efforts were made by</p>

			OCC to negotiate an upgrade but to date have not been successful. Comments passed to Field Officer.
150	WTC commends OCC in supporting the concept of Parish Path Wardens and draws to its attention the establishment in Woodstock of an Open Spaces and Rights of Way Working Group under the chairmanship of ex-Chair of OCC, John Banbury. WTC endorses the activities of this group whose further comments on the consultation document are commended to the County Council	<i>Noted</i>	
151	Parish Path Wardens are a great idea but please do not expect them to replace the Countryside Officer's Role. We need more professional staff not less to deal with the backlog of work that is being created.	<i>Noted</i>	See response to comments 141 and 145 above.
152	Comment from Shipton under Wychwood Parish Council. The Cotswold Wardens do an excellent job, but we support the concept of Local Stewardship which we believe would have clear focus on local Rights of Way issues. The threat of further funding reductions is one we believe will threaten the viability of public rights of way throughout Oxfordshire and a local review annually of Rights of Way would help to provide information with which to target areas of most concern. Local volunteers could have a significant impact but a clear mechanism needs to be in place to ensure consistency of approach and standardisation of work.	<i>Noted</i>	See response to comments 1-4, 141 and 145 above
153	Are there grants available to support voluntary work?	<i>Noted</i>	OCC has previously, but is not now able to offer grants. Instead it works with and signposts people to external funders such as Trust for Oxfordshire's Environment who do fund such schemes. OCC supports projects through professional advice, sometimes work on the ground, sometimes third-party funding, and assisting with identifying suitable contractors where necessary.
154	Some people do help maintain their local rights of way, and we do give a small donation to the RoW team towards this.	<i>Noted</i>	All inputs are very much appreciated
155	There is bound to be greater reliance on volunteer effort and people being motivated enough at a very local level to improve on the present position. As a Parish Council we will be expected to play our part in at least monitoring our existing rights of way. With their limited and diminishing resources the County Council will struggle to even maintain and keep open the existing network. Initiatives will therefore have to be taken locally and volunteers will be needed to attend to basic tasks such as cutting back vegetation etc.	<i>Noted</i>	See response to comments 1-4 and 141,146 above. The document makes it clear that the county council retains the statutory duty to assert, protect and maintain public rights of way
156	Is there any grant funding to parishes to help with the work at a local level?	<i>Noted</i>	See response to comment 153 above
157	The increasing use of neighbourhood and community groups to help in countryside access management is welcome, but they must be given the ability to make a difference. For example, it should be made easier for local groups/volunteers to address problems on the network such as missing signs, clearance and repair of gates and stiles	<i>Noted</i>	See response to comments 1-4 and 141,146 above.

158	It is not clear that the current guidance for Parish Path Wardens will allow a complete picture of the extant of problems and work done to correct them to be collected in the future. These volunteers are able to provide a comprehensive picture of the state of the network over the year (and could provide some help towards reducing the number of problems in the future) but if their efforts are not recorded and acted upon the efficacy of the exercise is questionable.	<i>Noted</i>	The PPW is intended to be carefully managed and limited by its design so that efforts are not wasted or workloads increased. All of the activity of the PPW that OCC is informed about is recorded and collected. Acting on reports ties into the issue priority approach and available resources
159	p.39: Figure 11: Add to bottom box '...to improve above basic standard' in order to underline point that this is non-statutory work.	<i>Noted</i>	Text amended to clarify this is above the work that OCC does as its statutory duty
160	Volunteers: We welcome the plan to encourage parish path wardens to help monitor rights of way in their area and to carry out basic maintenance. However, we would recommend strongly, based on our experience in the Chiltern Society, that there need to be co-ordinators for groups of path wardens. These co-ordinators would collect individual path warden reports and seek to ensure they provide a consistent level and standard of information which can then be passed to the Council. Without this important additional 'filtering and monitoring' function, we would be concerned that the Council might be deluged with reports of hugely varying significance. It would also be valuable for this new network of path wardens and volunteers to have the back up of a trained path maintenance group who would be capable of carrying out work (with landowner approval) – to improve the rights of way network whilst at the same time avoid simply increasing the Council's caseload.	<i>Noted</i>	See response to comments 141 and 146 above
161	<p>Alvescot Parish Council have considered it, and we are supportive of the overall aims. We wish to make the following comments.</p> <p>The main subject on which we would like to comment is that of partnership working. Improved partnership is undoubtedly a Good Thing. Moreover we realise that, in the current financial circumstances, it is inevitable that some of the functions formerly performed by the County Council are being passed to the local level. We note that, while the County Council will retain responsibility for monitoring and maintaining the Rights of Way network, it is apparent you will be looking increasingly to others to share the burden of work – and resourcing.</p> <p>That being the case, we believe that proper consultation with individual parishes is essential, in order to identify local priorities and agree who does what. Experience in this respect over the last few years has left something to be desired. For example, we discovered indirectly and late in the day that you had reduced your clearance programme.</p> <p>Ideally, we would like to see an annual meeting – or at least a conversation – with a footpath officer to identify local issues and agree a plan. We would also expect clarity about time scales for completion of agreed actions.</p>	<i>Noted</i>	<p>See response to comments 1-4 and 141,146 above. The document makes it clear that the county council retains the statutory duty to assert, protect and maintain public rights of way.</p> <p>The document contains an action to develop the path issue and categorisation approach by 2015/16</p> <p>OCC cannot commit to individual annual meetings as with over 300 local councils this would unreasonably impact on what activities the small number of rights of way officers could undertake. The way that communication is always able to be reviewed.</p>
162	The members of the Parish Council understand that the responsibility for the maintenance and the management of the rights of way within the county rests with the County Council. Whilst understanding the pressures placed upon the County Council, like all local authorities, the members of the Parish Council do not consider it appropriate that the County Council appears to be unilaterally proposing to make a call on parish precepts to fund the	<i>Noted</i>	See response to comments 1-4 and 141,146 above. The document makes it clear that the county council retains the statutory duty to assert, protect and maintain public rights of way.

	<p>maintenance of rights of way (as stated in Table 6: “Seek to add value to the maintenance work that OCC undertakes as highway authority, possibly using parish precept...” and again on page 40 “Undertake additional maintenance of improvements using precept..”). The wording of these two sections seems to suggest that the County Council believes it will be able to oblige parishes to increase their precept to maintain public rights of way, as the wording does not clearly acknowledge that this will only be possible with the support of the parishes.</p> <p>The members of Aston, Cote, Shifford & Chimney Parish Council consider that the full costs of appropriately maintaining the rights of way in Oxfordshire should remain with the County Council. If efforts are made to push the funding of maintenance onto the parishes where the rights of way are located, this will create uneven and unreasonable pressures between parishes – i.e. parishes which contain significant lengths of rights of way will be obliged to increase their parish precept per head to a higher level than comparably sized parishes containing fewer rights of way. As the rights of way can be enjoyed by all residents of the county (and beyond), regardless of where they live, the members of Aston, Cote, Shifford & Chimney Parish Council consider that the only fair basis upon which residents of Oxfordshire can be required to contribute towards the maintenance of the rights of way is if the full cost of the maintenance continues to be included within the County Council’s share of the council tax, which is then charged to all Oxfordshire residents on the same basis, regardless of where they live.</p>		<p>There is no intention to require parishes to raise their precept to pay for PRow maintenance. See also comments under 66 and 67 above.</p>
163	<p><u>P.38</u> “OCC needs to make the best of...efforts and enthusiasm” of volunteers.” We entirely agree, but it has to be understood that the public’s understanding of the issues is very small.</p> <p>The CS view that, if they want to save their unrecorded paths, the public must file claims is entirely unrealistic. Faced with the complexities and massive effort involved, the public believe this is a CS job and even the shortest explanation of the position only confirms their belief that such a complex area must be within the remit of paid experts.</p> <p>To exacerbate matters, we found both local Ramblers and councillors too busy to get involved in something so complex & time consuming. They were also under the impression that (incorrect) CS advice must be correct therefore nothing could be done about unrecorded ROWs. To get the public to act in the face of these misapprehensions is an almost impossible task.</p> <p>We suggest that, every time an unrecorded ROW issue comes to the CS, it is essential to involve the Parish Council and other local or relevant interest groups, to ensure that all information given is scrupulously correct, even if it involves admitting shortcomings.</p> <p>It would also be prudent for the CS to impress upon all concerned that the CS might need volunteer help, without which the ROW concerned may be at serious risk.</p>	<i>Noted</i>	<p>Parish Councils and local or relevant interest groups are routinely consulted on Definitive Map Modification Orders Applications and there are opportunities throughout the process to provide evidence. Whilst it is acknowledged that the overall process is complex, the initial application process essentially simply entails the applicant gathering and producing evidence to support his or her claim as the law requires and this recognised that local communities are best placed to provide this evidence of use. Clear guidance is provided to potential applicants to explain the process. Once an application has been made, the process is the responsibility of the authority to investigate.</p>

164	I wondered why OCC is only working with the Ramblers to develop the county wide parish path warden scheme - bridleways need looking after too - especially as they require a much higher clearance than a footpath. Will you approach other organisations on the Rights of Way forum to find parish wardens if there are insufficient members of the Ramblers to cover all the parishes?	<i>Noted</i>	Although this is a Ramblers initiative, all are welcome to participate, even if not members and that includes liaison with other groups to avoid duplication. The role of PPW has been developed between OCC and RA.
165	The Board supports the concept of Parish Path Wardens. There is, however, the need for good liaison with existing groups performing similar roles within Oxfordshire, such as the Cotswold Voluntary Wardens, to avoid overlap, maximise coverage and avoid confusion within Parish Councils. We recommend a clear role for Parish Path Wardens is produced to make sure volunteers know what they are being asked to as well as being clear on the limits of their role.	<i>Noted</i>	see response to comment 164
166	The proposals all seem to be very positive towards improving and increasing the footpath network and I would be happy to co-operate with most of the proposals. I think the idea of creating new `link` paths where at the moment the only link is walking along a busy main road e.g. the new path by Cokethorpe on the A415, is great and I would be happy to have involvement in this process. In principle I like the idea of voluntary work parties, but am a bit wary of the liability side. It reads as if the person organising this work, possibly me, would be responsible for ensuring that helpers had the `necessary` skills to do the work involved, presumably able to use secateurs, saws and possibly some sort of axe. I am old fashioned, but I accept personal responsibility for doing those sort of jobs as a life skill which can result in minor injuries, ie cuts and thorns etc and would expect any volunteers to work on the same basis so would not wish to be responsible for their accidents and subject to litigation.	<i>Noted</i>	The PPW scheme has limits on what people can do and falls under the umbrella of the Ramblers insurance cover
167	I have served as a Horspath Parish Councillor for a number of years & I am not aware of any measures that have been taken to increase their awareness of RoW matters. The draft RoWMP was circulated by SODC & it fell to me to give the Council a resume of its impact & I fear for it to sink out of sight again without further comment from a busy PC. We are the first village inset in the Green Belt to the east of Oxford, at a key position on the OGBW that links to open country in neighbouring Parishes. I am surprised your other excellent document; Countryside Access – A Parish Guide dating from 2010 was not distributed more effectively or has a place in your draft RoWMP. If has been superceded by the document I referred to in point 2, it is a pity a chance has been missed to use that title that would be much more likely to have gained some action by hard pressed PC's.	<i>Noted</i>	The way that communication is undertaken is always able to be reviewed
168	There is bound to be greater reliance on volunteer effort and people being motivated enough at a very local level to improve on the present position. As a Parish Council we will be expected to play our part in at least monitoring our existing rights of way. With their limited and diminishing resources the County Council will struggle to even maintain and keep open the existing network. Initiatives will therefore have to be taken locally and volunteers will be needed to attend to basic tasks such as cutting back vegetation etc. There is mention of local footpath wardens and if we can find a committed person we could co-opt them to help. Is there any grant funding to parishes to help with the work at a local	<i>Noted</i>	See response to comment 141 and 153 above.

	level?		
Look and feel, layout of the document			
169	One comment about layout, Table 6 could be set out so that the box Landowning, p 35 could be put on p 36 and the box Local area rights of way could be moved from p36 to p 37 so that neither of these boxes is split..I think that doing this makes it easier and clearer to read.	<i>Accept</i>	Table amended
170	On page six the Forum advises that a more complete list of activities that take place on PRow and the countryside access network is compiled to show the intrinsic value of the network and the wide range of users.	<i>Accept</i>	Document amended
171	Figure 1- network distribution diagrams - are not considered to add anything to the document. These should be removed and a link provided to the interactive maps instead. The same applies for the settlement tables on page 80, as these tables do not add anything to the document and are confusing. The Forum advises that the plan should keep the network maps and the disconnected map and put the tables on the website as an annex.	<i>Accept</i>	Document amended
172	The Forum feels that the Rights of Way Management Framework diagram, figure 9 on page 28, doesn't really show the interrelationships or provide enough of an explanation, for example showing how different organisations are involved in a particular area. It is important to provide this in a simple form as this is a key diagram for people to see and understand how different aspects work together. The parts of the diagram also need numbering to link them to the section's text.	<i>Accept</i>	Framework diagram expanded
173	On a purely factual note the BBOWT reserve at Sutton Courtenay Education Centre (post code OX14 4TE, grid ref SU 499918) appears on the district accessibility maps (Appendix A) as a 'site with unrestricted and free public access'. This is incorrect; the site is owned by RWE (Didcot power station) and managed by the Berks, Bucks and Oxon Wildlife Trust, and is only accessible to pre-booked educational groups. The coding should be changed to 'site with access restricted to certain groups...	<i>Accept</i>	Map altered
174	Oxfordshire Countryside Access Forum, technical points and typos: a) p17 Fig 6 and through document 'Green Belt' to be used rather than Greenbelt b) p16 Fig 5 adapt so that commons are shown as fully and unrestricted access (i.e. colour red) c) p18 Defra is Dept for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (it is correct in Glossary) d) p27 replace 'to evolve' e) p33 change the OCAF point to 'improve PRow processes' f) p34 break up mitigation measures and include 'appropriate' for surfaces, and add 'safer' g) p36 change the wording from 'associated groups' to something like 'Other organisations' h) p38 add 'and others' to the action over next two years i) p38 first line amend to identify the statutory duty j) p38 2 nd para change path to routes, tracks of PRow k) p38 4 th para, add 'see p39,41 and 43' to provide a direct connection in the text l) p39 Add 'investigate and apply for DMMOs' and change to PRowS m) p40 2 2 nd paragraph. Improve the wording and layout of this so it makes more sense n) p41 add interactive map to the photo recording box	<i>Noted</i>	Document amended but b) is incorrect as there is a public right of access to common land on foot only (map legend altered), apart from on the line of any public rights of way.

	<p>o) p43 user groups should also be researching applying to put paths on DM</p> <p>p) p58 add 'physical benefit' or 'exercise' to the third line about the value of PRoW</p> <p>q) p58 para 2 – ghost CAMP reference, also two on p59 and one on p60</p> <p>r) p59 add 'appropriate surface' and 'safer' to 'b' and in the appendix D</p> <p>s) p60 change to 'Green Belt' in table</p>		
Comments on specific public rights of way issues rather than comments about the plan – with list of actions taken			
175	Great Coxwell Parish council has asked for many years to have the path known as Siberia that runs from the centre of the village past the golf course and to the A420 resurfaced. It is currently 1ft wide of crumbling old tarmac and needs to be resurfaced to its original width. It is a very well used and important path that runs from the heart of the village to the bus stop on the A420. We would also like it to become dual walking and cycle path. This would link up a circular ride through Gt Coxwell, Little Coxwell, Faringdon and back.	<i>Noted</i>	Passed to area rights of way field officer
176	Great Coxwell Parish Council also are looking to improve the surface on the path behind the riding stables. This path runs from the end of Coxwell Road and is a continuation of the foot path from Faringdon. Again it is an essential path in a more urban setting that carries the children walking to school and those catching the bus. It is currently unsurfaced and often underwater and mud. We would like it to be hard surfaced from Coxwell Road, behind the stables to Cherry Orchard.	<i>Noted</i>	Passed to area rights of way field officer
177	Cycle / Path way from Lewknor, Aston Rowant and Sydenham parishes to Phoenix Way also needed in plan not only from Chinnor and Haddenham. There is a lot of support for such a project.	<i>Noted</i>	Passed to area rights of way field officer
178	We have a popular summer circular walk from Aston Rowant to Kingston Blount along the Lower Icknield Way AR 8, returning along AR7. This should be upgraded to an all-weather, all-year route	<i>Noted</i>	Passed to area rights of way field officer
179	A relatively small number of furniture improvements are required on the footpaths that lead southwest towards Charlton (removal of a single stile) and southwest towards East Challow (along the canal towpath on the west side of Denchworth Road/Mably Way). Both of these paths go towards or alongside new housing developments i.e. increasing populations, putting more pressure on these PRoW. We hope that S106 money will be used to remove stiles and replace them with gaps or gates, to extend access to more people (part of OCC's vision). The latter should be of at least medium mobility standard. Moreover, we hope that OCC will continue to provide surface material with which to renew the surface of the towpath section towards East Challow, and the section from Mably Way northwards past the allotments to Main Street. This could be done in association with volunteer groups e.g. the Wilts Berks Canal Trust and the Ramblers.	<i>Noted</i>	Passed to area rights of way field officer
180	Amongst the PRoW that OCC have acknowledged as requiring "surface/furniture improvements" are several that link Grove to East and West Hanney to the north. The footpaths are in reasonable condition but the path furniture is not; stiles should be replaced by gates. Cow Lane does not have problems with path furniture (being a BOAT, there is none) but much of the surface is a quagmire for much of the year. Pruning of trees and other vegetation is required to increase the penetration of drying sunlight and breezes. Part of the damage is caused by farm machinery; reinforcement of the surface is required. The poor path furniture on the footpaths combined with the dreadful	<i>Noted</i>	Passed to area rights of way field officer

	surface of Cow Lane result in underuse of these paths which otherwise form several circular walks between Grove, East and West Hanney communities.		
181	<p>Top of the list has to be supporting efforts to replace the closed bridge over the river Thame carrying footpath 6. Work on the replacement bridge is currently scheduled for August 2014, and much preparatory work has been done already.</p> <p>Path 4 from High St/The Osiers/Church Lane junction towards Four Winds has a 6ft width "Inclosure award". This path was used a lot when Dorchester Road was badly flooded earlier this year, and anyway is a well-used route. But it suffers from an uneven surface and would benefit from trimming vegetation growth in the summer. Naturally in the wet winter the increased usage made it muddy and slippery. As it is (at least) 6ft wide, it should be possible to allow bicycles to use it if the surface were made level (they are not currently permitted) – but at present that would make the path too muddy for pedestrians. Some kind of maintenance probably including grading and mowing, or perhaps including something like a gravel surface, would go a long way to improving the experience of using this route. In the future, might it be possible to extend this route to provide an off road footpath and cycle route to Dorchester and/or Berinsfield? Walking or cycling along the rather narrow road can be unpleasant as cars rush past, for walkers, runners and cyclists.</p> <p>The start of the restricted byway, path 7, over the ford, is unusable for much of the year as the river is too deep. Long standing report number 00637 suggests a "crossing/bridge or culvert required" here, which of course is unlikely to be funded under present conditions, but could form part of a longer term vision. Of course there would be disadvantages in improving access to a beautiful and usually quiet part of the village that would need consideration.</p> <p>Path 2, the Restricted Byway from Ford Lane to Chislehampton, and path 7, join together to make a trail for horses across the parish. Unfortunately the far ends of these paths link only to public roads. No doubt riders would like these paths to link on to a network of other rideable routes separate from the road network. In theory, Bridleways and Restricted Byways, etc, are open to cyclists. However in my limited experience Path 7 is almost impassable to cyclists even in the driest summers because of the ford, and Path 2 is not friendly to cyclists at hedgecutting times – the debris of hawthorn bits immediately punctures tyres.</p> <p>Path 2 and Path 1 could form part of an alternative non -road route to Berinsfield if permission could be negotiated over existing field tracks to link existing routes.</p> <p>There are other potential improvements to the existing footpath network in the parish. At one time there was an informal link between path 6 and path 5 but this was blocked in the late 1980's. If further development of the area is applied for, I would suggest that a condition of such a public right of way could be made as it would add considerably to the off road network (not only for me).</p>	<i>Noted</i>	<p>Passed to area rights of way field officer</p> <p>Passed to area rights of way field officer</p> <p>Passed to area rights of way field officer</p> <p>Passed to area rights of way field officer</p> <p>Passed to area rights of way field officer</p>

	Path 6 ends on the busy A329. Other onward paths such as 392/11b Pains Way to Dorchester and 392/15b to Warborough join the A329 close by. Perhaps existing wide verges could be used to make a firm/clear pathway linking the routes without having to walk along the road, and a safe crossing point be identified for 392/15b.		
182	Concerning D Appendix 7 Thame area needs map, I agree improvements will need to be made to the surface way on Chi BR 12 as the horses, tractors & bicycles do cause a lot of damage on bridleways. It's not just a matter of upgrading the status of Chi FP 3 & Chi FP11, the surfaces will also need upgrading to cope with the bicycles & horses. If Chi FP 10, instead of Chi FP 3, was upgraded to give access to Chi BR 12 then a shorter length of bridleway would be needed to have an improved surface.	<i>Noted</i>	Passed to area rights of way field officer
183	Garsington is well supplied with public footpaths and the local path wardens, in liaison with the Parish Council, the Village Plan committee and other volunteers are actively involved in: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Maintenance of the paths including clearance of nettles, brambles etc and anything else which hinders ability to walk the paths especially around gates, stiles, waymark posts and signs. 2. Replacing broken or faded waymark signs 3. Replacing broken stiles in accordance with CC guidelines on step height etc and on negotiation with local landowners 4. Informing the CC of any dangers e.g. fallen trees, broken bridges etc. 5. Litter clearance 6. Planning guided walk leaflets Where footpaths cross roads we appreciate the CC's attention to good visibility and traffic speed restrictions Our existing activities for 11a and b We have published an article in Garsington newsletter giving details of key local contacts Footpaths are being inspected regularly, brambles and nettles cut and signage checked and we have an accurate record of all stiles in the village. Issues to send to OCC are being collected and will be sent asap We are endeavouring to identify and make contact with local landowners and are in the process of agreeing improvements with some of them.	<i>Noted</i>	The work by this group, and may others, is appreciated by the public and OCC staff. Passed to area rights of way field officer
184	Any long term plan must give some idea how such an objective of LTP3 can be built on. I was pleased to see your very long term efforts to provide a crossing of the River Thame look to be coming to fruition at long last so very well done for that! This would rectify a RoW route that could be described as being fragmented with a chance to develop an inter village link that could be developed as part of LTP3. I see this as part of a significant route from the east, perhaps from as far as the OW at Tiddington, crossing the Thame at Chippinghurst, heading to Denton to join the OGBW at Garsington, then down to Horspath to join cycleway 57 into the City. This could be part of an overall east/west route, much as the Thames Path / Oxford canal is an existing north / south one & very much the type of route that LTP3 envisages & one that the RoWMP should aim for.	<i>Noted</i>	Passed to area rights of way field officer

185	Speaking personally I did like your reference in paragraph 2 of page 20, easier access for lower agility people that must now describe me. I was also pleased to see in the minutes of the last meeting the debate on route classification of RoWs & I would say that category 3 walks must meet basic standards & should not fall to be only used by the most experienced walkers.	<i>Noted</i>	
186	<p><u>Appendix 7 Thame Area needs map</u> <u>Proposed upgrade of footpaths leading to Phoenix trail to bridle way status</u> This was one of our original requests in 2011 and I am delighted that this is on the list. It is good to see more Chinnor families using this as a feeder route to the Phoenix trail thus avoiding the dangerous alternative of B4009. We should signal our wholehearted support for this. Part of the planning involves improvement of the current bridle way (this must be due to the local springs). However we see the requirement to provide some form of surface to protect from horse damage. It is currently a morass due to horses and I'm sure that it will only get worse when they are legally allowed to use it. This would also give an improved amenity for mobility disadvantaged members of our community (Section 149 of the Equalities Act 2010). <u>CH18</u> This is still unfinished business and remains a complete impasse. I understand from a contact in the ramblers association that there is movement to reinstate this due to one of the householders requiring planning permission. Can we please push this one along.</p> <p>Items not on Appendix 7 There does not appear to be a map giving any area needs between the northern half of Chinnor (Yes we are split in two) and Benson.</p> <p>Path to M40 j6/ Lewknor Can we please add this to the list as it is only a matter of time before somebody cycling to pick up one of the buses gets killed or seriously injured. I have driven between Chinnor and M40 numerous times at dawn and dusk and been terrified by the sight of cyclists appearing out of the gloom. It really is an accident just waiting to happen.</p> <p>Obviously this needs proper planning however for the sake of minimal cost and speed I would suggest the following: The Driftway to Kingston Stert road then a short distance along what is a pretty quiet road to pick up the path from Kingston Blount which runs behind the cricket ground to Aston Rowant then along the pavement which runs alongside the B4009. There is an alternative which is to follow the Driftway to the A40. However I would not have this as my preferred option as it is really boggy/marshy in parts.</p>	<i>Noted</i>	<p>Passed to area rights of way field officer</p> <p>Passed to area rights of way field officer</p>

Oxfordshire County Council
Countryside Access
Signal Court, Old Station Way
Eynsham OX29 4TL
01865 810226

www.oxfordshire.gov.uk/countrysideaccess