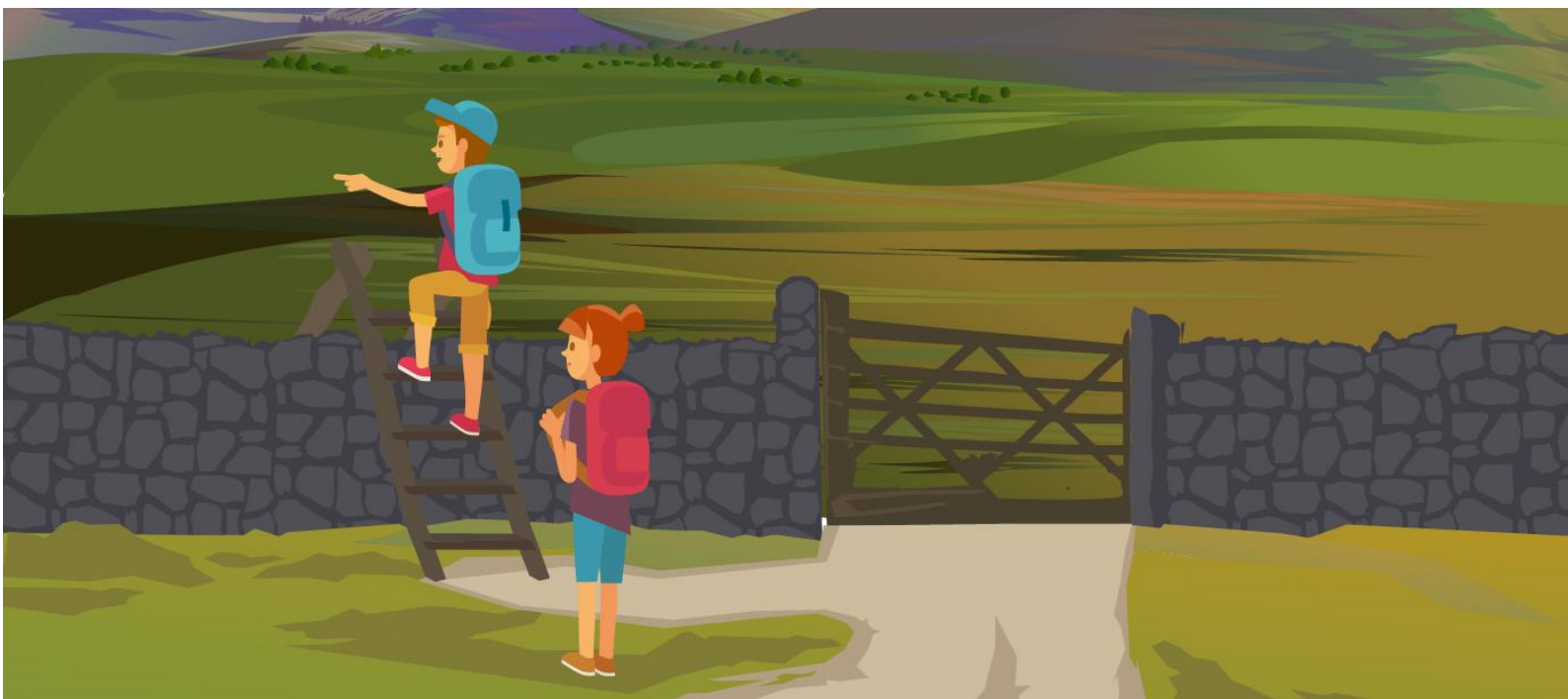


Environment, Roads & Facilities
Open Spaces

Rights of Way Improvement Plan 2019-2029
February 2021



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Issue and Revision Record

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Glossary & Abbreviations

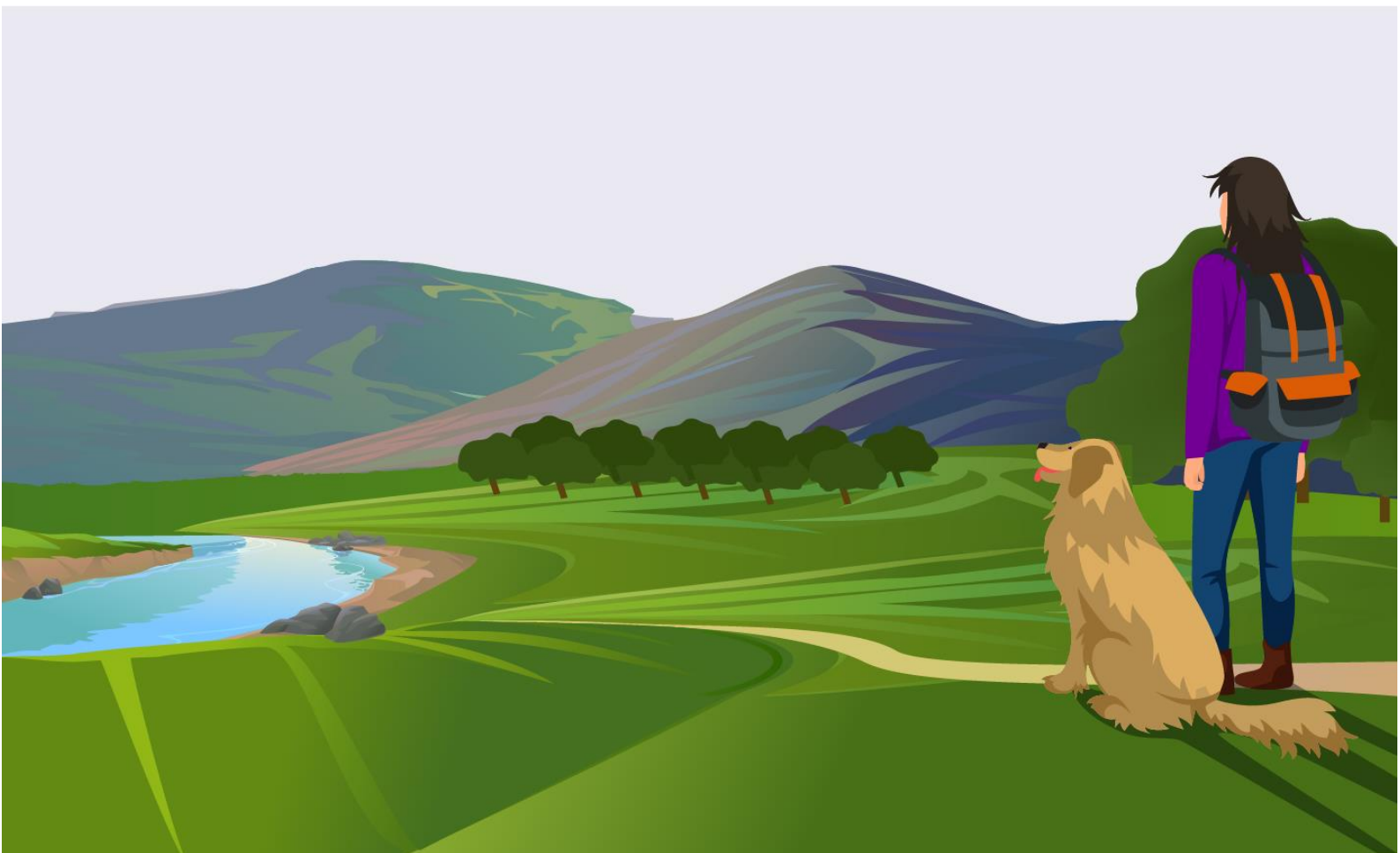
Term	Definition / Meaning
Apps.	Applications
BVPI	Best Value Performance Indicator
CCBC	Conwy County Borough Council
CCW	Countryside Council for Wales
CEDLAF	Conwy East & Denbighshire Local Access Forum
CELAF	Conwy East Local Access Forum
CROW	Countryside & Rights of Way Act 2000
Def.	Definitive
DMMO	Definitive Map Modification Order
'Easy to Use'	Paths which fall within the criteria set by the previous Welsh Government National Strategic & Core Indicator Set Ref 6.1
FTE	Full Time Equivalent
KM	Kilometre

Rights of Way Improvement Plan 2019-2029

Term	Definition / Meaning
LSB	Local Service Board
LEO	Legal Event Order
NRW	Natural Resources Wales
'Network'	The Conwy County Borough rights of way network
ONS	Office for National Statistics
PSB	Public Service Board
ROW	Rights of Way
ROWIP	Rights of Way Improvement Plan
SLA	Service Level Agreement
SNPA	Snowdonia National Park Authority
SoNaRR	State of Natural Resources Report
WG	Welsh Government
WCAIP	Wales Coastal Access Programme

It is more than ten years since the Rights of Way Improvement Plan was introduced. In that time we have experienced many changes, in particular in the way people look at exercise and outdoor leisure as key elements to improving the health of the nation. Travel within the county and access to the outdoors has been supported by a number of changes in legislation. The recently introduced active travel routes are adding greater opportunities to the existing cycle paths and coastal walking routes. The increased availability of rights of way and their access for all can only be seen as a benefit to health and leisure in our community.

It is great to see the growth of voluntary groups promoting healthy exercise as well as the involvement of volunteers contributing to the improvement of our environment for the enjoyment of all. Having established the basic groundwork in 2008 this new plan makes positive steps forward over the next ten years.



Executive Summary

In 2000, the Welsh Government introduced legislation which required all Local Authorities in Wales to produce a Rights of Way Improvement Plan (ROWIP). The aim of the plan was to detail the current level of access to footpaths, bridleways, byways and other areas of open space and demonstrate how access would be improved over the following 10 years. That period is now coming to an end and each Local Authority is tasked with reviewing the original Plan with a view to amending or renewing it for the next 10 years.

As part of the review we analysed how we performed against the targets we had set ourselves. These are included as Appendix 7 of the document. A number of the tasks were completed during the life of the Plan such as producing new policies and procedures and implementing a system to record customer requests. Some of the targets were not started due to a lack of resources and many of the targets are continually ongoing, such as surface improvements, consolidating the Definitive Map and Statement and improving furniture condition. During the review of the 2008-18 Plan we considered whether these targets were still relevant and if they would be required to form the basis of a new Plan.

The decision was made that the Plan did require renewal as there had been significant changes in the way Public Rights of Way are managed in Conwy and to reflect changes in legislation, the level of resources and guidance since the last Plan.

The new plan is written in the context of reduced resources and the withdrawal of financial assistance from Welsh Government (a grant which amounted to £550,434.14 over the previous decade). The Plan includes a Statement of Action which comprises 5 main aims. Within each aim are topics and specific tasks to help keep the Plan on track.

• Aim 1 - Ensure that the public rights of way network is open and available for use

- 1.1 Surveys – to undertake surveys using students and the work undertaken within the Service Level Agreement with Snowdonia National Park Authority by SNPA wardens
- 1.2 Least Restrictive Options – Encourage landowners to select least restrictive options
- 1.3 Inspecting Promoted Routes – Inspect our promoted routes annually
- 1.4 Surface Vegetation Clearance – Explore potential of volunteer groups to assist with this work
- 1.5 To work in partnership with the SNPA within the SLA
- 1.6 Maintenance and Enforcement

• Aim 2 - Provide an up-to-date and widely available Definitive Map and Statement

- 2.1 Consolidation of Map – Updated Map & Statement to be produced every 5 years
- 2.2 Statement of Priorities – To review our priorities and policies
- 2.3 Maintain digital online map – Explore potential to include more information on routes

• Aim 3 - Provide a more connected, safe and accessible network suitable for all users

- 3.1 Active travel – Ensure new routes are logical and well-maintained
- 3.2 Cycle routes – Seek funding to improve verges for cyclists
- 3.3 Surface improvements – Maintain surface to suitable standard
- 3.4 Bridge improvements – Provide information where bridge closures prevent access
- 3.5 Links to Coastal Path – Explore additional links to local communities and other routes

- **Aim 4 - Improve the promotion, understanding and use of the network**

- 4.1 Improved targeted information on internet – Provide more information on promoted routes
- 4.2 Promote walks and festivals – Support voluntary groups in Conwy

- **Aim 5 - Encourage greater community involvement in managing local rights of way**

- 5.1 Community Maintenance Scheme – Promote the scheme to Town and Community Councils
- 5.2 Volunteer groups – Explore development of volunteer activity
- 5.3 Local Access Forum

These aims will be broken down further through the annual delivery plans which will be prepared. The Delivery Plans will contain SMART targets which will form the basis of an annual report. This annual report will be made available on the Authority website.

Whilst it is acknowledged that this plan is more realistic than previous documents it is focused on what can realistically be achieved taking account of ongoing financial pressures and with conflicting resource pressures. CCBC remains ambitious and recognises at all levels throughout the Authority that access to public open areas and robust management of the rights of way network should be maintained. Positive management of the network can contribute towards the Welsh Government Prosperity for All agenda and our wider socio economic duties by virtue of the Future Generations and Wellbeing Act.

1 Introduction

1.1 Terms of Reference

1.1.1 Welcome to the Conwy County Borough Council's Rights of Way Improvement Plan 2018 – 2028.

This document and the action plan sets out how we will continue to improve access to our network of footpaths, bridleway, byways and open spaces for the people of Conwy and visitors to our county.

This Plan will reviewed annually with further consultation taking place in 2028 to prepare a further updated draft by 2030.

1.1.2 What is a Rights of Way Improvement Plan?

Under the provision of section 60(1) of the Countryside and Rights of Way Act (2000) (CROW), each local highway authority was required to publish a Rights of Way Improvement Plan (ROWIP) for all of its area within five years of commencement. Authorities were required, under subsection (2), to assess the extent to which local rights of way met the present and likely future needs of the public; the opportunities provided by local rights of way (and in particular by footpaths, cycle tracks, bridleways and restricted byways) for exercise and other forms of open-air recreation and the enjoyment of their area, and the accessibility of local rights of way to blind or partially sighted persons and others with mobility problems.

Section 60(5) defines 'local rights of way' as the public footpaths, cycle tracks, bridleways and restricted byways, together with the ways shown in definitive maps and statements as restricted byways and byways open to all traffic within each highway authority's area. Cycle tracks with or without a right of way on foot other than those in or by the side of a highway consisting of or comprising a made-up carriageway come within the scope of ROWIPs.

Section 60(1)(b) requires that any ROWIP includes a statement of the action the local highway authority proposes to take for the management of local rights of way, and for securing an improved network of local rights of way, with particular regard to the matters included in the assessment.

Under section 60(3) and (4) of the Act, local highway authorities are required to make a new assessment, review their ROWIP and decide whether or not to amend it not more than ten years after publishing their previous plan. Although not a statutory requirement it is anticipated that most amended plans will also be published within the 10 year timeframe. Those that are not finalised within the 10 years will be expected to be published not more than 12 months from the decision to amend. In Wales this means that reviewed plans will be expected to be published between 2017 and 2019; although authorities are free to produce them earlier if they are able. On completing the new assessment the Act allows authorities to decide whether their plan needs to be updated, in which case they are required to publish a report of their decision and the reasons behind it. However, given the significant changes to legislation and the availability of resources it is anticipated that all authorities in Wales will require a revised plan.

1.2 This ROWIP

This ROWIP has been produced following a series of assessments of our previous plan and how appropriate it was considered to be 10 years after its publication.

This Plan includes a new Statement of Action.

The Statement of Action is based on information gathered from each of the Assessments included as appendices to this Plan. This part of the ROWIP must also set out the Authority's proposals for action to improve the network over the 10-year life of the ROWIP. The Statement of Action now presented is realistic (rather than aspirational), seeking to deliver statutory obligations and meet public need as effectively as possible within the context of significant financial constraints.

Delivery Plans will be written with input from the Conwy East and Denbighshire Local Access Forum (CEDLAF). The annual Delivery Plans will set targets to work towards each of the aims set out in this ROWIP.

2 Background to Conwy and the ROWIP process

2.1 Location

Conwy County Borough is located in North Wales and has an area of 113,000 hectares. It is located between Gwynedd and Denbighshire.

Key strategic towns include; Llandudno, Colwyn Bay, Conwy, Llandudno Junction, and Abergelè in the north of the county. Llanrwst and Betws Y Coed in the south of the county.

Conwy County Borough is an area of outstanding landscape ranging from extensive sandy beaches and headlands to sheltered valleys, open moors and rugged mountains. Approximately 38% of the county lies within Snowdonia National Park.

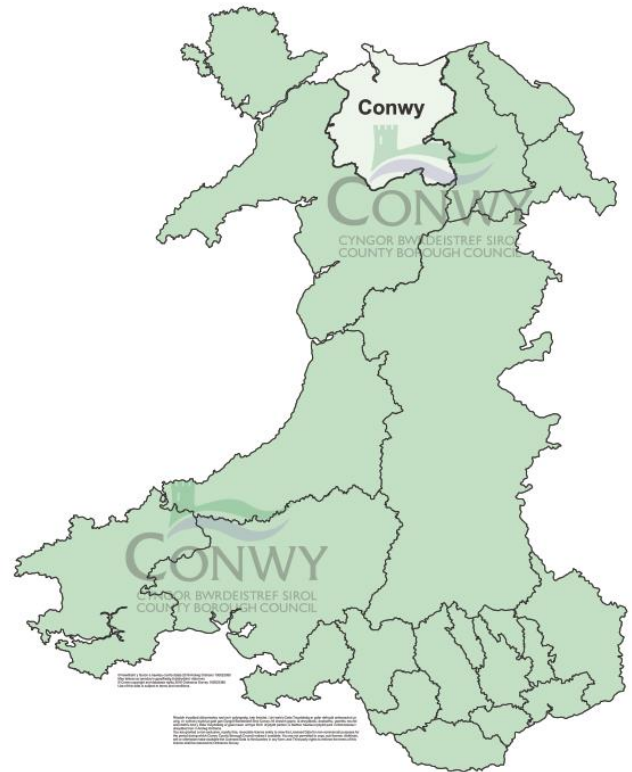


Figure 1 Local Authority Boundaries in Wales

2.2 About the People of Conwy

According to the 2011 census Conwy has a population of 115,228 with 85% of the population living in the coastal belt. This figure is estimated to have increased to 116,550 as of 30 June 2016 (ONS).

There is a fairly even split of males and females living in Conwy. In 2011 48% (55,749) were male and 52% (59,479) were female (2011 Census). Key statistics from the 2011 Census report that young people (0-15) account for 16.6% of the population. This compares with an all-Wales figure of 18.2%, slightly below the England and Wales national average of 18.9%. Those aged 16-64 years account for 59% in Conwy County Borough and those aged 65 years and over account for 24.4% in the County, much higher than the all-Wales average of 18.4% and the England and Wales average of 16.4%.

The high proportion of older people within our population also leads to the proportions of children (aged 0-15) and residents of working age (aged 16-65) being significantly below the Wales average. In 2011 there were 67,940 people of working age (16-64) in Conwy County Borough. This makes up 59% of the population, compared to 63.5% in Wales and 64.7% in England and Wales.

Understanding our demography helps us to plan for the future. Conwy is a tourist destination and therefore we must consider a significant influx of people during peak season.

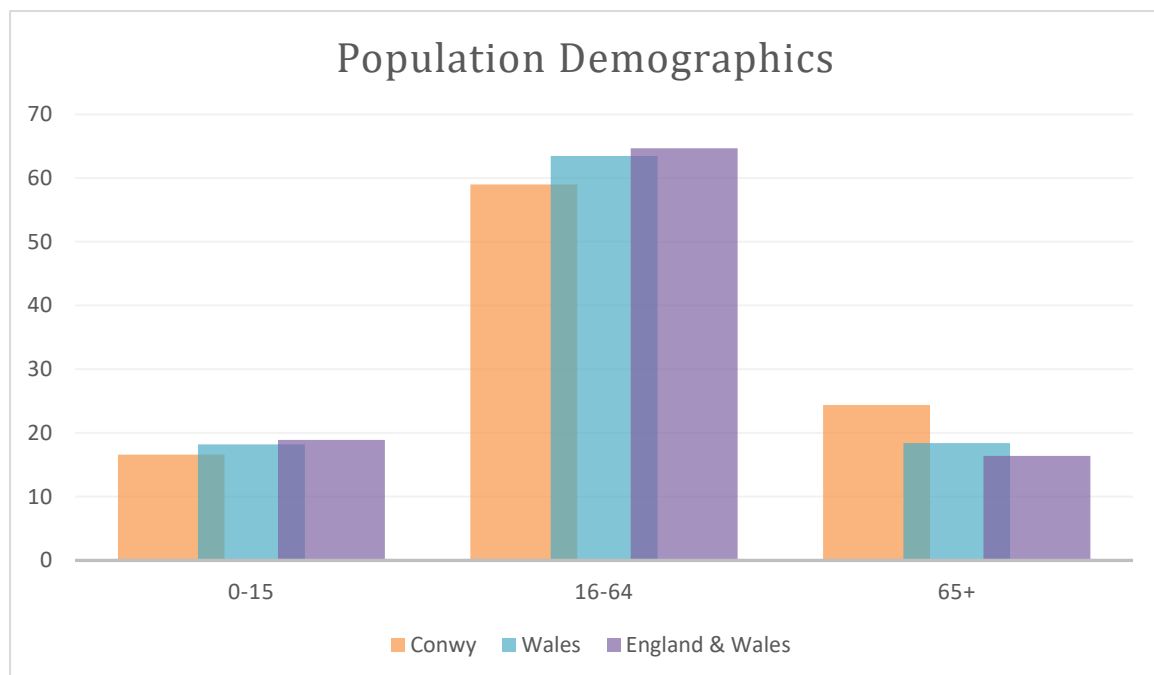


Figure 2 Age Comparisons with Conwy, Wales and England

2.3 Conwy County Rights of Way Network

Conwy has a network of 1,600km of footpath, 98km of bridleway, 21km restricted byways and 16km byways as shown in the plan below. 600km of this network falls within Snowdonia National Park.

This expansive network of ROW contributes to the needs of the health and well-being of the local communities and long distance routes such as the North Wales path encourages tourism to the area and the economic benefits they bring.

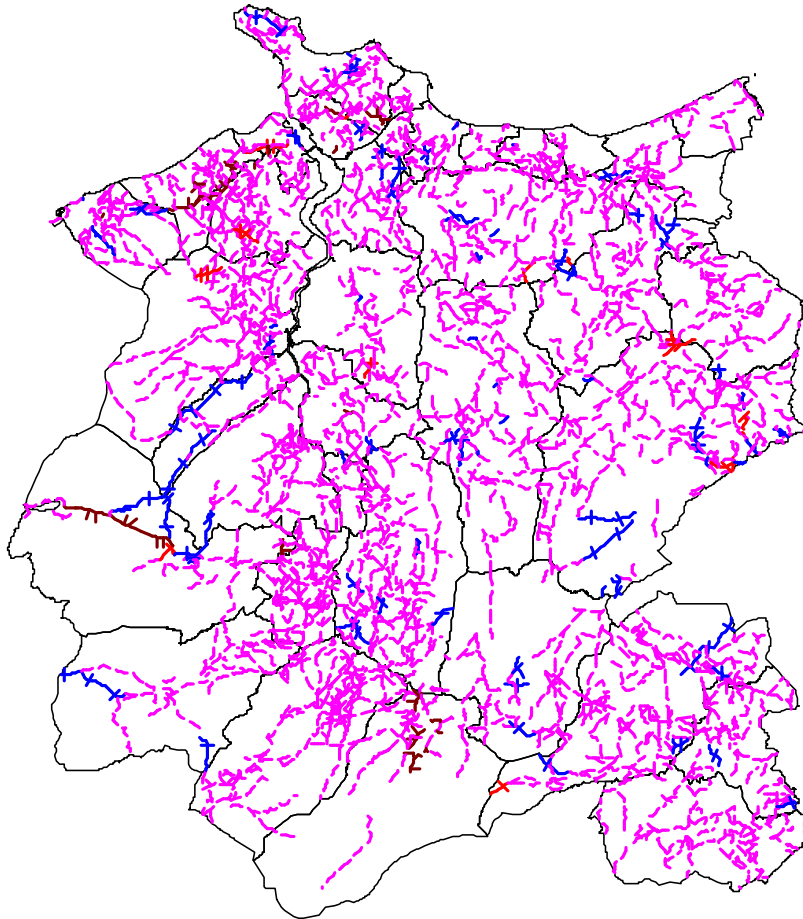


Figure 3 PROW Network in Conwy

The pink lines on the plan indicate the network of public footpaths, blue represents bridleways and brown and red show the few restricted and unrestricted byways respectively.

For more detailed information please follow the link to our website.

[Public Rights of Way \(conwy.gov.uk\)](http://conwy.gov.uk)

2.4 Methodology

The Welsh Government provided statutory guidance for the purpose of reviewing the existing plan and each Local Authority then decided if a new plan was required. Welsh Government produced a flowchart and timetable for the process (see below).



Figure 4 Flowchart for ROWIP Review

1. Planning for the review > Outline and timetable, Initial consultation
2. Carry out assessment > Making the new assessment, Evaluating the delivery of the previous ROWIP
3. Review of the previous ROWIP > Decision on whether to amend the ROWIP > This stage **must** be reached within 10 years of publication of the previous plan
4. Publish Draft ROWIP > Consultation on Draft Plan > 12 weeks should be allowed for representations > Revision of Draft ROWIP
5. Publication of ROWIP > This stage should be reached within 12 months of the decision on whether to amend
6. Review of Delivery Plans > Ongoing monitoring of delivery and progress > This should be done within the period specified by the authority

2.5 Consultation

The initial stage of the review was a desk based exercise analysing the facts and figures of what has been achieved within the lifespan of the previous ROWIP. In addition to that we assessed how the new ROWIP could contribute to the aims of the Active Travel and Well-being Plans and this information is included in the appendices. Also, as part of the preparation for this plan, Conwy Voluntary Access Group were consulted to find out more about the needs of less able users and how we could improve access provision for them (see appendices for more information).

A timetable was produced for the review which ensured the process kept moving at a reasonable pace and regular updates were made to the Conwy East and Denbighshire Local Access Forum (CEDLAF). CEDLAF were involved in the preparation of the Statement of Action. Snowdonia National Park Authority (SNPA) were also involved in the consultation process as the Park covers a third of Conwy County.

Table 1 Timetable for Conwy ROWIP Review

Stage	Task	Date
1	Carry out the Assessments – meet disability group (Conwy Voluntary Access Group)	September 2017
2	Report on the conclusions of the assessment – overview of the achievements of the 1 st ROWIP	November 2017
3	Review of the previous ROWIP	January 2018
4	Publish Draft ROWIP	March 2019
5	Three month public consultation period	June 2019
6	Consider any representations and objections and report on these	October 2019
7	Revise Draft ROWIP to take account of any relevant representations that the County Council supports	January 2020
8	Democratic Process	January 2021
9	Format & Publish ROWIP	Feb / March 2021
10	Prepare delivery plan	November 2019

Conwy County Borough Council made the decision to produce a new ROWIP as many of the tasks in the 2008-2017 ROWIP have been completed or are no longer appropriate.

2.6 Delivery of the previous ROWIP (2008-2017)

2.6.1 General

The 2008-2017 ROWIP was an aspirational document and the completion of the targets set within it relied on additional funding and staffing levels. Some limited additional funding came in the form of the Welsh Government ROWIP Grant which was administered by Natural Resources Wales (NRW) (previously Countryside Council for Wales (CCW)) on behalf of Welsh Government (WG). The total amount of funding Conwy received in grant funding was £550,434.14 over the 10 year period.

There was a change in the structure of the Rights of Way team at the start of this first ROWIP. The inspection and maintenance functions, which had been carried out by the Highway/Maintenance Section, were transferred to a dedicated Rights of Way team. Despite the changes to structure resources have been insufficient to maintain a system of regular inspection throughout the whole of the County. Snowdonia National Park Authority undertake annual inspections on our rights of way within the Park which account for approximately a third of the network. In addition to this Conwy continued to carry out the 5% Easy to Use survey as previously required by Welsh Government.

A new system of recording complaints and actions was adopted following the production of the ROWIP. The computerised database system, Symology, enabled a more accurate collation of data regarding the number of complaints made, actioned and resolved within a given period of time.

2.6.2 Definitive Map and Statement

A Statement of Priorities was produced alongside the Procedures Manual, and the Registers of Applications was made available on the website. The website has recently been updated and the page redesigned to give users more information.

The Definitive Map and Statement was consolidated and republished in 2013 and is due to be reconsolidated in 2018. Keeping the Definitive Map up to date also means our Legal Event Orders are processed in a timely manner and we currently only have 1 awaiting processing. Similarly, we are in a strong position with Public Path Orders and Modification Orders with 2 and 3 respectively in the initial stages of processing.

With the available level of resources we were unable to prioritise a Lost Way Project or a Review of Anomalies and these tasks were not started.

2.6.3 Maintenance and Enforcement

The targets set within the ROWIP were aspirational and reliant on the increased staff levels and resources proposed within the plan. To make the targets more achievable the timescale was extended from the 10 years of the plan to 15 years. Some of the targets were exceeded such as the number of stiles installed or repaired, surface improvements and installing new ditch crossings and bridges. There are still a number of outstanding issues such as missing and defective signposts, fences and walls and defective ditch crossings and bridges. A survey of approximately half the network in 2013-14 was carried out.

2.6.4 Other Access Provisions

The Wales Coastal Path was officially opened on 5 May 2012 between Chepstow and Queensferry. The section which runs through Conwy follows the coastline as well as having a circular link across Conwy Mountain. The strategic management of the project is now undertaken by a Natural Resources Wales (NRW) funded post. Maintenance and inspection of the route is carried out by Conwy County Borough Council's Countryside Wardens, supported by student placements and is part funded by Welsh Government through NRW.

A Development Officer was employed on a temporary contract to explore other access opportunities as tasks within the ROWIP. The Development Officer investigated the possibility of working with local horse riding groups to produce a Bridleway Strategy. This was produced in draft form but resources and stakeholder interest meant that this project was put on hold, and the project was not developed.

Cycling is a popular pastime in Conwy and encompasses the extremes of leisure and family cycling along the coastal promenades to mountain bike racing in the forests and woodlands and everything in between.

A large scale project with Denbighshire saw the marketing of a circular route in rural Conwy and improvements to surface conditions. Smaller scale projects were undertaken by the Authority's Traffic Section to improve access to schools. The Traffic Section are currently working on the Active Travel Plan which will tie in with the aims of this plan (See appendix 6).

Several small projects were carried out during the lifetime of the ROWIP to improve access for all. This remains a high priority for Conwy and features in this Plan.

For more details on any of the information above please see appendix 4 and 5.

3 Statement of Action

This Statement of Action is written during a time where resources for local authorities are reducing. The uncertainty of budgets over the next 10 years and the discontinuation of the Rights of Way Improvement Plan grant is reflected in the aims of this plan. A greater emphasis on volunteering opportunities will be explored to assist achieving realistic improvements. The actions in the first Statement of Action focussed on the results of our 100% survey of the network and ensuring the routes were accessible. Although we achieved a considerable amount during the previous ROWIP, a lot of work remains outstanding and innovative solutions will need to be sought to enable us to progress this.

The Statement of Action is organised around five aims as follows:

- Aim 1 - Ensure that the public rights of way network is open and available for use.
- Aim 2 - Provide an up-to-date and widely available Definitive Map and Statement.
- Aim 3 - Provide a more connected, safe and accessible network suitable for all users.
- Aim 4 - Improve the promotion, understanding and use of the network.
- Aim 5 - Encourage greater community involvement in managing local rights of way.



3.1 Aim 1 - Ensure that the public rights of way network is open and available for use

3.1.1 Surveys

In preparation for the 2008 ROWIP a 100% survey of the rights of way network was undertaken. A further survey started in 2012 updated information on 60% of the network. Snowdonia National Park Wardens carry out inspections of the ROW within their boundary (with the exception of NRW land) on a regularly basis. In Conwy we utilise temporary student wardens to survey 5% of the network annually. This figure is used as an internal performance indicator. The Authority aims to continue to undertake surveys on the current basis throughout the plan period, using student wardens and National Park Wardens.

3.1.2 Inspection of promoted routes

Local Authorities have been required to carry out an annual inspection of 5% of the entire ROW network and the results were submitted as a Welsh Government Best Value Performance Indicator. Whilst there is no longer the requirement to produce these figures nationally, Conwy County Borough Council has decided to continue to perform these inspections as a local indicator. Our partners, Snowdonia National Park Authority, carry out inspections of the rights of way within the Park boundary. Their wardens then arrange for the works to be carried out or passed to Conwy for rectification. Our promoted routes are regularly inspected by the student wardens. The Authority aims to inspect our promoted routes annually through the plan period.

3.1.3 Least restrictive options

Least restrictive options are preferable for new furniture or replacements as a general principle (location and local terrain will inform the priority and practicality of individual situations); however this is also dependent on the agreement of the landowner. The costs of stiles and gates are comparative although it can be argued that gates require less maintenance. Incentives could be offered to landowners to encourage a change to a least restrictive option although this would impact on available resources. The Authority aims to encourage landowners to choose the least restrictive options where appropriate, within the available resources and site conditions. The needs of disabled or less abled users should be considered for any new routes.

3.1.4 Snowdonia National Park Authority

Conwy will continue to work with SNPA through the Service Level Agreement (SLA) to carry out maintenance functions on the Authority's behalf. The SLA is our contribution to SNPA to enable the wardens to survey, inspect and carry out works to enable the network within their boundary to be of a good quality.

3.1.5 Surface vegetation clearance

Each area within Open Spaces undertake their own vegetation clearance programme, with selected routes being cleared each year. This is supplemented by Town and Community Councils undertaking annual vegetation clearance through the Community Maintenance Scheme, and more communities will be encouraged to participate, enabling work to be undertaken by local independent contractors. The Authority aims to continue our existing in-house vegetation clearance programme throughout the plan period and will explore the potential for greater use of volunteers to assist with this labour-intensive work.

3.1.6 Maintenance and Enforcement

The Authority is legally obliged to ensure that all highways are maintained to a reasonable standard for the status of the route. Footpaths will be maintained to a standard suitable for walkers taking into account the likely user and the nature of the terrain. Bridleways will be suitable for horse riders, cyclists and walkers, again dependent upon the nature of the terrain, and will have appropriate infrastructure for this category of path along the route. Byways, restricted byways and 'green lanes' will be maintained in accordance with historical evidence of use and will only be improved where additional resources are available.

Legally, we are required to provide landowners with a 25% contribution towards the maintenance of stiles and gates, which we currently fulfil by providing the materials for the landowner to install.

The Authority aims to work with volunteers, user groups and landowners to provide a service which maintains the PROW network and ensures it is fit for purpose. We will always aim to work in a collaborative manner but will utilise our powers of enforcement, particularly to address obstructions, where agreement cannot be achieved.

3.2 Aim 2 - Provide an up-to-date and widely available Definitive Map and Statement

3.2.1 Consolidation of Map

The Authority has an up to date Definitive Map and Statement which has been reviewed and republished 4 times since Conwy County Borough Council was formed in 1996. The last consolidation was in 2013 and is due to be re-done in 2018 as proposed in the 2008 ROWIP. The Authority aims to continue to consolidate the Map and Statement every 5 years, thus ensuring interested parties are working with up to date information.

3.2.2 Statement of Priorities/Policies and Procedures

The Authority produced a Statement of Priorities and our Policies and Procedures Booklet within the first year of the 2008 ROWIP. Since this time staffing levels and financial resources have reduced and the way we work will be reviewed. We therefore aim to review our priorities and policies.

3.2.3 Maintain digital online map

Although the legal requirement is to keep a paper copy of the Definitive Map and Statement, the expectation is such that all information should be available digitally. We already provide information on the website regarding public rights of way and the North Wales Coastal Path and more information could be made available which would assist people to plan their journeys.

The Authority aims to explore the potential to develop this.

3.3 Aim 3 - Provide a more connected, safe and accessible network suitable for all users

This aim supports the following Acts and Plans:

- Active Travel (Wales) Act 2013
- Planning (Wales) Act 2015
- Conwy County Borough Council Corporate Plan 2017-2022

3.3.1 Active travel

The Authority endeavours to ensure that new routes added to the Definitive Map and Statement align with the aims of the Active Travel (Wales) Act. The Authority aims to ensure new or improved routes are logical and follow desired lines, well-maintained and clearly marked.

3.3.2 Cycle routes

Whilst cycle routes are not recorded directly on the Definitive Map and Statement, cyclists and horse riders are able to use bridleways restricted byways and byways. There are potentially many roadside verges which are suitable for cyclists and horse riders to utilise. Resources permitting, the Authority aims to identify these verges and ascertain if potential funding is available to improve them for multi-use.

3.3.3 Surface improvements

The Authority aims to maintain the surface of our rights of way to a suitable standard for its status. In some locations this may be difficult due to erosion, terrain and usage. Improving the surface of routes can be costly and often our existing budget does not allow for many projects of this kind to be carried out.

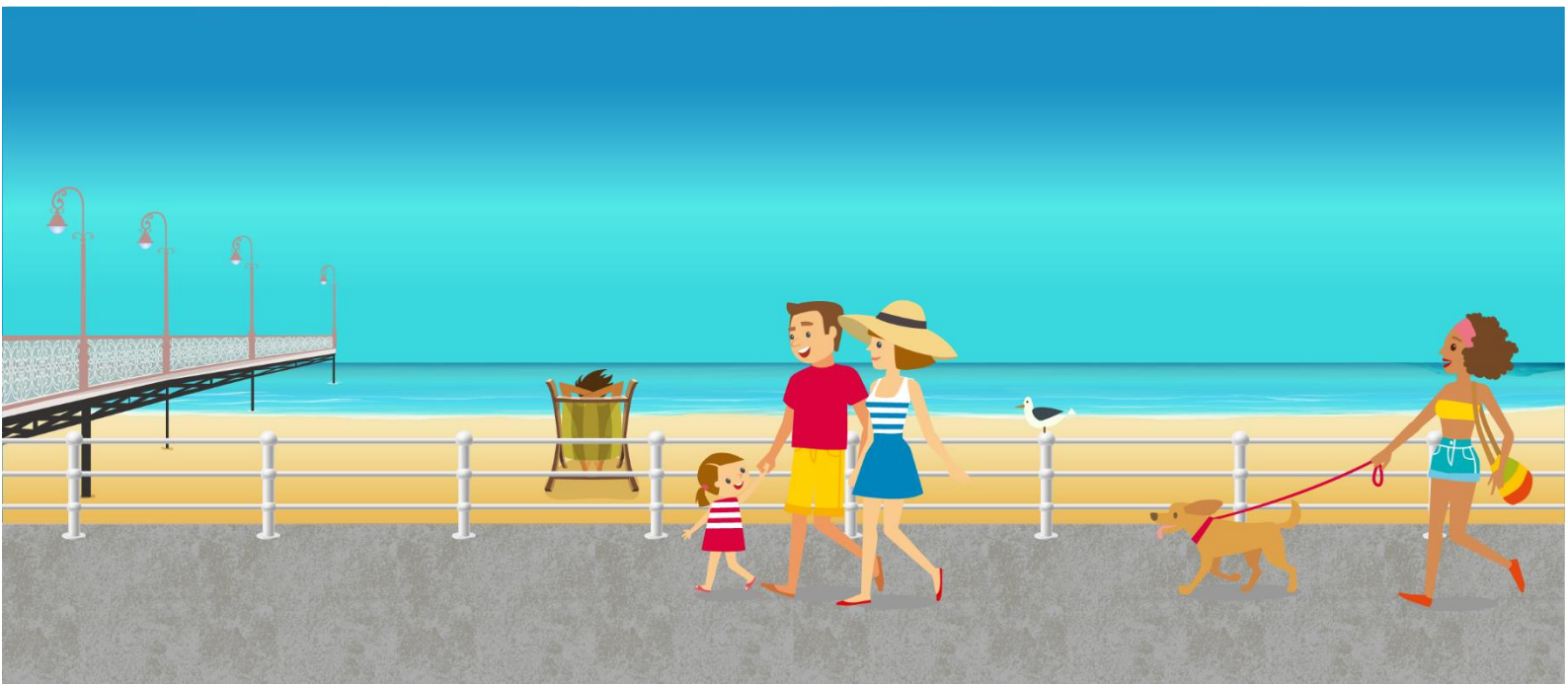
3.3.4 Bridge improvements

Following inspections, Structural Engineers may make recommendations as to bridge replacements/repairs that are required. In some circumstances the path requires a temporary closure. This information must be made available to the public so they can plan their routes with the most accurate information. The Authority aims to ensure that information regarding all temporary closures is available to the public.

3.3.5 Links to Coastal Path

Wales Coast Path should be kept up to the standards as noted in the document 'Quality Standards for the Welsh National Trails and Wales Coast Path'. For 2018/19 there is a 75% funded grant available for maintenance of the WCP and a 100% grant for re alignment.

The Authority aims to explore how the WCP links and benefits to and from local communities and promoted routes. For example having online promotional information on how the WCP links to Penmaenmawr as a village and the Penmaenamwr Upland Walk, North Wales Path, Pilgrims Way, Pensychnant Upland Walk, Huw Toms Walks to Rowen and Llanfairfechan.



3.4 Aim 4 - Improve the promotion, understanding and use of the network

This aim supports the following Acts and Plans:

- Active Travel (Wales) Act 2013
- Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015
- Equality Act 2010
- Environment (Wales) Act 2006
- Planning (Wales) Act 2015
- Welsh Outdoor Recreation Survey

3.4.1 Improved targeted information on internet

Following consultations with the Conwy Access Group, the Authority were informed that more route specific information could be extremely beneficial to users with limited mobility. This information could help them to decide if the route was accessible to them and their needs. We currently do not have a record of routes detailing gradients or limitations. The Authority aims to develop such information for Conwy's promoted routes over the course of the plan period.

3.4.2 Promote walks and festivals

Conwy Walking Week was established in 2003 and grew significantly in popularity over the following years. In 2012 the Volunteer walk leader group Cerdded Conwy Walks (www.cerddedconwy.org) was set up to replace Conwy Walking Week, to meet the growing demand for walks, and to make the project community based and more sustainable. The group now offer walking weekends through the year, offer walk leader training and are supported by Conwy County Borough Council. Cerdded Conwy Walks also help establish the Trefriw Walking Festival which is very successful and is working on stronger links with health walks and the benefits of walking for mental health. The group are open to helping and working on future projects. The Authority aims to support and facilitate the voluntary walking organisations working within Conwy.

3.5 Aim 5 - Encourage greater community involvement in managing local rights of way

This aim supports the following Acts and Plans:

- Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015
- Equality Act 2010
- Welsh Outdoor Recreation Survey
- Conwy County Borough Council Corporate Plan 2017-2022
- One Conwy
- SMPA Recreation Strategy

3.5.1 Community Maintenance Scheme

The success of the Community Maintenance Scheme varies throughout the county. Some Community/Town Councils are fully engaged and others have limited involvement. Take up seems to be reliant upon key interested individuals within the local community. The majority of Councils have not entered into the scheme. The scheme enables Councils to prioritise minor works within their community and resolve issues at a local level whilst being reimbursed for the works carried out. A greater involvement in the scheme would enable CCBC to focus on larger scale issues. The Authority aims to promote the Community Maintenance Scheme to Town and Community Councils.

3.5.2 Volunteer groups

Conwy currently has one voluntary group that carries out work on the ROW network. This group was formed as a working party from the Conwy Valley Ramblers. They have carried out excellent works such as vegetation clearance, stile and step installation and waymarking. This is an area of expertise which should be encouraged and enhanced throughout the coming years. The Authority aims to explore how the use of volunteers can be realistically encouraged and developed in any way that supports the delivery of the ROWIP.

3.5.3 Local Access Forums

Conwy County Borough is covered by 2 Local Access Forums; Snowdonia North LAF for the west of the county (the area within the Snowdonia National Park) and the remaining area is part of a joint LAF with Denbighshire County Council. These LAF's provide independent advice on outdoor recreation issues, and their membership includes a range of user and landholder interests. The LAF was significant in the development of the original ROWIP and was consulted greatly throughout the process. Similarly with the revised Plan the members of the LAF have commented on the draft plan and will be instrumental in the preparation of the annual delivery plans.

4 Next steps

The next step is deciding what actions to take to reach the aims. This will be done through annual delivery plans.

These plans will be written in line with the Statutory Guidance and with advice and guidance from the Conwy East and Denbighshire Local Access Forum (CEDLAF) and the North Snowdonia Local Access Forum (NSLAF). These forums are made up from representatives of various interested groups such as landowners, ramblers, horse riders and cyclists from Conwy and the neighbouring authorities of Gwynedd and Denbighshire.

These groups will also help make sure that people in communities can continue to get involved in decisions and that their views are listened to.

5 Reviews and reporting

The Authority will review the progress with each aim each year and produce an annual report which will be made available on the website to show progress. The proposed report template is shown on the following page.

6 Reporting Progress

Each year the Authority will produce a report stating what progress has been made for each task.

6.1 Aim 1 - Ensure that the public rights of way network is open and available for use

Task No.	Task Name	Stage	Comments
1.1	Surveys		
1.2	Least restrictive options		
1.3	Inspecting promoted routes		
1.4	Surface vegetation clearance		

6.2 Aim 2 - Provide an up-to-date and widely available Definitive Map and Statement

Task No.	Task Name	Stage	Comments
2.1	Consolidation of map		
2.2	Statement of priorities		
2.3	Maintain digital online map (report number of changes each year)		

6.3 Aim 3 - Provide a more connected, safe and accessible network suitable for all users

Task No.	Task Name	Stage	Comments
3.1	Active travel		
3.2	Cycle routes		
3.3	Surface improvements		
3.4	Bridge improvements		
3.5	Links to Coastal Path		

6.4 Aim 4 - Improve the promotion, understanding and use of the network

Task No.	Task Name	Stage	Comments
4.1	Improved targeted information on internet		
4.2	promote walks and festivals		

6.5 Aim 5 - Encourage greater community involvement in managing local rights of way

Task No.	Task Name	Stage	Comments
5.1	Community Maintenance Scheme		
5.2	Volunteer groups		

7 Appendices

7.1 PRESENT & FUTURE NEEDS

Conwy County Borough currently has 1600km of footpath, 98km of bridleway, 21km restricted byways and 16km byways within its boundary. These routes are recorded on the Definitive Map and Statement.

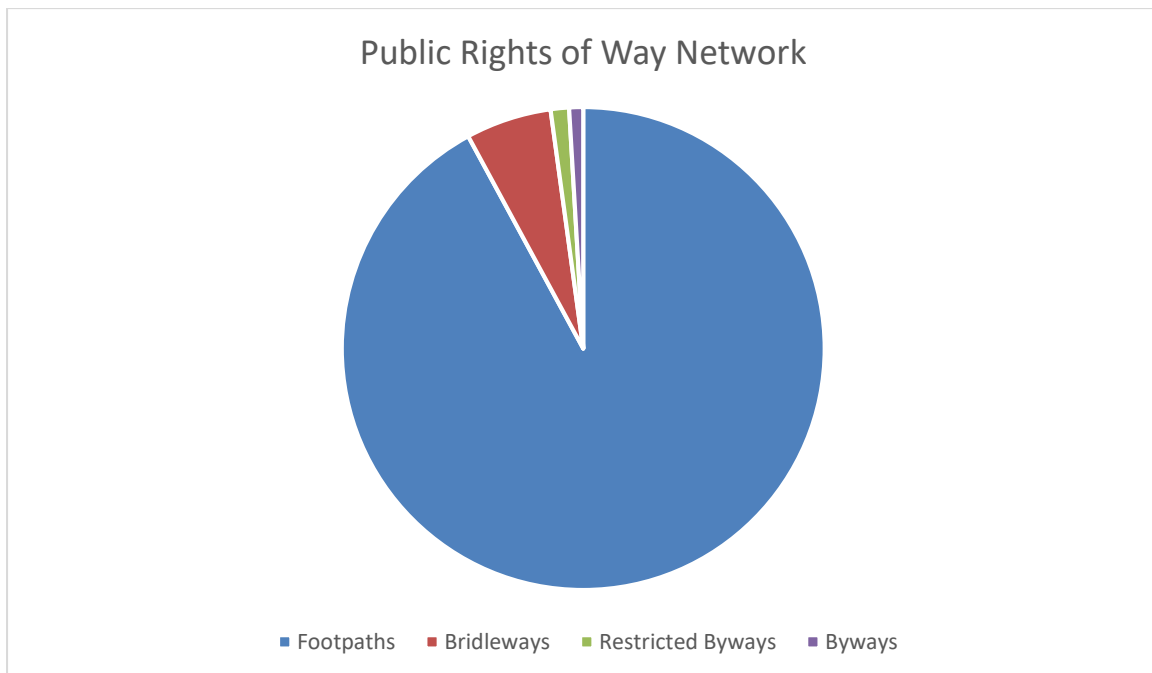


Figure 5 Category of PROW in Conwy

There are potentially many more routes which the public use which we do not have records of and, on application, these are investigated through the Modification Order process. Conwy County Borough Council (CCBC) is currently dealing with one Definitive Map Modification Order at this time with another one waiting to be processed.

The large network of footpaths in this area is a reflection of the information from the Wales Outdoor Recreation Survey 2014 which found that walking was the most popular form of access. Off-road driving and horse riding were not as popular with those surveyed.

The 97km of Wales Coast Path (which utilised existing footpaths and promenades) within Conwy is mainly for walkers with sections also usable by cyclists. The walking festivals and programmes supported by CCBC have mostly been for walkers as is the information for visiting the Local Nature Reserves.

The disjointed network of bridleways, byways and restricted byways makes it difficult to create circular routes for other interest groups without incurring significant expense.

A project was set up following the publication of the current ROWIP to try to improve the existing horse riding network; however this project was discontinued due to reduction in interest from the user groups and loss of officer capacity.

Off-roading is becoming more popular within Conwy as evidenced by the increased requests for information from user groups in the area. Off-road vehicle use is limited to 16km of

byways, together with 107km of unclassified roads known as ‘green lanes.’ Conwy and the SNPA continue to work with the user groups to encourage a higher degree of self-help in terms of maintenance and improvements.

Moving forward, it is appropriate for Conwy to acknowledge its population demographics and plan works to encourage more access for older people and those with a disability.

According to an Office for National Statistics survey in 2015 almost 1/3 of Conwy residents were over the age of 65. This is higher than the Wales and UK average.

The number of people recorded as having a limiting long-term illness during the 2011 census in Conwy was 13,896. These figures cover illnesses due to health, age or disability and range from heavily limiting daily activities to not limiting any daily activity. The table below shows how this compares with Wales and England and Wales combined.

		Conwy	Wales	England & Wales
All people		115,228	3,063,456	56,075,912
Day-to-day activities limited a lot	13,896	12.1%	11.9%	8.5%
Day-to-day activities limited a little	14,019	12.2%	10.8%	9.4%
Day-to-day activities not limited	87,313	75.8%	77.3%	82.1%

These figures are important when analysing the Wales Outdoor Recreation Survey 2014, which found that the current barriers to people experiencing the outdoors were physical disability (29%), health issues (21%), old age (14%) and a lack of time (13%).

The survey recorded the most popular places to visit were villages (80%), parks (77%) and beaches (77%). Less popular were hill/mountain/moor (66%), farmland (56%) and coastal land (54%) but in a survey covering all of Wales these locations would not be available to all respondents. The Wales Coast Path which crosses the northern boundary of the county is very popular with locals and tourists and there are links from the Path to villages and beaches.

7.2 OPPORTUNITIES FOR EXERCISE & RECREATION

Conwy has a network of Conwy has 16,000km of footpath, 98km of bridleway, 21km restricted byways and 16km byways as shown in the plan below.

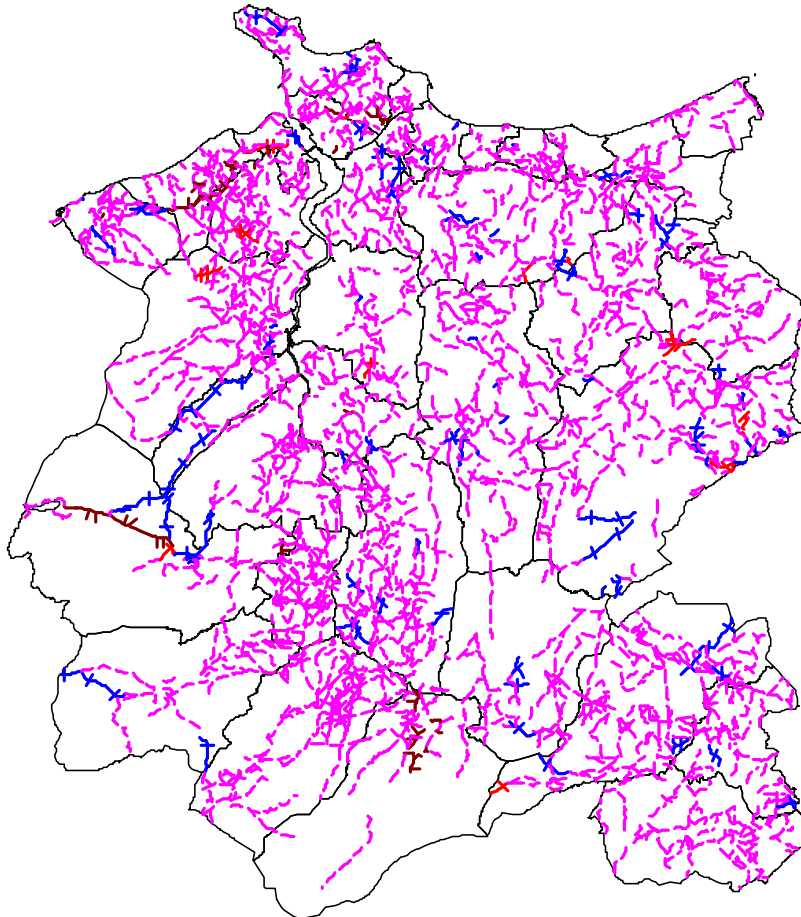


Figure 6 PROW Network in Conwy

The pink lines on the plan indicate the network of public footpaths, blue represents bridleways and brown and red show the few restricted and unrestricted byways respectively.

It is evident that there are far more opportunities for walkers which reflects the high percentage of users indicated in the Welsh Outdoor Recreation Survey 2014 (85% of those surveyed said walking was the main activity). Less provision is available for horse riding which recorded a 3% activity level and off-road driving slightly increased to 5% from the 2011 to the 2014 survey.

The off-road figure may be misleading as anecdotally it appears that these user groups tend to cross the border from England to participate in the activity which is not collated in the Welsh survey.

Public Rights of Way are simultaneously used for exercise and recreation with each route valuable in different ways. For example, the North Wales Path and the Wales Coast Path overlap in places and traverses the northern edge of the county and are promoted as long distance footpaths; however there are large sections of the routes, more on the Wales Coast

Path that are available to cyclists and smaller sections are used to access shops, schools and tourist attractions. The North Wales Pilgrims' Way crosses the above two paths and is also a long distance route between Basingwerk and Bardsey Island. Conwy County Borough Council promotes shorter routes through the county including the Hiraethog Trail and Huw Tom.

Exercise

For the purpose of this document, exercise is defined as physical activity to improve or sustain health and fitness.

Of those questioned in the Welsh Outdoor Recreation Survey 2014 30% said they would like to take part in walking more often and 8% showed an interest in increased off-road cycling.

Exercise was the main motivation from accessing the outdoors according to the 2014 survey.

Walking is a simple, free and an easy way to get more active and is promoted by the National Health Service. Conwy County Borough Council takes an active role in encouraging this with advertised Fun Walks lead by an experienced walks leader. The routes take less than 1 hour to complete and are available to people of all levels of fitness. According to the Wales Outdoor Recreation Survey 2014, those less likely to us public rights of way are those with long term health problems or disabilities.

The community walking group Cerdded Conwy Walks (with assistance from Conwy County Borough Council) offer volunteer leaders training to put on monthly walks programmes that anyone can come along too. The social, physical and mental health benefits of walking for the leaders and walkers can be seen in the popularity of the walks. The group are looking into developing links with Mental Health groups such and Mind for more people to enjoy the benefits of walking.

Recreation

For the purpose of this document, recreation is defined as leisure activities for the purpose of enjoyment or pleasure.

Conwy is a tourist destination which attracts people to a range of activities from mountain biking, gorge walking, canoeing, wildlife watching and off-roading. Conwy can boast areas within the Snowdonia National Park, SSSI designated locations as well as the Great Orme Country Park and several Local Nature Reserves. With 73km of coastline and 13 beaches Conwy is also popular with water sport enthusiasts and beach goers alike.

The Wales Outdoor Recreation Survey 2014 indicated that woodlands, parks and beaches were the most popular destinations, with woodland and beach locations increasing in popularity since the previous survey in 2011.

7.2.1 Conwy Access Group

The Conwy Access Group who represent residents with long term health problems or disabilities in the county reported that the standard of public rights of way is poor. They suggest lack of maintenance and poor surface conditions discourage people from accessing the countryside. The group praised the facilities and conditions within local parks but found there was no provision to access beaches for wheelchair users. It was accepted that the flood defence system along the majority of beaches made it difficult to improve access but that wooden panel barriers on promenades could be improved. Shorter journeys were preferred by members of the group (mainly due to battery life with powered wheelchairs).

The main improvement the group desired was information regarding routes they could use, gradient and surface condition. If this information was available on the website users could make an informed decision whether to use it. Provision of information was shown to be lacking as some members of the group were unaware of the path improvements for wheelchair users at the Little Orme or the Alwen Reservoir.



Figure 7 Accessible path on the Little Orme

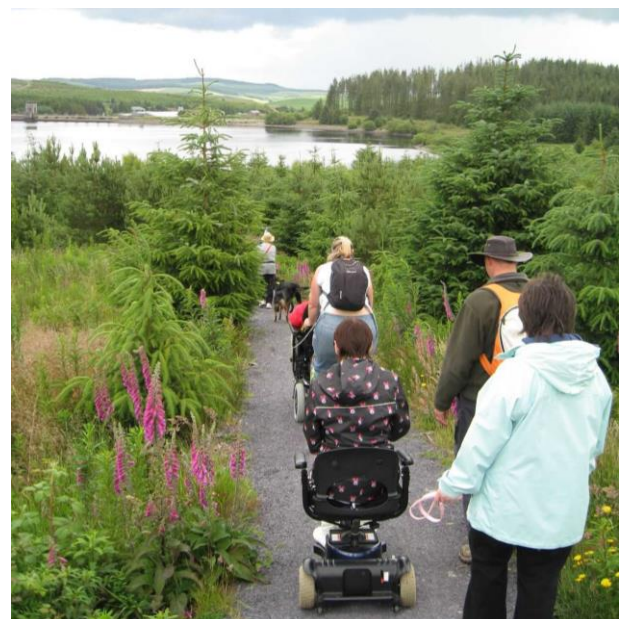


Figure 8 Accessible path at Llyn Brenig

7.2.2 How can the ROWIP help?

Things that cannot be addressed to improve participation are people's lack of time and the bad weather which were cited as the main barriers to outdoor recreation.

Areas that can be addressed if they are deemed to be an issue are improvements to knowledge and infrastructure.

Do members of the public know about the various groups to help them access the outdoors such as Fun Walks and Cerdded Conwy?

Are we making our information user friendly and accessible? Leaflets are now downloadable on the website, as is a digital copy of the Definitive Map.

Are the surfaces of paths maintained adequately for the type of user?

Is the least restrictive furniture used on routes?

Do we address reported issues in a timely manner? The introduction of the Symology reporting system has improved recording and monitoring of issues. The public now has the facility to report problems and pinpoint the location on the website.

Are there adequate links between villages and strategic routes?

Are there short circular routes within urbanised areas?

Are the routes to schools, parks and beaches suitable for young families?

Working with other organisations and agencies to improve access.

7.3 ACCESSIBILITY OF THE NETWORK

During the preparation of the 2008-17 Conwy Rights of Way Improvement Plan Conwy County Borough Council (CCBC) undertook a 100% survey of the ROW network. This indicated that the percentage of the network which was open and usable was 21.73% which was the poorest in Wales.

The table below indicates the percentage of routes within Conwy County which were 'Easy to Use' according to an annual 5 per cent survey. Each year a random selection of routes totalling at least 5 per cent of the total length of the network is surveyed to ascertain whether it is signposted and has appropriate furniture. The results vary from 49.3% in 2008-09 through 63.3% in 2017-18, to a peak of 72.4% in 2013-14.

Due to an internal restructure and limited resources, surveys were not carried out in 2014 or 2015. Student Countryside Wardens carried out the survey in 2016-17 and will continue to collate these figures annually for the foreseeable future.

It is no longer a statutory requirement to carry out these surveys however, CCBC will continue to collect this information for internal performance purposes.

Table 2 Performance Indicator Figures for Easy to Use routes in Conwy

Year	Outturn
2008-09	49.3%
2009-10	57.0%
2010-11	72.2%
2011-12	71.0%
2012-13	69.4%
2013-14	72.4%
2014-15	No surveys
2015-16	No surveys
2016-17	63.3%
2017-18	86.9%

The ethos of the current ROWIP was to become more proactive in resolving issues on the network rather than purely reacting to complaints. The current plan also recommended a huge increase in resources to enable the aspirations of the plan to be realised.

7.4 Analysis of Conwy ROWIP 2008-2017

Task No.	Task	Progress	Current ROWIP
1.1	Review R.O.W Team Structure	Completed	Needs to be re-written to reflect the recent internal restructure
1.2	Production of Procedures Manual	Completed	Needs to be reviewed and updated
1.3	Recording Requests for Action	Completed	We recorded 1565 requests for action between 2008 and 2017.
1.4	System of regular inspection	Partially Commenced	SNPA undertake regular inspections of PROW. We do not.
2.1	Statement of Priorities	Completed	The statement of priorities has been approved and is included within the Policies and Procedures Manual.
2.2	Register of Applications	Completed	Registers are available online and are updated on receipt of new applications
2.3	Remove Backlog of Apps	Ongoing	Completed DMMO's 2 Referral to planning inspectorate 2016/17 x 1
2.4	Remove backlog of LEO's	Completed	There is no backlog There have been 4 LEO's made 4 Consolidation Order 1 Next due 2018
2.5	Review Def. Map Anomalies	Not started	No further action has been taken with this task.
2.6	Consolidated Maps	Completed	The next consolidation of the Definitive Map will be due in 2018.
2.7	Investigate lost ways	Not started	As highlighted in the ROWIP this task is a low priority and the commencement of such is dependent on additional staff.
2.8	Process PPOs	Ongoing	Diversions 6 Extinguishments 1 Creations 9
3.1	Signpost ROW	Ongoing	915 signposts were missing and 268 were defective during the 2005 survey. We indicated that we would install 570 endposts between 2008 and 2017. We actually installed 121. 268 defective endposts required replacement and 61 of these were replaced.
3.2	Waymarking	Ongoing	No specific number of waymarkers were recorded during the 2005 survey. We have no record of the number of waymarkers which have been installed. A large number of waymarker disks have been dispatched to third parties.

Task No.	Task	Progress	Current ROWIP
3.3	Surface Repair	Ongoing	108 instances of surface damage were recorded during the 2005 survey. We carried out 130 improvements to the surface of PROW.
3.4	Bridges in safe condition	Ongoing	69 bridges were missing and 137 required repair during the 2005 survey. We indicated we would install 16 and repair 1134 bridges and ditch crossings between 2007-17. We installed 38 new structures and repaired 47.
3.5	Maintain path furniture	Ongoing	1381 broken gates and 317 broken stiles were recorded. We indicated that between 2008 and 2017 we would repair 851 broken gates and 282 broken stiles. We repaired or replaced 286 gates and 342 stiles during that time period.
3.6	Backlog of Obstructions	Ongoing	1529 Fence/wall obstructions were recorded during the 2005 survey. We proposed to resolve 944 of these issues between 2008-17. We actually resolved 228. 158 hedges and nuisance obstructions were recorded and 145 were resolved.
4.1	Access to Coast	Ongoing	No specific task set. Wales Coastal Path incorporates 32 miles plus 13 miles inland access routes through Conwy.
4.2	Improve Equestrian Access	Ongoing	85 complaints were resolved between 2008-17 on bridleways, byways and restricted byways.
4.3	Improve Cycle Access	Ongoing	The Cycling Centre of Excellence project between Conwy and Denbighshire is complete creating a 52km circular route between Betws y Coed and the Alwen Reservoir.
4.4	Improve Access for All	Ongoing	Consultation and analysis of information available to users was proposed to be completed by 2010-11. This was not completed due to staffing levels
4.5	Guided & Promoted Walks	Ongoing	Some of our walks leaflets were made available online and walking events were advertised on our website. The ability to report issues with a right of way is also available on our online mapping page on the website. A schedule of improvements to existing and new material describing suitability for less abled was proposed but identified as a low priority.

7.5 CONTRIBUTION TO ACTIVE TRAVEL

Active Travel (Wales) Act 2013 became law in Wales on 4th November 2013, making it a legal requirement for local authorities in Wales to continuously improve facilities and routes for walkers and cyclists (non-motorised users) in settlements with a population of 2,000 or more within a built up areas.

At the time of writing the assessments the existing route maps for Conwy County Borough had received ministerial approval and preparation for the integrated Network Map was well under way.

The Active Travel Plan highlights the desire for walking routes to be:

Coherent – Easy and logical routes

Direct – Following desire lines

Safe – Traffic-free, clearly defined entrance and exit points, free from overhanging vegetation

Attractive – well maintained furniture and environment

Comfortable – well maintained surface and drainage

The Public Rights of Way section worked closely with the Authority's Traffic Department on its Safer Routes to School initiative and created new, or improved existing routes that can encourage children and parents to walk or cycle to school. The Active Travel Plan goes further in promoting travel by 'more active methods' for journeys made to or from a workplace, educational establishment or in order to access health, leisure or other local services or facilities¹.

The current ROWIP does not prioritise Active Travel routes however this can be addressed in future plans.

A revised ROWIP will promote clearly defined footpath and bridleway access points and ensure that all complaints of damaged furniture and surface issues are dealt with in a timely manner.

¹ Welsh Government Design Guidance Active Travel (Wales) Act 2013

7.5.1 Duties Created by the Active Travel (Wales) Act 2013

Duties on local authorities

S.2(6) – duty to take certain factors and guidance into account when determining whether a route is appropriate for active travel.

S.3(1) – duty to prepare an existing routes map, and submit it to the Welsh Ministers for approval.

S.3(3) – duty to consult on the existing routes maps.

S.3(4) – duty to have regard to guidance on preparing and consulting on the existing routes map.

S.3(5) – duty to submit existing routes map within a fixed timescale.

S.3(6) – duty to submit a statement and explanation of standards of routes on the existing routes map to the Welsh Ministers.

S.3(7) – duty to submit a report on the changes in level of use of active travel infrastructure whenever re-submitting the existing routes map for approval (only applies after the first map).

S.3(10)(a)-(c) – duty to keep the existing routes map under review, and to resubmit it for approval every time the integrated network map is submitted for approval.

S.4(1) – duty to prepare an integrated network map and submit it to the Welsh Ministers for approval.

S.4(3) – duty to consult on the integrated network map.

S.4(4) – duty to consider the desirability of active travel whilst preparing the integrated network map.

S.4(5) – duty to have regard to guidance on preparing and consulting on the integrated network map.

S.4(6) – duty to submit integrated network map within a fixed timescale.

S.4(9)(a)-(c) – duty to keep the integrated network map under review, and to resubmit it for approval every 3 years.

S.5(1)-(3) – duty to publish maps and the statement and explanation.

S.5(2) – duty to have regard to guidance on publishing maps.

S.6 – duty to have regard for the integrated network map when preparing local transport plans.

S.7(1) – duty to make continuous improvement to active travel routes and facilities.

S.7(2) – duty to have regard to guidance on continuous improvement.

S.7(3) – duty to report to Welsh Ministers on costs incurred while making continuous improvement.

S.9(1) – duty to take reasonable steps to enhance active travel provision while exercising certain functions under the Highways Act 1980.

S.9(2) – duty to have regard to the needs of walkers and cyclists while exercising certain traffic management functions.

S.(10)(1) – duty to exercise functions under this Act in a way that promotes active travel and secures more active travel infrastructure.

S.10(2) – duty to make a report on Welsh Ministers on what the local authority has done to meet their duty under s.10(1).

7.6 CONTRIBUTION TO WELL BEING PLAN

The Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act is about improving the social, economic, environmental and cultural well-being of Wales.

It will make the public bodies listed in the Act think more about the long-term, work better with people and communities and each other, look to prevent problems and take a more joined-up approach.

This will help us to create a Wales that we all want to live in, now and in the future.

In accordance with the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act, the Conwy and Denbighshire Public Service Board has been established to produce a Well-being Plan. The Well-being Plan (2018-2023) has been produced in draft and is available for consultation (at the time of writing this assessment). This Assessment is based on the draft plan.

The Public Service Board (PSB) for Conwy and Denbighshire is made up of representatives from Betsi Cadwaladr University Health Board, NRW, National Probation Service, the three emergency services and Welsh Government amongst others. Their tasks are to prepare and publish an assessment of the state of economic, social, environmental and cultural well-being; and prepare and publish a plan setting out local objectives and proposals to meet them.

The assessment was informed by national and local research and feedback from residents businesses. It captured the strengths people and communities had to offer as well as the challenges and opportunities faced now and in the future.

It can be viewed at <http://conwyanddenbighshirelsb.org.uk/en/home/english-wellbeing-assessment>

The Well-being of Future Generations Act (Wales) 2015 set seven goals which all plans need to work towards. These are:

- A prosperous Wales
- A resilient Wales
- A healthier Wales
- A more equal Wales
- A Wales of Cohesive Communities
- A Wales of vibrant culture and thriving Welsh language
- A globally responsible Wales

In addition to the seven goals the PSB analysed the feedback from the assessment and identified a list of common themes. This list was reduced three priorities. These are:

1. People – Good Mental Well-being for all ages
2. Community – Community Empowerment
3. Place – Environmental Resilience

The Plan highlights some significant facts which will relate to the use of public rights of way and access to the countryside. These include:

The population is estimated to be getting older with more residents aged over 75 and less under 25. Currently a quarter of the joint population is aged over 65.

Over half of the population is obese or overweight.

75% of the land in Conwy and Denbighshire is agricultural and 13.5% is woodland.

15 million people visit Conwy or Denbighshire each year and almost a third of the employment is within the tourism sector.

Over 40% of pensioners don't have a car.

A quarter of residents have mental health needs – mainly anxiety and depression.

Between the 2 counties, 400 new homes need to be built each year to keep up with demand.

The Rights of Way Improvement Plan will take these three priority areas into account when producing the annual Delivery Plans.

7.7 CONTRIBUTION TO OTHER PLANS & PRIORITIES

A number of Acts, plans and surveys have been published since the ROWIP was published and these are being taken into account during the preparation of the new plan.

- Equality Act 2010
- Welsh Outdoor Recreation Survey
- Environment (Wales) Act 2006
- Planning (Wales) Act 2015
- One Conwy
- Snowdonia National Park Authority Recreation Strategy

7.7.1 Equality Act 2010 (and Conwy's Strategic Equality Plan 2020-2024)

The Equality Act 2010 replaced three separate pieces of all previous equality legislation including covering discrimination: Sex Discrimination Act 1975, Race Relations Act 1976 and Disability Discrimination Act 1995. The Equality Act 2010 protects people from discrimination in the workplace and wider society.

The Equality Act 2010 placed the requirement on public bodies to publish a Strategic Equality Plan to ensure policies are fully inclusive, eliminating discrimination and promoting equality.

Conwy County Borough Council has adopted the following 6 long term objectives to prevent inequality:

- Objective 1: Outcomes in Education attainment and Wellbeing in schools are improved.
- Objective 2: We will take action to ensure we are an equal opportunities employer and reduce pay gaps.
- Objective 3: We will take action to improve the Living Standards of people disadvantaged by their protected characteristics.
- Objective 4: We will improve Health, Wellbeing and Social Care outcomes.
- Objective 5: We will improve Personal Security and Access to justice
- Objective 6: Increase Access to Participation and improve diversity of decision making
- Objective 7: Develop our knowledge and understanding of the socio-economic duty to identify the key areas of impact to be addressed under each of the other 6 objectives.

7.7.2 Welsh Outdoor Recreation Survey 2014

Natural Resources Wales (NRW) commissioned 3 surveys to be carried out in 2008, 2011 and 2014 with a broad selection of residents in Wales. The surveys focused on public engagement with the natural environment and recreational visits taken during that period.

The surveys identified that outdoor visits were extremely popular with those questioned (93% of respondents had taken at least 1 visit during the relevant period). The over 75 age group were less likely to visit the outdoors than younger people; as were respondents with a long-term illness or disability. There were variations recorded between those with and

without access to vehicles and those on low incomes. People in deprived areas and those who are not in paid employment were less likely to use outdoor recreation.

Walking remained the main activity undertaken although a slight decrease was recorded between 2011 and 2014. It was popular with dog walkers, home owners and those in paid employment. Sightseeing or visiting an attraction was cited as the main reason for the visit (70%), followed by visiting a playground (46%) and picnicking (44%).

The main reasons for active participation were running (28%), outdoor swimming (26%), road cycling (24%) and off road cycling (17%).

The survey in 2014 indicated that going to villages, local parks and beaches were the main reason for visiting the outdoors (80%, 77%, and 77% respectively). This mirrors the result in 2011. Least popular reasons were to visit inland water (67%), hills/mountains/moorland (66%) and farmland (56%).

The main reasons cited for not visiting the outdoors within the last 12 months were physical disability (29%), health issues (21%), old age (14%) and lack of time (13%). The results differed to those who had not visited the outdoors for the previous 4 weeks: lack of time (29%) and poor weather (25%) had a greater impact on visits in the short-term. These results were similar across all three surveys.

The duration of visits were predominantly under three hours in length with the exception of sightseeing and picnicking.

7.7.3 Environment (Wales) Act 2016 – Area Statements

New powers have been given to Natural Resources Wales (NRW) through this Act to ensure the sustainable management of air, land, wildlife, plants and soil to improve the well-being of Wales. NRW are required to produce a State of Natural Resources Report (SoNaRR) every five years as well as producing Area Statements which will set out the requirements for improving sustainability on a national and local level. At the time of writing no Statements have been prepared for the Conwy area.

7.7.4 Planning (Wales) Act 2015

The Act sets out a series of legislative changes to deliver reform of the planning system in Wales, to ensure that it is fair, resilient and enables development. The plan will improve the Planning process to ensure the right development is located in the right place.

The act addresses 5 key objectives:

- a modernised framework for the delivery of planning services – the act introduces powers to allow planning applications to be made directly to Welsh Ministers in limited circumstances
- strengthening the plan-led approach – the act introduces a legal basis for the preparation of a National Development Framework and Strategic Development Plans
- improved resilience – the act will allow the Welsh Ministers to direct local planning authorities to work together and for local planning authorities to be merged

- frontloading and improving the development management system – the act will introduce a statutory pre-application procedure for defined categories of planning application
- enabling effective enforcement and appeals – the act enables changes to enforcement procedures to secure prompt, meaningful action against breaches of planning control and increase the transparency and efficiency of the appeal system

7.7.5 Corporate Plan 2017-2022

At the time of compiling this report the current Corporate Plan has expired and the new plan is in draft form. The new plan focuses on 8 main themes:

- 1 Skills
- 2 Safety
- 3 Housing
- 4 Health
- 5 Growth
- 6 Environment
- 7 Culture
- 8 Voice

The Corporate Plan aims to see the people of Conwy well educated and skilled and to feel safe in their communities; to value and look after the environment for future generations is also a key theme. Conwy County Borough Council will have an awareness of people's needs in regards to appropriate housing and reducing homelessness. Encouraging residents to be more healthy and active is a priority for the next five years as is building a prosperous economy. Conwy County Borough Council will encourage the protection of the Welsh culture and heritage and promote the Welsh language.

7.7.6 Snowdonia National Park Authority Management Plan / Cynllun Eryri

Snowdonia National Park Authority have drafted a management plan for the National Park which is currently at the consultation stage.

The Plan, like the ROWIP will deliver on Welsh Government policy objectives, goals and priorities. The key issues the Management Plan will consider are:

- Protecting and enhancing habitats, species and ecosystems
- Invasive species, disease and pollution
- Fragmented habitats
- Climate change and carbon storage
- Protecting and enhancing the environment
- Water and air quality
- The historic and built environment
- Engaging people with the environment
- Payment for ecosystem services
- Green energy, green transport and green buildings
- Sustained use of the Parks natural resources

The Plan seeks greater roles for volunteers to tackle footpath erosion and access issues, partnership working to tackle illegal activities by some user groups and to explore opportunities to improve health and well-being through the natural environment.

How can the Rights of Way Improvement Plan contribute?

Table 3 How the Conwy ROWIP links with other Plans

ROWIP Key Principles		Equality Act	Welsh Outdoor Recreation	Environment (Wales) Act	Planning (Wales) Act	Corporate Plan	SNPA Management Plan (Draft)
Ensure that PROW network is open and available for use		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Provide an up-to-date and widely available Definitive Map and Statement					✓	✓	
Provide a more connected, safe and accessible network suitable for all users		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Improve the promotion, understanding and use of the network		✓	✓		✓	✓	✓
Encourage greater community involvement in managing local rights of way		✓	✓			✓	✓

