

Wiltshire Council

Countryside Access Improvement Plan 2015 – 2025

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Appendix 1 - List of organisations consulted during the production of the CAIP

Age UK
Area Boards (Wiltshire Council)
Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty - Cotswolds
Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty - Cranborne Chase
Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty - North Wessex Downs
British Driving Society
British Horse Society
Byways and Bridleways Trust
Campaign to Protect Rural England
Canals and River Trust
Carers Support North Wiltshire
Climate Friendly Bradford-on-Avon
Community Transport South Wiltshire (formerly Salisbury District Community Transport)
Corsham Disabled Club
Cotswolds Canal Trust
Cotswolds Waterpark
Countryside Landowners Association
County Councils (adjacent to Wiltshire)
CTC - The national cycling charity
Devizes & District Blind and Partially Sighted Club
Devizes Community Area Partnership
Disabled Ramblers
Dressability
English Heritage
Environment Agency
Fieldfare Trust
Forestry Commission
Friends of the Ridgeway
Green Lanes Association
Independent Living Centre
Kennet and Avon Canal Trust
Kennet Carers
Land Access Recreation Association
Living Options
Malmesbury Physically Handicapped Club
Marlborough Downs Nature Improvement Area
Mencap Wiltshire
Ministry of Defence - Salisbury Plain Training Area
Mobilise
National Farmers Union
National Trails
Natural England
Neighbouring authorities
New Forest National Park
Ordinary Life Project Association

Open Spaces Society
Parish and Town Councils
Ramblers
Richmond Fellowship

Royal National Institute for Deaf People (RNID), Communication Services, South West Region
Salisbury Greenspace Partnership
Shopmobility
Sustrans
Tourist Information
Trail Riders Fellowship
Tread Lightly
Trowbridge Community Sensory Garden
U3A - University of the Third Age
Visit Wiltshire
Walking for Health
Walking Forums
West Wilts Access Group
Wilts & Swindon Users Network
Wilts & Berks Canal Trust

Wiltshire and Bath Independent Living Centre, (ILC) Semington
Wiltshire and Swindon Countryside Access Forum
Wiltshire Blind Association
Wiltshire Bridleway Association
Wiltshire Centre for Independent Living
Wiltshire Mind
Wiltshire People First
Wiltshire Primary Care Trust
Wiltshire Wildlife Trust

Appendix 2 – The Definitive Map and Statement (DMS)

The recording of a route on the DMS is conclusive evidence, in law, of the existence and position of a right of way. It should be noted that this is without prejudice to the existence of any other rights on the route. For example, a route may be recorded as a footpath but historic use by horse riders may have led to them also acquiring a legal right to use it. The definitive map records the position and status of a right of way and the definitive statement gives a description of the route.

The DMS was produced in the early 1950s and has been subject to review and alteration since that time. Examples of the reasons for change include:

- 1) Historical evidence suggests the original record is incomplete, e.g. evidence is found that public rights subsist that are not recorded at all or that are incorrectly recorded (e.g. rights for carriage drivers exist but the way is only recorded as a bridleway)
- 2) Rights have been acquired by more recent use
- 3) A route may have been diverted, extinguished or created (e.g. as part of a planning application)

These alterations are recorded in legal orders and are reflected on the “working copy” of the definitive map, which is available to view on Wiltshire Council’s website¹.

¹ <http://www.wiltshire.gov.uk/communityandliving/rightsofway/publicrightsofwaymapping.htm>

Appendix 3 – Public rights of way

(Public) rights of way are paths and tracks which anyone can use to cross land. Rights of way exist in towns, villages and the countryside and the public have a legal right to use them at any time of the day or night, all year round. All rights of way should be marked by a signpost or waymark where they leave a metalled road and at points along the route where people may have difficulty finding their way.

There are four different types of rights of way:



Footpath - a highway where there is a right of way on foot only



Bridleway - a highway where there is a right of way:

- on foot
- on horseback or leading a horse
- on any pedal cycle (though cycles must give way to walkers and horse riders)



Restricted byway - a highway where there is a right of way:

- on foot
- on horseback or leading a horse
- on any pedal cycle
- on a non-mechanically propelled vehicle (e.g. horse and cart)



Byway Open to All Traffic (BOAT) - a highway where there is a right of way:

- on foot
- on horseback or leading a horse
- on any pedal cycle
- on a non-mechanically propelled vehicle (e.g. horse and cart)
- on wheeled vehicles of any kind (including cars and motorbikes)

The surface does not have to be maintained to a standard suitable for vehicles.

Appendix 4 – Improving physical and mental health

Appendix 4A - The importance of regular exercise

The level of exercise recommended by Government varies between age groups, but to stay healthy or to improve health, adults should do at least 150 minutes (2 hours and 30 minutes) of moderate-intensity aerobic activity each week. Moderate-intensity aerobic activity means working hard enough to raise heart rate and break a sweat. This target can be achieved in a variety of ways, for further information see:

<http://www.nhs.uk/Livewell/fitness/Pages/whybeactive.aspx>

It has been medically proven that people who do regular physical activity have²:

- up to a 35% lower risk of coronary heart disease and stroke
- up to a 50% lower risk of type 2 diabetes
- up to a 50% lower risk of colon cancer
- up to a 20% lower risk of breast cancer
- a 30% lower risk of early death
- up to an 83% lower risk of osteoarthritis
- up to a 68% lower risk of hip fracture
- a 30% lower risk of falls (among older adults)
- up to a 30% lower risk of depression
- up to a 30% lower risk of dementia

“If a group of 120 healthy individuals aged over 60 years become active, then over 10 years (compared to an inactive group) there will be about 20 fewer deaths, 7 less heart attacks, 3 less strokes, 2 less new diabetics, and 13 less people with osteoarthritis of the knee becoming disabled.”³

Appendix 4B – Key policies to promote active living (including walking and cycling)

Walking and cycling, whether for utility or leisure purposes, are recognised as vital to improving the nation’s health, both physical and mental. Relevant strategies and initiatives include:

- *Active Travel Strategy (2010)*. The guiding principles of this strategy are that walking and cycling should be everyday ways of getting around - to improve health, tackle congestion, reduce carbon emissions and improve the local environment
- *Let’s Get Moving – A new physical activity care pathway for the NHS: Commissioning guidance (2009)*. This guidance is aimed at helping NHS professionals encourage people to be more active, e.g. GPs can encourage people to join walking groups or prescribe gym membership
- *Walk4life and bike4life initiatives*. These are part of the Change4life government initiative to promote healthy eating and greater activity
- *NHS Wiltshire Strategic Framework 2009-2014*. This recognises the need to see “The NHS thinking ‘outside the box’ and working with organisations across Wiltshire to promote healthy living, and a sense of wellbeing”

² <http://www.nhs.uk/Livewell/fitness/Pages/whybeactive.aspx>

³ Bird, Dr William (2004). pp27

Appendix 4C - The Countryside Access Network and physical and mental health

The UK National Ecosystem Assessment (UK NEA) is the first analysis of the UK's natural environment in terms of the benefits it provides to society and our continuing economic prosperity. Some of the relevant results include⁴:

- observing nature and participating in physical activity in green spaces play an important role in positively influencing human health and well-being
- local greenspaces or nearby natural habitats are vital for all individuals
- access to nature can encourage participation in physical activity
- green exercise in all habitats results in significant improvements in both self-esteem and mood
- experiencing nature has been demonstrated to have a significant positive impact upon heart rate and blood pressure
- contact with nature at any age can derive a whole number of benefits for physical and mental health, contact with nature during youth can directly impact upon healthy adult behaviours

There have been a number of other studies which have shown that exercise and/or contact with the natural environment benefits mental health:

- several studies have indicated that physical activity is at least as effective for treating depression as psychotherapy⁵
- two studies have shown that physical activity can be as successful at treating depression as medication. One study showed that after 16 weeks, exercise equalled the effect of a standard anti-depressant drug and after 6 months, those who continued to exercise were more likely to recover than those solely on medication⁶
- a report for the Forestry Commission⁷ reviewed a number of other studies. One study by the National Schizophrenia Fellowship reported that 85% of those surveyed who had used exercise as a treatment found it helpful to them⁸. In another study of people who had experienced mental health difficulties, 50% felt exercise had helped them to recover⁹
- an assessment of studies which considered the effects of "active participation" in the countryside (i.e. cutting back vegetation, building walls, installing gates etc.) showed a significant improvement in self-esteem in 9 out of the 10 case studies¹⁰
- children undertaking outdoor activities in nature appear to improve their symptoms of Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder by 30% compared to the same activities in an outdoor urban environment and three fold compared to an indoor environment¹¹
- The National Trust has presented compelling evidence that we as a nation, and especially our children, are exhibiting the symptoms of 'Nature Deficit Disorder'. They call for a re-assessment of how we and especially our children engage with the outdoor environment in order to achieve better physical health, mental health and improve their ability to assess risks to themselves and others¹²

⁴ United Nations Environment Programme, World Conservation Monitoring Centre (2011). Ch 23

⁵ Bird, Dr William (2004). pp 48-9

⁶ Ibid. pp 48-51

⁷ CJC Consulting (2005)

⁸ Hogman G & Sandamas G (2001)

⁹ Baker S & Strong S (2001)

¹⁰ Pretty J, Griffin M, Peacock J et al (2005). pp10

¹¹ Faber Taylor A, Kuo F and Sullivan W (2001). pp54-77

¹² Moss S (2012)

- The link between exercise and mental health is specifically recognised in the document “Exercise referral and the treatment of mild or moderate depression. Information for GPs and healthcare practitioners.”¹³

Appendix 4D – Government white papers relating to access to nature

The need to improve access to nature and the countryside was recognised in two white papers in 2010 and 2011:

- “The Natural Choice: securing the value of nature” shows how the value of our natural environment must be recognised and used, and states that people and nature must be reconnected. Many reasons for this are given, including the mental and physical wellbeing that contact with nature has been shown to bring
- “Healthy Lives, Healthy People” recognises that access to green space is associated with better mental and physical health across socio-economic groups. Government wants Local Nature Partnerships and Health & Wellbeing Boards to engage each other in their work and include access to the natural environment in their strategies

Appendix 4E - The CAN and the efficient use of limited funding

It was estimated by the Chief Medical Officer in 2004 that the cost of inactivity to the NHS and the economy was £8.2 billion annually. This included direct costs of treatment for the major lifestyle related diseases, the indirect costs caused through sickness absence and the costs of early mortality. This does not include the contribution of inactivity due to obesity which itself has been estimated to cost £2.5 billion annually¹⁴.

Another Department of Health report¹⁵ has looked in detail at the economic costs of mental health issues. This highlights the huge financial savings that could potentially be made by working to reducing these issues, and access to greenspace has a significant role to play:

- mental ill health is the single largest cause of disability in the UK, contributing up to 22.8% of the total burden, compared to 15.9% for cancer and 16.2% for cardiovascular disease
- the wider economic costs of mental illness in England have been estimated at £105.2 billion each year. This includes direct costs of services (e.g. NHS costs), lost productivity at work and reduced quality of life
- in terms of what this means for the NHS itself, In 2008/9, the NHS spent 10.8% of its annual secondary healthcare budget on mental health services, which amounted to £10.4 billion. Service costs which include NHS, social and informal care amounted to £22.5 billion in 2007 in England
- by comparison, the annual direct costs of smoking to the NHS in 2008/9 was £5.2 billion. Almost half of total tobacco consumption is by those suffering from mental health disorders

¹³ Mental health foundation (2005)

¹⁴ DoH (2004)

¹⁵ DoH (2011)

Appendix 4F – Cost:benefits of walking and cycling measures

A recent cost:benefit economic assessment by DoH¹⁶ considered walking and cycling schemes using the same method the government uses for assessing large (and very costly) transport schemes. This method considers many impacts of schemes such as reductions in congestion and savings in travel times, health benefits, reductions in accidents etc. The review looked at studies in both the UK and beyond. Almost all of the studies identified economic benefits of walking and cycling interventions which are highly significant. The mean result for all data identified was 13:1 and for UK data alone the mean figure is higher, at 19:1. This is way in excess of the 2:1 ratio the Department of Transport considers “high value for money”. Walking and cycling schemes are very cheap in comparison to providing for most other forms of transport, yet bring very high benefits.

Another study by Natural England¹⁷ estimated that every £1 spent on a health walk will save a primary care trust £7 on expenditure such as hospital admissions and medication.

¹⁶ Davis A (2010)

¹⁷ Heron C & Bradshaw G (2010). pp9

Appendix 5 - Climate change

Climate change is expected to result in the UK experiencing hotter and drier summers (which may lead to more frequent droughts), warmer and wetter winters (which may lead to more frequent flooding), rising sea levels and more severe weather (e.g. storms). These events could create risks and opportunities, including¹⁸:

- higher summer temperatures, with implications for human comfort, overheating, heat stress and increased demand for cooling;
- higher winter temperatures possibly leading to reduced demand for fuel;
- changing patterns of rainfall may affect flood risk, water resources and its availability and water quality;
- intense rainfall events could lead to drainage systems becoming unable to cope, resulting in flash flooding;
- flooding may lead to loss of life, injury, damage to buildings and land and contamination from sewage;
- an increase in problems with pests, diseases and non-native invasive species, which could affect farming and forestry
- subsidence and heave risks may increase for clay soils, due to higher temperatures, lower summer rainfall, increased evapotranspiration¹⁹ and increased winter rainfall

The impacts of extreme weather on the CAN and what can be done to ameliorate these impacts

The threats and opportunities that may impact on the areas of work covered by the Rights of Way and Countryside service include the following:

- 1) *More outdoor living will mean green and open spaces/infrastructure will be used more intensively*
 - higher summer temperatures mean there could be increased pressure on the council's public open spaces, parks and countryside sites and on rights of way - particularly those close to towns and villages. There may be an increase in dog visits which could increase dog fouling and affect biodiversity both by disturbance and also nutrient enrichment leading to changes in flora (and ultimately fauna). There could also be more pollution, particularly in the form of litter
 - controls in place to deal with this include managing visitors to protect what is special on our countryside sites, more regular patrols and education events by dog wardens, dog bylaws being put in place and more frequent attendance by grounds contract personnel to remove litter
 - further action may be needed on open spaces to provide shade in summer and minimise water use (e.g. use drought tolerant plant species). Individual site management plans are being written and the effects of climate change will be considered for each open space site managed by the service. We may have to consider sacrificial areas on some sites in order to safeguard what is special. More rights of way may need to be surfaced to combat the effects of erosion caused by increased use, and there could be higher expenditure on rights of way structures due to more frequent use

¹⁸ Town and Country Planning Association (2007)

¹⁹ the transportation of water into the atmosphere from surfaces, including evaporation from soil and vegetation

2) *Increased soil erosion associated with more intense winter rainfall*

- periods of intense precipitation could lead to soil erosion, landslips and flooding affecting public access. It would also have an impact on biodiversity. With drier summers and wetter winters causing stress to plant species potentially throughout the year, there is more likelihood of bare ground, which would be subject to erosion through flooding
- further action may be needed to reduce activities that cause soil erosion, e.g. over-use/over-grazing. A long term solution could be to introduce plants such as grasses, rushes or deep rooting trees to bind soil (taking care on the choice of species used bearing in mind drier summers). Such careful planting could have the dual benefit of habitat creation as well as ameliorating soil erosion. A strategic approach taking into account whole catchments is needed. This must include taking into account the impact of large developments introducing extensive hard surfacing

3) *Biodiversity; increase in invasive species; change in native species (abundance and distribution) and changing community composition*

- hotter, drier summers, droughts and water shortages, annual temperature increases, excessive rainfall and flooding and warmer wetter winters could lead to changing numbers and distribution of native plant and animal species, which would change Wiltshire's landscape. There could be an increase in agricultural pests and a loss of some ecosystem services (i.e. the benefits provided by ecosystems that contribute to making human life both possible and worth living)
- controls in place to deal with invasive species include enforcing wildlife legislation. The River Avon Invasive Species Forum, The North Wiltshire Invasive Plants Project and the Wiltshire Biodiversity Action Plan all have targets to take action against invasive species. If non-native invasive species are reported on Wiltshire Council owned/managed land they are eradicated. To ameliorate the effects of climate change on numbers/distributions of native plant/animal species, the Wiltshire Council Green Infrastructure Strategy identifies a GI framework that will benefit existing and new biodiversity
- further action is needed to raise awareness of invasive plants amongst all levels of staff involved with managing open spaces and rights of way. If non-native invasive species are identified there needs to be a rapid response action plan, in consultation with the GB non-native species secretariat. Management plans for open spaces must manage invasive species as well as enhance biodiversity. To protect against adverse climate change effects on biodiversity, green open spaces, habitats and ecological corridors can be enhanced via landscape scale projects and Sustainable Urban Drainage Schemes
- in the longer term, further action could include measures to encourage adaptation of habitats and natural colonisation by species suited to changing climate conditions, through the Wiltshire Biodiversity Action Plan. Pests/diseases may need to be monitored and extra resources considered to manage them. It may be that we have to accept loss of some habitats as a result of climate change

4) *Opportunities to use the canal network*

Opportunities to use the newly restored canal network for flood amelioration schemes should be investigated

5) *Communication*

All the above issues and opportunities bring the need for communication with local communities to explain why changes in management take place. The council is currently working towards the development of an adaptation action plan as part of the overarching ECO Strategy 2011-2020. This will set out:

- the risk assessment for future climate projections
- what the priority areas are
- the action being taken to address priorities
- how risks will be continually assessed and monitored in the future

Considering climate change adaptation and risk assessment is a continuous process which the council will keep under review.

Appendix 6 – Wiltshire Council strategies

Wiltshire Community Plan 2011 - 2026

Produced by: Wiltshire Assembly. The priorities and objectives are shared by all the key organisations in the assembly. Organisations represent the public, private and voluntary sectors.

Purpose: an overarching plan which outlines the strategic direction and long-term vision for the economic, social and environmental well-being of Wiltshire. It aims to provide a framework for all other plans produced in the county (i.e. including the CAIP).

Vision: to build stronger and more resilient communities

Key goals:

1. Creating an economy that is fit for the future
2. Reducing disadvantage and inequalities
3. Tackling the causes and effects of climate change

The CAN contributes towards the vision and goals because it:

- supports the rural economy by providing access to the countryside and historic sites for residents and tourists
- provides an extensive network of routes and areas the public can use for exercise, thereby improving people's health and saving the NHS money. It helps to reduce health inequalities as often it provides routes right from where people live. Medical journal The Lancet states that "Evidence shows that green space. . . seems to have real effects on health and health inequality, of the kind that politicians, planners and health staff should take seriously"²⁰
- enables opportunities for local people to get involved in management of open spaces and upgrading of the rights of way network near them
- provides access within and between settlements, to local services and public transport. This helps to support local businesses
- provides some mitigation for climate change as many parts of the CAN are green space
- has been shown that green space near housing enhances property values²¹

Wiltshire Council Business Plan 2013 - 2017

Produced by: Wiltshire Council

Purpose: to set out the council's key priorities and how it intends to achieve them for the period 2013 – 2017

Vision: to create stronger and more resilient communities

Key priorities:

- To protect those who are most vulnerable
- To boost the local economy – creating and safeguarding jobs
- To support and empower communities to do more for themselves

²⁰ Mitchell & Popham (2008). pp 1655-1660

²¹ Royal Institute of Chartered Surveyors (2007)

The Countryside Access Network supports these key priorities in a number of ways:

- the countryside sites provide a resource for groups with particular needs in the community. The Richmond Fellowship and the Wellbeing Project use the sites to help adults with stress and mental health issues to overcome. Many other groups also use them – e.g. the probation services, children with learning difficulties, Forest School, Wiltshire Council's youth offending team and Wiltshire Young Carers
- stiles can be an obstruction to many people, these are being replaced on key routes with gaps or gates to make them more accessible. Some routes such as within the country parks and along canals are generally flat and useable by people with mobility impairments
- visitors to the countryside support the local economy by spending money in local shops, accommodation and food providers - whether for day trips or holidays
- many decisions on prioritising the maintenance and improvement of the network are made with input from local residents and parish councils, so it reflects their needs and aspirations
- hundreds of individual volunteers and organisations such as parish councils, "Friends of..." groups and the canal trusts, are involved in the management of the CAN. This not only helps to keep the service focused on what residents want, it also helps reduce costs
- match funding provided by Wiltshire Council to parish councils through the Paths Improvement Grant Scheme helps local communities undertake work they feel is important. It also means that more schemes can be undertaken than if Wiltshire Council provided all the funding
- Wiltshire's Area Boards are taking an interest in the maintenance of their local networks, whether through providing funding for upgrades or supporting volunteer initiatives
- to create stronger and more resilient communities:
 - people need to be in good physical and mental health, the CAN is a key (and free at the point of use) resource well used by Wiltshire's population for exercise
 - partnerships are key. Maintenance of the network requires strong partnerships, for example with neighbouring authorities, funding bodies, the voluntary sector, user groups etc.

The Business Plan also has a number of key actions and desired outcomes, the access network also supports these in a number of different ways.

Appendix 7 – The main organisations and volunteer groups who support the management of the CAN

Area Boards

Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty – Cotswolds Conservation Board

Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty - Cranborne Chase and West Wiltshire Downs

Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty - North Wessex Downs

British Driving Society

British Horse Society

Byways and Bridleways Trust

Campaign to Protect Rural England

Cotswold Wardens

Cotswolds Waterpark Trust

Country Land and Business Association

English Heritage

Environment Agency

Kennet and Avon Canal Trust

Forestry Commission

Friends of The Ridgeway

Marlborough Downs Nature Improvement Area

Ministry of Defence - Salisbury Plain Training Area

National Farmers Union

Natural England

New Forest National Park

Open Spaces Society

Parish and Town Councils

South Wilts Ramblers - Heavy Gang

South Wilts Ramblers - Light Gang

SUSTRANS

The Ramblers

Trail Riders Fellowship

The Ridgeway National Trail Partnership

The Thames Path National Trail Partnership

Tread Lightly

U3A - University of the Third Age

Visit Wiltshire

West Wilts Ramblers

Wilts and Berks Canal Trust

Wiltshire and Swindon Countryside Access Forum

Wiltshire Bridleways Association

Wiltshire Wildlife Trust

Appendix 8 - Strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats assessment of the Countryside Access Network

One of the key parts of the process to produce the CAIP was to undertake a SWOT (Strengths, Weaknesses, possible Opportunities and potential Threats) analysis of the CAN. This was done through a workshop with representatives of user groups.

Each group at the workshop was asked the 4 following questions.

For the “user group” you represent:

1. What are the strengths of the access network?
2. What are the weaknesses of the access network?
3. What threats are there to the access network?
4. What opportunities are there for improving the access network?

The user groups who attended the workshop were:

- Walkers (The Ramblers)
- Cyclists (Sustrans and CTC)
- Horse riders (British Horse Society and Wiltshire Bridleways Association)
- Carriage drivers (British Driving Association)
- Motorised vehicle groups (Trial Riders Fellowship, Green Lane Association and Tread Lightly)
- Landowners (MoD, Country Landowners Association)

Several members of the Wiltshire and Swindon Countryside Access Forum also attended as independent users of the CAN.

Following the workshop the draft tables were sent to representatives of the following disability groups for comment:

- Wiltshire People 1 (an advocacy organization for people with learning difficulties)
- Wiltshire and Swindon Users' Network (represents disabled and older people)
- Wiltshire Centre for Independent Living (represents disabled people on direct payments)
- Wiltshire Blind Association
- Disabled Ramblers
- Age UK Wiltshire

The results of this feedback were then considered by staff in the Rights of Way and Countryside service to see if they had anything to add. The tables overleaf are the outcome of this work.

Strengths of the Countryside Access Network	
S1	Wiltshire has the third longest network of rights of way in England, at 6,000 km. It is extensive in most parts of the county
S2	The whole network is available to walkers. Walking is free and only needs footwear appropriate to conditions underfoot and clothing appropriate for the weather. It is the most accessible form of exercise to encourage sedentary people to become more active
S3	There is a larger network of both restricted byways and byways open to all traffic than other counties. This provides lots of opportunities for carriage drivers and motorised vehicle users to access the countryside. People with disabilities can also drive byways to visit more remote parts of the county that would otherwise be inaccessible to them
S4	There is a larger network of bridleways than other counties. If these are linked up well it provides lots of opportunities for horse riders and cyclists to access the countryside
S5	It provides access to the beauty of the countryside and heritage sites
S6	It provides safe, quiet and attractive links away from traffic
S7	It provides many routes right from where people live into the countryside
S8	Some links provide opportunities for "utility" journeys for walkers and cyclists, e.g. many urban paths are rights of way and provide routes for shopping, access to school etc.
S9	A wide variety of routes are available with both hard and natural surfacing - through fields, up hills, next to rivers or canals, along old railways, through woodland etc.
S10	Country parks sites provide venues for both Council and non-Council run family events, fetes, dog shows etc. Mental health groups also use the country parks for therapy already
S11	Country park sites and canals are generally very accessible for those with mobility problems
S12	Upgrades, such as replacing stiles with kissing gates and surfacing, are being undertaken to improve ease of access for a variety of users at key locations
S13	The service has more machinery available than previously so can be more proactive in clearing paths etc.
S14	Rather than just responding to issues raised by members of the public, it is proactively surveyed by staff to check its condition and to fix problems
S15	Many useful partnerships have been formed which help maintain the network, including external organisations, user groups, parish councils and volunteers
S16	There are already groups set up who provide guided walks and cycle rides E.g. Walking for Health, The Ramblers, Salisbury Plain Area Mountain Bikers etc.
S17	Lots of information is already available - e.g. books and the internet have maps and self-guided walks
S18	There are over 20 high profile long distance walking routes within Wiltshire, as well as the National Cycle Network. Examples of walking routes include the Ridgeway and Thames Path National Trails, the Mid Wilts Way, Pewsey Avon Trail, Wessex Ridgeway, Imber Range Perimeter Path and Kennet & Avon Canal towpath
S19	Despite being a military training site, the MoD seek to allow access onto Salisbury Plain where possible
S20	Most landowners accept the public's rights and are co-operative
S21	It provides a variety of habitat areas and green corridors for wildlife
S22	There is a lot of local knowledge, experience and expertise within the rights of way and countryside service

Weaknesses of the Countryside Access Network	
W1	The network is largely historic and although it has evolved, in places it does not meet the present and likely future needs of users and potential users
W2	It is fragmented in many locations, e.g. route statuses changes part way along (e.g. a bridleway may turn into a footpath at a parish boundary) or the only way to link between two paths is to cross or use a busy road
W3	Sometimes there are no links straight into the countryside from where people live
W4	People prefer to use circular routes, but in many locations there are none or they are longer than users want to travel
W5	There are many "missing links", i.e. no route where people want to go
W6	Signage (both council and private) and waymarking on the network is sometimes missing, incorrect, not clear or even misleading (e.g. a sign saying "Private Road" without also saying "footpath/bridleway only" can put people off)
W7	Some rights of way furniture (stiles, gates, bridges etc.) is in a poor state of repair or has been not been installed well
W8	Surface vegetation can make routes difficult to pass if not cut back enough
W9	As much of the surfacing of the network is natural, in some locations and at certain times of year routes can be difficult to negotiate
W10	Irresponsible use of byways open to all traffic by vehicular users can lead to serious, expensive damage to the network
W11	It is difficult to balance the needs of all relevant user groups (i.e. walkers, cyclists, horse riders etc.), so sometimes we may not get this right from the perspective of one type of user
W12	The maintenance budget is insufficient to keep all routes in good condition, therefore meeting many of the desires of members of the public (particularly for upgrades) is not possible
W13	Countryside sites are suffering from a lack of investment due to the limited availability of funding for maintenance and improvement
W14	Some barriers installed to prevent illegal use may have limited impact, but can cause problems for legal users
W15	The use of legal restrictions reduces access for all types of user (e.g. red flags on Salisbury Plain, traffic regulation orders are sometimes used to completely close routes if severe damage occurs)
W16	Enforcement and education relating to the removal of illegal obstructions and dog fouling, is sometimes insufficient
W17	Some routes are very narrow (both the available width on the ground and the legally defined width)
W18	Many routes are difficult for people with mobility impairments, e.g. due to surfacing, stiles etc.
W19	The "least restrictive access" principle for rights of way furniture, which aims to minimise the number of obstructions people with mobility impairments face, needs to be set out more clearly so it can be applied consistently across the county
W20	Some individuals or groups with mobility impairments cannot access the network easily, e.g. they need someone to drive them there and/or need someone to guide them
W21	Parking for drivers in rural areas and public transport access to the network can be very limited
W22	Occasionally there is conflict between different types of users
W23	Animals may put some users off - e.g. farm animals or uncontrolled dogs
W24	The remoteness of many areas means that some people will not use the network on their own due to safety concerns
W25	The right information is not always available, e.g. people with mobility problems would often have problems knowing in advance whether or not they could use a specific route

W26	A few landowners do not recognise the rights of the public so try to obstruct routes
W27	Most permissive paths are not mapped
W28	The Definitive Map, the map showing the defined legal lines of routes, dates from 1952. Only the "working copy" represents changes since that time

Opportunities for the Countryside Access Network	
O1	The CAIP provides the opportunity to create a widely agreed vision and aims for the management of the network. This will then help to justify the need for the network and seek to increase external funding and help with maintenance in line with this vision
O2	It can be promoted for providing access to the beauty of the countryside and sites of heritage interest, or for the interest of the routes themselves (e.g. canals or old railways). Also, the good public knowledge of routes such as The Ridgeway, Thames Path and National Cycle Network can be built upon
O3	It can be promoted as an asset for a variety of purposes such as utility trips (e.g. access to shops, schools etc.), for tourism and for keeping people healthy
O4	There is a strong government policy backing for walking and cycling measures due to the physical and mental health benefits they bring. A recent study has also suggested that horse riding and associated activities helps mental and physical wellbeing.
O5	It helps to reconnect people with nature. Bat and bird walks, owl prowls and nature rambles can continue to be undertaken at Wiltshire Council's countryside sites. Links could be created with schools to use the CAN.
O6	The countryside sites could be used more as a "stepping stone" to encourage people into the wider countryside
O7	Walking and cycling groups can continue to be promoted and supported where necessary to attract new users and help overcome the concerns some people have with walking alone
O8	The work of the service could be promoted more e.g. through the website, press releases, other organisations etc.
O9	Permissive routes could be mapped, though this would need close monitoring to keep information up to date
O10	New links can be identified, prioritised and created in partnership with the community, e.g. to avoid busy roads (including the use of verges), new town to countryside links, links to desired destinations such as Access Land etc. Methods of creating new links as set out by the The Trails Trust could be trialled. Wiltshire Council's Paths Improvement Grant Scheme (PIGS) should continue, it enables local councils to make upgrades to their local networks. A desk study could be undertaken, possibly using the methods used in a study in Oxfordshire, to examine missing links either countywide or focused around settlements and future development sites.
O11	The restoration of Wilts and Berks Canal could bring new access opportunities for walkers, cyclists, horse riders and those with mobility impairments
O12	Existing routes could be upgraded in status to allow additional users - e.g. a footpath could be converted to a bridleway
O13	New links do not have to be formal rights of way, they could be by permissive agreement of the landowner or toll routes where users pay the landowner
O14	Safer road crossings could be provided, e.g. by using existing bridges or underpasses or installing formal crossing facilities

O15	More circular routes can be identified, created and promoted (e.g. through information but also good signage), particularly from settlements and honey pot sites
O16	New ways of accessing the network could be provided - e.g. through new car parking (particularly near sites which are appropriate for those with a mobility impairment), publicising existing initiatives (e.g. a scheme where horse riders pay to park their horse box at a farm so they can then use the rights of way network nearby) or working with public transport providers could promote public transport access
O17	Developments (e.g. housing) can upgrade existing routes and provide new links in the network
O18	There are external funding opportunities, e.g. developer funding, funding for health and wellbeing schemes through the NHS, Landfill Communities Fund, National Lottery, Sustrans, sponsorship etc.
O19	Improving links between the CAIP and external strategies will help to justify levering in external funding for new links. E.g. Green Infrastructure Strategy, Core Strategy, health strategies, tourism strategies
O20	More joint working and information sharing both internally and externally could be undertaken
O21	The partnership between the rights of way and highways services, which means waste road planings and other materials from maintenance schemes are re-used on rights of way, is invaluable and should continue
O22	User groups, members of the public etc. could continue to help to pinpoint areas where we need to provide more information
O23	Partnerships with other bodies and landowners can be improved to increase support for projects, lever in funding for joint priorities and reduce issues (e.g. to avoid need for enforcement)
O24	Where conflicts occur (e.g. between different user groups on canal towpaths or byways), a strategy to try to reduce these problems could be looked at. This might involve design standards/best practice e.g. from user groups, codes of conduct (e.g. providing a link to the countryside code on website), signing (inc little green advisory signs or signs showing which users can use a route), campaigns etc.
O25	More routes suitable for those with mobility problems could be publicised (including country parks) or created in locations which would benefit the most people - e.g. replacing stiles with gaps or gates on key links near settlements, or surfacing in some locations. Canals, old railways and locations with parking and toilets are particularly useful. Many people go out walking with dogs but have to lift dogs over stiles. If stiles are to be retained, providing flaps that dogs can pass through would be helpful
O26	Schemes for accessibility improvements would be supported by the Equalities Act
O27	If disabled groups want to use the network but cannot due to not having transport available, work with social services or volunteer transport providers to try to overcome these issues
O28	A more defined policy on "least restrictive access" could be produced. Many stiles are built by landowner rather than bought in kit form so guidance could also be provided to landowners to encourage good designs
O29	Although volunteers, user groups, parish councils and landowners already help to maintain the countryside access network, even more involvement is possible. Tasks can include waymarking, upgrading stiles to gates, bridge building, cutting back vegetation and asking landowners to keep overhanging vegetation cut back
O30	Improvements can benefit several user groups at once
O31	The rights of way database will help with analysis and maintenance of the network. It may also be possible in future to link it with the website, so people can follow a path and see what access furniture is along the route
O32	On key links where there is a desire to use them all year, surface conditions could be improved by cutting back vegetation, improving drainage or surfacing where necessary
O33	The network should continue to be maintained proactively by Wiltshire Council staff, this is currently done through the parish by parish network survey. The survey highlights issues which are then fixed where required. Potentially volunteers could help with these surveys if guided by staff to ensure consistency. This system could be parish based or at an area board level, where groups of volunteers would cover a number of parishes

O34	Investigate use of alternative types of wood for furniture - the tannelised wood normally used is not as hardwearing as some other woods might be (e.g. chestnut)
O35	Education, statutory powers and working with the police can help to reduce issues such as use of illegal use, inappropriate barriers, uncontrolled animals, problems with dog faeces etc.
O36	Processing legal orders to change rights of way brings positive changes to the network, e.g. it protects ancient routes and diverts routes to meet modern requirements
O37	Public Path Orders, which are very useful but not statutory, could be contracted out so more time could be spent on the statutory Definitive Map Modification Orders
O38	The list of Definitive Map Modification Orders could be prioritised so the routes with most public benefit are dealt with first
O39	To produce a new, consolidated Definitive Map instead of having to work with both the original 1952 map and the legal events since
O40	Changes to legislation may lead to improvements in the current lengthy and complex legal processes which have to be gone through to formally record or make changes to the network
O41	New or revised policies could help the work of the service and bring greater clarity for the public. Examples include the use of Traffic Regulation Orders, installation of barriers, cropping and ploughing, maintenance policy, "least restrictive" policy, permissive paths, enforcement, etc.
O42	The merging of the two countryside and rights of way teams is leading to new joint working and potentially may lead to the "sharing" of volunteers
O43	The proposed service review will look at procedures and make sure that the service is appropriately structured

Threats to the Countryside Access Network	
T1	Reductions in funding, staffing or materials such as road planings when road works are undertaken would lead to less maintenance, fewer upgrades and fewer legal orders being undertaken. This would lead to more complaints. The network would become less useable, potentially fewer people would use it, ultimately leading to a less healthy population and considerably increased costs to the NHS
T2	Need to get sufficient political support when required, e.g. for undertaking statutory duties or when seeking physical upgrades to the network
T3	New housing and other developments could lead to fragmentation of the network
T4	If illegal or inappropriate use which seriously damages surfacing continues, further temporary closures may be necessary - which affects all users. Funding may not be available to repair routes for some time so they may remain closed for longer. There could be an increased need to use more permanent traffic regulation orders in future
T5	Restrictions such as traffic regulation orders reduce opportunities for some users or all users on affected routes
T6	Official barriers to try to restrict unauthorised use may restrict other, legitimate users
T7	Unlawful obstructions might not be dealt with effectively and quickly enough
T8	There may be opposition to some proposals for a variety of reasons
T9	Landowners may stop permissive access agreements, particularly when routes set up through DEFRA's stewardship schemes run out
T10	Landowners might not be supportive of some proposals, e.g. due to concerns relating to rural crime, adverse effects on land management, conservation etc.

T11	Legislation changes could reduce the powers of the council or lead to the permanent loss of some unrecorded historic routes
T12	A lack of tolerance or consideration between different types of user or users and landowners could cause conflict
T13	Access abuses may cause conflict between different types of user and users and landowners, e.g. cyclists on footpaths, motorised vehicles on restricted byways
T14	High volumes of use in some locations can cause maintenance problems, equally underuse can mean routes get much more overgrown
T15	There could be a loss of information (e.g. if archives were destroyed) or expertise within the service
T16	There could be a reduction in interest or demand from the public in the network
T17	Climate change could cause more maintenance issues or lead to more problems with pests

Appendix 9: References for documents cited in the Appendices

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