

ROWIP4 Steering Group Meeting 8th November 2023 – Meeting Minutes:

Action List:

- To discuss the commitment to the auditing of signage and whether Highways can get involved with Mark Readman at meeting on Friday 10th November – KGP/PO/MO.
- Amend text in draft to include *at least or minimum of 10 accessible routes* - KGP.
- To set up a meeting with Deborah and Kelly to discuss place-based approaches - KGP.
- To think about contacting partner organisations to encourage the adoption of ROWIP4 – KGP/PO/MO.
- Reference the need for balance between access and user security when using Public Rights of Way or build on current wording - KGP.
- To see whether Health Impact Assessments can be adapted and use in terms of Public Rights of Way – KGP/PO.
- To see whether a What3Words style function could be incorporated on prospective app to enable public to easily monitor PROW – KGP/PO/MO.

General Comments:

The Moving Together should be referenced as a Shared countywide Moving Together Strategy; it is not simply the Council's Plan. ROWIP should adopt the same approach as it has been developed through extensive stakeholder involvement and feedback.

General comments on ROWIP4 Policy 1:

The countywide auditing of signposts will be not included in the Delivery Plan. We recognise the importance of a countywide auditing process, but this is not included in the Delivery Plan because it is an existing statutory of the Rights of Way Team. The Delivery Plan is aiming to deliver new projects with secured investment.

General comments on ROWIP4 Policy 2:

Commitment to the auditing of signage should be in the lifetime of the Plan. Signage is important and is currently not in a good state with faded signage across the county, which creates an inaccessible network.

ACTIONS:

- To discuss the commitment to the auditing of signage and whether Highways can get involved with Mark Readman at meeting on Friday 10th November.

General comments on ROWIP4 Policy 3:

Can 'new' be put into the title of Policy 3? Argument is that this is not entirely true, and that the Policy aims to build on the current network.

Steering Group members highlighted that investment in existing network can be more important due to the existing desire lines than creating new routes from scratch. It is the availability of the route that is new rather than an actual PROW being built from scratch, with a greater capacity of these accessible routes being achieved.

ACTIONS:

- Amend text in draft to include *at least or minimum of 10 accessible routes* to reflect that if we develop 10 accessible routes, we won't stop there and will aim to continue the provision of accessible routes.

General comments on ROWIP4 Policy 4:

Moving Together in Peterlee, a Sport England funded approach – wide range of partners; delivery of Moving Together Strategy in a place-based approach with discussions of volunteers and ambassadors. This works well with ROWIP4 in terms of understanding how we can work on the ground and deliver pragmatic change.

ACTIONS:

- To set up a meeting with Deborah and Kelly to discuss place-based approaches and how ROWIP4 can build on community involvement as seen with the Moving Together Strategy.

General comments on ROWIP4 Policy 5:

It is important that the publicity campaign looks at wider communications and other documents produced by partners. For example, the Moving Together Strategy is sharing aligned messages with partners; the strategy aims to launch with partners to see how actions will be met and how the communications with partners and the public can be achieved.

With regard to comments on the ROWIP4 consultation around GP social prescribing link workers – Kelly outlined that updated healthy weight stats and publicly accessible mapping is on Durham Insights. Strategies can also be placed on Durham Insights for the public to access.

There were also discussions around encouraging others to adopt/endorse ROWIP4 and other documents at the same time – Feb 2024 is a good date as hopefully ROWIP4 will be adopted. Is there a potential to incorporate other logos on the document?

The Moving Together Strategy is measuring the growth of people involved and becoming a Moving Together champion to see who's moving across the county – social movement and everyone is encouraged to get involved.

ACTIONS:

- How can we encourage everybody – partners and the community – to see it as their plan rather than simply a council strategy?
- To get inspiration and work in partnership with Public Health and the Moving Together Strategy.

General comments on ROWIP4 Policy 6:

Emma and Mike are currently filming about Public Rights of Way and discussing the importance of the Countryside Code; this is actually happening which is so great to see due to it being a key part of ROWIP4 Policy 6!

It is important to note that Countryside Team and Police work together across the County, as does the Rights of Way Team. Reference to the fact there's balance between access and user security. 'share with care' is an approach the Countryside Team are taking by installing posts/structures which state clearly 'share with care'.

ACTIONS:

- Reference the need for balance between access and user security when using Public Rights of Way or build on current wording.

General comments on ROWIP4 Policy 7:

Is there scope for developer contribution to be part of the Delivery Plan? No PO thinks the delivery plan can be a reference point for developers, local community and council officers when negotiating public benefits.

Discussions around Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) and access (in terms of public access to Public Rights of Way and Railway Paths etc), with questions on whether we could work closely with Ecology whilst delivering ROWIP4 and the Delivery Plan. Mike and Darryl argued that access is usually seen as a hinderance and therefore commonly conflicts with BNG and Ecologists, since access near new developments in areas required for BNG conflicts with protecting the environment. On reflection, PO agreed we need to keep BNG separate from new PROW due to the tensions with local habitat creation.

Suggestion that when developing one of the 10 in 10 routes and a developer is looking for funding, developers could potentially contribute to the development of any projects in the delivery plan, and this could enable them to meet their s106 obligations. Need to check whether the s106 system would allow this.

Health Impact Assessments as part of the Moving Together Strategy are linked to Housing Developments of 100+ (standard threshold) - can this be adapted to Public Rights of Way?

ACTIONS:

- To see whether Health Impact Assessments can be adapted and use in terms of Public Rights of Way.

General comments on ROWIP4 Policy 8:

It is unclear to the public how issues on the Public Right of Way network can be reported and which teams' information can be passed to. The current system is a one-size-fits-all approach, and there may be potential for this to be improved. There is no perfect solution for this. Having several options for people may be the best approach and aim for internal teams to get better at filtering appropriate comments and responding.

ACTIONS:

- Emma suggested a potential idea for reporting issues that this could be incorporated onto the app with a What3Words style function that allows you to pin point where the issue is and maybe take a picture which could be delivered directly to appropriate place/team. This is definitely something to consider.

General comments on ROWIP4:

With farmyards, maintaining the diversion is crucial.

Whether an annual monitoring report could be produced or even better tied the Moving together Monitoring Framework.

Next meeting yet to be arranged.