

Appendix 3

Draft RoWIP public consultation plan process November 2018 –January 2023

1. Consultation objectives

We are now seeking public views and comment on the draft RoWIP 2087 - 2023, in order that it meets the current and future needs of the people living and working in the Borough of Bedford and those many visitors which enjoy our countryside.

Once the plan is published it will replace the Bedford Rights of Way Improvement Plan 2012 -2017 will complement the Bedford Borough Local Transport Plan (LTP3).

The final plan will guide the work of Bedford Borough Council from 2018 - 2023 in managing, improving and marketing the public rights of way network in the Borough.

An essential part of the ROWIP 3 process is making an assessment of user (& non user) needs.

- Who currently uses the network? (Different classes of user and user groups)
- Why are people using the network? (What is the attraction and their motivation),How do they know where to go(Information sources)
- How do they get to the network to use it (Modes of transport)
- How easy is the network to use? (Ease of use).

These formed key questions in the user needs questionnaire to which there were over 1200 responses. These responses also included a lot of comments and anecdotal information which has greatly helped to inform this ROWIP 3 process.

Key Stakeholder Engagement

To establish local need and the expectation of users, Bedford Borough Council sought the views of key stakeholders:

Town and Parish Councils
Bedford Borough Citizen's Panel
Borough of Bedford Local Access Forum (BoBLAF)
Borough of Bedford Disabled Access Group
Landowners and land managers
Statutory consultees
User groups (ramblers, cyclists, horse riders etc.)
Bedford Borough Council Members

Bedford Borough Council Services including Rights of Way, Highways, Transport, Access and Road Safety, Landscape, Ecology, Archaeology and Public Health.

Partnership organisations – Forest of Marston Vale
Borough of Bedford Local Access Forum (BoBLAF)

2. Duration and timeline

42 day public consultation period November 2017 – January 2018

3. Consultation communication plan and stakeholder analysis

We will use, update and modify existing stakeholder database

i. Networked consultation:-

Web based consultation – online polling and questions
Social Networks – feedback, comments and answer direct questions

ii. Targeted consultation :-

Bedford Borough Council internal and elected members
Borough of Bedford Local Access Forum
Citizens Panel?
Youth Parliament
Bedford Disabled Access Forum
Bedford Race Equality Centre
Neighbouring authorities
Countryside access groups (Ramblers, BHS, CTC, TRF etc)
Farmers and landowners (NF, CBLA)
BRCC
Town/ parish/ urban community councils
Volunteer groups

iii. Communications:-

Communications team
Web site
Social media
Press releases and local media
Direct mail out
BoBLAF
Information available on request from the ROW team
Documentation available to read in main Council offices and Libraries

4. Scoping and consultation product design matters

Main audience is people living and working in the Borough of Bedford. The geographical scope is the Borough of Bedford and immediately adjoining countryside and rights of way networks.

Equality and environmental impacts will need to be considered. Corporate risk assessment of impacts of the plan may be required.

5. The draft document

The 42 page draft document includes a detailed action plan..

Consultations products are :-

- Draft plan summary leaflet
- Printed full draft plan
- Electronic pdf versions of above
- Website content
- Social network content

The document will be printed in Plain English. Translation and inclusive media will be available upon request.

6. Sign off process

Draft plan final content is signed off by Portfolio Holder for Environment. Once 'signed off' the formal public consultation process can begin. The Final plan will be approved by the Borough Council upon completion of this statutory consultation process. This follows full and due consideration of all representations arising from the consultation. Summary document and feedback (in terms of response to representation) will be shared with consultees (see 7/8 below). The final RoWIP will be launched in the spring of 2018.

7. Analysis of responses and incorporating changes

All responses will be recorded, filed and a consultation summary produced. The final plan will be amended to incorporate those changes recommended for approval by the Portfolio Holder.

8. Feedback to consultees – report, summary and share responses.

Feedback will be sent to consultees and a consultation summary made available. The website will be used to share this information. Social media will direct people to those places where they can find shared information.

9. Final plan production

Once the consultation process is complete the amended document will be approved by the Portfolio Holder and made available electronically as a pdf document on the website and a limited number of printed copies will also be produced. This version will be graphically enhanced and given a final design makeover.

10. Launch and publication

The final RoWIP will be launched in spring 2018. This could be linked to events and activities yet to be planned and a communications plan will be designed to facilitate this.