

RHONDDA CYNON TAF COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL

CABINET

18th DECEMBER 2018

**OUT & ABOUT TWO: THE RIGHTS OF WAY IMPROVEMENT PLAN FOR
RHONDDA CYNON TAF 2019-2029**

**REPORT OF DIRECTOR, PUBLIC HEALTH, PROTECTION & COMMUNITY
SERVICES IN DISCUSSIONS WITH COUNCILLOR ANN CRIMMINGS,
CABINET MEMBER FOR ENVIRONMENT, LEISURE AND HERITAGE
SERVICES**

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1. PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

- 1.1 This report seeks Members approval of the Out & About Two: The Rights of Way Improvement Plan for Rhondda Cynon Taf (as attached at Appendix 1 of the report), prior to consideration by Council.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

It is recommended that Cabinet:

- 2.1 Endorse to Council the adoption of the 'Out & About Two: The Rights of Way Improvement Plan for Rhondda Cynon Taf 2019-2029'.

3. REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

- 3.1 The Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000 requires all Local Highway Authorities to prepare a Rights of Way Improvement Plan. The first Plan was adopted in 2007. Out & About Two is the decennial review of this Plan.

4. BACKGROUND

- 4.1 In 2016, the Welsh Government published guidance regarding the decennial review of Rights of Way Improvement Plans. A report on the Assessment stage was taken to the Public Service Delivery, Communities and Prosperity Scrutiny Committee in December 2017

and it was determined that a review of the Plan was required. The Cabinet Member authorised the formal 12 week consultation on the draft Plan in June 2018 and Scrutiny Committee received a presentation on the draft Plan in September 2018. The final Plan has now been produced, incorporating approximately 38 amendments arising from the consultation. The final Plan, the summary of the consultation responses (4 pages) and the full consultation responses document (248 pages), are available for inspection.

- 4.2 'Out and About Two: The Rights of Way Improvement Plan' for Rhondda Cynon Taf 2019-2029 will guide the Council in work relating to Public Rights of Way and other access opportunities within Rhondda Cynon Taf. It seeks to align with the Council's overall priorities and with the Cwm Taf Well-being Plan.
- 4.3 The introduction provides the legal background for preparing the Plan and describes the area covered. Section two provides a brief background on the first Rights of Way Improvement Plan and a summary of the evaluation of that Plan.
- 4.4 Section three provides a summary of the Assessment undertaken in 2017 to inform the review of the Plan. It considers the current condition of the access opportunities, future public need, Active Travel, the Public Services Board and the Well-being Plan and the conclusions of the Assessment; namely to prepare a revised Plan.
- 4.5 Section four provides a background to the Statement of Action. The aims and priorities from the Assessment are described, and the long term strategic commitments identified. The consultation on the draft Plan and the resulting changes are summarised. The purpose and content of delivery plans is explained and the proposed process of policy change set out.
- 4.6 Section five is the Statement of Action. Unlike the first ROWIP, detailed actions are not included. Instead key themes for action are identified under each of the six objectives. The objectives are as follows:
 - Promote outdoor countryside activity for health, regeneration, tourism and recreation;
 - Walking and cycling as transport options;
 - Protect the access resource;
 - Improve provision for walkers, cyclists, horse riders, off road vehicles and users with mobility or sensory disabilities;
 - Involving local community and voluntary organisations in the development, promotion and use of access opportunities;

- Develop a more efficient management system for statutory Rights of Way work, including the Definitive Map. Appendix 2.
- 4.7 Section six explains how Delivery Plans will be used to implement the Statement of Action. Section seven considers monitoring, reporting and Plan Review.

5. EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 In developing this proposal, an Equality Impact Assessment (EqIA) screening has been undertaken, which has identified that a full EqIA is not required.
- 5.2 It is considered that the Council meets the requirements of its Public Sector Equality Duty, in that due regard has been taken of the likely impact of the decision in terms of equality, diversity and discrimination.

6. CONSULTATION/INVOLVEMENT

- 6.1 The draft Plan was subject to a statutory twelve week consultation during the Summer of 2018. The draft Plan has been made available for public inspection in key Council Offices, in all Council Libraries and on request. The document was also available on-line together with a survey about the draft plan. The consultation has been promoted on-line, via leaflets and to an extensive list of consultees via letter or email and all Councillors were advised of the consultation. In addition, some informal consultation exercises were held at public events and in parks around the County Borough.
- 6.2 A total of 335 responses were received. 170 on-line questionnaires and 103 paper questionnaires, 7 written (including email) comments were submitted. A further 54 people contributed to informal discussions at; at least 4 locations together with observations from the Council's Scrutiny Committee. The Local Access Forum also provided observations.
- 6.3 A detailed (248 page) report and an accompanying data spreadsheet has been produced, which records all the comments and the resulting actions or changes. A four page summary is also available. Appendix 3.

7. FINANCIAL IMPLICATION(S)

- 7.1 The Council has a legal duty to produce a Rights of Way Improvement Plan. The implementation of the Plan will be subject to the Council's normal budgetary considerations, although there are no immediate financial requirements arising from this report. The Plan will also support any Council or partnership bids for grant funding.

8. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS OR LEGISLATION CONSIDERED

- 8.1 As indicated above, the duty to produce and review the Rights of Way Improvement Plan is set out in the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000. The Welsh Government Guidance also requires that the Plan should address issues arising from the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act, the Active Travel (Wales) Act, the Environment (Wales) Act and the Equality Act 2010.

9. LINKS TO THE CORPORATE AND NATIONAL PRIORITIES AND THE WELL-BEING OF FUTURE GENERATIONS ACT

- 9.1 The Plan has been prepared in parallel with the first Cwm Taf Well-being Assessment and the Well-being Plan. The Plan development has sought to address the five ways of working set out in the Well-being of Future Generations Act. As a result of the consultation, a number of respondents have expressed an interest in helping to implement aspects of the Plan.

10. CONCLUSION

- 10.1 'Out & About Two; The Rights of Way Improvement Plan' for Rhondda Cynon Taf 2019-2029 provides the objectives and key themes for actions to guide Council's work relating to Public Rights of Way and other access opportunities within Rhondda Cynon Taf over the next ten years. It seeks to align with the Council's overall priorities and with the Cwm Taf Well-being Plan.

LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 1972

AS AMENDED BY

THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT (ACCESS TO INFORMATION) ACT 1985

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Background Papers

Public Service Delivery, Communities and Prosperity Scrutiny Committee:

12th December 2017

27th September 2018

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