

# Norfolk Local Access Forum

Item No.

<b>Report title:</b>	<b>Norfolk Access Improvement Plan 2018 - 2028</b>
<b>Date of meeting:</b>	<b>11 October 2017</b>
<b>Responsible Officer:</b>	<b>Steve Miller, Assistant Director Culture and Heritage</b>
<b>Strategic impact</b> The Norfolk Access Improvement Plan 2018 – 2028 (NAIP) will replace the Rights of Way Improvement Plan 2007 – 2017 implementing the statutory duty for Norfolk County Council as the Highway Authority to review and publish a Rights of Way Improvement Plan every 10 years under the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000.	

## Executive summary

The NAIP Sub-Group of the Local Access Forum is working with Norfolk County Council to develop a Rights of Way Improvement Plan for 2018-2028 when the current plan finishes. They recommended a wider brief and calling it the Norfolk Access Improvement Plan 2018 – 2028 – with a sub-heading explaining that it is Norfolk's Rights of Way Improvement Plan. They are now refining the text and proposing a consultation date starting in February 2018 with a final publication date of July 2018.

### Recommendations:

Draft Text

- **To agree the approach and format of the draft NAIP, and to submit individual comments, factual corrections and suggestions to NCC by mid-November in advance of the publication of the consultation version in mid-December 2017.**
- **Draft Statement of Actions**
- **That the aims and objectives in the draft Statement of Actions be agreed and used to inform an Annual Delivery Plan**
- **Consultation Process**
- **That the content and timetable of the consultation process is agreed**

## 1. Proposal (or options)

### 1.1. Draft Text

The draft text and interactive format for publication has been developed with the NAIP sub-group of the NLAFF, taking into account their views as on the attached document. It will be published online as an interactive pdf with a paper version available for those without online access.

**Draft Statement of Actions** - the aims and objectives in the draft Statement of Actions will be used to inform the NAIP Annual Delivery Plan.

*We aim to create an easy to use, safe, healthy and sustainable way to enjoy the Norfolk coast and countryside.*

1. *A well-managed Access Network.* We will develop a well-signed, maintained and network of routes accessible to all – both public rights of way and promoted trails - which provide access to coastal, rural and urban areas
2. *A well connected Access Network* We will develop an integrated green infrastructure network that provides opportunities for all users; improve connectivity and accessibility of the network and develop opportunities

3. *A well-protected Environment* – We will provide access to and understanding about protection of the natural and historic environment, managing the impact of visitors on protected and sensitive sites.
4. *A well promoted Access Network* – We will communicate Norfolk's outstanding countryside and the benefits of outdoor activity for all users; and develop a communications plan identifying key user groups (walkers, cyclists, horse-riders, motorised vehicle users, disabled users and new users)
5. *A well informed Access Network* We will keep up to date web-based definitive and interactive maps and other access network information making best use of new technologies
6. *A community based Access Network* We will increase the involvement of communities in the development of their local access network and work with Parish Councils, volunteers and other community organisations
7. *A healthy Access Network* We will improve the health and wellbeing of users through active travel initiatives and leisure use of the access network. We will develop support and projects for those who would benefit from additional physical activity as identified in the Norfolk Public Health Strategy, particularly those not currently using the network
8. *A Valuable Access Network* Maximise the economic benefits to Norfolk that are generated through the access network. Work with businesses, tourism agencies and DMOs (Destination Management Organisations) and others to maximise the benefits for the visitor economy

### **Draft timetable for consultation**

The draft plan must be approved by the [NCC Environment, development and transport committee](#) prior to public and stakeholder consultation. The consultation period is at least 12 weeks (3 months). Both the Strategic elements and Statement of Actions will be consulted on.

We propose having two consultation mechanisms: a stakeholder 'drop in' event; and a public consultation. We will structure the public consultation with carefully worded questions and use an online survey (such as SmartSurvey) to handle the responses as well as a downloadable printed version. NAIP sub-group members have offered volunteer time to help collate responses to the consultations.

<b>Date</b>	<b>What</b>	<b>Who</b>
15/12/2017	NAIP consultation draft complete	NCC/NLAF
19/1/2018	NAIP consultation draft signed off	EDT Committee
1/2/18 to 30/4/18	NAIP consultation (stakeholders and the public)	NCC/NLAF
1/5/18 to 30/6/18	NAIP redrafted and completed	NCC/NLAF
1/7/18	NAIP published	NCC

## **2. Evidence**

- 2.1. Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000  
[DEFRA guidance on local authority responsibilities for Rights of Way Improvement Plans](#)

### 3. Financial Implications

- 3.1. Cost of consultation and publication – there will be a significant saving on the previous consultation which was wide reaching, involving many events and officer time as well as a large print run. The consultation for the new version will need approval from the County Council Environment Development and Transport Committee. It will use an online form for feedback and be published online as an interactive document. There will be a print version for people who do not have online access with a small print run.

### 4. Issues, risks and innovation

- 4.1.
- 1) Budget for consultation – see financial implications
  - 2) Staff resources including commitments of staff time – staff time has been allowed to develop the draft document and to follow up from the consultation. The amount of staff time required has been reduced due to the help from volunteers particularly members of the Norfolk Local Access Forum and the NAIP sub-group
  - 3) Project Timescales – there has been some slippage from the original timescales due to staff leaving and sickness – however it is now on track for publication in July 2018 as in timetable above.

### 5. Background

- 5.1. Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000 - Rights of way improvement plans.
- 1) Every local highway authority other than an inner London authority shall, within five years after the commencement of this section, prepare and publish a plan, to be known as a rights of way improvement plan, containing—
    - (a) the authority's assessment of the matters specified in subsection (2),
    - (b) a statement of the action they propose 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 dealt with in the assessment, and
    - (c) such other material as the Secretary of State (as respects England) or the National Assembly for Wales (as respects Wales) may direct.
  - 2) The matters referred to in subsection (1)(a) are—
    - (a) the extent to which local rights of way meet the present and likely future needs of the public,
    - (b) the opportunities provided by local rights of way (and in particular by those within paragraph (a) of the definition in subsection (5)) for exercise and other forms of open-air recreation and the enjoyment of the authority's area,
    - (c) the accessibility of local rights of way to blind or partially sighted persons and others with mobility problems, and
    - (d) such other matters relating to local rights of way as the Secretary of State (as respects England) or the National Assembly for Wales (as respects Wales) may direct.
  - 3) **An authority by whom a rights of way improvement plan is published shall, not more than ten years after first publishing it and subsequently at intervals of not more than ten years—**
    - (a) make a new assessment of the matters specified in subsection (2), and
    - (b) review the plan and decide whether to amend it.
  - 4) On such a review the authority shall—
    - (a) if they decide to amend the plan, publish it as amended, and

(b) if they decide to make no amendments to it, publish a report of their decision and of their reasons for it.

## **Officer Contact**

If you have any questions about matters contained in this paper or want to see copies of any assessments, eg equality impact assessment, please get in touch with:

**Officer name :** Sarah Abercrombie                      **Tel No. :** 01603 224461

**Email address :** Sarah.abercrombie@norfolk.gov.uk



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