Rights of Way
and Access Improvements Plan










LONDON BOROUGH OF BEXLEY

Listening to you, working for you

www.bexley.gov.uk

Table of Contents

1 Rights of Way and Access Improvement Plan - Executive Summary 3

1.1 Why have we prepared an Improvement Plan? .3

1.2 What does the Plan cover?..... 3

1.3 How was it developed?..... 3

2 Introduction 5

2.1 Introduction..... 5

2.2 Legislative Background..... 5

2.3 Bexley's RoW Network 5

3s Summary of Policy Implications 6

3 Policy Context..... 7

3.1 Introduction..... 7

3.2 Government RoWIP Guidance..... 7

3.3 Regional Policies..... 9

3.4 Local Government Policies 13

4s Summary of different Users and their Needs 30

4 Different Users and their Needs 31

4.1 Recreational Use of the Network..... 31

4.2 Walking..... 31

4.3 Cycling 33

4.4 Horse Riding 33

4.5 Other Interests 33

4.6 Access to Wildlife Sites..... 33

4.7 Utilitarian Use of the Network..... 34

4.8 Consultation with Users..... 35

4.9 Non-Users..... 36

4.10 Disabled Users..... 37

5s Summary of RoW Network Implications 38

5 Public RoW Network Characteristics... 39

5.1 Definitive Map and Statement..... 39

5.2 Assessing the network..... 39

5.3 Presence of the Network..... 40

5.4 Density of the Network..... 41

5.5 Connectivity of the Network..... 42

5.6 Condition of the Network..... 59

6s Summary of Action Prioritisation 60

6 Assessment and Evaluation 61

6 Introduction..... 61

6.2 Prioritisation Framework 61

6.3 Demand for Improvements to Existing Provision..... 61

6.4 Recent Improvement Works 63

7s Summary of Plan Objectives 66

7 Objectives and Opportunities 67

7.1 Introduction..... 67

7.2 Network-wide Themes..... 67

7.3 Area-specific Opportunities..... 69

8 Statement of Action 71

8.1 Introduction..... 71

8.2 Suggested Improvements..... 71

8.3 Estimated Costs and Potential Funding Opportunities..... 71

8.4 Timescale for Delivery 72

8.5 Partnership Working..... 73

8.6 Monitoring the Plan..... 73

8.7 Key Policies for the Improvement Plan 74

Glossary 81

Bibliography..... 82

Index of Maps, Tables and Figures 83

1 Executive Summary

1.1 Why have we prepared an Improvement Plan?

Section 60 of the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000 requires all local highway authorities in England and Wales to prepare and publish a Rights of Way Improvement Plan (RoWIP) covering all of their area. The Plan should include a Statement of Action that the local highway authority proposes to take to manage its Rights of Way (RoW) and improve the network in the future to meet the government's aims of better provision for users. The Plan should be reviewed and amended at subsequent intervals of not more than ten years.

1.2 What does the Plan cover?

Authorities are required to assess the extent to which the RoW network meets the present and likely future needs of the public; provides opportunities for exercise and other forms of recreation; and is accessible to mobility impaired or visually impaired persons. Where deficiencies in the network exist, improvements have to be identified and prioritised. The Improvement Plan is intended to be the prime means by which local highway authorities will identify the changes that need to be made.

Although the RoWIP is only required to include public RoW, as defined by law, the public RoW network in the London Borough of Bexley is relatively limited and there are many other routes in the Borough that are not legally classified as public RoW but which are used by walkers, cyclists and horse-riders. In response to this, the council has extended the scope of the plan to consider these additional routes and has produced a Rights of Way and Access Improvement Plan (RoWAIP) which assesses the availability, connectivity and adequacy of RoW in relation to other walking, cycling and horse-riding networks in the Borough.

Footpath 58 at East Wickham open space



The Bexley RoWAIP sets the context of public RoW and access improvement and management by drawing together information about the needs of different user groups and the existing level of resource provision. It evaluates how adequate the provision is and identifies prioritises and key actions to address any shortcomings. This is consistent with the statutory guidance published by DEFRA for local authorities in England.

1.3 How was it developed

The process of developing the RoWAIP was informed by a number of factors including focus group sessions with the general public, questionnaire distribution across the Borough and consultation with key stakeholders. Once the draft Plan had been prepared, the council published their draft RoWAIP and sought representations from the relevant authorities, agencies, local organisations and the public. After a twelve week consultation period, all representations were reviewed and a consultation responses report was prepared, outlining responses to the comments and proposed amendments to the Plan.

Many of the suggestions for improving the Plan have led us to make amendments to the finalised document. However, in some cases, suggested changes would have involved further investigations that would have delayed adoption of the Plan and would not have improved the content of the document. Therefore, amendments to the document focused on correcting factual inaccuracies and making appropriate changes to the Statement of Action to allow the Plan to be finalised.

Whilst the London Borough of Bexley has a statutory duty under the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000 to publish a RoWIP, there is no formal obligation on the Council to implement it. Accordingly, no funds have yet been allocated to Highway Authorities by Central Government specifically for RoWIP implementation. However, funding may be available where RoW improvements help to deliver transport priorities through the integration of RoWIPs and wider transport planning processes managed by Transport for London. This aspect will be the subject of on-going discussions with TfL. For improvements that do not fall into this category, funding will be sought through the council's capital and revenue budgets, including on-going partnership working across council departments and with external organisations and agencies. For more major improvements, this will include looking for opportunities to bring these forward as part of wider projects and programmes and through separate funding bids to central government.



Bridleway 139 leading from Joydens Wood Area to Parsonage Lane, Footscray

2 Introduction

2.1 Introduction

Public Rights of Way (RoW) comprise footpaths, bridleways and byways and are a significant recreational and access resource in the Borough. As well as providing access to the countryside away from roads used by motor vehicles, they can also provide a convenient means of travelling for short journeys in urban areas and are important in the daily lives of many people who use them for fresh air, exercise and to access local facilities.

Improved management of RoW and better information regarding the network can make a significant difference to people who currently use or would like to use the network. Providing new short links between currently fragmented sections of RoW can substantially widen the network across the local area thereby making it accessible to a greater proportion of the local population. In all areas, local highway authorities need to understand the use and demand for RoW so that they are able to meet the needs and expectations of people with different interests and levels of mobility. This supports the government's objective of better provision for walkers, cyclists, equestrians and those with mobility problems.

Definition of Rights of Way

A public Right of Way is a route which the public has a legal right to pass. The type of way is dependent upon the nature of the right:

- ***Footpaths*** are for use by pedestrians only.
- ***Bridleways*** can be used by pedestrians, cyclists and horse riders.
- ***Byways Open to All Traffic (BOATs)*** can be used by vehicles and all other kinds of user.
- ***Permissive paths*** are open to the public and but do not have the same rights as RoW.

2.2 Legislative Background

In 2002, DEFRA published statutory guidance for local authorities on RoWIPs outlining the overall purpose of the Rights of Way Improvement Plans and the issues that they aim to address. Each local highway authority was required to publish a RoWIP covering all of their area by November 2007.

The Plan must include an assessment of the extent to which local RoW meet the present and likely future needs of the public, the opportunities provided by local RoW for exercise and recreational activities; and the accessibility of the network to those with visual impairments and physical disabilities. A Statement of Action is also required in the Plan outlining the local authorities' intentions for managing and improving RoW. Arrangements for monitoring progress should also be in place with plans reviewed at subsequent intervals of not more than ten years.

RoWIPs are connected to other local authority responsibilities and may well be relevant to economic, social and well-being aspects of community strategies. Policies regarding healthy living, leisure, recreation, sport, tourism, transport and community should be linked accordingly to provide a context within which the RoWAIP can be developed.

2.3 Bexley's RoW Network

Bexley has a relatively limited public RoW network, covering less than 61 kilometres in total. However, the varied land use characteristics of the London Borough of Bexley make it appropriate to consider the network under two categories: that part of the network in the more heavily urbanised parts of the Borough, interspersed with parks and other small scale open spaces, and those areas of the Borough where there are more extensive open areas that provide opportunities for outdoor recreation such as Erith Marshes in the northwest, Crayford Marshes along the eastern edge of the Borough and the Footscray area in the south.

The key characteristic of the urban network is its fragmented nature. It generally comprises short sections of RoW within built up areas, with a few longer sections connecting communities and providing links through parks and open spaces. By contrast, the semi-rural network, towards the edges of the Borough, has a much higher degree of connectivity and provides some opportunities for circular walks. Footpaths, bridleways and byways can all be found in the marshes and the links are typically substantially longer than those found in urban areas. In addition the RoW network in these areas link to other pedestrian routes that, while not forming part of the designated RoW network, also form a complementary access and recreational resource.

As well as being an important recreational resource in itself, the RoW network is also an important resource linking to larger walking networks, such as the London Loop, the Capital Ring, the South East London Green Chain, the Cray Riverway, the Shuttle Riverway, the Thames Path and the Thames Cycle Path.

The RoW network also links to the wider highway network that includes pedestrian and cycle facilities. As the interconnectivity of all these routes is important for providing outdoor recreational access, the RoWAIP refers to these other walking, cycling and horse-riding routes in addition to the designated RoW network.

3s Summary of Policy Implications

A number of policies exist at the national, regional and local level which need to be considered in relation to RoW and will provide support for the Improvement Plan. The following points summarise the key policy issues which have a bearing on and have been considered through the RoWAIP.

- Cycling and pedestrian facilities should be improved to provide safe, attractive routes which connect town centres, transport interchanges, schools and leisure facilities and minimise conflict with motorised transport.
- Local routes that connect to strategic walking and cycling routes which will benefit local people and wider community should be identified and promoted.
- Access to green areas should be improved across the Borough and in particular opportunities for disabled people should be increased.
- The health of the Borough should be improved by encouraging people to lead healthy lives and undertake regular exercise.
- Work should be done to make the streets safer and reduce peoples' fear of crime to increase residents' feeling of personal safety and their quality of life.

In addition, there are other policy issues which will support the RoWAIP:

- Land use and transport planning decisions needs to be integrated to encourage sustainable travel by walking and cycling.
- The natural environment, including parks, open spaces, riverways and marshes, should be protected and managed. Organisations should work in a joined up way to publicise the recreational opportunities available to the community, to educate people and to actively encourage greater public participation.
- School Travel Plans, Workplace Travel Plans and other travel awareness campaigns should be used to promote walking and cycling to feature in peoples' journeys to work / school.

Footpath 134 leading from Mount Mascal Stables to North Cray Road

3 Policy Context

3.1 Introduction

One of the key considerations in developing a RoWAIP is to ensure that it reflects the key themes and complements the aims and objectives of existing plans and strategies significant to the area. Therefore, transport strategies for the whole of London as well as more localised health, recreation and biodiversity policies relating to the Borough's residents have been reviewed.

Setting the policy context and giving consideration to other relevant policy documents gives the RoWAIP the best chance of delivery by lending weight to funding bids and identifying potential opportunities for partnership working.

The following policies and plans have been considered in the development of this Improvement Plan:

National:

- Rights of Way Improvement Plans – Statutory Guidance, DEFRA
- Rights of Way Good Practice Guidance, Countryside Agency
- Planning Policy Guidance Note 17 (PPG17)
- 'By all reasonable means: Inclusive access to the outdoors for disabled people', Countryside Agency
- Disability Discrimination Act (DDA) 2005

Regional:

- The Mayor's Transport Strategy for London
- 'Making London a walkable city' – The Walking Plan for London
- Walking and Cycling: An Action Plan

Local:

- Bexley Council's Public Rights of Way Policy
- Bexley Local Implementation Plan
- Bexley Unitary Development Plan
- Bexley Community Strategy
- Key Sustainability Issues
- Parks Strategy
- Environmental / Biodiversity Action Plans
- The River Cray Riverside Access Study & Environmental Regeneration Programme
- The Shuttle: River Enhancement Opportunities
- Managing the Marshes: Vision & Statement
- East London Green Grid

Based on the findings from the policy review, preliminary desktop studies of the RoW network and public consultation, there are some overarching objectives which the Improvement Plan will seek to deliver. These are:

1. Improve the contribution RoW can make to ***sustainable travel*** through ***better connectivity to other networks, facilities and resources***.
2. Improve ***access*** to the RoW network for all user groups to create a more ***socially inclusive network***.
3. Improve the ***feeling of personal safety*** by creating a high quality, safe and secure network.
4. Improve ***information provision*** on the location, length, route and characteristics of RoW links and other walking / cycling / horse-riding routes to increase ***public awareness*** of available opportunities.
5. Improve the contribution that RoW can make to improving ***health*** and providing ***recreational opportunities***.

3.2 Government RoWIP Guidance

3.2.1 DEFRA Rights of Way Improvement Plans – Statutory Guidance

In 2002, DEFRA published statutory guidance for local authorities on RoWIPs outlining the overall purpose of the Improvement Plans and the issues that they aim to address. Each local highway authority is required to publish a RoWIP covering all of their area by November 2007.

The Plan involves an assessment of the extent to which local RoW meet the present and likely future needs of the public; the opportunities provided by local RoW for exercise and recreational activities; and the accessibility of the network to those with visual impairments and physical disabilities. A Statement of Action is also required in the Plan outlining the local authorities' intentions for managing and improving the RoW. Arrangements for monitoring progress should also be in place with plans reviewed at subsequent intervals of not more than ten years.

RoWIPs are connected to other local authority responsibilities and may well be relevant to economic, social and well-being aspects of community strategies. Policies regarding healthy living, leisure, recreation, sport, tourism, transport and community should be linked accordingly to provide a context within which the RoWIP can be developed.

DEFRA guidance clause 2.3.4 states that *"Local highway authorities should look at the definitive map in conjunction with the wider highway network, cycle tracks and permissive routes including towpaths and routes through woodlands and forests. This overall assessment should help to highlight those rights of way that might be used in combination with unclassified roads and other lightly trafficked minor highways. It should also assist in identifying those rights of way which may effectively be unusable or which put users at risk because they can be reached only along heavily trafficked roads without an adequate verge or footway."*

This guidance provides the basis for this Statement of Action which will feed in Bexley's RoWAIP.

3.2.2 Bexley Council's RoW Policy

Bexley Council has a RoW policy which sets out the Council's obligations in relation to the RoW network in The Borough. The policy states that:

- The Council will endeavour to assert and protect the rights of the public to the use and enjoyment any highway, including Rights of Way for which it is the highway authority.
- The Council will maintain and make available for inspection a definitive map of public Rights of Way and an accompanying statement.
- The definitive map and statement will be kept under continuous review and be amended to show alterations to routes or status, additions and deletions to the network or to correct errors.
- The Rights of Way network will be inspected twice each year and works to correct any deficiencies discovered will be undertaken.
- Prior to or on receipt of notice of an obstruction to a Right of Way, the Council will inspect the site and use its normal procedures, complying with Health and Safety guidelines, to remove the obstruction reported and any others found to be present.
- On receipt of a planning application that may affect Rights of Way, the definitive map will be consulted prior to planning consent being given.
- On receipt of a planning application that may affect Rights of Way, formal consultation with all appropriate consultees will be undertaken.
- If development necessitates the diversion, extinguishment or creation of a Right of Way this will be dealt with by the use of powers under Sections 257/259 of the Town & Country Planning Act 1990.
- In planning its own projects the Council will take into account the consultation process and timescale, where they affect Rights of Way.
- Where it is proposed to make an order or to undertake works affecting a Right of Way, the Council will consult all interested parties and take into account views expressed about such proposals, before publishing the order or proceeding with any works.
- The Council will prepare and publish a Rights of Way Improvement Plan. This will include criteria for improving the network and disabled access to it.
- The Rights of Way and Access Improvement Plan will be reviewed within ten years after publication.

3.2.3 The Countryside Agency Rights of Way Good Practice Guidance

In 1999 a Rights of Way Good Practice Guide was produced by the Countryside Agency in partnership with the County Surveyors Society (CSS), Institute of Public Rights of Way Officers (IPROW), and Local Government Association (LGA). The guide contains guidance for local authorities in the preparation of RoWIPs based on the experiences of eleven highway authorities in England that participated in a national demonstration programme to gain experience in implementing the new statutory requirements whilst providing a series of exemplar plans.

Guidance is included on:

- The lessons learned from the demonstration programme;
- Practical advice on preparing a RoWIP, including resource and staffing requirements;
- Guidance on assessments, developing the plan, consultation requirements and monitoring the plan; and
- Links to background research studies that provide guidance on main themes and issues to be addressed.

The guide offers practical advice and examples of good practice, as well as links to exemplar plans. It provides a useful source in developing a RoWAIP for Bexley, as guidance can be sought from Improvement Plans for areas of a similar nature.

3.2.4 Planning Policy Guidance

Planning Policy Guidance Note 17 (PPG17) provides a context for planning for open spaces, sport and recreation, all of which underpin peoples' quality of life. It indicates that well designed, effective, suitably implemented policies concerning the use of open space and recreational facilities, are fundamental to delivering wider government objectives regarding urban renaissance; rural renewal; social inclusion and community cohesion; health and well being; and sustainable development.

As paragraph 32 of PPG17 states, "Rights of Way are an important recreational facility, which local authorities should protect and enhance. Local authorities should seek opportunities to provide better facilities for walkers, cyclists and horse riders, for example, by adding links to the existing Rights of Way networks".

Planning obligations should seek to remedy deficiencies in the quality or quantity of open spaces and recreational facilities. To do this, authorities need to assess the needs of the population and review the existing provision to ensure that developments satisfy local needs.

3.2.5 Guidance for providing for disabled people

The Countryside Agency has produced a guide "By all reasonable means: Inclusive access to the outdoors for disabled people" to help countryside and open space managers and landowners to improve accessibility to

their routes and sites. While there is often conflict between providing access for the disabled and preserving the special qualities of a place, the aim of the guide is to provide a realistic, practical and effective approach to creating greater access in more places.

The guide's framework for action is based on the principle of 'Least Restrictive Access' (LRA), allowing for on-going improvements according to practicability and the availability of funds. While there is currently no defined statutory guidance for reasonable practice in the outdoors with regard to the DDA 2005, there are some standards for managers and landowners to consider when planning access improvements, including guidance on the surfacing, width and gradient of paths, and the provision of passing places, rest areas and platforms.

In terms of the Bexley RoWAIP, consideration needs to be given to how the RoW network can be upgraded to provide access for the mobility impaired. For this to be achieved it is essential to identify barriers and what improvements would bring about maximum benefit for disabled users. For a route to be fully accessible it needs to have a defined start point and end point to ensure that any improvements result in a complete and usable route. As such it is recommended that the most popular routes are prioritised for action. However, maintenance of routes, facilities and information should be based on the principle of LRA to ensure that all paths are improved over time. In addition to overcoming the physical barriers, other common barriers to visiting the outdoors need to be addressed. This includes providing accessible information regarding route locations, lengths, facilities and their suitability for different users.

A key aspect of any RoWIP is to improve access for those with mobility problems and other disabilities. As stated in DEFRA guidance:

"It is important that local highway authorities have a clear understanding of the extent and type of demand in their areas by blind or partially sighted persons and others with mobility problems for Rights of Way, both to underpin their Rights of Way improvement plans and to inform the day-to-day maintenance of the path network."

It is important that the Bexley RoWAIP addresses this issue and efforts are made to upgrade key routes to the standard set out in the guidance referred to above.

3.2.6 Disability Discrimination Act (DDA) 2005

The DDA defines disability as *'a physical or mental impairment which has a substantial and long term adverse effect on [a person's] ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities'*. This includes the following:

- Wheelchair users and ambulant disabled people;
- People with poor manual co-ordination or strength;
- People with sensory impairments, including impaired sight and hearing; and
- People who lack memory, concentration or understanding.

Whilst the DDA does not explicitly set out statutory guidance for providing access in the outdoors, Section 19 of Part III specifies that service providers cannot explicitly discriminate against those with a disability by making it unduly difficult for them to access a service.

Disability Discrimination Act

'It is unlawful for a provider of services to discriminate against a disabled person … in refusing to provide, or deliberately not providing, to the disabled person any service which he provides, or is prepared to provide, to members of the public.' Services include *'access to and use of any place which members of the public are permitted to enter.'*

Part III: Discrimination in Other Areas, Section 19

The Act specifies that it is the duty of the service providers to take all reasonable steps to remove, alter or provide a reasonable means of avoiding a feature which currently prevents a disabled person from accessing a service.

In addition to providing for people with a defined disability, it is important that the RoWAIP considers others with mobility impairments such as those with pushchairs and young children. In addition to making routes accessible for all, this will involve improving publicity so that parents and those with mobility impairments are aware of the length of routes, how accessible they are and where facilities, such as toilets and rest points, are located.

3.3 Regional Policies

3.3.1 The Mayor's Transport Strategy for London

The Mayor's Transport Strategy for London sets the policy framework for transport in the capital. It includes policies and strategies for all means of transport as well as the management of the city's road system.

Walking has declined by 15% in London over the past 20 years while premature death associated with inactive lifestyles has risen. As part of the Strategy, the Mayor hopes to work with Transport for London (TfL) and the London Boroughs to protect and enhance green spaces and improve quality and provision of pedestrian routes across the city.

In partnership with the London Boroughs, TfL is proposing to *"develop north to south and east to west pedestrian routes across central London as an initial step towards a network of routes where pedestrians are given priority."* There are six regionally recognised routes which form the Strategic Walk Network (SWN) which will be adopted and promoted, at regional level, as strategic green walking routes:

- London Outer Orbital Path; (Loop)
- Thames Path National Trail;
- South East National Trail, now known as Green Chain Walk;
- Capital Ring;
- Jubilee Walkway;
- Lee Valley Walk.

The SWN is designed for walkers and current Walk London policy is to resist shared use except where it is officially sanctioned, i.e. on some towpaths. To complement these 'walker only' routes, the Boroughs have been encouraged to identify schemes that will contribute to the overall vision and benefit local people and the wider community, of the six routes above only the first three are within the Borough.

Fewer than two per cent of trips currently made in London are by bicycle, despite half of all trips being less than two miles long. The London Cycle Network (LCN) is the current major initiative for improving conditions for cyclists as considerable variation in standards exists across the network. TfL, with the assistance of the London Boroughs and cyclist groups, proposes to extend the number of high quality cycle routes across the city by providing more direct access with enhanced priority.

The RoW network in Bexley has the potential to link into London-wide walking and cycling routes. As stated in DEFRA guidance, there is a need for close co-operation between local authority departments and neighbouring authorities so that opportunities to link networks to other routes adjacent to the Boroughs boundaries are realised.

3.3.2 'Making London a walkable city' – The Walking Plan for London

The Walking Plan for London (2004) was developed to assist organisations in achieving the Mayor's walking vision for London. The Plan proposes solutions to overcome the multitude of problems faced by all member of the community, by encouraging walking for shorter journeys and a combination of walking and public transport for longer distance trips. The overall vision is that London will become one of the most walking friendly cities in the world by 2015 through *"the creation of a high quality urban environment that enriches Londoners' experience and appreciation of walking as a valued and enjoyable activity"*.

A walkable city is defined as a city where walking is selected as a preferred choice of travel. The 5 'C's' have been adopted to assess the degree to which a city is walkable:

Connected: The extent to which the walking network is connected to key 'attractors' such as public transport interchanges, homes, places of work and leisure destinations, and the degree to which the routes themselves connect. This essentially means providing routes which get people from A to B safely, easily and via the most direct route.

Convivial: The extent to which walking is an enjoyable activity in terms of interaction with other people, the natural and built environment, and other road users. This will mean creating high quality public spaces through the removal of litter, graffiti and other problems.

Conspicuous: The extent to which walking routes and public spaces are safe and inviting. Enhanced security will be achieved through good quality lighting, improved visibility, increased natural surveillance and better signage.

Comfortable: The extent to which walking is enjoyable. A more comfortable public realm would be achieved through high quality well-maintained footpaths, attractive landscaping and architecture, and improvements in road space allocation and the control of traffic.

Convenient: The extent to which walking can compete with other modes as an efficient and attractive alternative. This would be achieved through the above factors, to create an attractive network of walking environments able to compete with less sustainable modes for short journeys.

A range of other Mayoral strategies support the promotion and development of walking within the Capital to widen acceptance of walking as a mode for short journeys. Local authorities will be central to delivering the Walking Plan through its integration with more local policies.

Walking accounts for the second highest proportion of all trips made in London and is an essential part of most journeys to work, getting to and from public transport and between interchanges. This is also the case for journey to school trips, where at secondary level, a number of trips begin at the bus stop. Significant decongestion benefits could be achieved through an increase in trips made to primary schools on foot, since many pupils live within walking distance of their school. Walking is also a popular mode for leisure trips. It has both a utility purpose linking shopping facilities and attractions with public transport routes, as well as being a valued recreational activity in itself.

Walking is accessible to all social groups, ages, religions and cultures and is the primary mode for accessing public transport opportunities. Surveys have indicated that some people are discouraged from using public transport due to the walking component of their journey. Therefore resources need to be targeted at improving access and interchange parts of the journey to encourage a modal switch from the private car.

Walking has a significant contribution to make to a number of objectives.

- It is socially inclusive, as financial status does not determine opportunities;
- It has the least environmental impact of all modes;
- It has numerous health benefits from reducing obesity and the risk of cardiovascular disease, to improving independence and social well-being;
- It boosts the economy through enhancing city centre vitality making it a place where people want to live, work, visit and invest.

However, a number of barriers exist which need to be targeted. The following issues were identified during the Walking Plans development: institutional issues, traffic volume, air quality, the walking environment, safety, security, information, mobility and access. As such six objectives have been identified that will need to be considered in the development of the Bexley RoWAIP:

Improving coordination and inclusiveness in the Walking Plan development through sub-regional and local strategic partnerships;

- ***Promoting walking*** by educating people on the advantages of walking;
- ***Improving street conditions*** through a series of area treatments and local improvements coordinated to develop strategic walking routes across the city;
- ***Improving development proposals and interchanges*** by issuing guidelines to ensure that pedestrians are fully considered in all new development proposals;
- ***Improving safety and security*** by improving street design to reduce traffic speeds, increase pedestrian priority and improve personal security;
- ***Plan delivery and monitoring*** through secured regional and local level funding to ensure that key actions can be delivered through the coordinated working of the London Boroughs and partners.

Extensive monitoring will be required at the local level to determine whether targets are being achieved. Several Boroughs have already incorporated walking targets in to their transport policy documents. The London Walking Plan outlines the following methodology for local authorities to review their walking routes.

- A review of walking routes and facilities;
- Identification of missing links, or where links or standards could be improved;
- A review of existing routes and catchment areas with a focus on areas with high levels of pedestrian activity;
- The physical condition of all routes;

  Defining targets for benchmarking to enable the monitoring of progress.

3.3.3 Walking and Cycling: An Action Plan

The DfT have set out an Action Plan for increasing the levels of walking and cycling as they make a positive contribution to many key public policy priorities. In particular, the government hopes to use the Plan as a means of public health intervention by increasing levels of physical activity and to reduce congestion.

The evidence suggests that a combined approach of environmental improvements, increased walking and cycling facilities, and carefully targeted information regarding health benefits, travel choices and recreational opportunities is most effective. Therefore, a number of aims have been identified, including:

- Creating places in which people want to walk and cycle;
- Providing high quality and safe facilities;
- Influencing travel behaviour through education, training and marketing;
- Building skills and capacity; and
- Monitoring success through better targets and indicators.

The land use and transport planning system plays a key part in improving the walking and cycling environment, by raising the standard of public access thereby making it easier for pedestrians and cyclists to get around. This objective is in support of Planning Policy Statement 6 (PPS6), which advises local authorities to give priority to pedestrians and cyclists in planning their town centres. It is also consistent with the reformed Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 and 'Section 106' agreements which are used to secure developer contributions to ameliorate the direct impacts of developments.

The Action Plan also integrates with RoWIPs by promoting walking in the countryside and ensuring the long term stability of the network. Improving existing routes is as important as creating new links and therefore the RoWAIP will contribute to several planning requirements.

Furthermore, improved accessibility by foot or bicycle has the potential to increase public transport patronage. Cycling and walking to rail stations or bus stops can improve journey accessibility and reliability in addition to having health and fitness benefits.

Education and marketing also has a role to play in increasing the number of journeys made by sustainable modes to the workplace and education centres. Targeted initiatives such as School Travel Plans, Workplace Travel Plans and other local and national travel awareness campaigns can be very effective in communicating the benefits of walking and cycling for different types of journey.

3.3.4 The London Plan: Spatial Development Strategy for Greater London (2008)

The London Plan is a strategic document which sets out an integrated social, economic and environmental framework for the future spatial development of London over the next 20 years. As well as identifying broad locations for change and proposals for implementation, the Plan provides a context for local planning policies relating to land use and infrastructure management and development and has regard for EU directives to ensure that the planning system operates within the wider European context.

The Mayor's vision is to develop London as a world city by delivering strong, diverse long term economic growth, encouraging social inclusivity and improving London's environment and use of resources. To realise this vision, the London Plan has six overarching objectives:

1. To accommodate London's growth within its boundaries without encroaching on open spaces.
2. To make London a healthier and better city for people to live in.
3. To make London a more prosperous city with strong, and diverse long term economic growth.
4. To promote social inclusion and tackle deprivation and discrimination.
5. To improve London's accessibility.
6. To make London an exemplary world city in mitigating and adapting to climate change and a more attractive, well-designed and green city.

Chapter 3 of the London Plan focuses on delivering improved accessibility throughout Greater London and ensuring diverse opportunities for leisure and recreation to improve social cohesion and public health as well as delivering against environmental objectives. Several policies have been identified which are applicable to the RoWAIP and improving access to recreational resources in the London Borough of Bexley. These include:

- **Policy 3C.1: Integrating transport and development** to improve walking and cycle capacity and accessibility and upgrade the public realm to reduce travel by unsustainable modes.
- **Policy 3C.19: Local transport and public realm enhancements** by implementing 'local area transport treatments' to improve the public realm and deliver transport, environmental and regeneration benefits in town centres, at interchanges and in residential areas.
- **Policy 3C.21: Improving conditions for walking** by providing safe, convenient, accessible and direct public access between key land uses and promoting high quality local walking routes, including the SWN.
- **Policy 3C.22: Improving conditions for cycling** by identifying, implementing and promoting high quality, direct cycle routes, where possible segregated from motorised traffic and pedestrians, and providing associated facilities.
- **Policy 3D.8: Realising the value of open space and green infrastructure** by protecting, promoting and improving access to London's network of open spaces.
- **Policy 3D.9: Green Belt** land should be protected and positive uses that improve the environmental and landscape quality and accessibility of this land should be encouraged.
- **Policy 3D.10: Metropolitan Open Land** should be protected from inappropriate development and preserved for leisure, recreation and cultural activities or historical, recreational and nature conservation.
- **Policy 3D.11: Open space provision in DPDs** to ensure that open space deficiencies and needs are considered in planning policies and addressed through the protection of locally important green spaces and provision of functional and physical linkages with these open spaces.
- **Policy 3D.12: Open space strategies** to ensure that boroughs protect, create and enhance green space in their area and manage open spaces appropriately for the benefit of the community.
- **Policy 3D.13: Children and young people's play and informal recreation strategies** to provide children with access to good quality, well-designed, secure and stimulating play and informal recreation opportunities in their area.

Chapter 4 of the Plan sets out policies for the Blue Ribbon Network and the role that waterways, including the River Thames and London's canal network, rivers, streams, docks, reservoirs and lakes have in delivering the Mayor's vision. As some of Bexley's access network links into the Blue Ribbon Network, the RoWAIP should have

regard for the following policies.

- **Policy 4C.4: Natural landscape** and the Blue Ribbon Network should be recognised as contributing to London's open space network and opportunities to create and enhance open spaces beside waterways should be identified to protect and enhance this important resource.
- **Policy 4C.11: Increasing access alongside and to the Blue Ribbon Network** by protecting and improving existing access to waterways and identifying opportunities to extend or create new walking and cycle routes alongside the Blue Ribbon Network.

Chapter 6 sets out policies for implementing the Plan through the coordination of policies, resources and stakeholder decision making. Of relevance to Bexley's RoWAIP are policies 6A.4 and 6A.5 which state that priorities in planning obligations should be set out in Boroughs' DPDs alongside a clear framework for negotiating on contributions. Additionally, the Mayor in partnership with the London Boroughs wishes to develop a voluntary system of pooling for the delivery of facilities related to proposed developments, with a particular emphasis given to public transport improvements which assist in tackling climate change.

The Bexley RoWAIP will seek to respond to these policies by providing a framework to take forward supportive measures at the local level. In particular, routes which connect the strategic walk network will be safeguarded and other opportunities to better connect open spaces will be explored.

3.4 Local Government Policies

3.4.1 Local Implementation Plan

The Local Implementation Plan (LIP) is a statutory document which each London Borough is required to complete, under the Greater London Authority Act 1999. It sets out how each Borough intends to meet its obligations in implementing the Transport Strategy of the Mayor of London. Bexley's LIP is a statement of the Borough's proposals with a timetable for implementing them.

Major regeneration opportunities exist in the north of the Borough in the Thames-side area which the council wishes to render fully accessible via a multi-modal route corridor, incorporating public transport improvements and better provision for walking and cycling.

Bexley's long term integrated transport strategy is to *"progressively secure a well-integrated, reliable, convenient and sustainable transport system"*. This will involve promoting walking as a viable healthy and environmentally friendly alternative mode.

Walking

The council's walking initiatives are directed towards improving walking conditions along key routes to town centres, transport interchanges, schools and leisure facilities. This will be achieved through a range of improvements aimed at creating safe and attractive walking environments in which conflict between vehicles and pedestrians is minimised.

- Street conditions will be improved through the use of high quality pavement surfaces, attractive landscaping and urban design, removal of clutter, the efficient allocation of road space and control of traffic;
- Safer and more secure walking environments will be created through a greater provision of street lighting and the installation of CCTV to reduce the fear of crime;
- Integrated pedestrian crossing facilities will be installed to minimise conflicts between vehicles and pedestrians;
- The council's Highway Maintenance Programme covers street maintenance to ensure footways and the general walking environment are kept at a high standard;
- The council's walking audit, officer observations and input from local residents and access groups.

The council is keen to increase the proportion of all journeys accomplished on foot but unfortunately the lack of data on current levels of use makes it difficult for specific targets to be established. However, the council intends to carry out walking audits and customer satisfaction surveys to allow the authority to accurately target proposals and quantify improvements in support of the Major's long term walking targets up to 2015, which are to:

1. Increase the modal share of walking for trips under two miles by 10%; and
2. Increase the average number of trips made on foot per person per year by 10%.

The need to encourage more children to walk is the focus of the council's School Travel Plan Strategy and the 'Walk to School' Initiative. Safer Travel Plan schemes are also progressively being implemented across the Borough to improving walking facilities and pedestrian safety. The council has a three year work programme of traffic schemes including the introduction of controlled pedestrian crossings which are being focused on locations used by the elderly and children on their journey to school.

The Walking Strategy also covers public footpaths and RoW. As well as being an important recreational resource, these routes provide important communication links and therefore the council will make effort to safeguard and enhance them.

Cycling

Bexley's Cycling Strategy is framed by the national and regional policy context:

- The National Cycling Strategy's target is to quadruple the number of trips made by bicycle by 2012 compared to 1996 levels.
- London Cycling Action Plan's long term aim is for a 200% increase in cycling in London by 2020, with an 80% increase by 2010 compared to cycling levels in 2000.
- The LCN+ target is to achieve a 100-300% increase in cycling between 2002/03 and 2009.

To achieve these objectives, the council will seek to improve infrastructure and promote cycling, as well as supporting the development of strategic and local cycle networks which provide safe, convenient routes both within the Borough and that link with routes in adjacent districts. In particular the council has actively participated in the LCN+ project which has involved the creation of additional strategic routes as part of the 1,000 mile London Cycle Network (LCN) and will complete the long distance Thames Valley Cycle route to support regeneration of the Thames Gateway.

With regard to local cycling opportunities, the council's long term strategy is to link all major destinations, including schools, hospitals, town centres and recreation areas with residential areas via a series of safe cycle routes. Since more than two-thirds of all journeys in the Borough are less than five kilometres, increasing cycling could have a significant impact on congestion. However, progress to date has been slow due to insufficient external funding and to achieve these aims, a partnership approach, involving major employers and schools, is required to ensure that cycle parking and associated facilities are made available.

Safety is another top concern. Cyclists represent a vulnerable class of road user and therefore highway design, improvements and traffic management need to ensure that safety is maximised and the conflict between users is addressed. However, schemes are based on development of the network and maximising use rather than addressing safety issues. Meetings with local user groups, LCN+ representatives and consultants are held monthly / bi-monthly to provide valuable feedback on the development of new routes.

The School Travel Plans programme is one of the most important schemes for providing safer cycling environments. As part of the scheme design, measures to reduce vehicle speeds are installed to ensure safe cycle routes to the school are provided. Where appropriate, cycle parking is also provided either through the Travel Plans or via the Mayor's School Cycle Parking Programme, which three local schools are currently involved in.

In terms of marketing, cycling is publicised through a series of local and national campaigns and via annual cycling events. Information regarding these initiatives and general cycling and route information is available at the council offices, other public buildings and in local cycling shops.

Funding

The London Borough of Bexley has a limited capital resource and therefore the primary source of funding for LIP projects comes from the TfL's allocation of funding for London's transport infrastructure from Central Government. However, the Borough endeavours to use alternative funding streams wherever possible and resources over recent years have come from the former ODPM Sustainable Communities Fund, the Government Office for London, the Single Regeneration Budget and DEFRA.

3.4.2 Bexley Unitary Development Plan

Bexley's second Unitary Development Plan (UDP) was adopted in April 2004 and sets out the council's policies for land use and development over the forthcoming decade. The UDP has been reviewed and those policies which could impact on the RoWAIP have been included below.

Transport

Road traffic can have a detrimental impact on quality of life through noise and air pollution, the inefficient use of resources, creating danger for vulnerable road users, taking up valuable open space and creating additional costs to individuals and businesses associated with congestion.

In response to this, the UDP includes policies to reduce the negative impacts of road traffic by offering greater choices of public transport and improving cycling and pedestrian facilities so that they are appropriate to everyone.

Policy T14

The Council will take account of the needs of cyclists in the design of highway and traffic management schemes and support the development of both strategic and local cycle networks to provide safe, convenient routes both within the Borough and linking with routes in adjacent boroughs and districts. The Council will seek to provide for and promote cycling in development proposals by requiring as appropriate:

1. the provision of safe and attractive cycle routes both within major developments and linking to existing or planned cycle networks;

2. the provision of convenient and secure cycle parking in accordance with the cycle parking standards set out in Annex 1 to this chapter.

Policy T15

The Council will seek to meet the accessibility needs of disabled people in the design of highway and traffic management schemes and in development proposals by:

1. promoting public transport and interchange facilities that are accessible to disabled people;
2. requiring provision of convenient, designated disabled parking spaces to meet needs; and
3. designing pedestrian routes and crossings which are safe and convenient for use by disabled people where appropriate.

Policy T16

The Council will seek to improve the environment for pedestrians and reduce the risk of accidents to pedestrians by means of:

1. adequate and safe crossing facilities, where necessary;
2. giving priority to the needs of pedestrians, including people with disabilities, in highway and landscape design; and
3. environmental enhancement schemes in areas of high pedestrian activity such as shopping streets.

Sustainable Communities

In addition to reducing reliance on the car, the council aims to encourage more sustainable transport choices and reduce the need to travel by integrating land use and transport planning decisions. Encouraging mixed use development at locations, particularly urban centres, which offer genuine and easy access by a range of modes, including walking, cycling and public transport will reduce demand for the private car, thus making travel by non-car modes safer and easier.

Policy T3

Development proposals likely to be significant generators of travel should be sited in town and district centres and other locations accessible by, or capable of being made accessible by, a range of transport modes, especially public transport, walking and cycling.

Policy T13

The Council will seek to promote a mix of land uses, including residential, in town and local centres, which reduces the need to travel and encourages the use of public transport, walking and cycling.

Greenbelt, Open Land and Heritage Land

The government and general public attach a growing importance to the quality, attractiveness and protection of the environment. The council are keen to avoid the loss of open land and the greenbelt as it provides attractive breaks in the built up area and *"it accommodates a wide range of open-air recreational, leisure, educational, institutional and other uses within easy reach of residential areas."* As such, the council intends to increase recreational opportunities, conserve and enhance the landscape, promote nature conservation, and secure suitable screening and landscaping of neighbouring built developments.

Heritage land comprises open areas of land of particular strategic importance, and includes areas of nature conservation, high landscape quality and historic importance, which offer opportunities for outdoor recreation. The quality and character of these areas are deserving of protection and enhancement, both for local residents and visitors, and the council will seek to promote access to these areas whilst protecting their individual character.

Policy ENV10

The Council will encourage recreational uses of a predominantly open nature to locate in suitable parts of the Metropolitan Green Belt. Special consideration will be given to open-air recreational proposals, which would result in the improvement of under used or damaged land.

Policy ENV16

The Council will seek to enhance recreational opportunities and take appropriate action in areas shown as Metropolitan Open Land to conserve and enhance the landscape, promote nature conservation, and secure suitable screening and landscaping for built development.

The South East London Green Chain

Green Chains are largely used for recreational purposes and offer extended footpaths and wildlife corridors through natural surroundings. The South East London Green Chain forms an almost continuous arc of public and private open space through Bexley, Bromley, Greenwich and Lewisham. These Boroughs have therefore adopted a series of objectives relating to the protection of this Green Chain.

- To improve and encourage the provision of suitable recreational facilities, with an emphasis on those serving a wide area of south east London and / or requiring open land;
- To safeguard the open land from built development and maintain its structural contribution in providing a visual break in the built up area of London;
- To conserve and enhance the visual amenity and ecological aspects of the landscape;
- To improve public access to and through the area;
- To promote an overall identity for the area in order to increase public awareness of available recreational facilities; and
- To encourage the collaboration and co operation of the various public and private agencies, owners, organisations, clubs, etc. in the area to achieve the above objectives.

Policy ENV17

The Council will protect land that forms part of the South East London Green Chain as defined on the Proposals Map and promote it as a recreational resource and visual amenity in conjunction with other parts of the Green Chain in southeast London.

Policy ENV18

Subject to Policy ENV17 above, the Council will take appropriate action in the Green Chain to conserve and enhance the landscape, to promote nature conservation and to ensure suitable screening and landscaping for built development.

Leisure a nd Tourism

Leisure and recreation opportunities are important in achieving a good quality of life and this is reflected in UDP policies to secure new provision and safeguard existing facilities. In particular, the council wishes to retain uses where they serve a local need and benefit local residents. However, open spaces and recreational opportunities are only valuable where residents can gain access to them; yet the council's local user survey indicated that *"some parts of the Borough are deficient in their accessibility to one of more types of open space"*

The existing walking and cycling network provides an important recreational resource in itself but also plays a central role in providing access to other leisure opportunities. In support of this, the council intends to *"safeguard and endeavour to enhance public footpaths and rights of way, to make them safer and more attractive to use and to improve access to recreational facilities."* Any improvements that are made will need to increase accessibility for all and improving routeing, lighting and footpath condition offers scope to reduce crime and enhancing public safety and thus increase use.

Additionally, the council wants to increase the opportunities for people with disabilities to participate in as wide a range of activities as possible and will therefore ensure that consideration is given to the provision of adequate access for people with disabilities.

However, some areas are potentially at risk of being over used. The council recognises that *"information services and signing are important to make the area attractive and convenient for visitors, and to direct tourism activity to the best locations, where any risk of adverse impacts will be minimised"*.

Policy TAL8

The Council will seek to improve public access to open spaces, the countryside and riverside areas, including improved access for people with disabilities.

Policy TAL9

The Council will safeguard and endeavour to enhance public footpaths and rights of way, to make them safer and more attractive to use and to improve access to recreational facilities.

Policy TAL10

There will be a presumption against the closure or diversion of public footpaths unless equivalent or improved alternative provision is to be made.

Policy TAL12

The Council will aim to maximise the potential of waterside and riverside areas, particularly of the Thames, for water based activities and riverside walks, provided that safety and navigation on the waterways is not prejudicial and the special character of the waterside areas or sensitive areas of wildlife are not adversely affected.

The RoWAIP will complement these policies by safeguarding existing resources seeking to deliver an attractive, accessible network which effectively connects green spaces and recreational opportunities across the borough to maximise opportunities for the boroughs residents.

3.4.3 Bexley's Sustainable Community Strategy

The Government's definition of 'sustainable communities' are "places where people want to live and work, now and in the future. They meet the diverse needs of existing and future residents, are sensitive to their environment, and contribute to a high quality of life. They are safe and inclusive, well planned, built and run, and offer equality of opportunity and good services for all." Sustainable communities are diverse to reflect local circumstances; however the Government has identified eight interlinking elements which are present in sustainable communities:

1. **Active, inclusive and safe** – fair tolerant and cohesive with a strong local culture and other shared community activities.
2. **Well run** – with effective and inclusive participation, representation and leadership.
3. **Environmentally sensitive** – providing places for people to live that are considerate of the environment.
4. **Well designed and built** – featuring quality built and natural environment.
5. **Well connected** – with good transport services and communication linking people to jobs, schools, health and other services.
6. **Thriving** – with a flourishing and diverse local economy.
7. **Well served** – with public, private, community and voluntary services that are appropriate to people's needs and accessible to all.
8. **Fair for everyone** – including those in other communities, now and in the future.

Bexley's Community Strategy, entitled 'Bexley Together', sets out the borough's plans to create 'a strong, sustainable and cohesive community'. The strategy serves as the overarching plan for promoting and improving the well-being of the area and has been developed to respond to needs identified by local businesses, voluntary and community organisations, the Council, statutory organisations and local residents. The delivery plan for Bexley Together sets out indicators to define and monitor progress towards goals focused around four interrelated elements: building safer and stronger communities; developing healthier communities for adults; promoting economic development and the environment; and developing services for children and young people.

To ensure sustainability is at the heart of local strategic decision-making and that strategic economic, social and environmental priorities effectively contribute to the delivery of a sustainable community, each priority identified in the strategy respects the five principles of sustainable development:

1. Ensuring a strong, healthy and just society;
2. Using sound science responsibly;
3. Promoting good governance;
4. Achieving a sustainable economy;
5. Living within environmental limits.

The Bexley Together Action Plan 2008-2011 outlines the borough's approach to addressing the five top community priorities identified from consultation. Actions are based on a three year rolling period but will be updated annually to ensure the strategy evolves to reflect changing needs.

1. Reduce anti-social behaviour on our streets, including drug and alcohol related disorder, youth disorder and graffiti.
2. Reduce crime, including violent crime, ensuring local people feel safer and have less fear of crime;
3. Promote choice and independent living in the community through increased levels of customer access, control and equity.
4. Improve educational standards and outcomes for all children and young people in our schools and narrow the gap for vulnerable groups.
5. Maintain a high quality environment, ensuring Bexley is a clean and attractive Borough that promotes the feeling of safety among its residents.

The RoWAIP will contribute to addressing these priorities by improving the appearance and accessibility of green spaces; creating new and improved opportunities for outdoor recreation; and encouraging adults and children to lead healthier, more active lifestyles. In particular the RoWAIP will assist in the delivery of specific actions to:

- Work towards Bexley being one of London's "Greenest" Boroughs;
- Review and update byelaws for parks and open spaces;
- Maintain the borough's 104 parks and open spaces.

3.4.4 Bexley Community Strategy

Bexley's Community Strategy has been developed by the Bexley Partnership whose membership consists of some 130 organisations from the public, private, community and voluntary sectors. The Strategy is a long term plan covering the next decade and is based around the vision for *"a strong, sustainable, cohesive community"*, building on the following components:

- Individual well-being and development;
- A safe, secure and attractive environment;
- Economic prosperity and opportunity.

Within the strategy a series of aims and actions have been identified. A number of these relate to RoW and can be supported through improvements to the network, as illustrated below.

Well Being and Development

1. Health

Bexley is generally a healthy place and over the last ten years much has been done to help people lead independent lives and to help families in disadvantaged areas. Changes are currently taking place to better integrate services through closer working of the health services, local authority and voluntary groups.

To further improve health and reduce incidents of life threatening diseases, the London Borough of Bexley is taking action to encourage people to take responsibility for their health and to lead healthier lifestyles by undertaking regular exercise, eating a balanced diet and choosing not to smoke.

Health:
The aim is *"for Bexley to be a healthier place for everyone, with accessible, high quality services, where people are effectively supported to help them lead independent, healthy and fulfilled lives."*

Bexley's Community Strategy: Our Vision for Bexley 2003-2013

To achieve this aim, a number of objectives have been Identified:

- To reduce health inequalities and improve local people's health across the Borough.
- To support local people to take responsibility for their health and positively choose a healthy lifestyle.
- To formulate partnerships to increase user involvement and empowerment.
- To ensure the older people and those with disabilities receive the support they need to lead independent and active lifestyles.

The RoW network has the potential to contribute to health targets by offering people the opportunity to undertake regular exercise and participate in outdoor activities. Promoting greater awareness of the recreational activities available to people, and how they are able to access them, may encourage people to change their lifestyles to lead healthier lives. However, this will be dependent upon partnership working between organisations to provide information and services and promote community involvement in such activities. The council therefore needs to look at developing initiatives to promote healthy lifestyles and deliver services to encourage involvement in health schemes.

2. Culture

Bexley is one of the greenest boroughs in London and has a rich natural and built heritage, encompassing parks, woodlands, nature sites, historical sites and conservation areas. Imaginative solutions to preserve, protect and develop these areas are needed to safeguard such resources for the future.

Culture:
The council wants the London Borough of Bexley *"to be a community where cultural and leisure opportunities and activities improve health, promote social inclusion and cohesion, develop skills, contribute to the borough's economy and develop our sense of identify."*

Bexley's Community Strategy: Our Vision for Bexley 2003-2013

In support of this policy, the council's objectives are:

- To maximise the impact and contribution of culture and leisure to address the Borough's needs and identified priorities.
- To maintain and develop the culture and leisure infrastructure of the Borough.

The council actively encourages people to visit Bexley's parks, open spaces, nature reserves and historic sites, in support of its health and leisure policies. The RoW network also represents an important recreational resource and provides access to open spaces across the Borough. Therefore, the council could look into publicising the two in partnership to encourage sustainable access to the Borough's heritage sites.

A Safe, Secure and Attractive Environment

1. Safety

Bexley is one of the safest London Boroughs. Partnership working and more public consultation over recent years has generated significant successes in reducing crime in the borough. However, the feeling of personal safety is important to residents as fear of crime can seriously affect peoples' quality of life. As such, the council's aim is to work To reduce crime to make the streets feel safer.

Safety:
The council proposes *"to work towards Bexley being the safest borough in London."*

Bexley's Community Strategy: Our Vision for Bexley 2003-2013

In support of this, the council proposes:

- To take action to reduce the disorder and make the streets and town centres safer.
- To ensure local people feel safer and have less fear of crime.

In terms of RoW, improving the feeling of personal safety will involve ensuring that vegetation is cut back, obstructions are removed, litter and dog fouling is cleared and adequate lighting is provided, as appropriate. In addition, methods of reporting crime will need to be assessed to ensure that problems are dealt with and within an appropriate timescale.

2. Environment

Bexley is one of the cleanest and greenest boroughs in London. It has a large amount of open space, including a growing number of nature reserves and an increasing number of environmental and conservation groups becoming involved in protecting local wildlife and biodiversity.

In terms of the urban environment, Bexley has some of the cleanest and well-maintained streets of all the London Boroughs, though graffiti and dog fouling have been raised as particular issues to address. In addition, the borough is keen to reduce air pollution by better educating householders, businesses and road users on environmental issues.

Environment:
The London Borough of Bexley aims *"to protect and enhance our valuable local environment, to make sure Bexley is a clean and attractive place and to support the sustainable development of the borough."*

Bexley's Community Strategy: Our Vision for Bexley 2003-2013

In support of this vision, the council's objectives are:

- To ensure that green spaces and heritage are of the highest quality, safe, well maintained and supported by the local community.
- To work with communities and businesses so that they are more environmentally aware and responsible.
- To work to achieve a clean attractive environment with reduced pollution.
- To protect the natural and built environment and local biodiversity and ensure sustainable development.

To meet these aims, an action to increase community use and involvement in parks has been identified. Measures to achieve this action should contribute to improvements to the RoW network by encouraging people to become more involved in using and managing recreational resources.

Economic Prosperity and Opportunity

1. Transport

Bexley is relatively accessible by major roads, rail services and bus routes and is not as severely congested as central London. However, the borough still experiences the problems inherent in most urban areas and therefore has to face the challenge of striking a balance people's freedom to travel against transports environmental Impacts.

Transport:
The council's aim is *"to have a good transport network that builds on the borough's strengths, supports the local economy and strengthens local communities."*

Bexley's Community Strategy: Our Vision for Bexley 2003-2013

While the council proposes to support residents and businesses which choose to move towards more sustainable travel options, there are no specific actions proposed to increase walking and cycling in the Borough in favour of less sustainable modes. However, the council recommends that residents should walk, cycle or use public transport in favour of the private car, and businesses should encourage employees to use alternative modes in their journey to work and car share, where possible.

3.4.5 Key Sustainability Issues

Approximately two-thirds of London's land area is occupied by green spaces and water spaces providing important habitats for local flora and fauna. The London Borough of Bexley recognises that in order to improve quality of life in the borough, they need to work to ensure that developments have minimal impact on the natural and built environment and respect Bexley's rich heritage. Specifically, the following key issue areas have been identified by the borough to reflect the priorities set out in LA21:

Key Issue 1: To ensure the environmentally effective use of the built and natural environment.

- Protect and enhance the existing urban heritage, including conservation areas, listed buildings, open spaces and green belts through the implementation of the unitary development plan.
- Encourage proposals that facilitate new and improved public transport and are unlikely to generate additional volumes of transport by private cars.

Key Issue 2: The protection and enhancement of natural habitats and the borough's biodiversity.

- Implement a Bexley Biodiversity Plan consistent with national and regional strategies and priorities.

- Ensure that parks and other natural and semi-natural sites under the Council's control or direction are managed in a manner sensitive to wildlife needs and review management plans for the Borough's important wildlife sites.
- Protect and enhance areas of known conservation importance and made these more accessible to the public where this will not reduce their conservation value.
- Implement the trees and woodlands strategy and regularly review this.
- Increase the awareness of nature conservation and biodiversity issues and the encouragement of wildlife by involving as many individuals, groups and organisations as possible.
- Continue to implement regeneration partnership schemes which enhance the wildlife value of industrial and other development sites.

Key Issue 3: To encourage sustainable transport and an integrated transport network.

- Encourage cycling and walking as viable and healthy alternatives to the car.
- Actively support and promote green travel policies such as Green Travel Plans and Travel Wise.
- Work in partnership with groups and institutions to encourage cultural change towards more sustainable transport patterns.
- Promote safe cycle routes and encourage walking by supporting the Green Chain Walks.

Key Issue 4: To encourage sustainable economic development and gain.

- Promote partnership schemes with businesses to improve the local environment.
- Implement the Visitor Strategy and Action Plan.

Key Issue 5: To promote environmental education in schools and raise awareness in sustainability issues among the local community.

- Support and assist local initiatives which promote sustainable development and responsible citizenship to individuals in the course of their daily working and family lives.
- Promote the "Safer Routes to School" initiative.

Key Issue 6: To deliver an increasingly sustainable local environment through partnership and participation with businesses, voluntary bodies, local organisations, etc.

- Work with and support local businesses in addressing sustainability issues and reducing their environmental impacts locally and on the region.
- Encourage local businesses to adopt sustainable commuter and transport plans for their employees.

Key Issue 7: To develop and promote healthy lifestyles and health delivery through partnership.

- Promote healthy eating and lifestyles.
- Develop the local health improvement programme.

Key Issue 8: To support and encourage sustainable design and construction.

- Implement the approved Bexley Sustainable Design and Constructions Guide, a Local Development Framework Supplementary Planning Document.

Key Issue 9: To adapt to manage climate change and mitigate against the effects.

- Consider recommendations made in Planning for Climate Change (a supplement to PPS1) and the London Plan to ensure that spatial planning responds effectively to climate change.
- Prepare and implement a Bexley Climate Change Strategy and Action Plan.
- Prepare and implement a Local Environmental Sustainability Strategy and develop an Environmental Sustainability Forum.
- Continue to deliver environmental projects and improvements in and around the borough's rivers and marshes.

3.4.6 Bexley Open Space Strategy

Bexley's Open Space Strategy provides a framework for the future management of open spaces and recreational facilities by encouraging service areas to work in partnership to plan for the effective delivery of local and site-specific improvements to protect, create and enhance the borough's open space network. As well as being an important environmental resource, open spaces also make an important contribution towards national and local priorities. Well designed planning policies and supporting implementation plans are fundamental to the delivery of Government objectives relating to urban renaissance, rural renewal, sustainable development social inclusion, health and well being.

At a regional level, the commitment to safeguarding these resources and improving access to them is illustrated in the East London Green Grid Framework which sets out the Mayor of London's aspirations to create a network of interlinked, high quality public areas and green spaces across the East London sub-region. Locally, Bexley Council is also committed to maximising use of the borough's environmental resources by balancing leisure opportunities with nature conservation.

The Open Space Strategy considers provision in the borough by typology. Those of particular relevance to the RoWAIP include parks and open spaces; natural and semi-natural open space (including sites of importance for nature conservation); amenity green spaces; and corridors (including rivers and public rights of way).

A key focus of the Open Space Strategy is improved access and provision of an effective green infrastructure network which provides linkages for humans as well as maximising opportunities for biodiversity and wildlife. An assessment of the adequacy of current open space provision in the borough reveals the improvements that are required for each typology.

- Metropolitan Parks, District Parks and Local Parks are highly regarded across Bexley but local facilities are perceived to be of lower quality and safety and accessibility deficiencies exist in some areas. To maximise the effectiveness of the parks network, connectivity needs to be improved to better integrate facilities with the areas they serve.
- Bexley has significant quantities of Natural and Semi-Natural Open Spaces which offer significant opportunities for wildlife conservation and biodiversity as well as providing recreational opportunities. Maintaining a balance between these sometimes conflicting uses is a key challenge as is facilitating access via green corridors for flora and fauna as well as the public.
- Many areas of the borough which are devoid of parks have a good provision of Amenity Space to meet residents' needs. However, many sites serve no particular purpose and lack facilities so improving the quality of these spaces should be prioritised going forward.
- Green Corridors are an integral element of Bexley's future plans and will assist in delivering regeneration and nature conservation objectives. Integration of the river corridor with the rest of the borough is a particular priority.

Analysis of current provision highlights the opportunities for improving the open space network to derive more benefits from green space provision and to ensure that facilities better meet local needs. The overarching vision is to "lead and implement the Open Space Strategy, through partnership working, creating an attractive, safe, secure and sustainable environment that protects and enhances the quality of life for all residents and visitors to the London Borough of Bexley". To deliver this vision, key objectives for the future delivery of open space in the borough in the short and long term have been identified.

Short Term Objectives	Long Term / Ongoing Objectives
• To enhance the quality of open spaces in the Borough in terms of both recreation and biodiversity. • To ensure the quantity of open space is sufficient to meet local needs. • To maximise access to existing open spaces. • To maximise the use of open space, sport and recreational facilities.	• Facilitate stronger, sustainable communities. • Create a safe and secure environment, ensuring that facilities are designed to discourage crime and promote usage of open spaces. • To ensure that population change, new employment sites and regeneration initiatives act as a catalyst for improvement. • Provide a linked network of open spaces that meet the needs of all residents.

To encourage a strategic approach to the delivery of green space and proactive planning of improvements, a framework has been prepared which provides evidence for decision-making and prioritises recommendations for improvements. To deliver the recommendations outlined in the strategy both capital and revenue investment to enable increased maintenance will be required and therefore the integration of the strategy with the wider policy context is key. The priorities which are of particular relevance to the RoWAIP include:

1. **To enhance the quality of open spaces in the Borough.**
   - **a.** Maintain the quality of larger parks and undertake a rolling programme of improvements to enhance the quality of local parks.
     - i. Provide a greater range of facilities in local parks.
     - ii. Improve standards of maintenance in local parks and implement a programme of improvements to gates and signage at smaller sites.
     - iii. Facilitate the delivery of improvements to open space through the inclusion of appropriate policies within the Local Development Framework (LDF).
     - iv. Ensure that open spaces are designed with crime prevention and provision of safe, secure environments in mind.
   - **b.** Promote environmental management and conservation to increase biodiversity at the Borough's open spaces.

i. Encourage an abundance of flora and fauna in parks and promote the inclusion of natural areas within parks.

ii. Maintain and improve the natural resources of the Borough in terms of biodiversity including the sustainable management of the river corridors.

iii. Maximise the opportunities to mitigate climate change through the effective provision of open spaces.

2. To ensure the quantity of open space is sufficient to meet local needs.

a. Protect and maintain the Council's existing open space and consider opportunities to increase or enhance existing provision in line with local development when opportunities arise.

Bexley's RoWAIP will play a key role in the delivery of improved access across the borough by safeguarding existing resources, promoting opportunities for outdoor recreation and enhancing the quality and connectivity of the green infrastructure network. As the RoWAIP and Open Space Strategy are closely aligned and complement one another, the RoWAIP will seek a partnership approach to the delivery of improvements to meet the identified objectives.

3.4.7 Bexley Biodiversity Action Plan

Biodiversity Action Plans have come about following the Earth Summit in Rio de Janiero in 1992. In 1994 the British Government published *Biodiversity: The UK Action Plan* and established a *UK Biodiversity Action Plan Steering Group* who published a report the following year which set out a national framework and outlined the importance of Local Biodiversity Action Plans.

In 2002 the Mayor's Biodiversity Strategy was published which detailed the Mayor's vision for protecting and conserving London's natural open spaces. The Strategy *"seeks to ensure that there is no overall loss of wildlife habitats in London, and that more open spaces are created and made accessible, so that all Londoners are within walking distance of a quality natural space."* The strategy was prepared with regard to actions in the London Boroughs and will therefore inform the conservation management of each Borough's existing and potential natural resources.

The Bexley Biodiversity Action Plan identifies species and habitats of national, regional and local importance and outlines a plan of action for their conservation in the context of the generic London-wide Plan. An assessment of species and habitats value and their relative risk has been carried out to prioritise the actions required to manage them and to allow targets to be set to measure progress.

Individual action plans have been established for the following key habitats:

• Allotments	• Lowland Heathland
• Grazing Marsh	• Parks and Open Spaces
• Hedgerows	• Private Gardens
• Reedbeds	• Wetlands
• Woodland	

They have also been drawn up for the following key species:

• Bats	• Skylark
• Black Poplar	• Song Thrush
• Kingfisher	• Stag Beetle
• Newts	• Water Vole
• White-letter Hairstreak	• Wild Daffodil

The Plan is intended as a starting point to permit regular monitoring and progress reports and it is intended that further species and habitat plans will be developed on an on-going basis. The involvement of partners, volunteers and the public is viewed as essential to the Plan's implementation and monitoring and a parallel document outlining public involvement in species and habitat conservation supports the Biodiversity Action Plan to achieve the widest possible interest.

The Biodiversity Action Plan also supports the council's six key aims of:

1. Promoting Education For Life
2. Improving Health and Well-Being
3. Sustaining Prosperity and Extending Opportunity Through Regeneration
4. Making Our Community Safer
5. Caring For Our Environment
6. Making The Most Of Leisure Time

The RoW network will inevitably contribute to these aims of increasing public involvement by allowing people to enter into and explore some of these key habitats, raising awareness of species in the Borough and encouraging greater participation in outdoor activities and biodiversity issues.

3.4.8 The River Cray Riverside Access Study and Environmental Regeneration Programme

In 2004 the London Borough of Bexley was awarded £500,000 from the ODPM to improve access and flood storage along the River Cray corridor. The scheme was

designed to provide opportunities for nature conservation, learning, exercise, community activity and recreation for local people and as such the council's vision was to create *"a river corridor, which is ecologically rich, well managed and an attractive area for people to visit and enjoy. The connection of urban areas with green space will provide an accessible, safe place, which is understood and valued by local communities."*

As part of the coordinated programme to improve the River Cray, a series of studies took place to establish the baseline situation. In autumn 2004, a partnership of stakeholders undertook extensive surveys to identify the baseline situation and identified the main challenges as being:

- Poor access, signage and surfacing;
- A feeling of unease;
- Eye-sores;
- Fly-tipping and anti-social behaviour;
- Pollution and litter;
- Neglect.

Following on from this, Groundwork South East London (GWSEL) was appointed by the London Borough of Bexley in 2005 to survey public access along the River Cray and determine the potential for expansion of the existing 10 mile route.

To address these issues which were identified through these surveys, a series of actions were identified. Those which relate to the RoWAIP are summarised below.

1. To protect, enhance and manage biodiversity in the Cray corridor by:

- Implementing a programme to control invasive species
- extending habitat management plans
- developing an ecological education programme to improve understanding of flora and fauna.

2. To make access to the River Cray easier and more interesting for users by:

- installing directional signage including fingerposts and way-markers to promote the Cray Riverway and London LOOP routes;
- installing interpretation panels to inform users of the river's history, flood management role, wildlife habitats and promote how users can get more involved;
- creating an identity for the river using artwork and gateways;
- improving footpath and byway surfaces at identified locations; establishing additional links between the riverside and adjoining town centres, local facilities and residential areas.

3. To encourage education and community participation by:

- Giving children the opportunity to investigate a learn about local flora and fauna;
- Promoting initiatives that encourage positive recreational use of the river, including recreational events, fundraising opportunities and walks along the river;
- Consulting the public and engaging the community in the long term care of the river corridor.

4. To deter enviro-crime and better maintain the river corridor by:

- recruiting volunteers to report and monitor incidents of antisocial behaviour and identify sites where fly-tipping and vandalism occur;
- releasing regular reports to raise awareness of crime and deter future incidents;
- promoting key contacts to the community for reporting incidents.

While the studies found that the existing RoW network provided good access to and along the river, they also identified a series of specific opportunities to improve this amenity, including:

1. Surfacing paths through Foots Cray Meadows to improve accessibility;
2. Negotiating with Old Dartfordians Rugby Club and Hall Place to add access points and routes;
3. Negotiating with landowners to provide new paths and pedestrian bridges to improve riverside access linking Crayford Town Centre with Crayford Rough and residential areas opposite Crayford Industrial Estate;
4. Partially resurfacing Byway 106 through Crayford to improve all weather accessibility for pedestrians and cyclists;
5. Replacing the Barnes Cray Road link with a new path south of the River, west of Maiden Lane; and
6. Improving links between the Cray Riverway, Crayford Marsh and the Thames path by:
    - improving Byway 103 / Footpath 25
    - providing a new footbridge across the Cray to connect Footpath 249 with the Thames Cycle Path;
    - providing a demand responsive signal across the Thames Road to link Footpath 249 directly opposite;
    - re-directing path users along the river on Footpath 249.

Implementing these improvements will increase access to both the River Cray and the local RoW network and should therefore be considered in both the development and implementation of this Improvement Plan.

Table 3.1:
Proposed Improvements along the River Shuttle

Project	Proposed Improvements
Parish Wood Park	• Create paths across waterlogged ground • Improve river environment • Provide seats
Berwick Crescent	• Removal of fencing to enhance public access along the River Shuttle corridor
Hollyoak Wood Park	• Realignment of the Shuttle Riverway • Paths to be covered with bound gravel • A raised platform with seating to give access to ecological zones • Improve access to the weir • Repaint the weir
Willersley Park	• Adjust the playground enclosure • Provide a raised platform with seating with wide steps down to the water
Sidcup Golf Course	• Move the fence of the golf course back to enable a new path • Improve existing paths through the woodland
Riverside Walk	• Repaint the vent pipes to demarcate the extent of space
Bexley Woods	• Improve path through the woods • Provision of infrastructure (seating and bins)
Riversdale Road	• Removal of the fence • Adjustments to the ground to create level access • Creation of a bound gravel path
Beths Grammar School Playing Fields	• Improve the path with fence to playing fields • Provide seating • Pave the entrance to the playing fields and the path
Walking along the A2	• Install interpretation boards • Improve the footway along the A2 beyond the Bourne Road flyover to enable easy access • Improve the A2 road side path • Re-routing of the path has been considered
Confluence	• Install a viewing platform with signs identifying the Rivers Shuttle and Cray • Install a ramped connection to the A2 path
Leaflet	• Update and improve the Shuttle Riverway leaflet and walking map to include information about the river, associated spaces and useful facilities

3.4.9 The Shuttle: River Enhancement Opportunities

The River Shuttle is a tributary of the River Cray and is located predominantly in the London Borough of Bexley. The river has been physically modified in places and is impacted by urban pressures including poor water quality, fly-tipping and concentrated recreational use.

The aim of River Enhancement Opportunities project was to develop a plan of opportunities for management, enhancement and conservation of the River Shuttle. As part of the project, two studies were conducted, the first of which focused on improving access, whilst the second assessed opportunities to enhance biodiversity, improve water quality and develop an integrated river maintenance plan.

Shuttle Riverway: Improving Access

The Shuttle Riverway walk is an eight kilometre route from Avery Hill to Hall Place. The signposted walk passes through woods, parks and alleyways and there are a number of paved sections, particularly in the western part. However, signage to adjacent facilities is sparse and there are some steep slopes and muddy tracks which prevent usage by people with impaired mobility. Additionally, large detours through residential areas exist at a couple of locations, due to unclarified RoW issues, which disassociates the walk from the River.

Several sites along the River Shuttle have been identified for access improvements. The proposed improvements at each site are set out in ***Table 3.1***.

The River Shuttle: River Corridor Enhancement Opportunities

Given that the River Shuttle is publicly accessible along the majority of its length and is a valuable recreational and educational resource for the Borough, one of the key drivers for the project was to manage and enhance quality of life and public access.

The Shuttle Riverway Walk follows the Shuttle River from Avery Hill Park to Hall Place and forms part of the East London Green Grid Framework as well as providing an important link between the South East London Green Chain Walk and the Cray Riverway. The river corridor is well used by residents for walking and cycling both for recreational and utilitarian purposes.

Unfortunately intense public use of the River Shuttle corridor is physically impacting on the river environment, in terms of bank erosion and trampled vegetation. In addition, litter and fly-tipping have also been identified as a problem making the river look unsightly and causing hazards.

To resolve this, the council proposes to develop a bankside vegetation management and access plan for use by park management to limit mowing, encourage natural vegetation regeneration and to actively plant native bankside trees or shrubs. Additionally, park managers would be responsible for monitoring habitat diversity to control invasive species. A parallel project is also being developed to enhance public access along the river whilst considering the potential impact of heavy usage on the river environment.

3.5 Managing the Marshes: Vision and Statement

The London Borough of Bexley has three marsh areas which are remnants of a more extensive traditional grazing marsh that has been fragmented by development. The Erith, Crayford and Dartford marshes, all of which front the River Thames, contribute to the Borough's green infrastructure and are important to the Thames Gateway Green Grid.

The marshes are mostly grazed and are used for clay pigeon shooting, model aeroplane flying and motorcycle scrambling as well as passive recreational access. However, many places provide little or no access and unfortunately a degree of incompatibility exists between some of these uses. Problems with noise and water course pollution, vandalism and anti-social behaviour means that they suffer negative perceptions despite being held in high regard by many.

All of the marshes are valued in terms of nature conservation. Both the Erith and Crayford Marshes are designed as Areas of Metropolitan Importance for Nature Conservation. They both contain rich grassland and wetland habitats and collectively accommodate a range of species including water voles, invertebrates, amphibians, mammals, birds and fish. The Dartford Marsh also holds nature conservation value and has the potential to be designated as an SSSI. The marsh supports the largest water vole population in Kent and its dyke system is rich in marginal and aquatic species.

The marshes are relatively accessible via a range of transport modes and to a large number of the population. However, entrance signage is often poor and Erith Marsh, in particular, has virtually no pedestrian and footpath signage. Busy roads and railway lines also hamper direct access and improving access and the quality of signage from the wider area will significantly increase the accessibility and enjoyment of the marshes.

All of the marshes have the potential to fulfil a linking role by providing a shared resource for new and old communities. Community involvement will complement other local programmes and will provide the opportunity to engage local people in the delivery of improvements and management of the environment. Past community engagement has taken place through a programme of community events and activities, such as bat evenings, guided walks, history and wildlife events and reptile talks. Identifying further community opportunities and working with local schools will support the expansion of this programme in the future.

The Managing the Marshes programme was developed as a 10 year Strategic Plan with the three core objectives being that:

- The marshes should be a place for biodiversity to flourish, where species, habitats and management priorities are part of the heritage;
- the marshes should be a place that contributes to the area's prosperity in terms of the economy as well as people's health and well-being;
- the marshes should be a place for existing communities and future generations to use.

The marshes provide a network of open spaces and the strategy aims to improve public access to and through the marshes and to manage access so that recreation and conservation objectives are compatible. The Thames Path, Thames Cycle Path and Cray Riverway all provide long distance trails and it is intended that more local footpath and cycleway improvements will further increase access to the marshes and River Cray from existing centres such as Dartford, Slade Green, Erith, Belvedere and Thamesmead.

The marshes can also provide functional linkages between employment zones, housing areas and town centres. Bridges, subways and improved at-grade crossings are all proposed to increase cycle and pedestrian access and the provision of clear routes from public transport facilities will increase accessibility from the wider area.

Specifically, there are proposals at Erith Marsh for:

- A bridge crossing over the railway to link Erith Marsh with green space at Lesnes Abbey and Belvedere;
- a subway / bridge to cross the Eastern Way to link marshland that is bisected by the road;
- a link to the River Thames.

Additionally, Thames Water aspire to create a circular walk on the Erith Marshes site by removing an earth bank which currently creates a barrier along footpath one.

There are also proposals at Crayford / Dartford for:

- Long distance cycle and walking route along the Thames from Slade Green and 'The Bridge' (a new housing and mixed use development on the former Joyce Green hospital site);

- new paths to link new marshes / green space / recreational opportunities with housing development;
- short circular walking routes;
- bridges across the River Darent and River Cray;
- routes onto the Thames flood defence bund via steps and a ramp;
- a route to lookout on the landfill area;
- new car parks at Howbury Moat, near Eirth Yacht Club and at one of the sports centres near 'The Bridge'.

While increased accessibility is being encouraged, it is recognised that an effective visitor management programme needs to be in place to ensure that pressures on the marshes, in terms of visitor numbers, recreational activities and new local developments, are managed. This will involve zoning to allow appropriate recreational uses to take place in some areas while other zones are managed specifically for their nature value. The strategy will seek to link marsh community initiatives with training, employment, events and consultation in the local area to encourage communities' stewardship and respect of the marshes. Also, land owners, land managers and new and existing friends groups, including Wildlife Trusts, Groundwork Trusts and Local Forums, will be involved in implementing the strategy by delivery environmental quality and increasing community cohesion.

The RoWAIP and Managing the Marshes strategy have the potential to be mutually supporting as they both strive to increase accessibility to green spaces and recreational opportunities. The RoW network will provide local linkages to the marsh areas and will connect more strategic routes whilst the strategy's access improvements to overcome major barriers will assist in creating a less fragmented walking and cycling network around Erith, Crayford and Dartford.

3.5.1 East London Green Grid

The Green Grid provides a sub-regional framework for open space enhancement. It is intended to deliver projects at the local level which will assist in building a strategic network and will support the aims of the Mayor's London Plan. The Green Grid will involve the creation of new public areas and the enhancement of existing parks and green spaces by:

- Creating a better environmental context for development,
- Enhancing biodiversity and ecological values, and
- Improving flood risk management opportunities.

The East London Green Grid covers eleven London Boroughs and covers two growth areas which are priority regeneration areas. The London Borough of Bexley has a major role to play in delivering the Green Grid by enhancing accessible green space and contributing to flood risk management.

The London Borough of Bexley has established an ambitious regeneration programme for the next ten years to redevelop areas within Erith Western Gateway, Crayford Town Centre, Thamesmead and Abbey Wood as well as Belvedere and Erith Employment areas. Specifically, the council aims to *"create a high quality Green Grid incorporating existing and new open spaces and linkages"* with the strategic objectives of:

- Enhance green infrastructure;
- Support regeneration;
- Reduce flood risk;
- Enhance biodiversity;
- Provide for recreation and leisure;
- Education, interpretation and heritage;
- Engage communities;
- Reduce open space deficiency;
- Integrate with relevant strategies;
- Best practice;
- Develop a vision for the Inner Marshes Conservation Park.

Within Bexley, forty-nine initiatives have been identified, of which twenty are priority projects. Fifteen of these priority projects relate to providing recreational access opportunities in the Borough and are therefore relevant to the RoWAIP. These projects are detailed in ***Table 3.2*** and shown on ***Map 3.1*** taken from Design for London's East London Green Grid Area Framework 5.

Table 3.2: Green Grid Projects within the London Borough of Bexley

Erith Marshes (5.01a)
In 2006, a strategy was produced for Managing the Marshes and a large programme of environmental enhancements transformed Crossness South Marsh, enabling the site to become a new community ecological facility. Crossness Nature Reserve also benefited from investment in its infrastructure and visitor facilities. However, more work is required to ensure the sites are connected to the surrounding housing and employment areas including the new Horizon Business Centre, part of Veridion Park, the Tavy Bridge Estate and the River Thames.

Lesnes Abbey Visitor Centre (5.02)

The site boasts the remains of a medieval abbey set against an ancient woodland backdrop and an archaeological Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI). Increased visitor numbers are anticipated, with improved transport infrastructure planned for Abbey Wood, the Greenwich Waterfront Transit and Crossrail. Lesnes Abbey Wood is one of the Council's five Green Flag Parks and the second largest open space in the borough. A new state of the art visitor centre is needed for this historic site. This building would also act as a flexible facility to enable other community uses.

Belvedere Wetlands (5 .03a)

Recent studies have suggested a range of improvements to footpaths, cycle links, public open spaces, amenities and the network of dykes. At present, the dykes are fragmented and neglected and existing public open spaces are underused. Links to Erith Marshes, enhancement of the water vole habitat and buffer zones all need to be planned.

Franks Park (5.03b)

This attractive woodland park is surrounded by residential areas and local roads. Routes into the site are unattractive, poorly signed and difficult to find. As a result, the site is little known and underused. Enhanced routes, signage and gateways would open up the site to the wider area.

The Erith Pedestrian & Cycle Links (5.03dv

This project aims to exploit the potential of a pedestrian / cycle route from the riverside through the town centre. The Manor Road and links to Erith route aims to develop and formalise walking and cycling routes to the Howbury Centre and adjacent sites, providing a direct link to Manor Road which leads into Erith town centre through the Manor Road Industrial Estate and to Crayford Marshes. These projects are well defined and form part of the Local Implementation Plan (LIP).

Crayford Marsh (5.04)

The marsh is a Site of Metropolitan Importance for Nature Conservation. It has been prioritised for ecological enhancements, infrastructure improvements and the targeting of enviro-crime in line with the recommendations of the Managing the Marshes Strategy. Physical links to Dartford Marshes are needed and the joint management of the two marshlands must be considered, In line with the marshes landscape management plans.

Erith Saltings (5.04b)

This unique site is the last remnant of salt marsh south of the Thames in Greater London. It incorporates mudflats, reed beds, grazing marsh and a fossilised forest. A management plan has been produced with clear recommendations for the way forward. In addition, management to protect this fragile habitat from erosion in the context of the sea level change is required. An erosion study provides options for the protection of the site from strong currents and wave action. Funding has been secured to build a new club house on the site.

New Darent Bridge (5.04d)

This project aims to link Crayford and Dartford Marshes at the Darent Flood Defence Barrier by connecting the existing National Cycle Network Route 1, which runs along the south embankment of the River Thames. At present, cyclists and pedestrians face a considerable diversion of approximately five miles to cross the River Darent at Bob Dunn Way.

Darent Industrial Estate (5.04e)

Pollution from this large employment zone is likely to have a detrimental impact on the water quality of the ditches on Crayford Marshes. Fly-tipping is a problem, so is the sinking into the marshes of the unadopted access road, which is the only way into the site. It is proposed to carry out a feasibility study into the sources of pollution, in consultation with landowners and businesses, to better understand the effect on the marshes and proposed mitigation measures.

Slade Green Central (5.04g)

This group of projects includes Slade Green Recreation Ground, Whitehall Lane and Dale View open spaces. These sites offer limited opportunities for local people yet could contribute to the provision of much needed amenity facilities. A strategy is needed to improve access to these sites and to consider the layout and site uses in the context of the redevelopment potential of the wider area of Slade Green.

Shearwood Crescent (5.04i)

This site is a land filled open space beside the Thames Road scheme. It needs to be developed for community use in consultation with local residents.



Map 2.1: Green Grid Project Locations

In addition to these local projects, a series of network-wide initiatives are also planned. Those which are of relevance to the RoWAIP project and which impact upon the London Borough of Bexley are summarised in ***Table 3.3***.



River Cray Restoration Strategy & Environmental Improvements (5.06a)

A focus on the production of a river restoration strategy and capital enhancements for the River Cray building on the success and momentum of the River Cray Environmental Regeneration Programme 2004/06. Several riverside sites offer opportunities for recreation, flood alleviation and biodiversity including enhancing and creating habitats for water voles, whilst linear routes link Hall Place and the River Shuttle to the Southeast London Green Chain Walk and the Cray Riverway to Crayford / Dartford Marshes and the London Loop.

River Cray Flood Alleviation (5.06c)

Flood plain replacement at Barnes Cray pastures and the creation of a wetland reed bed area is a priority to drain the widened Thames Road naturally via a sustainable drainage system whilst at the same time providing a valuable wildlife habitat.

Foots Cray Meadows (5.06j)

The River Cray flows across this large Green Flag site and forms an attractive lake, which is home to a good range of waterfowls. The Five Arch Bridge provides a striking feature in the landscape and enables the crossing of the river. Some BAP species including the Black Poplar are present. The lake is in urgent need of restoration as it has become silted up and the islands are collapsing. The businesses based at Foots Cray Business Park are keen to enhance their estate's environment, south of the Meadows.

Joydens Wood & Chalk Wood (5.07)

A range of physical barriers associated with stable facilities and other private holdings currently restricts access to these woods and the sites are generally disconnected from the residential areas around them. There is a need to better understand users' patterns and improve access through the removal of obstructions and the installation of signage into the woods.

The River Shuttle (5.08)

The River Shuttle is a small tributary of the River Cray. It is heavily modified with weirs and other structures and sections have been realigned. The Shuttle Riverway is 8km long and stretches from Avery Hill to Hall Place. Twelve project proposals have been identified to improve access, enhance biodiversity and reduce flood risk. Work is also needed to improve the water quality of the River Shuttle.

Danson Park (5.09)

This popular park has a large lake used for boating. It is regularly polluted by misconnections to the domestic water network and contamination from storm drains. This results in eutrophication and the pollution of the River Shuttle. A strategy is needed to restore the water quality in the lake and prevent it from polluting the Shuttle. There is an urgent need for biodiversity enhancements throughout this very formal park.

East Wickham Open Space (Sub-Area 6)

Work by the council and Local Friends Group has significantly improved this site in recent years. However, this informal open space requires an investment in its infrastructure including the trim trail, footpaths and signage. Additional tree and shrub planting would enhance biodiversity value.

Table 3.3: Green Grid Projects across the South East London Green Chain Network

Green Chain 'Making the Links'

Enhanced access to open spaces within the Green Grid Plus Sub-Area, including improvements to signage and way-marking, walked surface, safety and security and promotion (off-site dissemination).

Green Chain 'Access to Wildlife'

Two new nature trails to connect residential areas in the Thames Gateway to the poorly accessible and under-utilised Grove Park Nature Conservation Area and Southmere Park and Lake.

Green Chain Regional Park Feasibility Study

A feasibility study to examine whether designating and managing the Green Chain as a regional park will give added value to the existing Green Chain open space network and address the area's regional park deficiency.

4s Summary of Different Users and their Needs

The RoW network can serve many purposes and is used by a range of users, with sometimes conflicting needs.

- Walking is the most common means of accessing the network and many of the Borough's local RoW connect with more strategic routes, including the London Loop, Capital Ring, South East London Green Chain, Cray and Shuttle Riverways and the Thames Path.
- Bexley supports cycling as a healthy, non-polluting environmentally friendly mode of transport and is actively participating in the LCN+ project to create a 1000 mile strategic route network for London.
- Horse-riding is mainly focused in the southeast of the borough around Footscray Meadows, Chalk Wood and Joydens Wood where a relatively extensive but poorly connected network of routes exists.
- The network also provides opportunities for jogging, running and other outdoor pursuits and provides access to regionally and locally important wildlife sites recognised by GLA's 'WildWeb'.
- RoW in urban areas provide connections between residential areas, schools, medical centres and rail stations. Here the network has a potentially important role to play in the journey to work and journey to school.
- Very few people in the Borough make their journey to work on foot or by bicycle, particularly journeys over two kilometres in length. This suggests that there is scope for RoW improvements to help encourage a modal shift from the dominant private car.
- Consultation indicated that 86% of users make use of the network at least once a week, with the majority of using RoW for leisure purposes.
- Amongst network users, including those with disabilities, litter / dog fouling, obstructions and personal safety are the top three features which discourage respondents from using the network. They also have the highest importance for improvements.
- Concerns over personal safety and RoW condition also deter non-users from using the network.

View along Braille Walk, Footscray Meadows which is a walk provided specifically for the partially sighted.

4 Different Users and their Needs

4.1 Recreational Use of the Network

The RoW network can serve many purposes, though its main use is for recreational purposes, particularly on the urban fringe and in rural environments. Trips for recreational purposes can be made on foot, by bicycle and on horseback and consideration needs to be given to all these modes within the RoWAIP.

4.2 Walking

Walking is the most common means of accessing the RoW network. Bexley's RoW provides a widespread but fragmented network of routes across the Borough. The majority of routes are less than 100m in length, though some more extensive pathways exist in the marshland areas in the north and east of the Borough.

Many of the marshland routes connect with more strategic networks, including permissive paths, the London Loop, the Capital Ring, the South East London Green Chain, the Cray Riverway, the Shuttle Riverway, the Thames Path and the Thames Cycle Path. Information on each of these routes is summarised below.

Many of these routes are publicised either through the Borough's website or on the TfL website. As well as information highlighting points of interest, some of the leaflets also provide public transport information and details of the suitability for different user groups.

Information on local walking festivals is also published on local Borough's websites and by TfL and Walk London. The 'London Walking Weekend' is organised by Walk London to celebrate National Walking Day at the end of May and is currently in its third year. They also hold events in Bexley in January and September. The 'Green Chain Walking Festival' is another annual event which takes place across the Boroughs of Lewisham, Greenwich, Bexley and Bromley. It offers nine days of events during September and is intended to raise the profile of the Green Chain as a valuable recreational asset. (See Map 5.2)

4.2.1 The London Loop

The LOOP is London's first official orbital footpath and has been adopted by the Greater London Authority (GLA) as a strategic walking route. It consists of twenty-four sections, some of which connect to various other routes, such as the Green Chain footpaths, for those wishing to undertake extended walks. Two LOOP walks pass through the Borough of Bexley:

- LOOP 1 – Erith Riverside to Old Bexley Village, 8½ miles;
- LOOP 2 – Old Bexley Village to Jubilee Country Park, 7¼ miles.

Both of these routes are classed as 'easy walking' and are therefore suitable for walkers of most abilities. Additionally they provide the option of shorter walking routes along sections of the LOOP which are suitable for the less mobile and those with pushchairs.

4.2.2 The Capital Ring

The Capital Ring is a 115 kilometre orbital urban walk around inner London passing through the city's parks, riversides, streets and woodland. The first sections were opened in 1999 as one of the flagship projects for London's Walking Forum. The whole network was completed in September 2005 and is now recognised by the TfL as a strategic route.

The Capital Ring route has a number of spurs providing opportunities for circular walks and it also links in with the London LOOP. Sixty-four kilometres of the total route is categorised as 'easy' walking and is therefore suitable for those of differing abilities.

4.2.3 South East London Green Chain

The Green Chain Walk was created in 1977 by a joint team of four London Boroughs, including Bexley, Bromley, Greenwich and Lewisham. The forty mile network of footpaths links some 300 Green Chain Open Spaces, including allotments and school playing fields, as well as ancient woodland and parkland.

The South East London Green Chain walk starts on the Thamesside Walk at Thamesmead and runs for 16 miles towards Crystal Palace. The route passes through Bexley for almost six miles, via Lesnes Abbey Woods, Bostall Heath and Woods, East Wickham Open Space and Oxleas Wood.

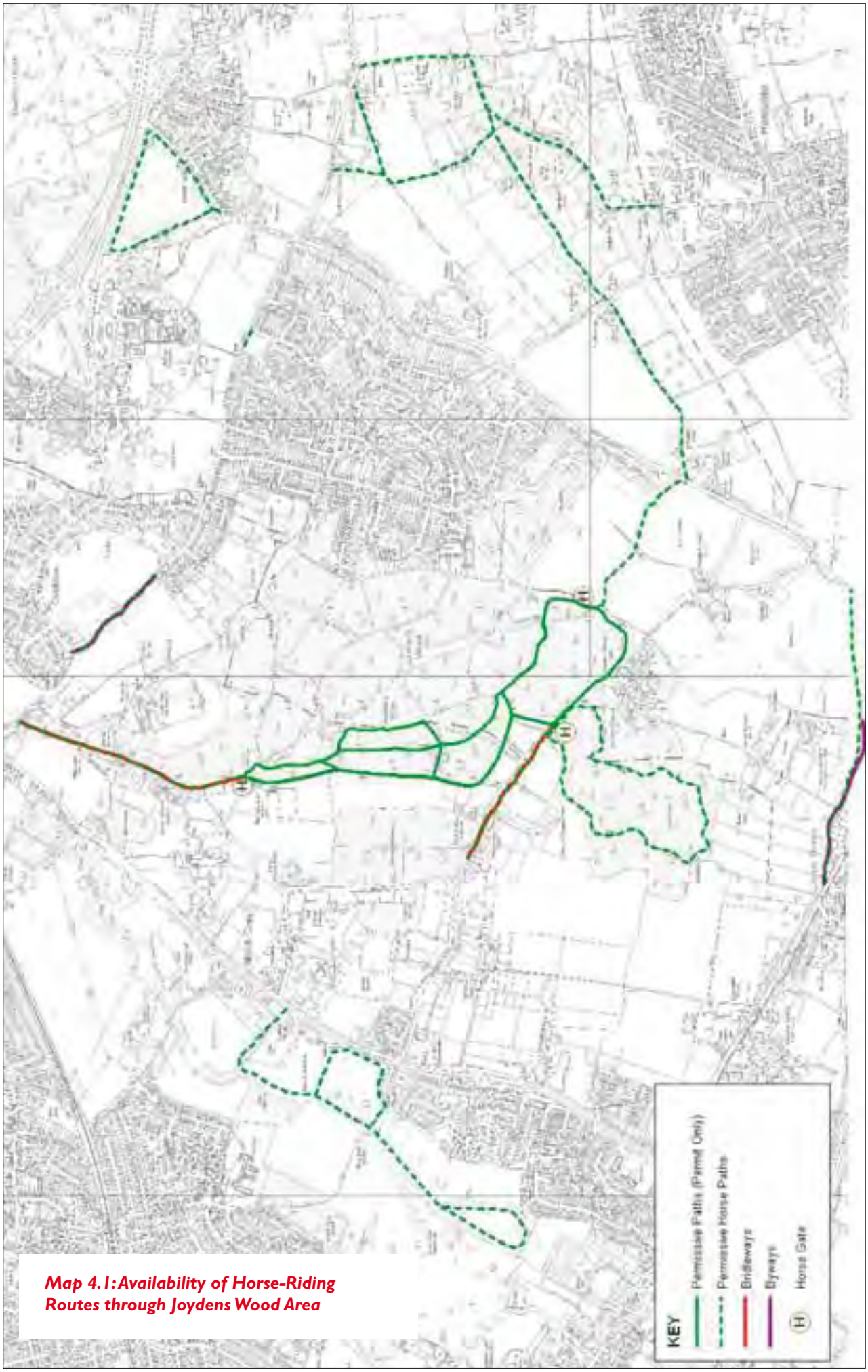
As well as providing opportunities for circular walks, the Green Chain is also within walking distance of 15 railway stations and countless bus routes making linear walks a viable option as well.

4.2.4 Cray Riverway & Shuttle Riverway

The Cray Riverway is a well signposted walk along the River Cray which covers a distance of approximately 10 miles. Starting at Foots Cray Meadows it follows the river northwards through North Cray to Hall Place at Bexley and then through Crayford to the River Darent and subsequently the Thames.

The Shuttle Riverway is another route which is signposted along the Shuttle River, a tributary of the River Cray. The five mile route starts at the Green Chain Walk at Avery Hill Park and continues to Hall Place where it joins the Cray Riverway through the Crayford Marshes.

Where possible the routes follow riverside walks but they also use woods, parks, RoW and some linking roads, with most paths being surfaced.



Map 4.1: Availability of Horse-Riding Routes through Joydens Wood Area

4.2.5 Thames Path and Thames Cycle Path

The Thames Path is a 184 mile national trail which follows the River Thames from its source in the Cotswolds, through the City of London, finishing at the Thames Barrier near Greenwich. One section of the walk, Thames Barrier to Crayford Ness, covers more than nine miles and passes across Bexley and Greenwich Boroughs via Woolwich, Thamesmead and Erith. The route is accessible by public transport and links to other signed walks, such as the Green Chain Walk and Capital Ring networks.

4.3 Cycling

The London Borough of Bexley supports cycling as it is healthy, non-polluting and environmentally-friendly. More than two-thirds of journeys made within the Borough are less than 5 kilometres in length and the council is therefore keen to encourage increased use of cycling to positively impact on traffic congestion and the environment. As such, the council supports the development of local and strategic cycleways and therefore participates in the LCN+ project to create a 1000 miles strategic route network for London.

While supporting cycling, the council recognises that too many children are injured each year whilst out on their bikes. To reduce these figures the council provides guidance on their website for parents to ensure that their children are able to control their cycles and are able to recognise the dangers posed by other road users and traffic. Additionally, the London Borough of Bexley holds cycling awareness courses throughout the Borough every summer for children who are in their last year of primary school or are starting secondary school. (See Map 5.3)

4.4 Horse Riding

In Bexley, off-road riding routes are comprised of public RoW, (including two bridleways and 15 byways) and permissive tracks, which are available to the public by permission of the land owner. Horse-riding in Bexley is mainly focussed in the southeast of the borough around Footscray Meadows, Chalk Wood, Joydens Wood and the surrounding area, as shown on ***Map 4.1***.

Joydens Bridleway Group was formed in 1993 and is closely associated with local riding clubs and walking groups. The Group have produced a map of where to ride within the London Borough of Bexley which highlights all the routes that are available. While a relatively extensive network of routes exist in Joydens Wood, Chalk Wood and Foots Cray Meadow, they are poorly connected to one another and access between involves riding on-roads.

4.5 Other Interests

The RoW network also offers opportunities for other uses including jogging, running and other outdoor pursuits. Furthermore, the RoW network provides access to and through a diverse range of natural habitats providing opportunities to educate and involve the local community.

4.6 Access to Wildlife Sites

'Wildweb', created by the GLA, provides a wealth of information on wildlife sites across London including the 1,400 areas designated as Sites of Importance for Nature Conservation (SINCs). As well as giving detailed information on wildlife, biodiversity and landscapes, the site also gives travel information and interactive maps so that anyone can access the natural environment.

The sites have been categorised under the following three headings:

- *Sites of Metropolitan Importance* (140): The best examples of wildlife habitats which often accommodate rare species;
- *Sites of Borough Importance* (780): Important habitats within each Borough;
- *Sites of Local Importance* (460): Smaller wildlife sites to ensure that everyone has access to nature sites near to their home.

Within the London Borough of Bexley, the following sites have been identified:

A permissive horse riding route at Footscray Meadows



Sites of Metropolitan Importance:

- Chalk Wood and Joyden's Wood
- Crayford Marshes
- Crayford Rough
- Erith Marshes
- Lesnes Abbey Woods and Bostall Woods
- River Cray
- River Thames and Tidal Tributaries

Sites of Borough Importance Grade I:

- Belvedere Dykes
- Bexley Woods
- Bexleyheath Golf Course
- Crossways Nature Reserve and Crossways Golf Course
- Danson Park
- Erith Quarry
- Franks Park
- Hollyhill Open Space
- Home Wood and Bunkers Hill Ponds
- Queen Mary's Hospital Grounds
- Sidcup Gold Course and Lamorbey Lake
- The Old Orchard (The Gun Club Site)
- Woodlands Farm, Dryden Road Open Space and Hill View Cemetery

Sites of Borough Importance Grade II:

- Blackfen Woods
- Bursted Wood Open Space
- Churchfield Wood and St Mary's Church
- Crayford Landfill and Howbury Grange
- Crossness Sewage Treatment Works Pond
- East Wickham Open Space
- Hall Place (North) and Shenstone Park
- Harrow Manorway Nature Reserve
- Martens Grove
- Mount Mascal Farm
- Railsides between Bexley Heath and Slade Green Triangle
- Rectory Lane Pond
- Rutland Shaw
- Sand Spinney
- Sidcup Line Railsides
- Slade Green Recreation Ground
- Southmere Park
- St John the Baptist Churchyard, Erith
- St Paulinus Churchyard, Crayford
- Streamway, Chapman's and Erith Cemetary
- The River Shuttle and Wyncham Stream
- The Warren
- Upper College Farm

4.7 Utilitarian Use of the Network

The origins of public RoW is as a functional network for journeys with a utilitarian purpose. Though much of the network is now used for leisure purposes, RoW in urban areas can provide important connections between residential areas, schools, medical centres and rail stations. The RoW network also has a potentially important role to play in the journey to work and the journey to school.

4.7.1 Journey to Work

Within the London Borough of Bexley, the average distance that people travel to work is 12.84 kilometres. In total 29% of people live within walking or cycling distance of their place of employment (12% within 2km and 16% within 5km). However, sustainable modes (walking / cycling) account for less than 7% of all journeys to work.

When broken down by ward, the number of people cycling to work is fairly consistent across the whole Borough with between 0.6% and 1.5% of people choosing to use this mode. By contrast, walking varies between 3.6% in St Mary's and 8.5% in Christchurch.

Across the Borough, between 10% and 19% of journeys made are less than 2 kilometres and could easily be walked. A further 13% to 24% of journeys made are between 2 and 5 kilometres. These could also be largely completed on foot or by bicycle. Cycling is also feasible for journeys between 5 and 10 kilometres which account for another 15% to 23% of journeys. However, 49% of journeys of less than 2km in length are made in the private car, while 72% and 78% of people use the private car for journeys of 2km to 5km and 5km to 10km, respectively.

4.8 Consultation with Users

During June 2007, a questionnaire was distributed across the Borough to obtain the views of the public. The questionnaires were available:

- in the Bexley Magazine, which was delivered to approximately 98,000 households / businesses across the Borough from the 12th June 2007;
- on request by calling the project specific hotline setup by the London Borough of Bexley Council; and
- by post to 86 schools / colleges, 5 adult centres, 10 youth centres, 7 community centres, 12 local forums, major landowners and the adjoining Boroughs of the London Borough of Bromley, Dartford Council, Greenwich Council and Kent County Council.

The questionnaire covered a number of issues relating to the RoW network to uncover the reasons why people use the network, how frequently they use it and which areas they are most likely to visit. In addition, the respondents were given a list of problems with the RoW network and asked to rank the scale of the deterrent. They were also asked to rank a list of possible improvements so that statistical gap analysis could be undertaken.

Gap analysis uses the cross-tabulated results of questionnaire responses to identify those attributes which currently discourage the public from making use of RoW but which are perceived to be very important. Those attributes with a mean value close to zero indicate the greatest correlation between the current state of features and their importance for improvement. Further details of this approach are included in the Technical Report "Developing a Rights of Way and Access Improvement Plan".

A total of 1,044 questionnaires were received over the seven week consultation period, representing a 1% response rate.

The majority of respondents were users of the network and had used RoW within Bexley in the last 12 months. The general findings from the questionnaire were that 86% of respondents used the network at least once a week (Base 901):

- 71% (603) for walking / rambling / jogging
- 46% (168) for driving*
- 28% (107) for cycling*
- 6% (15) for horse-riding
- 37% (28) for other purposes

As there are only 2 bridleways (1.5km) and 14 byways (7.3km) in the Borough, it is not certain that all respondents have thorough understanding of RoW.

Of these,

- 73% (661) use local RoW 'for leisure / recreation / enjoyment' purpose
- 55% (496) use local RoW 'for exercise / health reasons'
- 49% (444) use local RoW 'to access open space / parks / attractions'
- 45% (403) use local RoW 'to access shops / other local amenities'

Respondents were asked to state whether they agree / disagree that certain features discourage them from using the local RoW network. When combining 'strongly agree' views with 'agree' for statements that discourage the public from using the RoW network, the top three features are as follows:

- 71% (653 of 913) 'agree' or 'strongly agree' that **litter / dog fouling** discourages them from using the RoW network;
- 60% (540 of 891) 'agree' or 'strongly agree' that **obstructions** e.g. overgrown vegetation discourages them from using the RoW network; and
- 57% (525 of 930) 'agree' or 'strongly agree' that the **feeling of personal safety** discourages them from using the RoW network.

Respondents were then asked how important it is the local RoW features are improved. The following three features were considered to be most important:

- 45% of respondents (426 of 943) felt that it was 'very important' to clear **litter / dog fouling**;
- 43% of respondents (409 of 952) felt that it was 'very important' to improve the **feeling of personal safety**; and
- 32% of respondents (292 of 920) felt that it was 'very important' to improve **lighting**.

This highlights that the top three features that discourage respondents from using the local RoW network have the highest importance for improvements.

A statistical gap analysis was used to measure the public's assessment of the current level of service / resource provision against their view of the level of importance of the provision of a certain service / resource. The discrepancy between the satisfaction and importance rating was used to as an indication of the priority of providing that service / resource. This technique found the following features, in priority order, to be most in need of addressing:

1. Litter / dog fouling
2. Feeling of personal safety

3. Obstructions
4. (Other)
5. Lighting
6. Awareness of RoW
7. Surface
8. Signs / way-marking

Over 1,000 completed questionnaires were received and the results also indicated the public are generally happy with the quality and provision of the following features:

- Connections between RoW
- Conflict with other users
- Gates / stiles

Respondents were asked whether they would use the local RoW network if the improvements they identified as 'important' or 'very important' were carried out. Of the 990 respondents who answered this question, 58% (574) stated that they are 'very likely' to use the RoW network if the improvements they identified as important were carried out. A total of 90% of all those that responded (890 of 990) were either 'likely' or 'very likely' to use the RoW network if the improvements were made.

4.9 Non-Users

In addition to considering the needs of existing users of the RoW network, statutory guidance states that RoWIPs must also have regard for non-users as they may become users in the future.

A total of 17 people on the council's Residents Panel were recruited to participate in two focus groups run at Bexley Civic Centre in March 2007. The response to participate in the Focus Groups was poor and the desired quotas were not achieved. Additionally, the groups were intended to target non-users and latent users but it was found during the interview that some participants were regular users of the network.

The results from this research suggest that the main reasons for people not using the local RoW network in Bexley are:

- Concerns over personal safety – poor lighting / youths congregating / not well used
- Condition of RoW – surfacing / overhanging vegetation / rubbish / fly-tipping / dog fouling

The following improvements were suggested:

• Improved safety
• Improved lighting
• Improved surfaces
• Maintenance of vegetation
• Police presence / patrol
• Improved signage
• Better publicity
• Better disabled access
• More user friendly access in terms of gates / stiles

Map 4.2: Route of the Braille Walk on Foots Cray Meadows



4.10 Disabled Users

Overarching the various forms of access is the theme of 'Access for All'. It is recognised that accessibility problems exist across a number of sections of the network which can exclude disabled users, those with pushchairs and buggies, and those with limited mobility. One stile can potentially exclude a huge section of the population from using a RoW.

Over recent years, legislation from national government and the European Union has been implemented, in relation to access to sites and buildings. Amongst the most important acts are the Disability Discrimination Act 1995 (DDA) and the Countryside & Rights of Way Act 2000, discussed in *section 2.2.4*.

One of the issues preventing many potential users from accessing the RoW network is a lack of network knowledge. Some sites including Joydens Wood and Chalk Wood are difficult to access with limited signage and barriers to access along footpaths. Routes of a suitable physical condition may exist but they need to be publicised to make mobility impaired users aware that the route is accessible.

There is a Braille Walk on Foots Cray Meadows in the south of borough which was originally installed at the request of a blind couple who lived on the estate and felt unable to enjoy their local environment. The route starts at the entrance to Foots Cray Meadows off Ellenborough Road, by the old garage area and the culvert. It skirts to the east of the woodland, along the back of the flats and houses on Ellenborough Road, for approximately 100 metres. Six wooden marker posts are set at regular intervals along the route, each with a Braille marked number disc set into an angled top. There is also a seat installed next to the end marker post for walkers to rest. ***Map 4.2*** shows the route of the Braille Walk.

A braille signed post which directs the walker to the next post.



4.10.1 Consultation with Disabled Users

On the questionnaire distributed in June 2007, respondents were asked whether they had any long-term illness, health problem or disability which affects their daily activities. Of the 1,014 respondents who answered this question, 181 had one of these problems which affected their daily activities.

Of these 181 respondents, 45 had not used a RoW in Bexley over the last 12 months. Walking was the most popular method of using the local RoW network and 71% of respondents with an illness / disability did this at least once a week. Nine respondents with an illness / disability cycled at least once a week along a RoW and only two made use of the RoW network for horse riding.

The majority of respondents with an illness / disability use local RoW 'for leisure / recreation / enjoyment' and 'for exercise / health reasons' but a sizeable proportion also use RoW 'to access shops / other local amenities', 'to access open space/parks/attractions' and 'to access a friends / relatives property'.

When respondents were asked which local RoW features discourage them from using the network, the top three features for which people either 'agree' or 'strongly agree' were:

- 75% of respondents (109 of 147) are discouraged from using the network because of 'litter / dog fouling';
- 65% of respondents (90 of 137) are discouraged from using the network because of 'obstructions'; and
- 65% of respondents (97 of 149) are discouraged from using the network because of the 'feeling of personal safety'.

These features were ranked above 'surface' and 'gates / stiles' despite their potential to cause problems for those in wheelchairs or those who have walking difficulties.

The top three features that discourage disabled respondents from using the RoW network are also ranked highly in terms of being 'very important' for improvements. However, they are prioritised in a different order and the 'awareness of RoW' has been noted to require greater improvement than reducing 'obstructions'.

5s Summary of RoW Network Implications

The following points summarise the key findings from the Network Assessment, including assessments of localised census data.

A relatively comprehensive RoW network is available in the London Borough of Bexley, though it is very dispersed in urban areas. The semi-rural network focused on Erith Marshes, Crayford Marshes and Foots Cray comprises large open spaces and footpaths, bridleways and byways providing opportunities for outdoor recreation.

- The Borough is home to a significant number of recreational resources including regional, district and local parks and open spaces. As well as being an important recreational resource in itself, the RoW network providing connections to London's Strategic Walking Network and strategically important corridors.
- The network has a role to play in both utilitarian and recreational journeys. While parts of the RoW network are fragmented, it does have good connectivity to the local highway network and other walking / cycling routes providing important links between key attractors.
- 95% of Bexley's RoW network is 'easy to use by members of the public' according to Best Value Performance Indicator 178. This suggests that the Borough is performing relatively well compared to other outer London Boroughs.

All of these points will need to be considered in the development of a RoWAIP to sustain and improve its contribution as an important recreational resource.

Byway 56, leading from Wickham Street, Welling

5 Public RoW Network Characteristics

5.1 Definitive Map and Statement

Since 1949, Parliament has required authorities to record all paths which are RoW on a Definitive Map. Recording RoW on a Definitive Map is conclusive evidence of its existence as of that date and gives the path added legal protection to keep it open and usable. Once a public RoW exists, it remains until it is lawfully closed or diverted but this can only arise out of legal action by the local authority, a magistrates' court or a government department, or through an Act of Parliament.

The Definitive Map is accompanied by a Definitive Statement which describes each RoW in greater or lesser detail. The Statement may define the position, length or width of RoW which is conclusive evidence of its position, length or width at that relevant date. In addition, it may outline any limitation or condition attached to that RoW which is also conclusive.

Each Definitive Map and Statement has a 'relevant date' which provides evidence that public rights existed at that date. It is possible that a legal change has occurred since the relevant date which has not been recorded on the Map, but details of the change should be available for public inspection with the Definitive Map and Statement.

5.2 Assessing the network

The varied land use characteristics of the London Borough of Bexley make it appropriate to consider the network under two categories. Parts of the borough are heavily urbanised but are interspersed with parks. By contrast, Erith Marshes in the northwest, Crayford Marshes along the eastern edge of the borough and the Foots Cray area in the south comprise large open spaces and provide opportunities for outdoor recreation.

5.2.1 Category 1 – The Urban RoW network

The key characteristic of the urban network is its fragmented nature. It comprises of small sections of footpath passing through built up areas, with a few longer sections connecting settlements and providing links through parks and small open spaces.

5.2.2 Category 2 – The Semi-Rural RoW network

By comparison, the semi-rural network, on the edges of the borough, has a much higher degree of connectivity and provides some opportunities for circular walks. Footpaths, bridleways and byways can all be found in the marshes and the links are typically substantially longer than those found in urban areas.

As well as being an important recreational resource in itself, the RoW network is also an important resource for larger walking networks, such as the London Loop, the Capital Ring, the South East London Green Chain, the Cray Riverway, the Shuttle Riverway, the Thames Path and the Thames Cycle Path.

Based on the policy review and examination of the RoW network in Bexley, some themes have been identified which are considered appropriate to provide the basis for network management and improvement strategies for both the urban and semi-rural networks (Category 1 and 2). These are outlined in ***Table 5.1*** below.

Table 5.1: Categories of Public RoW identified for inclusion in the RoWAIP

Category	RoW Type	Main Purpose of Use
1	Urban	Utilitarian and recreational use: • Access from home to community facilities; • Access to parks and open spaces; • To reduce journey times or lengths or to avoid using roads.
2	Rural	Primarily recreational use: • Connections to urban centres or nearby parks and open spaces for walkers and cyclists; • Access to green belt land for walkers, cyclists and horse riders; • Access to country parks and open areas.

5.3 Presence of the Network

Within Bexley there exists approximately 61.6 kilometres of legally defined RoW. The majority of these are footpaths (87.8%) totalling around 54.1 kilometres. The remainder of the network is split between bridleways and byways, as outlined in ***Table 5.2***. There a re approximately 1.5 kilometres of bridleway and 6.0 kilometres of byway which represent a combined total of 12.1% of the total network.

5.3.1 Distribution of the RoW network

Table 5.3 indicates how the network is distributed across the Borough by ward. The majority of RoW are located in the more semi-rural wards along the eastern edge of the Borough, including Crayford, Cray Meadows, North End and St Mary's which collectively account for 56% of the total network.. By contrast, the west of the Borough, towards London, has relatively few RoW, with Blackfen and Lamorbey, East Wickham, Falconwood and Welling, Lesnes Abbey, Longlands and Thamesmead East collectively accounting for 15%.

Though the network is relatively extensive in terms of length in semi-rural areas, it does not provide any opportunities for circular walks solely on RoW. However, the network does link into other walking networks in this area, providing opportunities for outdoor recreation.

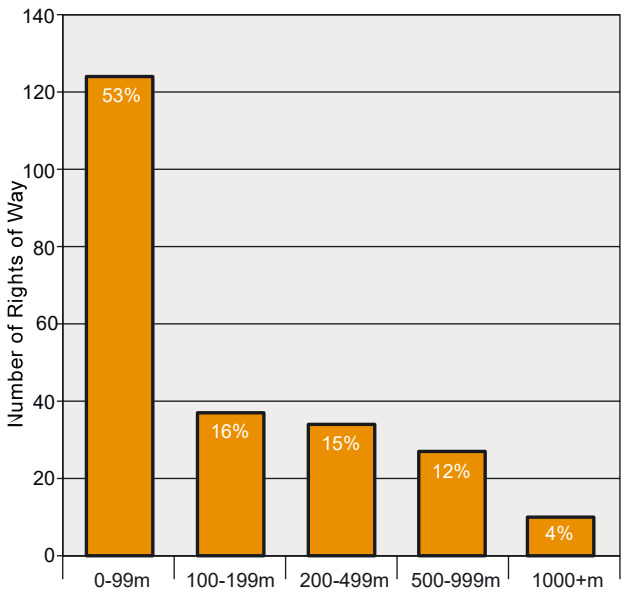
Bridleways can be found in two of the Boroughs' wards (Cray Meadows and St Marys), providing just 1.5 kilometres of horse-riding routes. However, a further 6.2 kilometres of Byways Open to All Traffic, which can also be used by equestrian, are available in 7 of the Boroughs' wards (Belvedere, Cray Meadows, Crayford, East Wickham, Lesnes Abbey, North End and St Marys).

5.3.2 Lengths of RoW

Given that the Borough of Bexley is predominantly urban, the RoW network is characterised by short route sections, as outlined in ***Figure 5.1***. More than half of all footpaths (56%) are less than 100 metres in length, while just 4% (10 footpaths) are more than a kilometre long. By comparison, 41% of bridleways and byways are more than half a kilometre in length.

Many RoW are likely to be 'cut-throughs' between residential streets which provide a significant local facility for walkers / cyclists. However, these routes do not always contribute to the wider network which provides integrated access opportunities for walkers, cyclist and equestrians.

Figure 5.1: Number of Rights of Way by Length



5.3.3 Definitive Map Modification Orders

Bexley's Definitive Map and Statement was updated in October 2007. In accordance with the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 s53, the council is required to keep the Definitive Map and Statement under continuous review, therefore a record of all future modifications will be kept with the Map and Statement.

Table 5.2: Classification of the Public RoW Network

Definitive Classification	*Permitted Users*	*Length (kilometres)*	*Number of Links**	*Approx. % of Network*
Footpath	Pedestrians	54.1	215	87.8
Bridleway	Pedestrians, Equestrians, Cyclists	1.5	2	2.4
Byway	Pedestrians, Equestrians, Cyclists, Some Vehicles	6.0	15	9.7
TOTAL		**61.6**	**231**	**100**

* A link is classified as an individual section of footpath, bridleway or byway with its own distinct number.

Table 5.3: Network Availability by Ward

Ward	Length (kilometres)	Number of Public RoW	Approx. % of Borough's Network
Barnehurst	5.0	6	0.9%
Belvedere	26.6	13	5.0%
Blackfen & Lamorbey	2.7	3	0.5%
Blendon & Penhill	9.1	7	1.7%
Brampton	9.9	9	1.9%
Christchurch	9.2	9	1.7%
Colyers	10.1	12	1.9%
Cray Meadows	108.2	31	20.2%
Crayford	48.5	34	9.1%
Danson Park	10.4	12	1.9%
East Wickham	17.6	13	3.3%
Erith	42.5	8	8.0%
Falconwood & Welling	2.0	3	0.4%
Lesnes Abbey	14.5	8	2.7%
Longlands	12.3	7	2.3%
North End	88.7	13	16.6%
Northumberland Heath	9.7	7	1.8%
Sidcup	16.9	11	3.2%
St Mary's	54.9	20	10.3%
St Michael's	4.1	6	0.8%
Thamesmead East	32.0	3	6.0%

5.4 Density of the Network

The RoW network cannot be assessed by lengths per ward alone as this takes no account of the varying sizes of wards. For example, Cray Meadows covers an area of 7km^2, whereas St Michael's covers an area less than 1.5km^2.

Measuring the density of the network (the length of RoW per square kilometre of land) allows a direct comparison between each ward. The average network density for the whole Borough is 8.8 metres of RoW per square kilometre. The density varies between 1.2m/km^2 in Falconwood and Welling and 19.9m/km^2 in North End.

Map 5.1 shows the population density of each ward in the Borough in relation to the RoW network to give an indication of the potential demand for RoW. The RoW network is most dense in the south and east of the Borough around Crayford and Erith Marshes where the population density is relatively low. Around these areas there are several RoW links which are relatively well connected offering recreational opportunities. By contrast, the network through the most urbanised wards in the central and eastern areas of the Borough is much more segregated and the majority of links are short in length. However, urban RoW can still provide important links to access facilities for people living in these localities.

Footpath 171 leading from North Cray to Maidstone Road, Swanley.



5.5 Connectivity of the Network

The RoW network has a role to play in both utilitarian and recreational journeys and can provide important links between key attractors. The connectivity of the network to schools, health centres and other walking, cycling and horse-riding networks has been mapped and is discussed below. Although parts of the public RoW network appear fragmented, it does have good connectivity to the local highway network.

5.5.1 Connectivity to Other Networks

Over 30 regionally and locally important walking networks pass through the London Borough of Bexley, including the London Loop, Thames Path, South East London Green Chain and Cray Riverway. These have been mapped against local RoW and are shown on ***Map 5.2***.

Many of these walking routes interact with the local RoW network but few additional circular walking routes are generated as a result. However, the RoW network has the potential to provide important access links to these walking routes thereby enabling local communities to make use of nearby recreational resources.

Additionally, legally defined bridleways and byways, which can be used by cyclists, have been mapped against the London Cycle Network and National Cycle Network, as shown on ***Map 5.3***. The RoW network integrates relatively well with both cycle networks by providing access from urban areas and filling in gaps in the more rural areas to the north and east of the Borough.

5.5.2 Connectivity to Schools

A desktop assessment was made of the connectivity of the network to primary and secondary schools to assess the potential for pupils of compulsory school age to use the network to access their local education centre. A map showing the connectivity of the RoW network to primary and secondary schools is included in ***Map 5.4*** and ***Map 5.5***, respectively.

Where the population density is greatest, in the north of the Borough, the schools are relatively dispersed, indicating that pupils living in these wards may have to travel further to school. Therefore, the RoW network in these locations, despite being extensive, may offer limited opportunities for use by pupils in their journey to school.

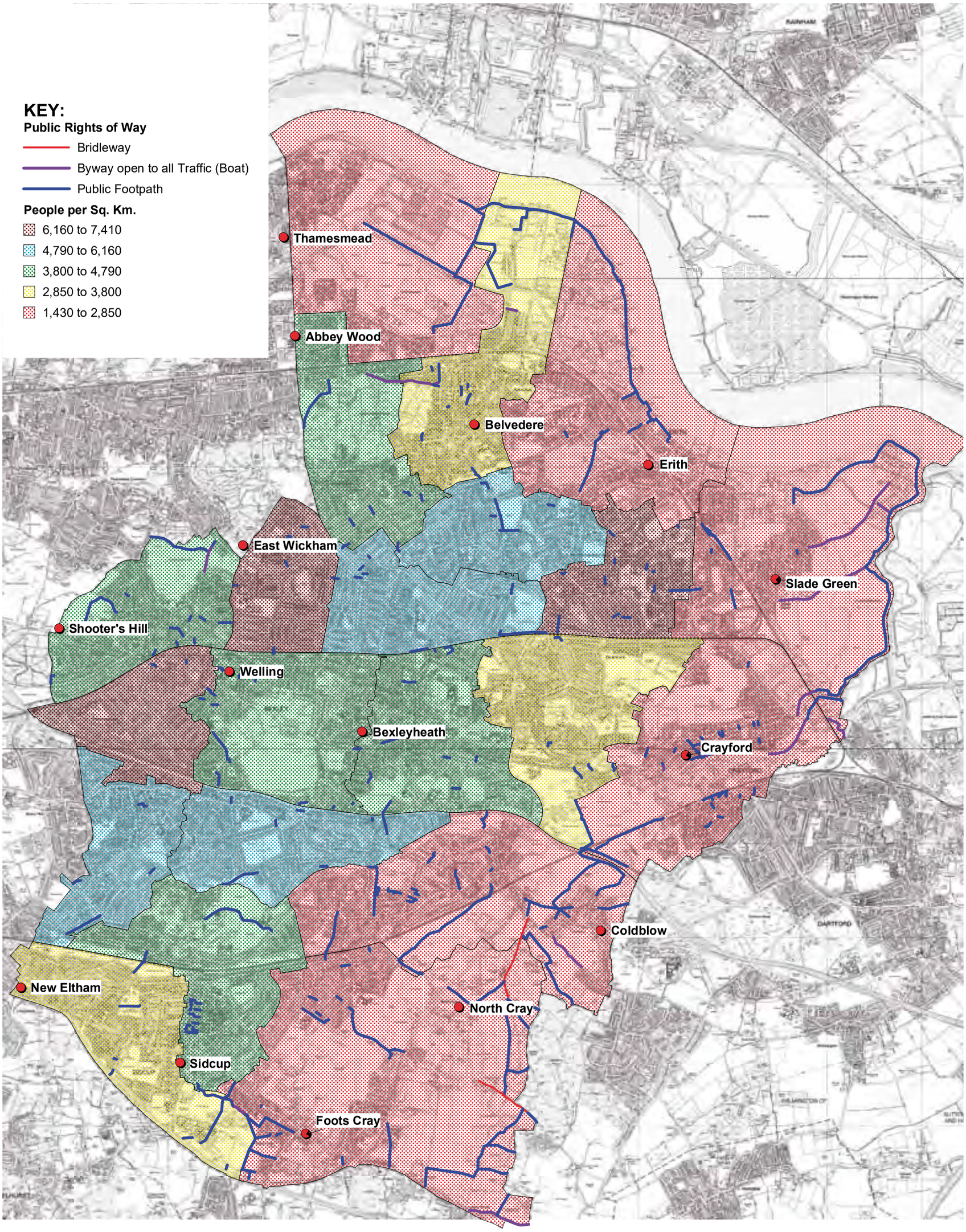
By contrast, schools in central areas of the Borough are more clustered. While the RoW provision around these areas is more limited, it still has the potential to benefit some pupil's who walk to school by providing shortcuts.

Secondary school pupils usually attend from a much more dispersed area and there are only 15 secondary schools in the Borough. Wards along the eastern edge of the Borough have the largest number of secondary school pupils though relatively few schools serve these areas. While walking may not be a viable option for many of these pupils, the RoW network can still contribute to the journey to school by providing access to bus stops via routes away from busy main roads.

Footpath 43 is an example of an 'Urban' footpath linking Sussex Road, Northumberland Heath with Ightham Road.



Map 5.1: Network Density



5.5.3 Connectivity to Community Facilities

Map 5.6 shows the RoW network in relation to community facilities, including youth centres and community centres. These centres are predominantly located in urban areas of the Borough where the RoW network is relatively dispersed. However, the network could be important in providing alternative off road access for people wishing to access these facilities.

5.5.4 Connectivity to Parks and Open Spaces

The provision of leisure facilities is important for social well being and therefore the connectivity of the RoW network to parks and open spaces has been mapped and is shown in ***Map 5.7***. Several of the longer RoW routes in the Borough pass through or alongside parkland areas, providing access to residents living near to these open spaces.

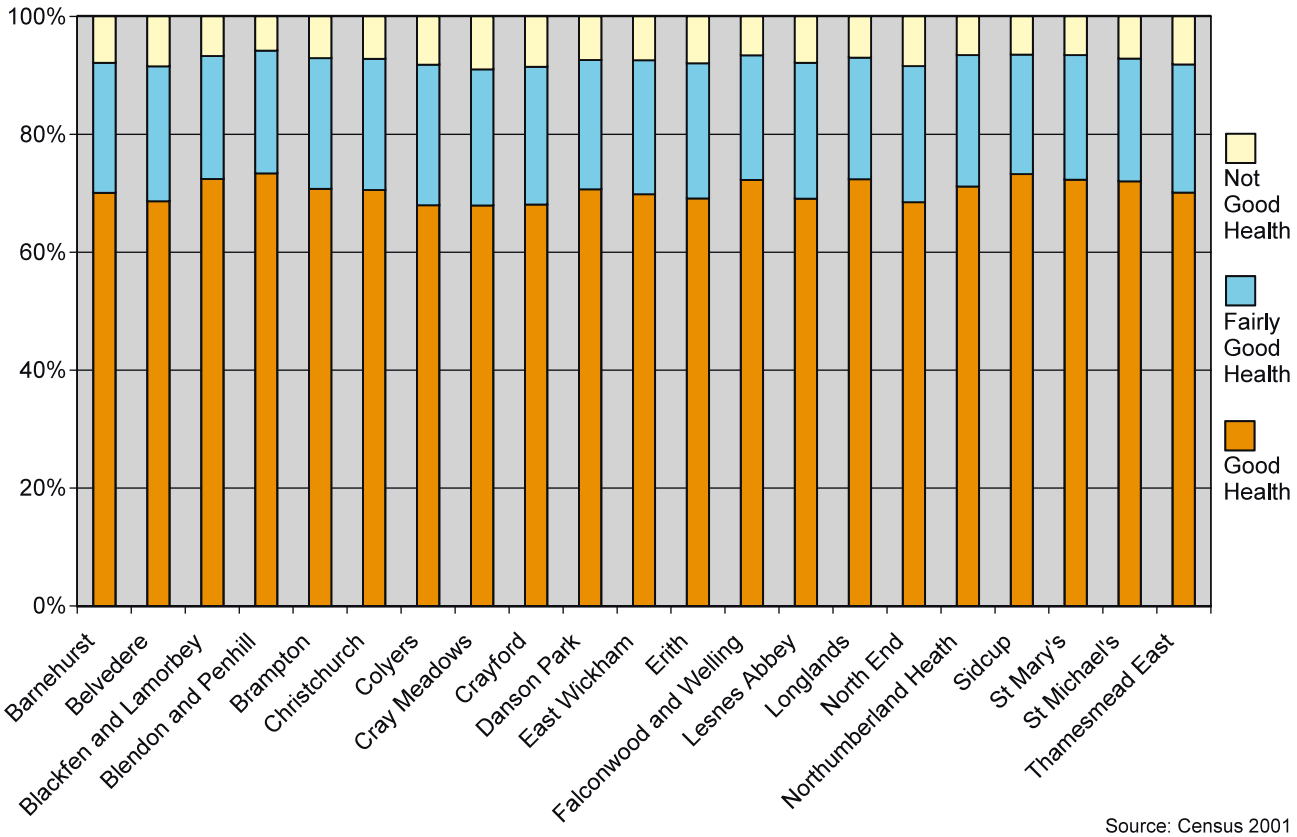
5.5.5 Opportunities to Improve Health

A review of health data for all of the wards in Bexley highlights the variation in 'good' and 'poor' health across the Borough and therefore where improvements to the RoW network could be beneficial by increasing peoples' opportunities for exercise. The results from the 2001 Census are presented in ***Figure 5.2*** and indicate the variations in health through three distinct categorisations.

On average, 71% of the Boroughs' residents have 'good health' with around 7% suffering with 'not good health'. Cray Meadows have the lowest percentage of people with 'good health' (68%) and the highest incidence of 'not good health' (9%) of all the wards. By contrast, Blendon and Penhill has the best overall health, with 73% of residents having 'good health' and less than 6% with poor health.

Overall, levels of health are relatively consistent across the Borough and therefore improvements to the RoW network anywhere in the Borough could prove beneficial in terms of health improvements by encouraging more physical activity.

Figure 5.2: Ward Level Health Data for Bexley



Source: Census 2001

Key:

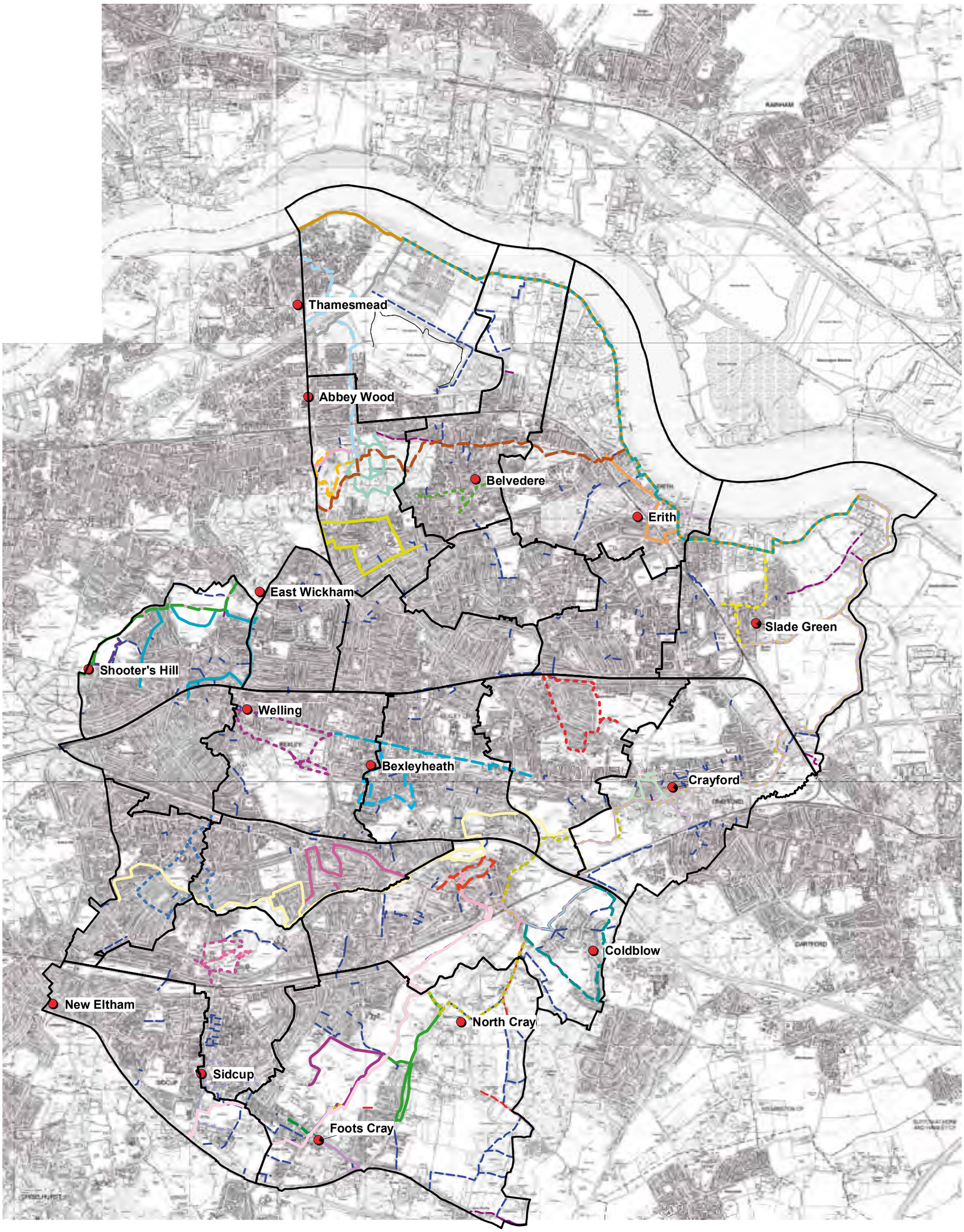
Public Rights of Way

- Bridleway
- Byway open to all traffic (Boat)
- Public Footpath

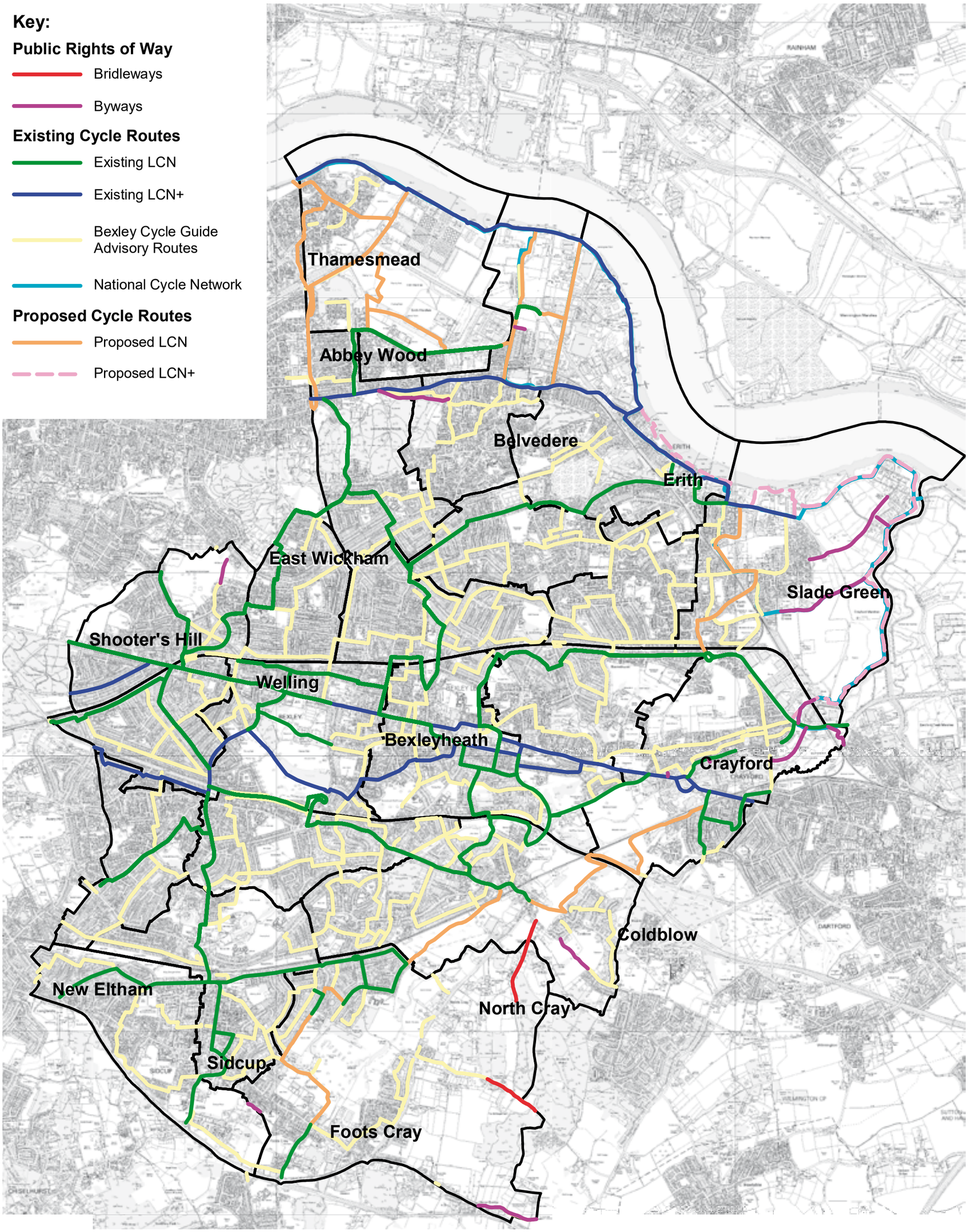
All Walks

- A Walk Around Barnehurst
- A Walk Around Belvedere Village
- A Walk Around Blackfen
- A Walk Around Blendon to Bridgen
- A Walk Around Bostall Woods & West Heath
- A Walk Around East Wickham
- A Walk Around Erith
- A Walk Around Foots Cray
- A Walk Around Foots Cray Place Est
- A Walk Around Lamorbey and Halfway House
- A Walk Around Lesnes Abbey
- A Walk Around North Cray
- A Walk Around Old Bexley
- A Walk Around Old Crayford
- A Walk Around Old Sidcup
- A Walk Around Parkhurst Conservation Area
- A Walk Around Slade Green
- A Walk Around Upton
- A Walk Around Welling
- A Walk in Bexleyheath
- Cray Ringway
- Cray River Way
- Green Belt Walk
- Green London Way 5
- Lesnes Abbey Self-guided Trails
- London Loop 1
- London Loop 2
- Shuttle River Way
- South East Link Green Chain 1
- South East Link Green Chain 2
- South East Link Green Chain 3
- Thames Path Southeast Extension
- Thamesmead Ridgeway Path
- Thamesside Walks from Erith Riverside
- The Glade Tree Trail
- Unnamed section
- Woodlands Farm Health Walks

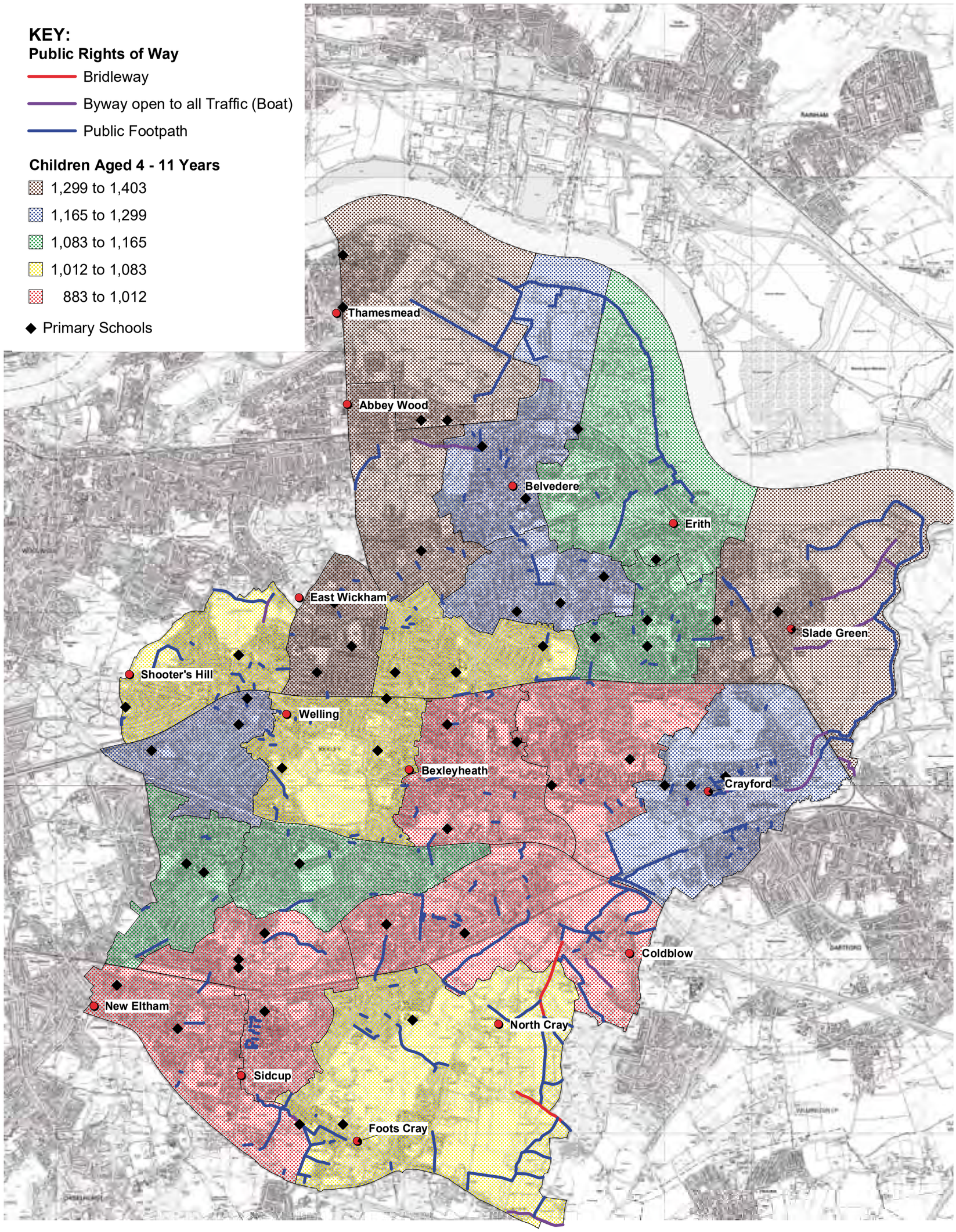
Map 5.2: Connectivity of Public RoW to Other Walking Routes



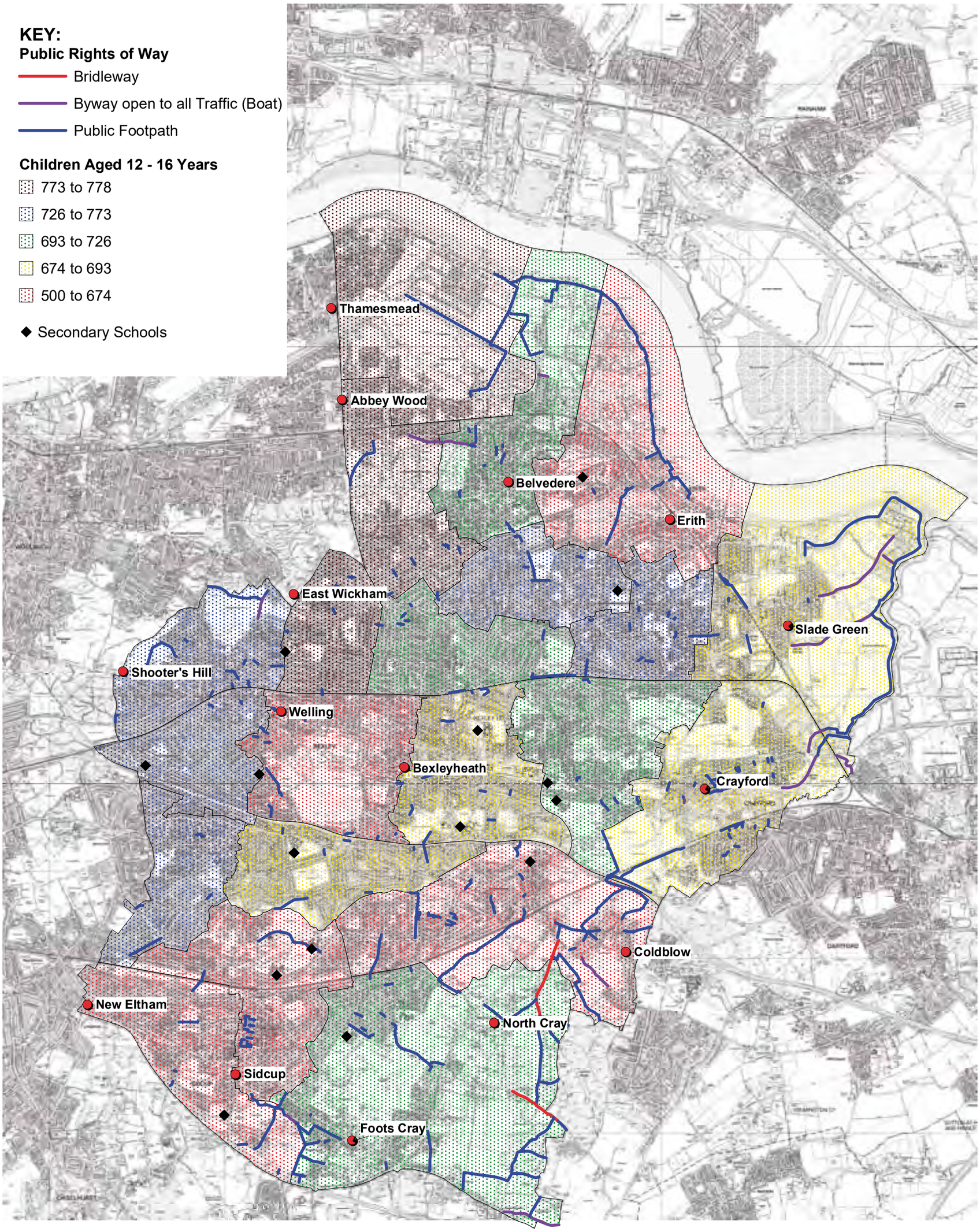
Map 5.3: Connectivity of Public RoW to Other Cycling Routes



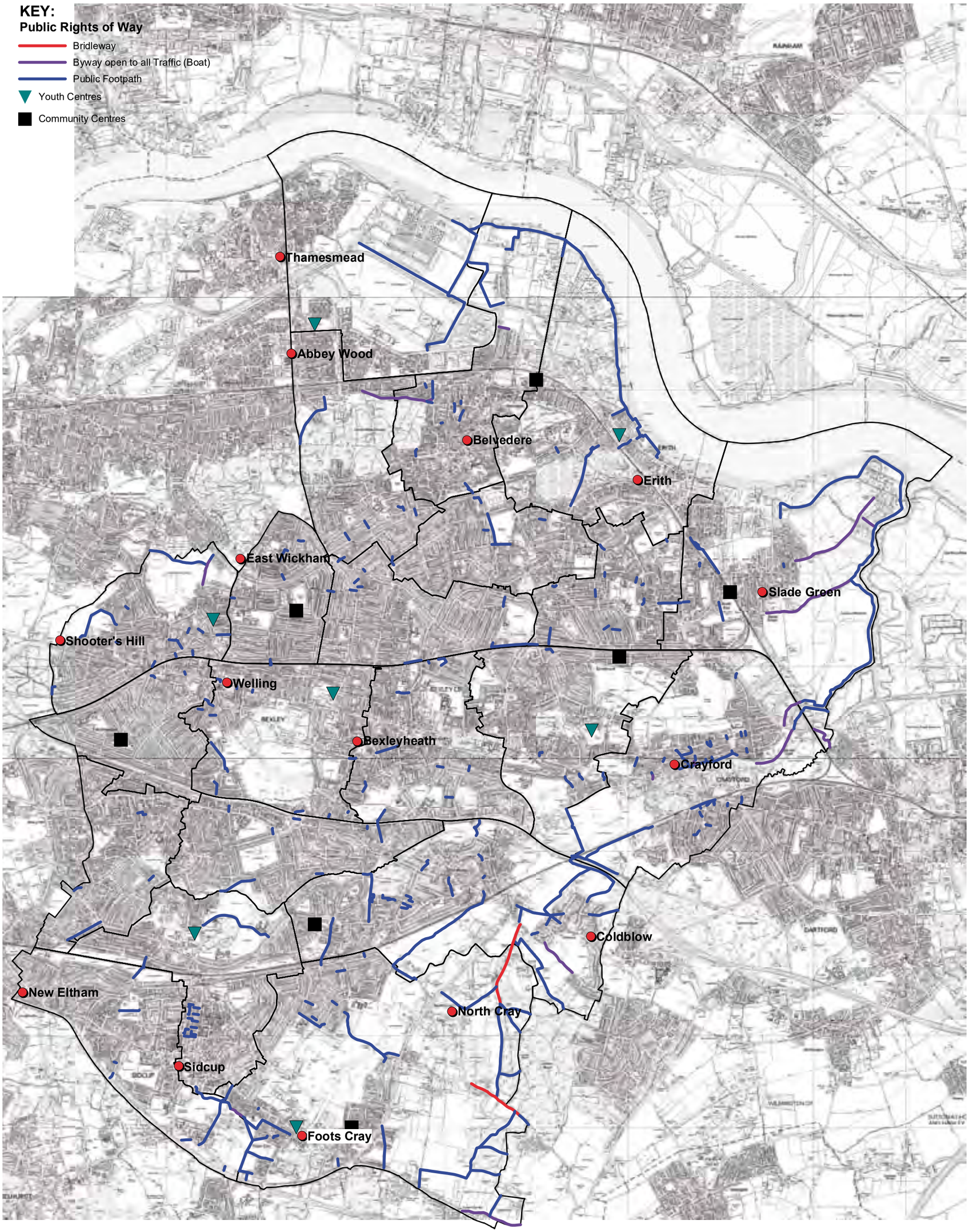
Map 5.4: Connectivity of Public RoW to Primary Schools



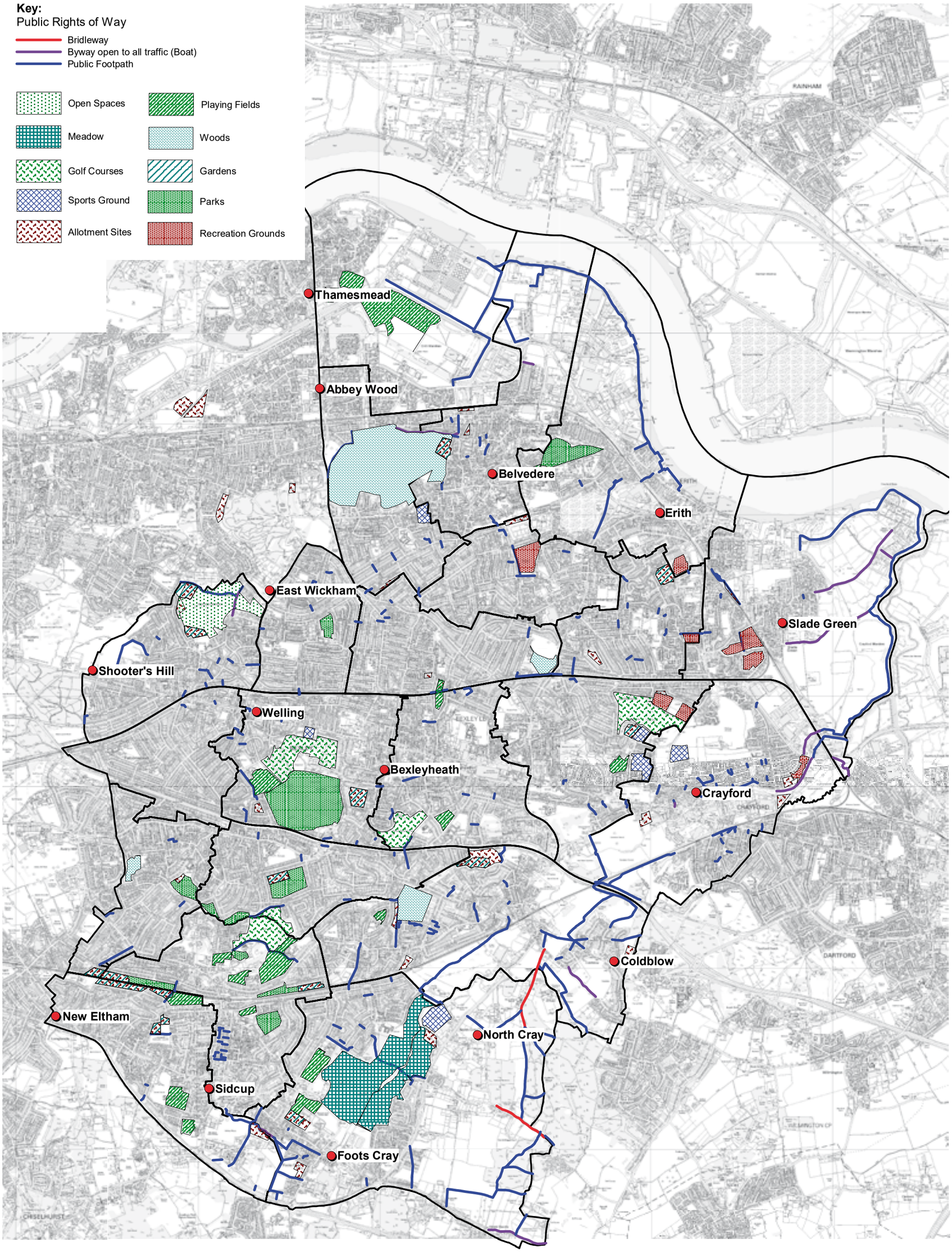
Map 5.5: Connectivity of Public RoW to Secondary Schools



Map 5.6: Connectivity of Public RoW to Community Facilities



Map 5.7: Connectivity of Public RoW to Parks and Open Spaces



5.6 Condition of the Network

5.6.1 Rights of Way Condition Surveys and Best Value Performance Indicator 178

Surveys are regularly conducted to assess the performance of the RoW network according to Best Value Performance Indicator (BVPI) 178: *Percentage of the total length of footpaths and other rights of way which are easy to use by members of the public.* These c ondition surveys assess the state of individual links in the network to ensure that footpaths are properly maintained.

5.6.2 Survey Results

Parts of the RoW network is also regularly monitored via a partnership between the London Borough of Bexley and the North West Countryside Partnership who monitors country paths on an annual basis. Additionally, the public and interest groups are able to report defects to the council via the council's main telephone number or in person at the contact centre.

The physical condition of RoW is officially measured annually by the council as part of Best Value. Best Value Performance Indicator 178: '*Percentage of the total length of footpaths and other rights of way which are easy to use by members of the public*' is a national indicator which allows the condition of RoW to be compared across the UK.

As the network is relatively small, every link is assessed each year. ***Table 5.4*** shows that the percentage of RoW which are 'easy to use by members of the public' compared against targets. The Borough is performing relatively well against other London Boroughs.

Table 5.4: BVPI 178 Targets for Bexley

Years	Target	Actual
2005/06	100%	87.9%
2006/07	100%	94.5%
2007/08	95%	95.6%
2008/09	96%	96.12%
2009/10	97%	-

Footpath 169 leading from Maidstone Road to Edgington Way, Footcray. Improved in 2008 using private developers funding.



6s Summary of Action Prioritisation

A number of improvements have been identified for inclusion in the RoWAIP for Bexley. However, it will not be possible to implement all of these at any one time due to budgetary constraints. Therefore, those improvements which have maximum benefit will be prioritised. This includes improvements that affect the largest proportion of the population and those that contribute to the most objectives.

In addition, when prioritising actions, consideration needs to be given to possible interactions with other policies and programmes. The RoWAIP will therefore need to be reviewed regularly in the light of this programme.

Section 8 discusses the challenges that the Improvement Plan will need to address and identifies some opportunities which can form the basis of the RoWAIPs network management and improvement strategies.

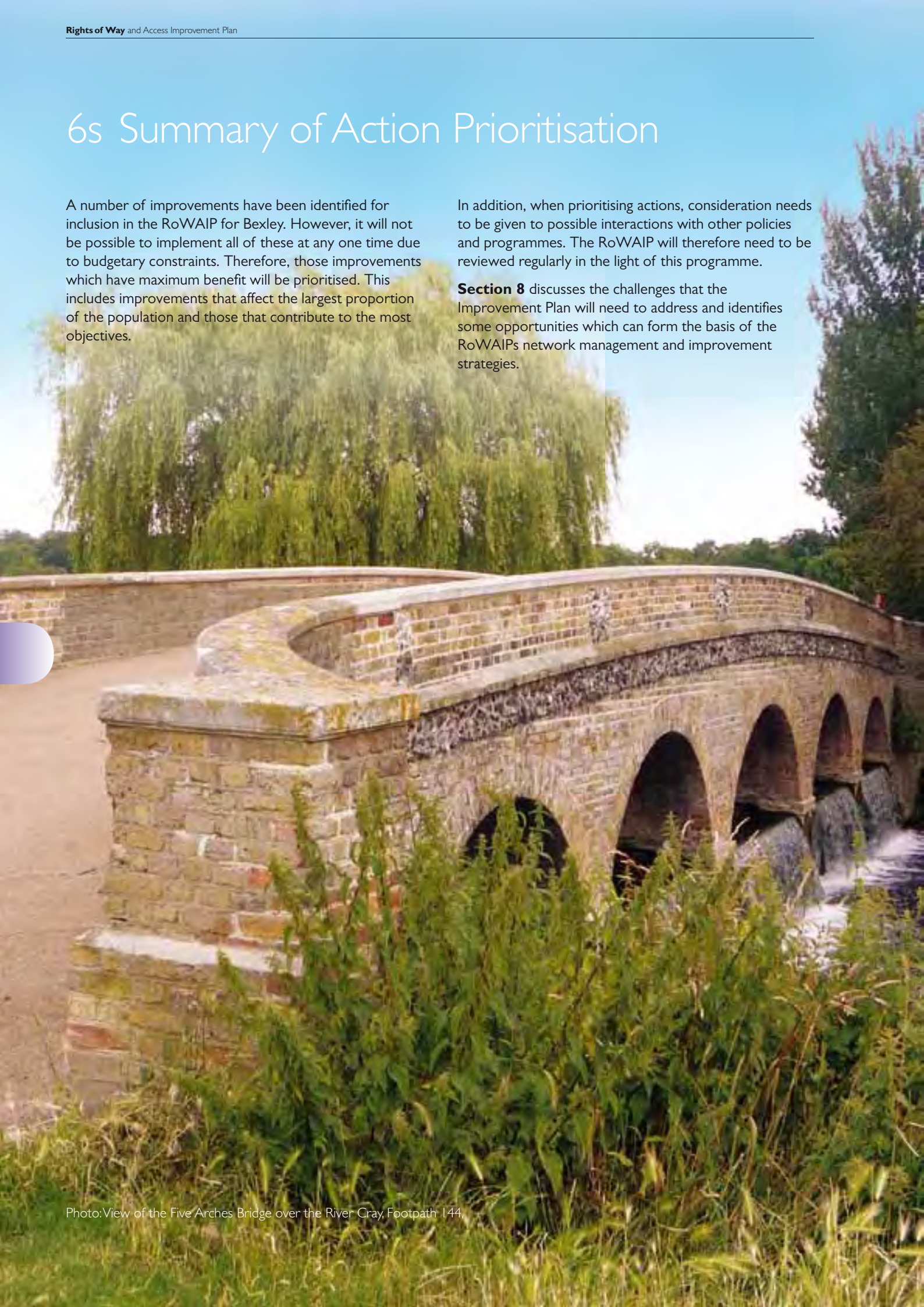


Photo: View of the Five Arches Bridge over the River Cray, Footpath 144.

6 Assessment and Evaluation

6.1 Introduction

Not all of the potential improvements to the RoW network that were identified from the consultation exercises can be implemented in the short term. Therefore, a prioritisation framework has been developed to assess which improvements the public feel are most important. Gap analysis has been selected as the most appropriate method for prioritising improvements and has been used to identify which improvements will be of most benefit to the public if implemented.

6.2 Prioritisation Framework

The prioritisation framework uses the cross-tabulated results of the questionnaire to identify those attributes which currently discourage the public from making use of RoW but which are perceived to be very important. Those attributes with a mean value close to zero indicate the greatest correlation between the current state of features and their importance for improvement. A positive mean score suggests that the RoW feature does not discourage respondents from using RoW and does not require any improvement. A negative mean score suggests that the feature discourages respondents from using RoW and it therefore requires greatest improvement. Those attributes which currently discourage the public from making use of RoW but which are perceived to be very important have been prioritised as 1, 2 or 3, dependent upon that attribute's current state, according to satisfaction results, as shown in ***Tables 6.1*** and ***6.2***.

Table 6.1: Prioritisation Framework

Level of discouragement of feature			Importance of providing resource: Very Important (5)	Important (4)	Neither (3)	Unimportant (2)	Very Unimportant (1)
	Strongly Disagree	5	0	1	2	3	4
	Disagree	4	-1	0	1	2	3
	Neither	3	-2	-1	0	1	2
	Agree	2	-3	-2	-1	0	1
	Strongly Agree	1	-4	-3	-2	-1	0

Priority 1 **Priority 2**
Priority 3 **Meets Expectations**
Exceeds Expectations

Table 6.2: Improvement Priorities

Attribute	Gap	Priority
Litter / dog fouling	-1.86	Priority 2
Feeling of personal safety	-1.35	Priority 3
Obstructions	-1.29	Priority 3
Other	-1.21	Priority 3
Lighting	-1.17	Priority 3
Awareness of RoW	-1.01	Priority 3
Surface	-0.68	Priority 3
Signs / way-marking	-0.65	Priority 3
Connections between RoW	-0.39	Neutral
Conflict with other users	-0.08	Neutral
Gates / stiles	0.12	Neutral

6.3 Demand for Improvements to Existing Provision

The results of the gap analysis suggest that overall the population of Bexley are discouraged from using the RoW network and feel that a number of improvements are needed. There appear to be no features which encourage people to use the network. However, it should be acknowledged those who are unhappy with RoW were more likely to respond than those who are content with the network.

6.3.1 Priority 1 Improvements

The results of the gap analysis indicates that there are no attributes which the majority of people 'strongly agree' deter them from using the network and which are perceived as being 'very important' to improve. Therefore, no Improvement Priority 1's were identified.

6.3.2 Priority 2 Improvements

The results from the questionnaire indicate that the public consider litter and dog fouling to be the biggest issue deterring them from using the network and consider this to be a Priority 2 Improvement. The condition of RoW was also highlighted as an issue by people in the focus groups, who suggested that litter, dog fouling and fly-tipping deterred them from using RoW.

6.3.3 Priority 3 Improvements

In total seven Priority 3 Improvements were identified and include (in priority order):

1. Feeling of personal safety	2. Obstructions
3. Other	4. Lighting
5. Awareness of RoW	6. Surface
7. Signs / way-marking	

Feeling of Personal Safety

The next issue most in need of improvement relates to the feeling of personal safety. The focus groups found that safety concerns were the biggest deterrent of people using local RoW and the main reasons respondents felt unsafe using local RoW in Bexley were the perceptions that they were not well used; were places for youths to congregate; and that they were not well lit.

Obstructions

The incidence of obstructions is also an issue which impacts on peoples' feeling of personal safety. Overgrown vegetation deters people from using RoW as it gives the impression that the network is not well used and hides potential attackers from view. Therefore, the removal of obstructions should assist in meeting other priority three improvements by making RoW appear safer.

Lighting

Poor lighting is considered to be a significant deterrent to people using local RoW, especially alleyways. Concerns over poor lighting and the link to personal safety was cited mostly by women, though some men agreed that they would not want their wives to use alleyways, particularly after dark. Improving lighting should assist in meeting other priority three improvements by making RoW appear safer.

Other

Other reasons for not using the RoW network included:

- Dogs not being kept on leads;
- Congregating youths and anti-social behaviour;
- Litter, fly tipping and dog fouling;
- Graffiti and vandalism;
- Safety concerns related to the appearance of RoW and time of day.
- Misuse by bicycles, motorcycles and horse riders.

Several respondents felt that measures to address these issues were required to make RoW appear safer. In addition, measures to retain flora and fauna habitats were also cited as an area for improvement.

Footpath 3 runs alongside the River Thames and this route also forms part of the Thames Cycle Route



Awareness of RoW

Good advertising is important to encourage use of the RoW network for utilitarian and recreational uses. Respondents at the focus group were all surprised by the number of RoW in the Borough and many were unaware of current information availability. The questionnaire findings have also highlighted the need for better advertising to increase awareness of the RoW network.

Surface

Poor surfacing creates problems for all RoW users but particularly those with mobility impairments and other disabilities, for whom the RoWAIP is seeking to provide access. Poor surfacing coupled with overgrown vegetation and inadequate lighting creates the impression of RoW being poorly maintained and under-utilised which leads to concerns over personal safety.

Signs / way-marking

Improved signage was also recognised as a desired improvement, though the questionnaire found that most people considered it to neither encourage nor discourage them from using the network. However, poor signage can potentially discourage people from making use of the network. Signs indicating where paths lead to should be provided as a minimum, but the provision of additional information, such as distances, should also be considered.

The council regularly inspects its RoW network and currently 99% of the network is signed.

6.3.4 Neutral Attributes

The gap analysis has shown the remaining three attributes to be neutral as the public consider them to equate to their expectation and do not perceive improving the attribute to be a priority.

Connections between RoW

Bexley's RoW network is relatively well connected in the north of the Borough and links up with various London-wide networks. However, it is fragmented in other parts of the Borough and does not provide many opportunities for circular walks without resorting to the wider highway network. Therefore, providing additional links will generate more opportunities for walking and cycling.

However, creating additional RoW links is costly, therefore sections of the network which are already well connected and provide circular routes should be identified and publicised as an interim measure. When investigating the availability of circular walks, the needs of disabled and mobility impaired users should be borne in mind and, where feasible, routes should be publicised which are fully accessible for the mobility impaired, including parents with young children and pushchairs.

Conflict with other users

Some respondents felt that managing conflicts between different user groups was important, though the majority did not consider conflicts to discourage them from using the network. The majority of routes in Bexley are for pedestrians only, but on shared routes conflicts should be minimised by making people aware of other potential users.

Gates / stiles

The gap analysis found that gates / stiles are the only attributes which people appear to be relatively happy with in their current state and which they do not consider is in need of improvement. Therefore, maintaining gates / stiles to their current standard is sufficient in meeting peoples' needs and expectations.

6.4 Recent Improvement Works

While many improvements to the network have been identified through consultation exercises, the Borough has an ongoing programme of maintenance and improvement works. Several improvements have already been made to the public and permissive RoW network and access points in recent years. These upgrades have been ongoing for some time, mainly funded by the available revenue budget, and will contribute towards the actions proposed in the Statement of Action. ***Table 6.3*** on the next page summarises some of the improvement works completed in the Borough since 2005.

Byway 7, Leather Bottle Lane, Belvedere, leading from Heron Hill to Abbey Road.



Table 6.3: Improvements and New Provisions

NORTH HEATH RECREATION GROUND	
Problem: Site users travelling between Steele Walk and Sussex Road / Brook Street on hard standing paths had to go through the playground, leading to dog incursion problems on the playground.	**Solution:** Create an extension to the existing hard standing tarmac footpath around the outside of the playground. *Completed 2007.*
STREAMWAY OPEN SPACE / CHAPMANS LAND	
Problem: Motorcycle incursion on the site putting user safety at risk.	**Solution:** Installation of an anti-motorcycle barrier. Completed 2007.
LESNES ABBEY	
Problem: Type one constructed pathway on woodland fringes off of New Road considerably eroded and unsuitable for disabled users.	**Solution:** Enhance users' experience of site and wider user groups accessing the site from New Road by creating a new hard standing tarmac footpath suitable for disabled users. Completed 2006.
Problem: Wear and erosion to woodland paths.	**Solution:** An annual programme of repair exists by means of laying hogging. Ongoing.
Problem: Motorcycle incursion on the site putting user safety at risk.	**Solution:** Installation of 3 anti-motorcycle barriers at previously noted key entry points. Completed 2007.
EAST WICKHAM OPEN SPACE	
Problem: Up until the late 1990's no hard standing footpaths existed on the site leading to the site being underused and impassable in places.	**Solution:** As part of the sites programmed development, plans were initially put forward by East Wickham Conservation Volunteers for a periphery path to be installed that would increase visitor numbers, create a safe walking route for parents and children to schools and open the site to other user groups, including the disabled. Projects have been undertaken over a number of years and in 2006 London Borough of Bexley funded the completion of the 1800 metre circular route.
Problem: Wear and erosion to paths.	**Solution:** Wear to paths, once identified, is scheduled for repair. Ongoing.
Problem: Motorcycle incursion on the site putting user safety at risk.	**Solution:** Installation of 2 anti-motorcycle barriers at previously noted key entry points. Completed 2007.
DANSON PARK	
Problem: No hard standing pathways on south side of the lake, leading to erosion and restricted access for different user groups.	Solution: To enhance users experience of site and to widen user groups accessing the site a new hard standing Cotswold gravel dual cycle / pedestrian footpath was created, linking Danson Road with existing pathways. Completed 2005.
Problem: Wear and erosion to existing paths.	**Solution:** Wear to paths, once identified, is scheduled for repair. Ongoing.
Problem: Restricted access and pathways not linked.	**Solution:** As part of HLF works in 2006, new linking pathways were installed.

FOOTS CRAY MEADOW

- Braille walk from the Ellenborough Road entrance.
- Improved surface dressing on the path from Water Lane and on the path to the rear of All Saints' Church.
- Link between hard standing 'Burning Road' and Footpath 144.
- Construction of a DDA compliant ramp and kissing gate opposite the car park provision off Rectory Lane.
- Installation of DDA compliant kissing gates on the western boundary from Rectory Lane to the Riverside Road entrance.
- Construction of a new hard standing footpath from the Riverside Road entrance to link with the new playground nearby.
- Surface dressing on the path from Bexley Lane to the camp site.
- Installation of a new hard stepped path from the elevated section from Bexley Lane to the camp site field and from the camp site entrance to The Lawns area.
- Installation of hard surface tarmac aprons on the kissing gates at various locations.
- Regular dressing of the permissive horse ride surface with wood chip, when required.
- New hard surface path from Cleve Road to North Cray Woods.
- New tarmac surface on Footpath 144 at the St. Andrews end.
- New tarmac surface on Footpath 144 and on Footpath 228 at the St. James' church side.

FOOTS CRAY RECREATION GROUND

- Footpath 165 to Suffolk Road totally reconstructed and widened.
- New DDA compliant kissing gates installed at each of THE four entrances, along with the installation of tarmac bases on each.

PARKHILL / HURST ROAD OPEN SPACE (GOLDEN ACRE)

- New DDA compliant tarmac path constructed from Parkhill Road to the new playground.
- New DDA compliant kissing gate installed at the entrance.

HALL PLACE

- Previous stepped access over the bridge to the flood plain now ramped at each end for ease of wheelchair access.

LAMORBEY PARK, BURNT OAK LANE

- Some of the existing tarmac path network has been overlaid.
- Rustic trail through woodland surface dressed with stone chippings.

LONGLANDS RECREATION GROUND SIDCUP

- New hard standing permissive path constructed to link Appledore Crescent with Footpath 156.

MARTENS GROVE, BEXLEYHEATH

- Stepped hard standing woodland path lifted and re-laid with concrete
- Installation of key clamp hand rail.

MAYPLACE AMENITY, BARNEHURST

- DDA compliant kissing gate installed at the Taunton Road entrance.

BEXLEY WOODS

- Footpath from Elmwood Road to Parkhill Road, adjacent to the river walk, is due for surface dressing in a rustic style.

RUSSELL PARK, LONG LANE

- DDA compliant kissing gate installed at the Woolwich Road entrance, along with a hard standing base.
- Newly constructed footpath installed from this entrance to link with the recently refurbished playground.

SIDCUP PLACE

- Vehicle / pedestrian entrance from Chislehurst Road overlaid
- Top tarmac path by tennis courts linking the Chislehurst Road entrance completely lifted and reconstructed
- Path from Chislehurst Road entrance to Red Lodge overlaid.

SLADE GREEN RECREATION GROUND

- New hard standing footpath constructed from Hollywood Drive entrance to link with the new playgrounds and ball court facilities.
- Installation of lighting columns to this path ongoing
- Vehicle / pedestrian access at Hazel Road reconstructed.

WARING PARK

- New rustic hard standing path constructed through woodland to link with perimeter tarmac paths.

7s Summary of Improvement Plan Objectives

The overarching objectives which the Improvement Plan will seek to deliver are:

- Increased sustainable travel through better connectivity.
- Creation of a more socially inclusive and accessible network.
- Creation of a high quality, safe and secure network.
- Improved information provision to increase public awareness.
- Provision of more recreational opportunities to improve health.

To deliver these objectives a series of area-wide themes have been identified, which include:

- Providing **'Access for All'** to maximise opportunities for all user groups.
- **Promotion, Information Provision and Education** to promote the network and the opportunities available for different user groups and trip purposes.
- **Health Initiatives** to increase public participation in physical recreational activities.
- Identifying and maximising opportunities for **Cyclists and Equestrians** whilst managing conflicts with other user groups.

In addition, specific themes related to the urban and semi-rural network have been identified. These relate to maximising use of the network for the **journey to school / links to community facilities** and providing **links to recreational facilities,** respectively.

Footpath 25 which runs alongside the rivers Thames, Darent and Cray and via Byway 103 that connects to Thames Road. This route is also part of the Thames Cycle Route

7 Objectives and Opportunities

7.1 Introduction

Guidance states that RoWIPs should be developed within the context of related plans and strategies as well as supporting statutory duties and responsibilities towards the RoW network. The RoWAIP for Bexley has been influenced by and will contribute to a range of national, regional and local policies and initiatives.

At present the RoW network appears to be under-used, largely because of limited provision and poor public knowledge. However, with improved publicity and greater information availability as well as better integration with other networks, there is potential for RoW to be used for both utilitarian and recreational purposes. Additionally, the RoW network has the potential to contribute towards health initiatives by encouraging greater use of the network for participation in outdoor activities.

Based on the findings from the policy review, preliminary desktop studies of the RoW network and public consultation, there are some overarching objectives which the Improvement Plan will seek to deliver. These are:

1. Improve the contribution RoW can make to ***sustainable travel*** through ***better connectivity to other networks, facilities and resources***.
2. Improve ***access*** to the RoW network for all user groups to create a more ***socially inclusive network***.
3. Improve the ***feeling of personal safety*** by creating a high quality, safe and secure network.
4. Improve ***information provision*** on the location, length, route and characteristics of RoW links and other walking / cycling / horse-riding routes to increase ***public awareness*** of available opportunities.
5. Improve the contribution that RoW can make to improving ***health*** and providing ***recreational opportunities***.

To enable progress against these objectives to be monitored, the following indicators could be used:

1. Number of ***journeys to school / work*** made on foot or by bicycle.
2. Best Value Performance Indicators (**BVPI**).
3. ***Perception surveys*** to gauge peoples' awareness of the network and to assess peoples' feeling of personal safety whilst using the network.
4. Levels of ***recreational use of the network***.
5. ***Number of hits*** on new RoW section on council website.

The delivery of objectives can be considered in relation to network-wide themes and area specific opportunities, as set out in the following paragraphs..

7.2 Network-wide Themes

7.2.1 Access for All (AA)

A key emphasis of the DEFRA guidance on RoWIPs is that provision should be made for improving access for those with disabilities and mobility impairments. This includes those with pushchairs and young children as well as those with physical, mental and visual impairments. While it is acknowledged that the whole network cannot be upgraded to cater for this user group, particularly given its potentially detrimental impact on the natural environment, certain routes should be made accessible for all.

Improving access for all does not only encompass upgrading the network to include complete routes with smoother surfaces and less steep gradients, but also promoting awareness amongst the disabled community of suitable routes, their length and where facilities, including toilets, car parking and resting places, are located.

'Access for All' includes establishing standards which maximise the opportunities of different user groups in accessing and using the RoW network and wider permissive path network. According to best practice, improvements to the network should be based on the principle of 'Least Restrictive Access' (LRA) so that those with physical impairments and mental disabilities are able to enjoy the same opportunities as the unimpaired on as much of the network as possible.

In addition, the accessibility theme is based on the integration of the network with community facilities and the opportunities for different user groups to access these.

For this objective to be satisfied, the following key issues will need addressing through the RoWAIP:

- Identify standards which maximise the opportunities for different user groups, based on the principal of Least Restrictive Access (LRA).
- Extend and improve the network of circular routes which are accessible to those with disabilities, including mobility and visually impaired, and advertise their location, length, the facilities available and their suitability for different user groups.
- Promote strategic routes which provide access from residential areas to key attractors, including retail centres, schools and business districts.
- Promote use of the RoW network for accessing the countryside as well as parks, open spaces and other centres of recreational activity.
- Integrate RoW and permissive paths with other networks providing walking, cycling and horse-riding opportunities to maximise the potential for people to use sections of the RoW network in their day-to-day life.

Given that RoW are only part of the overall access resource available in Bexley, it will be important to establish joint working arrangements within the council and with key partners such as TfL and neighbouring authorities in order to deliver these objectives effectively.

7.2.2 Promotion, Information Provision and Education (PIPE)

Promotion of the network is important in raising awareness amongst different user groups about the opportunities available to them. In addition to promoting the network for leisure purposes, the opportunities for use of the network to access community facilities, including employment and education centres, retail developments and leisure centres, will also be publicised. Furthermore, information about how to use the network and the benefits that could accrue could be an important driver in improving social connections, health and well-being.

An important aspect of permitting access to the network by the mobility impaired is identifying and promoting those sections of the network that are accessible to wheelchairs, pushchairs and the infirm. In particular those paths which form a complete route will be targeted taking into account disabled parking facilities, public conveniences and suitable resting places. This is also applicable to cyclists and equestrians to ensure that conflict between user groups is minimised where possible.

Improving promotion of the RoW network will involve:

- Developing a range of approaches to better publicise the RoW network and the opportunities available to different user groups and to encourage greater use of the network both for utilitarian trips and for recreation purposes.
- Identifying and promoting those routes which are accessible to people with mobility impairments to reduce their feeling of exclusion from the network.
- Publicising opportunities available to cyclists and equestrians;
- Increasing information provision about where RoW are located, where the route begins and ends, their length, what facilities are available (including car parking, toilets, resting places, etc), which user groups the route is suitable for (e.g. walkers, cyclists, equestrians, those with mobility / visual impairments), what the route connects to or whether it is circular, etc.
- Promoting use of the network for leisure purposes and where feasible, publicity of the RoW network should link into other relevant initiatives. This could include involvement in 'Wildweb', the 'Active Lifestyles' scheme and the annual 'Walking Festival'.
- Promoting the network as a means of accessing community facilities.

Given that the RoW network is part of a Borough wide pedestrian and cycling network, consideration needs to be given to integrating RoW promotion with promotional activities across these wider networks.

7.2.3 Health Initiatives (HI)

This theme is based around increasing use of the network by encouraging people to use the network for physical recreational purposes. Greater participation in physical activities such as walking, cycling and horse-riding could form an integral part of improving the general public's health in the future.

Increasing awareness about the benefits that people can gain from using the RoW and permissive paths network could be achieved through the promotion of health initiatives within the local area, either as a means of improving overall health or to assist in the recovery of patients treated for a specific illness. For this to be successful a fully integrated network, connected to community facilities and to other paths forming circular routes, will be required. Also, routes will be maintained to a high standard to maximise the opportunities of the mobility impaired.

Utilising the RoW network to promote health initiatives will involve:

- Working with health organisations to develop promotional materials to encourage people to lead more active lifestyles and participate in outdoor activities.
- Encouraging hospitals and health care centres to make use of the network by encouraging the public to lead more active lifestyles.
- Continuing to develop the annual 'Green Chain Walking Festival' to encourage more people to walk for leisure reasons.

Targeting individuals with health conditions that could benefits from use of the network, e.g. as a means of reducing obesity.

7.2.4 Cyclists and Equestrians (C&E)

Walkers, cyclists and equestrians have differing needs and impacts on the RoW network. Conflict can arise when multiple user groups use the same route, as such the opportunities for cycling and horse-riding will be considered and publicised in addition to walking routes. Horse-riders in particular can make paths unsuitable for walkers and therefore the opportunities available to this user group need to be well managed to reduce adverse impacts on other groups.

Cyclists have varying requirements. In the more urban areas, good surfaces may be desirable for general cycling use. On the more rural parts of the RoW network, cycling may be limited more to potential use by mountain bikers, unless routes of are a particularly high standard.

In order to minimise the conflicts that arise on the RoW network, procedures need to be in place to manage which parts of the network are used for different activities. This will involve:

- Developing a management regime to ensure that different user groups do not negatively impact upon one another. On shared routes, ensure that conflict between users is minimised by segregating the path for different uses, such as walking and cycling routes through urban areas.
- Ensuring that there is a good provision of suitable routes for cyclists and equestrians. Produce leaflets / information packs for cyclists and equestrians to inform them of which parts of the RoW network they can use and how it integrates with other routes which are available for their use.

7.3 Area-specific Opportunities

In addition to the general themes, category-specific themes have been identified which relate specifically to assessment of urban and rural routes.

7.3.1 Category 1 – Urban Network Themes

Journeys to School (JS)

The RoW and permissive paths network could potentially be used by a number of students in their journey to school. This is particularly relevant to secondary school students. However, it could also apply to primary school children who live within walking distance of their school. For such RoW to be feasible for use by school children and parents, these routes will need to be well maintained so that they are safe and secure.

To maximise the potential of the RoW network to be utilised in pupils' journeys to school, it will be necessary to work with education centres to:

- Establish where students travel from and whether the RoW presents a viable alternative to their existing journey to work.
- Identify which sections of the RoW network could be used by pupils to access schools and work with schools to promote their use.
- Offer information to students about where their local RoW network is and what key facilities they can access using RoW.
- Ensure that the RoW network is incorporated into School Travel Plans.

Links to Community Facilities (LCF)

Improvements to the network are most likely to be targeted on the most popular, well used paths or those which serve a specific purpose. Those which provide access between residential areas and local facilities, leisure centres and retail developments will therefore be prioritised within a programme of targeted improvements.

Clearly, the improvements outlined in the RoWAIP need to have maximum benefit for minimum cost. Therefore, initial actions need to focus on upgrading those routes which are most popular but which the public perceive to be in need of improvement. This involves:

- Prioritising network improvements on links which are well used and which serve community facilities.

Developing the network to provide connections between residential areas and community facilities and open spaces.

7.3.2 Category 2 – Semi-rural / Rural Network Themes

Links to Recreational Facilities (LRF)

To maximise the opportunities provided by the RoW and permissive path network, a key objective is to develop connections between paths and recreational resources, including greenbelt land, country parks and other open spaces. However, it needs to be ensured that excessive pressure is not put on sensitive environment areas as this could be potentially damaging to the local environment and natural habitats.

Maximising use of the RoW network on links to and in conjunction with recreational facilities will involve:

- Publicising established routes which connect to parks and large open spaces taking into account the need to ensure that areas are not overused and ultimately damaged.
- Targeting improvements to upgrade existing routes which have the potential to provide important connections, for example between residential areas and recreational resources, including greenbelt land, parks and open spaces.
- Prioritising network developments between the types of areas mentioned above.
- Upgrading strategically important routes which connect to open spaces so that they are suitable and accessible for all.



Public footpath 172 leading from Joydens Wood

8 Statement of Action

8.1 Introduction

Statutory guidance on RoWIPs instructs local highway authorities to produce a Statement of Action from the information collection and evaluation process, indicating the main findings and allocating delivery partners, estimated costs and targeted completion dates to key actions.

This section outlines a series of issues which the RoWAIP should seek to address and recommends actions which could be taken to meet these needs. The Statement of Action focuses on RoW as is required by legislation and looks to address problems and issues identified through public consultation and the assessment of the network. It also looks to respond to the wider policy context and the role that RoW may fulfil within the wider network of walking, cycling and horse-riding routes in Bexley.

8.2 Suggested Improvements

Based on the improvement and maintenance needs highlighted in ***Chapter 6***, a number of actions have been identified. These have been prioritised using a priority framework to ensure that those improvements which are deemed most important receive attention first. However, it may not be possible to implement those improvements identified as priority one in the short term owing to budgetary constraints. It is therefore proposed that low cost improvements which can be easily implemented, are relatively cheap to implement and maintain, and have an impact on more than one priority should be concentrated on in the shorter term.

8.3 Estimated Costs and Potential Funding Opportunities

Whilst the council has an informal programme for maintaining RoW, resources for improving the network are heavily constrained. It envisaged that the majority of maintenance and other revenue funded improvements proposed in ***Table 8.2*** will be accommodated through existing budgets as a result of improved management processes and better targeting of resources. However, where proposed improvements have a significant cost implication, alternative funding opportunities will be explored. A range of potential funding opportunities are summarised in ***Table 8.1***.

The council will consider all those potential sources of funding to support enhancements to RoW in Bexley. Given the limited nature of the RoW network in the Borough and small scale nature of many enhancement possibilities, opportunities will be sought for funding through partnership working across council services and with external partners.

8.3.1 Bexley Planning Obligations Guidance Supplementary Planning Document

Planning obligations are legal agreements between local planning authorities and applicants with an interest in land that is subject to planning consent. They are used to prescribe the nature of the development or to secure a developer contribution to compensate for loss of land or to mitigate developments wider impacts to ensure that growth, both individually and cumulatively, meets national, regional and local sustainable development policies. This document provides a transparent, fair and consistent process for negotiating, applying and monitoring planning obligations.

Development has implications for transport networks and the environment and, in relation to transport and access improvements, the Council's objectives include:

- Promoting sustainable transport choices;
- Protecting and enhancing the environment and amenity;
- Optimising the use of the existing transport network;
- Improving access, safety and comfort, particularly for pedestrians, cyclists, people with disabilities and other vulnerable road users.

The Council will seek planning contributions from all qualifying residential, commercial and retail development towards transport infrastructure provision to facilitate the delivery of transport improvements in the borough. It is estimated that Bexley will require annual S106 contributions totalling an average of £1,065,300 to deliver the Council's transport programme over a ten year period and this sum has been used as a basis for calculating the transport contributions set out the Planning Obligations Guidance SPD. Transport for London (TfL) will also provide funding for projects within their business plan and the Council will bid for TfL and other agencies for additional funding, as appropriate. However, the success of these bids and the level of funding awarded cannot be guaranteed.

Transport contributions will be allocated to schemes identified in Bexley Council's Local Implementation Plan (LIP), Highways Asset Management Plan (HAMP), Rights of Way and Access Improvement Plan (RoWAIP) and Crayford Strategy and Action Plan. Transport schemes and programmes of particular relevance to this Plan include:

- Local accessibility;
- Encouraging walking;
- Cycling (non-London Cycle Network) and cycle parking;
- London Cycle Network + Cycling Scheme;
- Street lighting improvement and maintenance; and

- Public realm and transport improvements;

A similar approach has been used to calculate contributions towards the maintenance and improvement of high quality open spaces. The Council recognises that the needs of the borough in terms of the quality, quantity and accessibility of public open space can be met by improving the appearance, quality and safety of existing green areas and through the provision of new open spaces. The Council's objectives for open space and leisure facilities in the borough are outlined in the following strategies:

- Council Parks Strategy
- Trees & Woodland Strategy
- Biodiversity Action Plan
- Open Space Strategy
- Cultural Strategy
- Diversion & Inclusion Strategy
- Local Agenda 21 Strategy
- Sports Strategy
- Playing Pitch Strategy
- Physical Activity Strategy

Contributions towards open space, sports and leisure facilities will be sought from residential, town centre and business developments towards new or enhanced open space provision. Where open space cannot practicably be provided on site, proportionate contributions will be sought for off-site provision, as appropriate. It is anticipated that opportunities will be sought from this funding source to support and facilitate delivery of the RoWAIP.

8.4 Timescale for Delivery

Many improvements will be delivered through management and targeting of existing, on-going revenue programmes. The scope and cost of a proposed improvement will impact upon the timescale over which an improvement is likely to be delivered. In recognition that some actions will take longer to implement than others and some will be a prerequisite for further actions, three broad timescales for delivery have been identified:

1.	Short term: 0 – 3 years
2.	Medium term: 4 – 10 years
3.	Long: greater than 10 years

The medium term vision, up to 10 years, will feed into the next RoWAIP to ensure that improvements in the shorter term continue to contribute to longer term aims.

Footpath 106, showing a section of the footpath next to the River Cray before improvement



8.5 Partnership Working and Consultations with Stakeholders

In accordance with RoWIP guidance, the council will work with neighbouring authorities to ensure that the Improvement Plan does not conflict with other RoWIPs and to coordinate improvements, where possible. During the pre-consultation period, the London Borough of Bexley wrote to the relevant officers of the London Borough of Bromley, Dartford Council, Greenwich Council and Kent County Council. Consultations also took place with statutory consultees, residents of Bexley and focus groups drawn from the Bexley Residents Panel.

The RoWIP has the potential to contribute to and be influenced by many other plans, policies and strategies relating to health, the environment and transport. In many cases, actions outlined in the RoWIP will benefit other policies and vice-versa. In addition, RoW are only part of the wider access resource available to the public and the RoWIP will comprise part of the Council's overall approach to access in the borough. Therefore, where possible, actions should be coordinated across Council service areas to maximise effectiveness. Examples of this could include:

- Promoting walks on RoW in connection with other departments and initiatives;
- Advertising key routes which provide access to parks, open spaces and countryside sites;
- Working with school / workplace travel plan co-ordinators to identify sections of the network which could be used in the journey to school / work, e.g. those which provide access to train stations, bus stops or other transport interchanges.

8.6 Monitoring the Plan

It is intended that the Statement of Action is kept under continued review and progress reported annually to members.

Footpath 106, next to the River Cray after improvement



8.7 Key Policies for the Improvement Plan

In preparing this RoWAIP, the council has identified the following key policies in relation to RoW. These po licies link into the objectives and themes identified previously and collectively they underpin the recommended actions outlined in ***Table 8.1***.

Policy 1: Definitive Map and Statement

In parallel to the development of this RoWAIP, the council has completed digitising the Definitive Map with the aim of developing an interactive map that can be used by members of the public. This work is ongoing and it is envisaged that the finalised map will show the RoW network in relation to other walking and cycling routes in the Borough and will provide information on lighting, signage and ease of use.

Policy 2: Information, Marketing and Promotion

Publicity and promotion of the RoW network is limited at present so the council will advertise the opportunities provided by RoW primarily through the interactive map on their website but also through leaflets, press releases and on-site information. Additionally, the council will investigate the potential to publicise the network in partnership with other local and national initiatives, such as the Green Chain Festival, National Walking Day and the annual 'In Town Without My Car' event.

Policy 3: Maintenance and Management

The council will continue to maintain the RoW network to a high standard based on BVPI indicators and, where feasible, will aim to improve accessibility of the network for all users, including mobility impaired and disabled users.

Policy 4: Improvements

Based on this study and further research, the council will identify which parts of the network are most in need of improvement in terms of removing litter, dog fouling and obstructions and improving lighting, surfacing and the general feeling of personal safety. Additionally, the council will investigate funding opportunities for implementing these improvements.

Policy 5: New Provision

The council will identify where new links are most needed in the network and investigate potential funding options to provide them. It will also actively engage with relevant land owners to encourage them to keep existing permissive paths open and to create new routes, where appropriate.

Priority will be given to:

- RoW which link Category 1 and Category 2 footways, particularly those near to town centres and schools.
- Surfacing improvements to provide access for all. Where possible, routes which support regeneration initiatives will be targeted.

Footpath 51, is an example of an 'Urban' footpath that connects King Harolds Way with Abbots Walk, Abbey Wood.



Table 8.1: Potential Funding / Co-ordinated Working Opportunities

NAME	SUMMARY	RELEVANT PROJECT OBJECTIVES
Local Transport Plan (LTP)	The LTP sets out the authority's local transport strategies and policies and includes an implementation programme.	• To improve local transport provision. Projects could include those relating to more sustainable travel and the provision of walking / cycling routes.
Local Strategic Partnership (LSP)	LSPs are non-statutory, multi-agency partnerships that bring together public, private, community and voluntary sectors at a local level. They allow different initiatives and services to support one another so they can work together effectively.	• To improve local services.
S106 Agreements	Section 106 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 enables a local planning authority (LPA) and a developer to enter a legally binding agreement or planning obligation over a related issue.	• To place obligations on developers requiring them to minimise the impact of their development on the local community and to carry out tasks which provide community benefits.
DCLG Participatory Budgeting Pilots	Participatory Budgeting allows local communities to decide how money is spent and where resources are targeted.	• To allow neighbourhoods to direct resources at the issues they care about. • To bring transparency to the way decisions are made about the use of limited resources.
Neighbourhood Renewal Fund (NRF)	The NRF is a non-ring fenced grant which is available to England's 86 most deprived local authority areas to enable them to improve services in collaboration with their LSP.	• To improve mainstream services to tackle deprivation. • To narrow the gap between deprived areas and the rest. • To contribute to achieving sustainable development.
Landfill Tax Credit Scheme (LTCS)	LTCS allows landfill operators to reduce their Landfill Tax Liability by making contributions to approved environmental bodies for environmental and community projects.	• To reclaim, remediate or otherwise bring land back into social, environmental or economic use. • To reduce, mitigate or prevent pollution on land where polluting activities have ceased. • To provide and maintain public amenities and parks within the vicinity of a landfill site. • To conserve and promote biological diversity through the provision, conservation, restoration or enhancement of a natural habitat, or the maintenance or recovery of a species in its natural habitat in the vicinity of a landfill site.
Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF)	The HLF gives grants to a wide range of projects which enable communities to celebrate, protect and learn about local, regional and national heritage. It funds the entire spread of heritage including buildings, museums, natural heritage and the heritage of cultural traditions and language.	• Awards for All: For small local groups to widen the appreciation and understanding of heritage and extend experiences of different types of heritage. • Your Heritage: For projects which conserve and enhance heritage and open up heritage resources for communities to enjoy and learn about. • Heritage Grants: For projects which conserve and enhance heritage and encourage greater community involvement in their heritage. • Parks for People: A three year joint initiative between HLF and the Big Lottery Fund to help with the restoration and regeneration of parks and green spaces. • Landscape Partnerships: For schemes which provide long term social, economic and environmental benefits for rural areas by conserving features which create historic character, conserving cultural activities, encourage public participation in heritage and improving understanding of local crafts and skills. • Young Roots: For projects which involve young people (13-20 year olds) in finding out about their heritage, developing skills, building confidence and promoting community involvement.
Big Lottery Fund (BIG)	BIG is the largest distributor of lottery money and provides funding for health, education and environment projects.	• Awards for All: For projects that enable people to take part in art, sport, heritage and community activities, as well as projects that promote education, the environment and health. • Fair Share Trust: Targeted at 77 areas across the UK, the fund is available for projects which improve the living environment for communities. • Changing Spaces: An environment led programme focused on improving green spaces to meet peoples' needs, to make them accessible to all, to encourage public participation and to improve biodiversity and wildlife habitats.
Aggregates Levy Sustainability Fund (ALSF)	The ALSF is financed by the levy on aggregate extraction and funds projects which reduce the negative impacts of aggregate extraction and minimise the demand for primary aggregates.	• To address the environmental and social costs of aggregate extraction. • To deliver environmental improvements. • To minimise the demand for primary aggregates • To reduce the local effects of aggregate extraction.
Environmental Stewardship Scheme (ESS)	The ESS provides funding to farmers and land managers who deliver effective environmental management on their land.	• To conserve wildlife and biodiversity. • To maintain and enhance landscape quality and character. • To protect the historic environment and natural resources. • To promote public access and understanding of the countryside. • To protect natural resources.
Local Area Agreements (LAA)	LAAs are three year agreements between central government, the council and partner organisations and outline priorities for improving local services.	• To improve local services
Primary Care Trusts (PCT)	PCTs are responsible for organising and funding all health and social care services provided by other organisations.	• To improve health and social care facilities locally.
English Woodland Grant Scheme (EWGS)	The Forestry Commission provides financial support through the English Woodland Grant Scheme (EWGS) for creating and managing woodlands and increasing the delivery of public benefits.	• To create and management woodland areas for public benefit.
Private Companies	Private Companies sometimes offer community grant schemes to groups undertaking environmental or sustainability work as part of their community development strategy.	• To improve the environment and encourage sustainability for the benefit of the community.
European Regional Development Fund (ERDF)	ERDF helps projects which offer substantial benefits that truly meet the needs of a region and wouldn't take place without a grant.	• To address regional imbalances. • To encourage economic development and regeneration. • To promote competitiveness. • To enhance and develop skills. • To contribute to sustainable development. • To offer substantial benefits which meet the needs of an area.
LIFE+	LIFE+ is a limited but focused funding instrument providing specific support for the development and implementation of community environmental policy and legislation.	• To protect wildlife and habitats and halt the loss of biodiversity. • To contribute to the implementation of community environmental policy, the development of innovative policy approaches, technologies, methods and instruments, the knowledge base as regards environment policy and legislation, and the monitoring of the environment. • To implement communication and awareness raising campaigns on environmental, nature protection or biodiversity conservation issues, as well as projects related to forest fire prevention.

Table 8.2: Improvement and Maintenance Priorities

RECOMMENDED ACTION	CONTRIBUTION TO...			TIMESCALES FOR DELIVERY	COSTS	FUNDING OPTIONS/ DELIVERY PARTNERS	METHODS / DELIVERY PARTNERS
	OBJECTIVES	THEMES	PUBLIC PRIORITIES				
DEFINITIVE MAP & STATEMENT							
Ensure that the Definitive Map and Statement is kept up-to-date	2, 4	AA, PIPE	IP3e	Deliverable	£	LBB Revenue Budget	• Update the Definitive Map and Statement to include all modifications since it was last published in October 2007 and make it available for public viewing. Keep the Definitive Map and Statement under continuous review in accordance with the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 s53.
Review designation of routes	2, 3	AA	IP3a, N2	Short	£	LBB Revenue Budget	• Review the existing designation of routes. Consider reclassifying certain routes from byway to bridleway to reduce illegal use of motorbikes.
Continue to digitise the Definitive Map	2, 4	AA, PIPE	IP3e, IP3f, N3	Ongoing	££	LBB Revenue Budget	• Work with internal partners and TfL to develop a publicly available interactive map that can be used by members of the public which provides information about the key features of routes and their suitability for different user groups.
Map other routes, against the RoW network to raise awareness of interconnectivity	1, 2, 4	AA, PIPE, LRF	IP3e, N1, N2	Short	££	LBB Revenue Budget	• Show the RoW network in relation to other walking / cycling / horse-riding routes to illustrate the connectivity of different networks.
INFORMATION, MARKETING & PROMOTION							
Develop a two-way flow of information about RoW and walking routes via the internet and promote all forms of access	1, 2, 4, 5	PIPE, HI, JS, LCF, LRF	IP3a, IP3e	Medium	££	LBB Revenue Budget	• Develop a website that displays high quality information on RoW and other walking routes and which has a facility to enable users to report faults and make comments. • Develop a web based map which provides information about key features of routes and their suitability for different user groups and which has a facility to enable users to report faults and make comments.
Regularly review the need for a RoW / access forum	1, 2, 4, 5	AA, PIPE, C&E	IP3b, IP3d, IP3e, IP3f, IP3g, N1, N2	Ongoing	£	LBB Revenue Budget / Voluntary Organisations	• Review the need for an annual RoW / access forum for the London Borough of Bexley and interest group representatives to discuss the RoW network / other recreational networks. The forum should identify network issues, consider possible actions to address these problems and look at ways to fund improvements.
Identify and promote routes which are suitable for use by different groups, including cyclists, equestrians and disabled users	1, 2, 4, 5	PIPE, HI, JS, LCF, LRF	IP3a, IP3e, IP3f, N1, N3	Short / Ongoing	£	LBB Revenue Budget / Voluntary Organisations	• Put regular articles about the RoW network and the recreational opportunities available in the borough in the Bexley Magazine and on the Council's website. • Undertake a promotion campaign in connection with relevant departments and organisations to encourage greater use of the network. Use public buildings and community facilities as sources of information. • Develop publicity materials and, where possible, link publicity to other initiatives, such as the Green Chain Festival and National Walking Day. • Organise events to encourage use of the network and encourage travel plan coordinators to investigate use of the RoW network for utilitarian purposes. • Work with local disabled user groups to establish minimum standards for footpaths designated as suitable for disabled users. Use this information to identify priority routes, such as those connecting to parks / open spaces and sites of interest. • Work with Education Team to identify potential routes for pupil journeys to school.
Advertise key features of the RoW network and its presence in relation to other networks	2, 4, 5	PIPE, HI, JS, LCF, LRF	IP3e	Short	£	LBB Revenue Budget	• Work with internal partners and TfL to develop a publicly available interactive map that can be used by members of the public which provides information about the key features of routes and their suitability for different user groups. • Create leaflets which advertise walking conditions to allow individuals to determine which routes are suitable for them to use.
Publicise the opportunities available to cyclists and equestrians.	2, 4, 5	AA, PIPE, C&E, LRF	IP3e, N1, N2	Short	£	LBB Revenue Budget / Voluntary Organisations	• Work with cycling and horse-riding groups to identify their needs and make them aware of which sections of the network they can use and how they integrate with other routes.

KEY:

OBJECTIVES

- **1:** Improve the contribution RoW can make to sustainable travel through better connectivity to other networks and recreational resources.
- **2:** Improve access to the RoW network for all user groups to create a more socially inclusive network.
- **3:** Improve the feeling of personal safety by creating a high quality, safe, secure, well lit network.
- **4:** Improve information provision on the location, length, route and characteristics of RoW links and other walking / cycling / horse-riding routes to increase public awareness of available opportunities.
- **5:** Improve the contribution that RoW can make to improving health and providing recreational opportunities.

THEMES:

- **AA:** Access for All
- **PIPE:** Publicity, Information, Provision and Education
- **HI:** Health Initiatives
- **C&E:** Cyclists and Equestrians
- **JS:** Journeys to School
- **LCF:** Links to Community Facilities
- **LRF:** Links to Recreational Facilities

PUBLIC PRIORITIES:

- **IP2:** Litter / dog fouling
- **IP3a:** Feeling of personal safety
- **IP3b:** Obstructions
- **IP3c:** Other
- **IP3d:** Lighting
- **IP3e:** Awareness of RoW
- **IP3f:** Surface
- **IP3g:** Signs / way-marking
- **N1:** Connections between RoW
- **N2:** Conflict with other users
- **N3:** Gates / stiles

Table 8.2: Improvement and Maintenance Priorities continued

RECOMMENDED ACTION	CONTRIBUTION TO...			TIMESCALES FOR DELIVERY	COSTS	FUNDING OPTIONS/ DELIVERY PARTNERS	METHODS / DELIVERY PARTNERS
	OBJECTIVES	THEMES	PUBLIC PRIORITIES				
MAINTENANCE & MANAGEMENT							
General maintenance of the network	2, 3	AA	IP2, IP3a, IP3b, IP3d, IP3f	Ongoing	£	LBB Revenue Budget	• Develop a network management programme to ensure the RoW network is well kept and that obstructions are minimised. Ensure that the programme provides an appropriate response to ad-hoc obstruction problems. • Continue to operate a cyclical fortnightly schedule of cleansing maintenance on all hard surface footpaths. • Ensure that appropriate methods of reporting problems on the network are in place and that officers take responsibility for addressing these issues. • Carry out an audit of the access network to identify problem areas are and where deficiencies exist. • Consider holding an annual consultation event with key user groups to identify problems with the network and where service improvements are most needed.
Removal of overgrown vegetation	2, 3	AA	IP3a, IP3b	Ongoing	££	LBB Revenue Budget	• Continue with programmed vegetation cut and clearance three times per annum on all public footpaths. • Ensure that vegetation is cut to cater for all users groups, i.e. cyclists and equestrians require more height than pedestrians.
Reduce and prevent litter / dog fouling	2, 3	AA	IP2, IP3a	Short	££	LBB Revenue Budget	• Put up signs at each end of RoW prohibiting fouling. • Improve reporting methods to increase potential of prosecution.
Coordinate RoWIP with Access Audit	1, 2, 5	AA	N1	Short	£	LBB Revenue Budget	• Ensure that actions identified in the RoWAIP address issues and deficiencies identified through the Access Audit.
Coordinate RoWAIP with Bexley Parks and Open Spaces Strategy	1, 2, 5	AA	N1	Short	£	LBB Revenue Budget	• Improve coordination between the RoWAIP and the Parks and Open Spaces Strategy to create a more integrated recreational and access network.
Coordinate RoWAIP with River Cray and River Shuttle Improvements	1, 2, 5	AA	N1	Short	£	LBB Revenue Budget	• Improve coordination between the RoWAIP and the River Cray and River Shuttle Improvements to ensure that projects contribute towards improving the wider access provision.
Coordinate RoWAIP with the Managing the Marshes Strategy	1, 2, 5	AA	N1	Short	£	LBB Revenue Budget	• Coordinate projects recognised in the Managing the Marshes strategy with actions identified in the RoWAIP to ensure that improvements contribute towards wider access objectives.
Coordinate the RoWAIP with Green Grid and Green Chain Improvements	1, 2, 5	AA	N1	Short	£	LBB Revenue Budget	• Coordinate Green Grid and Green Chain Improvements with the RoWAIP to increase access in the borough and create more recreational opportunities for walking.
IMPROVEMENTS							
Provision of lighting	3	AA, JS, LCF	IP3a, IP3d	Short / Ongoing	£££	Capital Funding	• Identify routes in need of improved lighting and investigate funding mechanisms for installing and maintaining additional lighting. Prioritise routes which have been identified through public concerns and focus on routes which provide access to local facilities, such as town centres and train stations.
Improve surface condition	2	AA	IP3f	Medium	£££	Funding Bids	• Improve the surfacing of routes in disrepair which are well used and that provide access to local facilities. • Identify well used routes which are connected to parks / open spaces and upgrade the surface condition to provide access for all, including those with mobility impairments.
Improve signing of RoW and permissive routes	4	AA, PIPE, LCF, LRF	IP3e, IP3g	Medium	££	LBB Revenue Budget	• Improve signing on the RoW network and permissive paths to increase the public's awareness of where routes are located.
Review use of stiles at each location.	2,	AA	IP3g	Short	£	LBB Revenue Budget	• Investigate the replacement of stiles at each location with suitable alternatives.
To improve access to existing open spaces	1,2,3,4,5	AA, HI, C&E, JS, LCF, LRF	All + N1	Short/ Ongoing	£	LB Revenue, S106 External funding	• Investigate and produce a prioritised list of projects to maximise access to existing public open spaces in order to offset existing deficiencies identified in the Bexley Open Space Strategy. Review list of priority projects to align with Local Development Framework, Open Space Strategy and emerging spatial policies.
NEW PROVISION							
Keep existing permissive paths open and create new routes	1, 2, 5	AA, LRF	N1	Medium	££	LBB Revenue Budget	• Work with landowners to encourage them to keep existing permissive paths open and to create new permissive routes which will positively contribute to the wider walking network. • review all permissive routes created by others and obtain copies of all permissive route agreements.
Create new links to connect to the existing regional strategic network and provide circular routes	1, 2, 5	AA, HI, C&E, LRF	N1	Short/ Medium	£££	Capital Funding	• Identify and publicise circular routes comprising of RoW, permissive paths, strategic routes and other suitable networks. Where feasible create new links to produce a more integrated network and connect more effectively with the SWN. • review routes identified as part of the consultation process and develop an action plan.
Investigate an improvement scheme for equestrians	2, 4	AA, C&E, LRF	N1	Long	£££	Capital Funding	• Implement a scheme to improve equestrian access in the borough and seek to create new links to create circular routes. • In particular, identify areas where access from stables to riding routes present problems.

KEY:

OBJECTIVES

1: Improve the contribution RoW can make to sustainable travel through better connectivity to other networks and recreational resources.

2: Improve access to the RoW network for all user groups to create a more socially inclusive network.

3: Improve the feeling of personal safety by creating a high quality, safe, secure, well lit network.

4: Improve information provision on the location, length, route and characteristics of RoW links and other walking / cycling / horse-riding routes to increase public awareness of available opportunities.

5: Improve the contribution that RoW can make to improving health and providing recreational opportunities.

THEMES:

AA: Access for All

PIPE: Publicity, Information, Provision and Education

HI: Health Initiatives

C&E: Cyclists and Equestrians

JS: Journeys to School

LCF: Links to Community Facilities

LRF: Links to Recreational Facilities

PUBLIC PRIORITIES:

IP2: Litter / dog fouling

IP3a: Feeling of personal safety

IP3b: Obstructions

IP3c: Other

IP3d: Lighting

IP3e: Awareness of RoW

IP3f: Surface

IP3g: Signs / way-marking

N1: Connections between RoW

N2: Conflict with other users

N3: Gates / stiles

Glossary

AA	Access for All
ALSF	Aggregates Levy Sustainability Fund
BLG	Big Lottery Fund
BOAT	Byways Open to All Traffic
BVPI	Best Value Performance Indicator
C&E	Cyclists and Equestrians
CSS	County Surveyors Society
DCLG	Department for Communities and Local Government
DDA	Disability Discrimination Act
DEFRA	Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs
ERDF	European Regional Development Fund
ESS	Environmental Stewardship Scheme
EWGS	English Woodland Grant Scheme
GLA	Greater London Authority
GWSEL	Groundwork South East London
HI	Health Initiatives
HLF	Heritage Lottery Fund
IP	Improvement Priority
IPROW	Institute of Public Rights of Way
JS	Journey to School
LA21	Local Agenda 21
LAA	Local Area Agreement
LCF	Links to Community Facilities
LCN / LCN+	London Cycle Network / London Cycle Network Plus
LGA	Local Government Association
LIP	Local Implementation Plan
LPA	Local Planning Authority
LOOP	London Outer Orbital Path
LRA	Least Restrictive Access
LRoW	Local Rights of Way
LSP	Local Strategic Partnership
LTCS	Landfill Tax Credit Scheme
LTP	Local Transport Plan
MP	Maintenance Priority
NRF	Neighbourhood Renewal Fund
ODPM	Office of the Deputy Prime Minister
PCT	Primary Care Trust
PIPE	Publicity, Information Provision and Education
PPG	Planning Policy Guidance
PPS	Planning Policy Statement
RoW	Rights of Way
RoWAIP	Rights of Way and Access Improvement Plan
RoWIP	Rights of Way Improvement Plan
RRoW	Rural Rights of Way
SINC	Site of Importance for Nature Conservation
SoA	Statement of Action
TfL	Transport for London
UDP	Unitary Development Plan
VM	Visitor Management

Bibliography

Bexley Council Best Value Performance Indicator 178

Bexley Council Developing a RoWAIP

Bexley Council Rights of Way Policy, information available from: rightsofway@bexley.gov.uk

Bexley Council RoWAP Consultation Report

Bexley Community Strategy 2003 – 2013

Bexley's Key Sustainability Issues

Bexley Local Implementation Plan 2005/06 – 2010/11

Bexley Parks Strategy

Bexley Unitary Development Plan 2004

By all reasonable means: Inclusive access to the outdoors for disabled people (2005), Countryside Agency

Capital Ring

Census 2001
www.statistics.gov.uk/

Countryside Agency Rights of Way Good Practice Guidance (2005)

Cray Riverway

Definitive Map and Statement, information available from rightsofway@bexley.gov.uk

DEFRA Rights of Way Improvement Plans – Statutory Guidance (2002)

Disability Discrimination Act 2005
www.opsi.gov.uk/Acts/acts2005/ukpga_20050013_en_1

East London Green Grid
www.thames-gateway.org.uk

Joydens Bridleway Group

London Cycle Network

London Loop

Making London a Walkable City – The Walking Plan for London (2004), Transport for London

Managing the Marshes: Vision and Statement (2006), London Borough of Bexley

National Cycle Network
www.sustrans.org.uk

Planning Policy Guidance Note 17

River Cray Riverside Access Study (2006), prepared for the London Borough of Bexley by Groundwork Southeast London

Section 60 of the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2002
www.opsi.gov.uk/acts/acts2000/ukpga_20000037_en_1

Shuttle Riverway

South East London Green Chain

Thames Path

The Mayor's Transport Strategy for London (2001)

The River Cray Environmental Regeneration Programme 2004 – 2006, London Borough of Bexley

The Shuttle: River Enhancement Opportunities, London Borough of Bexley

Walking and Cycling: An Action Plan, Department for Transport

Wildweb, Greater London Authority
wildweb.london.gov.uk/wildweb/Welcome.do

Walk London

Index of Maps, Tables and Figures

MAPS

Map 2.1: Green Grid Project Locations 28

Map 4.1: Availability of Horse-Riding Routes through Joydens Wood Area 32

Map 4.2: Route of the Braille Walk on Foots Cray Meadows 36

Map 5.1: Network Density 43

Map 5.2: Connectivity of Public RoW to Other Walking Routes 47

Map 5.3: Connectivity of Public RoW to Other Cycling Routes 49

Map 5.4: Connectivity of Public RoW to Primary Schools 51

Map 5.5: Connectivity of Public RoW to Secondary Schools 53

Map 5.6: Connectivity of Public RoW to Community Facilities 55

Map 5.7: Connectivity of Public RoW to Parks and Open Spaces 57

FIGURES

Figure 5.1: Number of Rights of Way by Length 40

Figure 5.2: Ward Level Health Data for Bexley 45

TABLES

Table 3.1: Proposed Improvements along the River Shuttle 24

Table 3.2: Green Grid Projects within the London Borough of Bexley 26

Table 3.3: Green Grid Projects across the South East London Green Chain Network 29

Table 5.1: Categories of Public RoW identified for inclusion in the RoWAIP 39

Table 5.2: Classification of the Public RoW Network 40

Table 5.3: Network Availability by Ward 41

Table 5.4: BVPI 178 Targets for Bexley 59

Table 6.1: Prioritisation Framework 61

Table 6.2: Improvement Priorities 61

Table 6.3: North Contract Improvements and New Provisions 64

Table 8.1: Potential Funding / Co-ordinated Working Opportunities 75

Table 8.2: Improvement and Maintenance Priorities 77

Table 8.2: Improvement and Maintenance Priorities continued 79

If you would like to know more about the services the Council provides, or would like either a translation of this document or the information in a different format, please call our Customer Contact Centre on 020 8303 7777 and press 0, quoting reference: 603019/06/09

LONDON BOROUGH OF BEXLEY

Listening to you, working for you

www.bexley.gov.uk