

Response from Braunston Parish Council to the consultation on the Draft NCC Rights of Way Improvement Plan 2018 - 2028

- The Draft Action Plan consists of background information, actions taken during the previous plan period and key issues for users and other stakeholders.
- The section titled 5.0 ROWIP 2018 – 2028 identifies issues and needs but does not state the actions that will be taken during the plan period to address those issues and needs. For example, p16 - 'There is a need to identify ways in developing more opportunities for alternative routes for horse riders.' There is no plan to address this issue.
- We would like to see action plans that address the issues and needs identified in the document.
- We would like to see targets in the plan to improve communication. The NCC website contains an on-line Register of Definitive Map Modification Order Applications which is significantly out of date even though a more thorough list showing applications up to 2017 is included in the Draft Action Plan. The on-line Register of Definitive Map Modification Order should be kept up to date.
- We would like to see action plans to develop the role of Path Wardens further. Circular and village linking walks were identified in the previous plan with details from the Kettering area. Path Wardens could submit such walks for their own parishes for inclusion in a countywide website to publicise the Rights of Way network and further its use in order to encourage healthy activity.
- We would like to see action plans to provide additional opportunities for circular walks. In the circumstance where a Right of Way emerges on to a road at a point where there is no continuing path, the plan could state that representations will be made to the relevant departments to include a return footpath in the grass verge where such a verge exists. For example, ED11 has links with other RoWs at its west end but to the east emerges onto Welton Road near no other path. There is scope to make a return path on the verges of the road as shown below.



- We would like to see an action plan that requires planning authorities, when considering planning applications, to consult with Northamptonshire Highways regarding the potential for any development to improve the connectivity of Rights of Way. This should include the creation of alternative pedestrian and cycling access points to/from residential developments that provide shorter routes that nudge users towards more sustainable and healthy transport choices. (West Northamptonshire Joint Core Strategy, Policy C5 Enhancing Local and Neighbourhood Connections. d) SECURING AND ENHANCING URBAN AND RURAL WALKING NETWORKS)
- We believe the Improvement Plan should have a section that encourages and assists Definitive Map Modification Order applications particularly prior to the 1st January 2026 deadline when, under the Countryside and Rights of Way Act, the Definitive Map is scheduled to be closed to claims for bridleways and footpaths which existed before 1949.

Guidelines concerning appropriate evidence to support such applications are sparse, and it's clear that the submission of plans and maps in support is a key element if any application is to have a reasonable prospect of success. It would be useful therefore if the Improvement Plan could offer some guidance and encouragement on the types of evidence including maps and plans which have been found useful in past cases e.g. 19th century and early 20th century Ordnance Survey Maps.

It would also be useful if the Improvement Plan committed to publishing the Northamptonshire Highways system of allocating points to prioritise DMMO applications.