

# Appendix H

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## Top Themes and Commentary

## Businesses – Top Themes

1. A majority of respondents describe the nature of their business as 'accommodation'.
2. Some businesses do not believe their business will benefit as a result of improvements to the Public Rights of Way network.
3. Better promotion of countryside access might affect their business.
4. 'Increased litter/dog fouling', 'not properly managed' and 'more vandalism' as negative aspects.
5. Improving awareness of countryside access as a beneficial improvement.
6. 'Information about routes' and 'car parking provision' are key factors to a more convenient and enjoyable experience.
7. 'Cleaning up dog fouling', 'clearly marked permissive paths', 'clearly marked Rights of Way' and 'Good range of footpath/circular routes' will improve visiting experiences.
8. 'Signing on paths/routes', Public transport to the countryside', 'maintenance of paths', 'keeping crime and vandalism to a minimum' and 'information about routes' are factors, which are in need of most improvement.
9. 'Enforcement of laws' and 'regular cleaning of cycle paths' as possible management improvements.

## Businesses – Commentary

1. Broad ranges of businesses are represented. However a greater proportion of businesses are involved in the accommodation sector.
2. Businesses surveyed predominantly employ between one and three full time employees, or in contrast are employers employing eleven or more individuals on a full time basis.
3. More businesses receive a percentage of their turnover from walkers and cyclists than from other countryside users groups.
4. Around half of businesses surveyed express awareness of the Definitive Map of Rights of Way. Of those aware of the Map, half have made enquiries about legally recorded Rights of Way. Notably, businesses perceive public awareness of the Public Rights of Way in Tyne and Wear to be low level.
5. Many businesses are unsure how improvements to the Public Rights of Way network will be of benefit to them. Those currently benefiting from the Rights of Way network see benefits largely materialising in the form of increased visitors and greater local knowledge.
6. There does appear to be a theme of businesses feeling that their experience of Public Rights of Way could be improved by improved maintenance and reduced vandalism. These factors apply equally to the adopted highway network
7. A high level of non response does not allow firm conclusions to be established with regard to what improvements businesses feel could be made.
8. Signing on paths/routes and information about routes are aspects of the Public Rights of Way network business respondents feel are in most need of improvement.
9. Businesses generally acknowledge better promotion of countryside access will affect their business in some way. They largely endorse information about routes and car parking provision as the main factors which would make a visit to Tyne and Wear's countryside more convenient and enjoyable.
10. More businesses suggest good guidebooks/public awareness above other factors as improvements to countryside access provision which would be of benefit to their business. However, there is no clear indication from businesses as to how increased use of the countryside could be of benefit to businesses surveyed.

## Elected Members – Top Themes

1. Elected Members are aware of the existing network and countryside access provision.
2. Half of the Elected Members who responded believe the network in their area does, with varying success, fit with the wider network of routes within the Borough.
3. 'Motorbikes' seen as the biggest barrier in their particular area.
4. 'Regular maintenance' and 'more police' can help remove barriers limiting usage of the network.
5. 'Maintenance', 'more information' and 'more funding' are contributions that can be made by local government at ward level to improve access for users.
6. 'Insufficient routes' seen as a particular gap in the provision of access for users.

## Elected Members – Commentary

1. The respondent group predominantly represent Gateshead Council (10 respondents), Sunderland City Council (7 respondents) and Newcastle City Council (7 respondents). In addition 4 respondents of Elected Members represent South Tyneside. North Tyneside Council is also represented but to a lesser extent.
2. There is a clear mix of opinion between Elected Members who perceive the public to be aware of the existing Rights of Way network and countryside access provision and those who feel the public are unaware.
3. Although Elected Members express a positive outlook towards the size and distribution of the network within their area in terms of the positioning of routes both designated and informal. Elected Members express mixed feelings towards the network in their area and how it fits with the wider network of routes within the Borough. Elected Members identify numerous particular policies and plans for their area, which they feel, could influence development of a future RoWIP for the Borough.
4. Elected Members highlight motorbikes and aspects of safety as being the biggest barriers to walkers, horse and cycle users with regard to the use of the Public Rights of Way network. Elected Members suggest regular maintenance and more police as two of the most viable methods of tackling these barriers and others established during analysis
5. Insufficient routes and poor maintenance are particular gaps in the provision of access identified by Elected Members.
6. Elected Members recognise 'maintenance', 'more funding' and 'more information' as contributions that could be made at ward level to improve access for users.
7. Elected Members have experienced conflicts between various combinations of users, landowners and the environment. It is clear the greatest levels of conflict exist between users and the environment. Encouragingly, less conflict is evident between users and landowners.

## Land Managers - Top Themes

1. Just over two thirds of land managers do have Rights of Way on their land. Five have permissive paths and one has permissive land access.
2. Three quarters of respondents have a significant part of the land they manage located near the urban fringe.
3. Land Managers believe awareness of Public Rights of Way in Tyne and Wear is high amongst local people and visitors.

4. Public Rights of Way on their land best meet the needs of 'walkers'.
5. Over one quarter of Land Managers experienced legal and illegal use of Public Rights of Way on their land.
6. Enjoyment can be increased by keeping crime and vandalism to a minimum
7. 'Keeping crime and vandalism to a minimum' and 'signing on paths/routes' as the aspects most in need of improvement.
8. 'Maintenance of pathways/hedges/grass' rated highly as an improvement to management of the network.

### Land Managers – Commentary

1. Land managers surveyed are predominantly landowners working land or are tenant farmers. The area of land managed by respondents is typically between 5-500Ha in size, and is principally managed through farming (livestock, arable or both arable and livestock). A significant part of the land managed is often located near the urban fringe.
2. Individual land managers mention various ways how increased use of the countryside might benefit their business. However, no common theme emerges from the responses given. Land Managers would like further advice on farmer maintenance agreements, changes to network and barriers/stiles/gates.
3. Generally land managers feel the Public Rights of Way on their land meet the overall needs of users well. However, this is largely in relation to walkers and riders, and to much lesser extent cyclists and those with disabilities.
4. Awareness of the Definitive Map of Public Rights of Way is high which may be as a result of land managers typically having Public Rights of Way, Permissive Paths and/or Permissive land access on their land. Many land managers have not made enquiries about legally recorded Public Rights of Way. Land managers do perceive public awareness of the Public Right of Way network in Tyne and Wear to be high.
5. Many land managers have recently experienced walkers and riders on their land and to lesser extent cyclists. Notably, fly tipping, dogs out of control and other illegal activities have also recently been experienced by around half of all land managers.
6. No clear trends are evident in relation to feature or management factors of the countryside or Public Rights of Way that land managers think could be improved.
7. Keeping levels of crime/vandalism to a minimum and clearly marked Public Rights of Way are the most frequently mentioned factors land managers feel will make their visit to the countryside more convenient or enjoyable. Notably, these factors are also highlighted by land managers as being the aspects of the Public Rights of Way network they feel are in most need of improvement.

### Tyne and Wear Joint Local Access Forum – Top Themes<sup>1</sup>

1. No clear single issue/factor is evident – members aspirations spread over a range of topics and depend on interests.
2. There is a strong need to address conflict of interests between user groups.
3. The interests of land managers are not understood by users and more work could be done in partnership with landowners especially on access development/legal responsibilities.
4. There is a demand and need for a safer integrated network and greater access for all users, especially greater provision for cycles on public transport.

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<sup>1</sup>Taken from the top ten surveys completed by Forum Members in 2004 and 2006.

5. Issues of anti social behaviour should be addressed enabling a safe network that is well utilised and available to all. Concern about the lack of enforcement of offences occurring on Public Rights of Way
6. Concerns about the physical condition of the network and maintenance limitations - especially vegetation control, structure condition and surface damage.
7. Users look for better connected provision beyond Public Rights of Way – not necessarily reflected in organisation of current public provision.
8. Signs and waymarks seen as a weakness. Better integration between urban and rural signing is desired. Better information can increase confidence in using and knowledge of the network
9. Bureaucratic limitations, such as, conflicting priorities within authorities are seen as a barrier in achieving an integrated network/partnership working.
10. Development control not seen as sufficiently protecting rights of ways and countryside access.

### Tyne and Wear Joint Local Access Forum – Commentary

1. A spread of aspirations from members, though not as widely spread as users.
2. While gates are more accessible than stiles, litigation is of concern to land mangers, for instance, livestock causing road accidents.
3. More input needed from other agencies, especially the Police, if members concerns are to be effectively addressed.
4. Legislation does not allow the flexibility desired at times, for example, Definitive Map issues.
5. Some responses seem more generic than Tyne and Wear specific, for example, references to land management techniques carried out.
6. Signage and information provision seen as a “high impact” solution in increasing awareness throughout Tyne and Wear
7. The overall aim and objectives of the RoWIP cannot be achieved without the tools for the job.

### Organisations – Top Themes

1. Perceive public and visitors to be ‘fairly aware’ of the Public Rights of Way network in Tyne and Wear.
2. The network for walkers and cyclists as either ‘very good’ or ‘fairly good’. Ratings for ‘riders’ and users ‘with disabilities’ are less positive.
3. Organisations could contribute to the RoWIP by ‘reporting any problems’, ‘providing advice on how to make rights of way/more information’ and ‘monitoring footpaths’.
4. Local issues might be overlooked through planning at a regional level.
5. Would like to see ‘improved routes’, ‘more routes added’ and ‘some routes upgraded’ as improvements to the Public Rights of Way/Access network in Tyne and Wear.
6. ‘Non-destructible signage/better signposts’ seen as the highest priority for immediate improvement to countryside access.
7. Conflict between users can best be resolved through ‘understanding each user’s needs’.
8. ‘A good range of footpaths/circular routes’ and ‘clearly marked Public Rights of Way’ will improve visiting experiences.
9. ‘Signing on paths/routes’ and ‘vegetation control’ are factors, which are in need of most improvement.

## Organisations – Commentary

1. The individuals responding to the survey largely represent organisations that are categorised as ‘user groups’, ‘charities/volunteers’ or ‘government bodies’. The areas these organisations are chiefly concerned with are predominantly ‘local areas’ and to a lesser extent ‘regional areas’.
2. It is not possible to draw clear trends in the way organisations perceive public awareness of the Public Rights of Way in Tyne and Wear due to mixed respondent feedback. Around half of the organisations represented are aware of the Definitive Map of Rights of Way. Of those who are aware of the Map more have made enquires about legally recorded Public Rights of Way than those who have not.
3. Organisations rate the network for ‘walkers’ most positively followed by ‘cyclists’. They rate the network less positively for ‘riders’ and least positively for ‘those with a disability’.
4. Although the use of various strategies as a means of removing conflict between different user groups is endorsed. A greater number of organisations suggest the understanding of each users needs as a solution to conflicts.
5. Respondents representing the various organisations outline numerous factors as ways to make visits to Tyne and Wear’s countryside more convenient and enjoyable. Themes relating to factors such as a range of well-maintained routes with clear signage and more information are particularly evident.
6. Notably, the themes which are outlined above as a means of making visits to the countryside more convenient and enjoyable are also outlined as aspects of the Public Rights of Way network Organisations believe are in most need of improvement.
7. ‘Improved routes’, ‘more routes’ and ‘up-grading some routes’ are the main changes Organisations would like to see take place to improve Right of Way/access in Tyne and Wear. Organisations highlight ‘non-destructible signage/better signage’ and ‘improved access/routes’ as the highest priorities for improving countryside access in Tyne and Wear.
8. Notably, it is not possible to draw firm conclusions in respect of how well organisations believe local plans and partnerships address countryside issues. However, it is clear organisations do believe local issues might be overlooked if Public Rights of Way were planned at a Regional level. Organisations believe ‘reporting a problem’, ‘advise on how to make Public Rights of Way/more information’ and ‘monitoring footpaths’ are the main areas where they themselves can contribute to the RoWIP.
9. Factors relating to signage improvements are highlighted above other aspects of the Tyne and Wear countryside and its Public Rights of Way as something organisations would like to see being done differently

## Users – Top Themes

1. ‘Lack of adequate signage’ is the most frequently mentioned aspect, which discourages individuals from using Public Rights of Way or other recreational routes in Tyne and Wear.
2. Would like to visit ‘country parks/public open spaces’, ‘woods/forests’ and ‘Rights of Way’.
3. Public Rights of Way utilised mainly for the purpose of ‘walking’.
4. ‘Car’ was the most popular form of transport to access countryside/open spaces. ‘Bus’ and ‘Metro’ were 4th and 5th respectively.
5. Once in the countryside/public open space ‘walking’ was the most popular activity.
6. ‘A good range of footpaths/circular routes’ and ‘clearly marked Public Rights of Way’ will improve visiting experiences.

7. 'Signing on paths/routes', 'vegetation control', 'keeping crime and vandalism to a minimum', 'cleaning up dog fouling' and 'maintenance of paths' are factors, which are in need of most improvement.
8. Local knowledge was the greatest source of information.
9. 'Allows people to access the countryside safely/recreational access/freedom of choice' was seen as the most positive aspect of the countryside and the Public Rights of Way network.
10. 'Removal of dumped rubbish/fly tipping/glass/dog fouling/horse fouling' as things they would either not like to see or would like to be seen being done differently above all other aspects considered.
11. Peoples' use and enjoyment of the countryside in Tyne and Wear could be improved by 'promoting/publicising/advertising on a wider scale'.
12. The top 15 locally promoted routes most used – in whole or part (1459 respondents).

Route	Number of Respondents
Derwent Walk (Gateshead) .....	1094 (75%)
Coastal Footpath (South Tyneside) .....	817 (56%)
Keelmans Way (Gateshead).....	715 (49%)
Tanfield Railway Path (Gateshead).....	700 (48%)
Hadrian's Wall Path National Trail (Newcastle) .....	686 (47%)
Sea to Sea Route – C2C (Gateshead, Newcastle, North Tyneside, South Tyneside, Sunderland).....	584 (40%)
Waggonway Network (North Tyneside) .....	540 (37%)
Marsden Circular (South Tyneside).....	481 (33%)
River Wear Trail (Sunderland).....	467 (32%)
Hadrian's Cycleway – NCN72 (Newcastle) .....	423 (29%)
Reivers Route – RCR10 (Newcastle, North Tyneside).....	336 (23%)
Bowes Railway Path – RCR11 (Gateshead, South Tyneside, Sunderland).....	306 (21%)
National Cycle Route 1 – NCN1 (North Tyneside, South Tyneside, Sunderland).....	262 (18%)
River Don Footpath (South Shields) .....	248 (17%)
Three Rivers Cycle Route (Gateshead, Newcastle, North Tyneside, South Tyneside, Sunderland).....	233 (16%)

## Users – Commentary

1. The user respondent group largely consists of male and females ages 35 years and over. These individuals are predominantly White-British and do not have a disability. They are likely to be a member of a club/organisation, including to a greater extent than others, Walking clubs/Associations and The National Trust. Therefore, it can be seen that the respondents to this survey are quite different to the general population in that they are predominantly older, white British and do not have a disability (particularly given the older age bracket that most respondents fall into).
2. A broad range of countryside attractions are highlighted by a large number of users as places they would like to visit in Tyne and Wear. Particular interest surrounds Country parks/Public open spaces, woods/forests and Rights of Way. Users feel amongst other positive aspects the countryside and Public Rights of Way network in Tyne and Wear allows people to access the countryside safely, have recreational access and freedom of choice.

3. Users refer to various sources of information in order to gain information about where they can go. 'Local knowledge', 'books/leaflets' and 'Ordnance Survey Maps' are the most heavily consulted sources of information.
4. Public Rights of Way are used for various reasons. Use is most often associated with walking, viewing the landscape and cycling.
5. Users frequently visit the countryside or public open spaces in Tyne and Wear. The journey they make to the countryside or open space they are visiting is typically made by Car or via Public Transport. Walking and Cycling are also modes of transport, which are favoured by the user group. When in the countryside or open space users predominantly travel on foot or cycle. The distance travelled on Public Rights of Way is generally between 2-10 miles.
6. User satisfaction in relation to Public Rights of Way is not conclusive as a result of respondent tendency to provide a neutral response. However, highest satisfaction expressed is with regard to 'the condition of stile and gates', 'the existing Right of Way network' and the 'number of routes close to users' homes'.
7. Users express greatest dissatisfaction with factors relating to signage/route direction.
8. Users are discouraged from using Public Rights of Way or other recreational routes in Tyne and Wear by 'a lack of adequate signage', 'a lack of time' and 'a lack of information'. (A lack of secure parking and a concern for personal safety are also emerging trends).
9. It is clear from findings a good range of routes, which are clearly marked and maintained are factors, which might make visits by users more convenient and enjoyable. These areas are highlighted as those most in need of improvement.