



**RIGHTS OF WAY IMPROVEMENT PLAN FUNDING PROGRAMME (RFP)
2015-16**

END OF YEAR OUTPUTS REPORT.

This report contains the following sections:

Section	Page
1. Background	3
2. Key Achievements	3
3. Financial Overview	4
4. Actions Delivered: Types of Work Carried Out	7
5. Who is Intended to Benefit from Actions	15
6. Funding for Groups that make disproportionately low use of the countryside.	17
Appendix 1 - List of Funding Conditions	19

Executive Summary

Local highway authorities in Wales are required to produce statutory Rights of Way Improvement Plans (ROWIPs) under Section 60 of the Countryside and Rights of Way 2000.

They are a 10 year prioritised plan for the improvement of the local rights of way network for all users – walkers, cyclists, horse-riders, off road users as well as people with sight and mobility problems.

Welsh Government has made funds available for the implementation of these ROWIPs from 2008-2016 using a funding formula to all 22 Welsh local authorities and 2 National Park Authorities. The programme entitled “Right of Way Improvement Plan Funding Programme (RFP)” has been administered by Natural Resources Wales (and formerly the Countryside Council for Wales) for the entire funding period.

The funding has been used to carry out a wide and varied number of actions to improve the rights of way network in Wales and benefit all sectors of society.

All information gathered in this report has come directly from the local authorities.

Key points of this report are:

- Practical improvements on the ground remain the most funded action;
- Projects delivered intended to benefit more than one group;
- Specific projects have been delivered to encourage access for all.

1. BACKGROUND

Local highway authorities in Wales are required to produce statutory Rights of Way Improvement Plans (ROWIPs) under Section 60 of the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000. They are intended to cover a 10 year period and provide a prioritised plan for the improvement of the local rights of way network for all users – walkers, cyclists, horse-riders, off road users as well as people with sight and mobility problems.

The Welsh Government (WG) allocated £1.7 million annually in capital monies for the implementation of ROWIPs in 2008/9, 2009/10, 2010/11. In 2011/12 and 2012/13 the allocation was £1.4 million. In 2013/14 the funding was £1 million with the same amount being allocated in 2014/15 and 2015-16. This brings the total funding to date to £10.9million.

The Countryside Council for Wales was tasked with establishing the ROWIP Funding Programme (RFP) and administering and managing the funding to local authorities. This role was taken on by Natural Resources Wales on April 1st 2013.

This paper provides information collated directly from all 24 funded authorities¹ (All 22 local authorities, Brecon Beacons National Park and Pembrokeshire Coast National Park Authorities) about the work **delivered** in 2015-2016, the eighth year of the RFP. Similarly, financial and output information in this report relates to all 24 authorities receiving funding. Where appropriate 2014/15 ROWIP data has been included for comparison.

During the 8 year funding period, there have been a number of conditions which local authorities have to adhere to. In 2015-2016 these were amended by Welsh Government in order to simplify and improve them. For the purposes of reporting, it should be noted that whilst there was no longer a requirement to carry out a specific project for what had been defined as ‘low use groups: groups that make disproportionately low use of the countryside’ authorities have reported on projects that have taken place, and these are included as part of the reporting below. For more details about the conditions for 2015-2016, please see Appendix 1.

2. KEY ACHIEVEMENTS

Key achievements of the funding in 2015-2016 are:

a) **Practical improvements on the ground:**

76% of the funding was used to improve existing access on the ground, following the trend from previous years that local authorities are mostly utilising ROWIP funding for practical works on the ground. This work has contributed to increasing the proportion of the network that is easy to use. Again, works include improving path furniture such as bridges, gates, installing benches at key view points and surface improvements e.g. improving path drainage.

b) **Improvements that benefit more than one group - including walkers, cyclists and horse-riders:**

Projects that had a “general benefit to all users” and projects that were “multi-benefit” (benefiting more than one user type) together accounted for 52% of the total value of projects and 40% of the total number of projects funded this year. This shows that RFP delivers actions for many different activities and ranges of ability. This year “multi-benefit including Low User

¹ 23 ROWIPs cover the whole of Wales. Since 2009-2010, Pembrokeshire Coast National Park Authority who have a joint ROWIP with Pembrokeshire County Council received funding direct from CCW and therefore reported on work delivered separately from the Council.

Groups” was the category noted for the most actions (increasing to 50% of the funding value compared with 48% in 2014/15). The nature of these projects is to be more specifically targeted to meeting people’s needs.

The range of beneficiaries catered for by these various projects is wide: for example,

- 34% of multi-benefit projects catered for the group of users “walkers, cyclists and horse-riders”;
- 5% of multi benefit projects catered for ‘low use’ groups including disabled users, people with mobility problems, people with pushchairs and Community First areas;
- Walkers accounted for 50% of the value of actions of who would benefit from the actions carried out.

The rest of these projects benefited a whole range of users in different combinations e.g. “walkers, People with limited mobility”, or “Walkers, Cyclists, Horse-riders, Carriage Drivers, Vehicle Users”. There were many different combinations of users.

c) Improvements specifically to make outdoor access easier for people who find it difficult:

As mentioned above, whilst there was no requirement to deliver a specific project for ‘low use groups’ rather, in all ‘on the ground’ improvement work on rights of way, the access authorities should comply with the principles of least restrictive access and also aim to comply, wherever possible, with the statutory guidance issued by the national Assembly under Section 69 of the CROW Act and with NRW’s associated guidance ‘By All Reasonable Means’ Even so, authorities reported 16 specific actions aimed at making access easier for groups that make disproportionately low use of the countryside, the funding for these specific projects totalled £90,217

d) Status of routes and improved infrastructure.

A further 907km of the rights of way network is now easier to use following improvements which the RFP and other funding sources contributed in 2015-16.

The majority of the routes improved in 2015-2016 were either footpaths or bridleways but all types of route have seen some improvement.

Information about the infrastructure that was installed and removed indicates that the least restrictive access condition is being implemented to make the network become increasingly accessible, year on year.

3. FINANCIAL OVERVIEW

The Land, Nature and Forestry Division of WG, were, once again, successful in securing a further year’s funding of the RFP in 2015-2016 with a budget of £1million. NRW worked to manage the budget to ensure as much spend within the project as possible and a total spend of £999,764 (99.98% budget spend) was achieved.

The WG funding was allocated on the basis of an agreed funding formula, which comprised a baseline amount of £25,000 for each authority with the additional funding being allocated on a formula basis. Within each authority the formula was calculated on the basis of a weighting of 65% on the length of PROW (including rights of way in the coastal zone), 25% on usual population (updated using Census 2011 data) and 10% on the area of access land.

This report provides information about the £1million provided by WG for the RFP. In addition, local authorities invested their own funding and accessed other sources of funding. Table 1 below shows the total amount of money spent on ROWIP actions over and above the WG funding, and compares these figures with 2014/15 expenditure.

Table 1: Overall funding for RFP actions in 2015-2016

Organisation	Funding Amount (£) 2015/16	Funding Amount (£) 2014/15
WG funding	1,000,000	1,000,000
LA spend	97,248	150,366
Other sources of funding*	52,538	173,134
Total RFP (£)	£1,149,786	£1,323,500

LA Spend

This refers to the amount of money that the authorities have contributed from their own funds over and above their RFP allocation for 2015-16 (but excluding staff costs).

*Other sources of funding:

Authorities were also asked to report on other sources of funding which they were able to draw on in addition to the two main sources for ROWIP actions.

Other sources of funding amounted to £52,538 and included:

- Own Revenue budget;
- Cardiff walking for Health;
- Council communications Dept. & Harbour Authority;
- Holiday Pathways Funding;
- Coastal Communities Fund.

Some caution should be exercised in comparison with previous years (due to the inclusion by some authorities of authorities own funding under the 'Other Sources of Funding' category) LA spend on projects reported under the RFP has reduced since 2013/14 (£426,207) but is at a similar level to 2012/13 (then £198,969). In 2015-16 it has reduced again to £97,248.

It is clear that 'other sources of funding' has decreased significantly since 2012/13 (then £601,437), but is higher than 2013/14 (then £116,868). We understand that the reduction in 'other sources of funding' was due to a number of external funding agreements coming to an end in 2012/13, which may also explain the increase in LA spend where this funding was no longer required to match fund elsewhere. An overall reduction in contributions from elsewhere reflects the current economic climate and overall reduction in budgets and staff in local authorities.

Management of Funding:

As in previous years, the authorities had to ensure that 40% of funding was claimed by the second claim deadline (December 2015) to assist budget management and help us ensure that all the money is utilised in year. All authorities met this requirement and 54% of the whole RFP budget was claimed by December 2015, significantly above the 40% condition.

All other claims were submitted on time with the appropriate documentation. Table 2 below shows the funding offers for 2015-2016. All authorities managed their budgets well so that there was no need for reallocation of funding between authorities.

Table 2: Funding offers and total amount claimed 2015-2016

Authority	Funding Offer (£)	Funding Amendments	Total claimed (£)
Anglesey	33,585	0	33,585
Blaenau Gwent	26,786	0	26,786
Brecon Beacons	49,918	0	49,918
Bridgend	32,965	0	32,965
Caerphilly	37,480	0	37,480
Cardiff	37,103	0	37,101
Carmarthenshire	54,607	0	54,607
Ceredigion	53,521	0	53,521
Conwy	47,410	0	47,177
Denbighshire	40,022	0	40,022
Flintshire	37,699	0	37,699
Gwynedd	76,594	0	76,594
Merthyr Tydfil	23,931	0	23,931
Monmouthshire	41,304	0	41,304
Neath Port Talbot	35,056	0	35,056
Newport	29,682	0	29,682
Pembrokeshire County Council	23,864	0	23,864
Pembrokeshire Coast National Park Authority	23,864	0	23,865
Powys	122,668	0	122,668
Rhondda Cynon Taff	39,519	0	39,519
Swansea	37,286	0	37,286
Torfaen	28,334	0	28,334
Vale of Glamorgan	31,136	0	31,136
Wrexham	35,666	0	35,664
Total (£)	£1,000,000	0	£999,764

4. ACTIONS DELIVERED: TYPES OF WORK CARRIED OUT

OVERVIEW

The range of work that can be undertaken to implement ROWIPs is broad. Authorities grouped their actions according to agreed 'Programme Action Types'. Analysis of the number and value of these different action groups provides information about the type of work authorities carried out.

Actions were grouped as follows:

- a) **Improve existing linear access:** physical improvements to routes e.g. improving the surface of paths, installing or repairing stiles, gates and other path furniture.
- b) **Create new linear access:** physical creation of new routes.
- c) **Improve other access opportunities:** for example, improvements to access to access land/other natural green space.
- d) **Improve information and promotion about linear access:** for example signage and way-marking, on site (e.g. interpretation panels), off site (e.g. leaflets), website, events, and marketing.
- e) **Improve systems/processes for linear access management:** for example systems for maintenance, enforcement, monitoring, reporting.
- f) **Improve records/databases for linear access management:** for example bringing the definitive map up to date, digitising the definitive map, or developing/improving electronic PROW management system.
- g) **Deliver additional analysis of linear access:** for example additional survey/analysis of access provision or additional analysis of access use.
- h) **Other action type:** where none of the above action types were applicable.

Chart 1 and **Table 3** below show the breakdown of the value actions (£) that were delivered in 2015-16, and compares these to 2014-15 values. A detailed breakdown of who benefited from these actions is provided further on in the report.

Chart 1

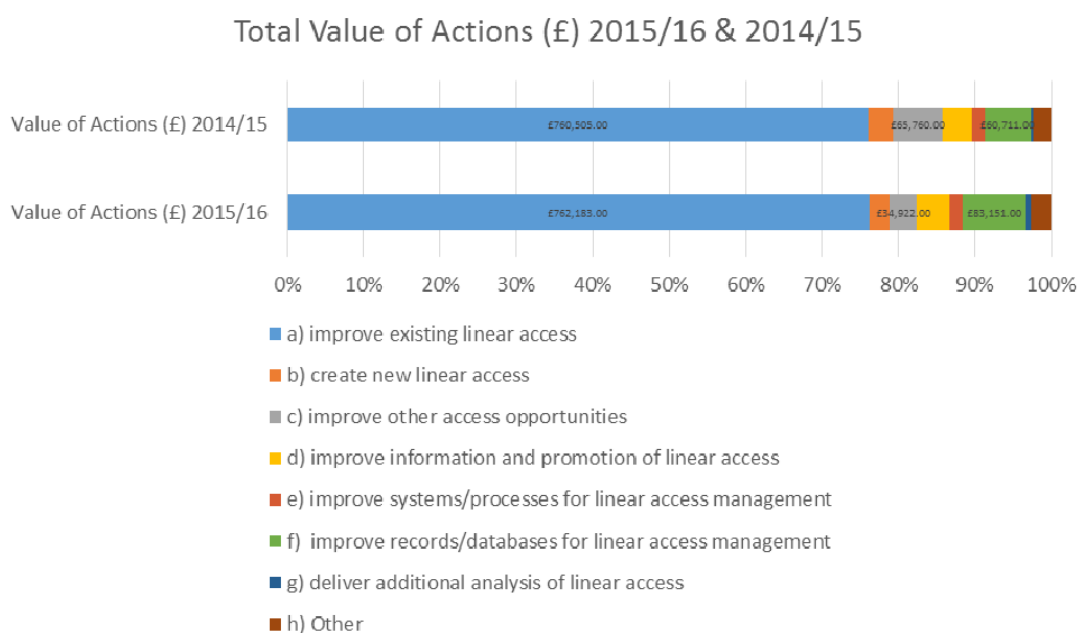


Table 3: Breakdown of Action Type and Value (including low use group) 2015 - 2016

Programme Action Type	Number of Actions 2015/16	Value of Actions (£) 2015/16	Value of actions (£) as a % of allocation 2015/16	Number of Actions 2014/15	Value of Actions (£) 2014/15	Value of actions (£) as a % of allocation 2014/15
a) improve existing linear access	127	762,183.00	76.24	132	760,505.00	76.06
b) create new linear access	12	26,492.00	2.65	11	31,975.00	3.20
c) improve other access opportunities	6	34,922.00	3.49	12	65,760.00	6.58
d) improve information and promotion of linear access	16	43,245.00	4.33	17	37,950.00	3.80
e) improve systems/processes for linear access management	4	16,920.00	1.69	3	16,098.00	1.61
f) improve records/databases for linear access management	8	83,151.00	8.32	7	60,711.00	6.07
g) deliver additional analysis of linear access	3	6,843.00	0.68	1	3,733.00	0.37
h) Other	9	26,008.00	2.60	5	23,182.00	2.32
Total	185	£999,764.00	100	188	£999,914.00	100

In 2015-2016, 76% of the projects were for improving existing linear access. This follows the trend from previous years that the majority of the RFP allocation is for practical works on the ground. Where authorities select more than one Action Type, these are classed as h) 'Other' see page 13 for further details.

OUTPUTS AND DETAIL

Considering each of these action types in turn, we can look in more detail at the characteristics of the work delivered. Tables 4 to 14 provide further breakdown of the above action types.

Improving existing linear access and creating new linear access (actions types a and b).

£762,183 has been spent on improving existing linear access and the works completed are very similar to previous years such as:

- Carry out surface improvement works to enable footpath to be upgraded to bridleway;
- Access improvements to the footpath to include changing stiles for kissing gates and a new sleeper bridge;
- Removal of stiles and barriers impeding access for users by the removal in particular of stiles, along both promoted routes and routes of local significance;
- Self-closing gates to replace stiles, signage and way marking;
- Improving access to multi user routes allowing people with mobility issues to access routes more easily for example;
- Green Dog Walker - provide information to dog walkers using public access.

There were 12 project that created new linear access, examples of these include:

- Creation, by Order, of Small link Path between Fp 48 & Bw 46 Cornelly (Grid Ref. SS 79738002 - SS 79698002);
- Coastal zone - cycle path (S26 Order confirmed March 15) at Ty Moelwyn, Porthmadog , SH5720 3848 - SH5725 3840 , Prepare design, engineering drawings and consents for the construction of a multi user route - walkers, wheelchair use, cyclists.

Table 4 below shows the route lengths improved to meet the Wales benchmark indicator 'Easy to Use' standards², and compares these with 2014/15 kilometres of improvements . Authorities were asked to report on the total length of route improved on the basis of links - the definition being that a PROW link begins and ends where it meets:

- a junction with another PROW;
- a metalled road; and
- a dead end.

This was in order to show the network length that was now *easy to use* by the public as a result of improvements, and not just the length of route which had been physically worked on. This total length **should not** be solely attributed to works and funding under the RFP. Rather, RFP has contributed to this, together with other organisations and funding sources (primarily local authorities themselves).

	Km of network 'easy to use' 2015/16	Km of network 'easy to use' 2014/15
Footpath	634	475
Cycle track	28	24
Bridleway	181	216
Restricted Byways	36	25
Byway Open to All Traffic	28	54
Total	907 Km	794 Km

Table 4: Status and Length of Route which RFP has helped make 'Easy to Use' during 2015-2016 & 2014-2015 (including contributions from other sources of funding).

Table 4 (above) shows that the footpaths are by far the most common type of route to be improved on, which reflects the fact that the Welsh network is made up mainly of footpaths (79%)³. Analysis of this information shows that these improved routes are distributed across Wales.

Table 5 and 6 provide information about work on infrastructure under RFP. In line with previous years, more gates have been installed/replaced than stiles, and more stiles have been removed. This indicates that authorities are adhering to the condition to apply the least restrictive access approach; which enables as many people as possible to use the routes being improved.

² Previously National Performance Indicator, the indicator itself is no longer collected by all authorities and the results are no longer publicly available.

³ CCW Policy Research Report No. 03/05 - Wales Rights of Way Condition Survey 2002

Other infrastructure installed includes:

New/Replacement Infrastructure	No of item 2015/16	No of item 2014/15
Stiles	62	84
Gates	476	532
Bridges	59	101
Fingerposts	308	272
Waymark posts	346	294
Total	1,251	1,283

Table 5: Infrastructure installed new or replaced under RFP 2015-2016.

Removed Infrastructure	No of item 2015/16	No of item 2014/15
Stiles	96	97
Gates	16	31
Total	112	128

Table 6: Infrastructure removed under RFP 2015-2016.

Actions forming part of Regional Trail/linking to a National Trail or Wales Coast Path.

Authorities were asked to state where action types a) and b) included work on a regional trail, or on links to a National trail or the Wales Coast Path.

Of the £788,675 spent on linear access, the table below shows that 41% of this (£325,735) was used on routes that are in some way promoted and highlights the importance which authorities place maintaining and enhancing their flagship routes.

Table 7: Actions forming part of regional trail/linking to a National Trail or Wales Coast Path in 2015-2016

Type of Trail	No of Actions 2015/16	Value of Actions (£) 2015/16	Value (£) as a % of total 2015/16	No of Actions 2014/15	Value of Actions (£) 2014/15	Value (£) as a % of total 2014/15
Regional Trail	14	70,110	22	13	73,713	25
Wales Coast Path	7	27,147	8	10	70,789	24
National Trail	4	30,085	9	3	37,225	12
Other	30	198,393	61	22	116,698	39
Total	55	£325,735	100%	48	£298,425	100%

Most 'other' projects were locally promoted and community trails in addition, examples of types of projects included under the 'other' category included:

- Links to local circular routes;
- The PROWS worked on will link to WCP Regional Trails and Promoted Routes;
- Links to National Trail.

Action type c) improve other access opportunities.

In addition to local rights of way, ROWIPs should contain information about other types of access in an authority area. The CCW Wales ROWIP Review⁴ showed that 4% of all ROWIP Actions relate to access land designated under CROW and 6% to other types of access opportunities. These types of actions are noted under the RFP in category c) improve other access opportunities. Table 8 below shows what other types of access opportunities were improved in 2015-2016 to which 3.5% of the overall funding was allocated to improve other access, reflecting the emphasis placed on linear access in the ROWIPs themselves.

Table 8: Types of Access improved under category c) improve other access opportunities 2015-2016

Type of Access	No of Actions 2015/16	Value of Actions (£) 2015/16	Value (£) as a % of total 2015/16	No of Actions 2014/15	Value of Actions (£) 2014/15	Value (£) as a % of total 2014/15
Natural Green Space	5	29,500	84	2	2,638	4
PROW Land	0	0	0	1	0	0
Other	1	5,422	16	9	63,122	96
Total	6	£34,922	100%	12	£65760	100%

Of the 1 'other' project included 'Improve signage and way marking on PROW and Access network'.

Action type d) improving information and promotion about linear access.

This action type ranked second (in terms of number of actions) and accounted for 4.3% of the overall monetary allocation this year. This action type has been consistently a popular use of the funding over the lifetime of the programme. The CCW Wales ROWIP Review showed that 'promotion off site' was the second most common intended action type after 'management'. This is a type of action can be delivered at a relatively low cost and is also essential to encourage greater participation in outdoor recreation as promoting routes assures users that these routes are open and available

The table below shows the breakdown of the types of information and promotion that were funded.

Table 9: Action type d) improving information and promotion about linear access 2015-2016

Type of information	No of Actions 2015/16	Value of Actions (£) 2015/16	Value (£) as a % of total 2015/16	No of Actions 2014/15	Value of Actions (£) 2014/15	Value (£) as a % of total 2014/15
Off Site	7	12,500	29	8	7,376	19
Signage & Waymarking	2	6,481	15	1	2,472	7
Events	2	7,147	17	1	3,485	9
On site	0	0	0	1	3,000	8
Website	1	5,408	13	0	0	0
Other Info and	4	11,709	27	6	21,617	57

⁴ CCW Policy Research Report No. 08/26. Evison, Taylor and Coleman. (2009) *Wales ROWIP Review*.

Promotion Initiatives						
Total	16	£43,245	100%	17	£37,950	100%

Offsite types of information e.g. leaflets are still a popular way of getting information out into the public domain. They are relatively inexpensive to produce and are transportable to different places e.g. country fairs, tourist information centres, handed out at open days and other promotional events. It is also easy to transfer the paper copy into a digital version for the internet which can be updated to reflect any changes. This means that local authorities can promote routes to a technology savvy audience as well as those who prefer something tangible in their hand.

Events to design and promote the local rights of way network play an important role in trying to encourage participation in outdoor recreation. They provide a way to interact with new and existing users by talking and getting to know what users want and expect from their local rights of way network. Events also provide an ideal opportunity to promote what is currently out there to enjoy.

Table 10: Action type e) improving systems/processes for linear access management 2015-2016

Proper and informed management of linear access is crucial to having a well maintained rights of way network. The table below shows the types of work being delivered under RFP that relate to systems and processes for improved management.

Type of Action	No of Actions 2015/16	Value of Actions (£) 2015/16	Value (£) as a % of total 2015/16	No of Actions 2014/15	Value of Actions (£) 2014/15	Value (£) as a % of total 2014/15
Reporting	1	3,388	20	0	0	0
Monitoring	1	4,000	24	0	0	0
Maintenance	0	0	0	3	16,098	100
Other	2	9,531	56	0	0	0
Total	4	£16,920	100%	3	£16,098	100%

Projects include:

- Developing Web accessibility for CAMS and In field data capture of maintenance issues;
- Continue to use and review appropriate information notices along public rights of way;
- Knowledge Hub Training.

Table 11: Action type f) improving records/databases for linear access management 2015-2016

Type of Action	No of Actions 2015/16	Value of Actions (£) 2015/16	Value (£) as a % of total 2015/16	No of Actions 2014/15	Value of Actions (£) 2014/15	Value (£) as a % of total 2014/15
Bringing the definitive map together	6	45,915	55	4	44,712	74
Developing / Improving electronic PROW mgmt.	0	0	0	1	1,425	2

system						
Digitising the Definitive Map	1	13,256	16	1	10,579	17
Other	1	23,980	29	1	3,945	7
Total	8	£83,151	100%	7	£60,661	100%

Work on the Definitive Map still featured in 2015-2016, with a consistent level of input in bringing the Definitive Map up to date during the 8 year funding period which shows that this action type continues to underpin rights of way management and is an ongoing feature of ROWIPs.

There was 1 fixed term appointment working on Definitive Map work which was fully funded by the RFP. The value of the project included all project costs, not just costs solely related to the employment of staff.

Other Project in this table included

- To identify suitable locations, purchase and install monitoring equipment and if possible training for volunteers to maintain it

Table 12: Action type g) delivering additional analysis of linear access 2015-2016

Type of analysis	No of Actions 2015/16	Value of Actions (£) 2015/16	Value (£) as a % of total 2015/16	No of Actions 2014/15	Value of Actions (£) 2014/15	Value (£) as a % of total 2014/15
Additional survey/analysis of access provision	3	6,843	100	1	3,733	100
Total	3	£6,843	100%	1	£3,733	100%

This action was to further develop the volunteer network in surveying and basic maintenance.

Table 13: Action type h) other 2015-2016

	No of Actions 2015/16	Value of Actions (£) 2015/16	Value as a % of total 2015/16	No of Actions 2014/15	Value of Actions (£) 2014/15	Value (£) as a % of total 2014/15
Other	9	26,008	100%	5	23,182	100%
Total	9	26,008	100%	5	23,182	100%

Actions identified as "Other" contained more than one type of action e.g. some projects had an element of action type a) improving linear access as well as action type d) improve information and promotion of linear access. It was therefore difficult to pigeon hole that particular action within the existing criteria for action types.

Examples of these projects are:

- ‘Officer Support to provide administration support to a new volunteer recruitment programme with a view to provide training to enable them to undertake condition surveys of prows across the local authority area. The information will be then entered into the CAMS data base by volunteers with officer support;
- ‘Access improvements to prows that traverse this site to include installation of steps, installation of kissing gates installation of sleeper footbridge;
- Increasing Bridleway provision as part of the realignment/reinstatement of RoW;
- Increasing Bridleway provision as part of the realignment/reinstatement of RoW and following request from users/Community Council.

Table 14: Actions which included a Biodiversity element 2015-2016

There were a variety of projects that assisted public understanding, or conservation, of local biodiversity. Whilst for 2015-2016 there was no requirement for every authority to carry out a specific project (rather a general requirement to adhere to conservation related duties) where authorities did report about such projects this has been included in analysis.

Type of Biodiversity action	No of Actions 2015/16	Value of Actions (£)2015/16	Value (£) as a % of total 2015/16	No of Actions 2014/15	Value of Actions (£) 2014/15	Value (£) as a % of total 2014/15
Biodiversity Projects	32	165,154	100	32	£200,724	100
Total	32	£165,154	100%	32	£200,724	100%

‘Biodiversity projects’ refers to actions that improve access and benefits nature conservation/biodiversity as well.

These actions have a public engagement element to them in that members of the public are learning about local biodiversity on the routes they use. This can be achieved in the form of interpretation boards at key points along a route, or at access points to a local nature reserve or leaflets about local flora and fauna given out at county fairs or in schools.

Some of these biodiversity actions are very similar to action type d) Improve information and promotion about linear access, where works delivered under this action type include interpretation panels, leaflets and events.

Some examples are

- Improving access to a site of Importance for nature conservation cross access land and managing the routes over the land to benefit biodiversity and informal enjoyment of the hillside;
- Biodiversity Leaflet.

5 WHO IS INTENDED TO BENEFIT FROM ACTIONS

Authorities were asked to show the intended beneficiary of each action.

Table 15: below shows the main beneficiaries of the RFP – this includes all the actions funded by RFP and all the beneficiaries 2015-2016 (see also Chart 2 below)

Beneficiaries	Number of Actions 2015/16	Value of Actions (£) 2015/16	Value (£) as a % of total 2015/16	Number of Actions 2014/15	Value of Actions (£) 2014/15	Value (£) as a % of total 2014/15
Multi - benefit (including Low Use Groups)	70	498,733	50	68	478,116	48
Walkers	93	376,795	38	89	329,356	33
Disabled Users and people with Mobility Problems	10	79,699	8	10	69,520	7
Horseriders	5	22,667	2.3	2	7,465	0.7
General benefit to all users	5	15,890	2	8	52,786	5
Others	1	4,897	0.5	5	35,455	4
Walkers/ Landowners	1	1,084	0.1			
Vehicular Users	0	0	0	1	2,472	0.2
Young People, Families, Walkers, disabled users, people with mobility problems	0	0	0	2	14,249	1
Other groups that make low use of countryside	0	0	0	3	10,495	1
Total	185	£999,765	100%	188	£999,914	100%

In this year's programme, 3% of the actions were of "general benefit all users" and 38% were "multi benefit" i.e. benefitted more than one group of users. Together, these projects accounted for 52% of the total value of funds in this year.

Here as in the Wales ROWIP Review (2009) and previous years, the largest single user group expected to benefit from actions are walkers which reflects the way in which footpaths make up the majority of the rights of way network in Wales. Also it is not possible for other user groups to benefit specifically in the way that walkers do as improvements on bridleways and cycle routes will also

benefit walkers and are therefore inherently 'multi-benefit'. Projects for walkers alone accounted for 38% of the RFP financial allocation and 50% of the overall number of actions.

One of the conditions throughout the previous 7 years of the funding programme was that all local authorities had to include at least 1 action that benefited 'Low Use' groups defined as "groups that disproportionately make low use of the countryside", for example:

- disabled users;
- people with mobility problems;
- young people.

If an authority recorded an action as "Low Use" then it was an action specifically designed for the aforementioned groups of people.

On further inspection of the data, low use groups are also being represented in other actions not specifically aimed at low use groups.

Actions recorded as being "multi benefit" were actions where there was more than one group specifically intended to benefit as a result of the work, including those groups who are able to access the countryside more easily and frequently i.e. walkers and cyclists as well as "low use" groups who are not able to access the countryside so easily.

Whereas projects that have a "general benefit to all users" tend to be focused around planning and improving management systems.

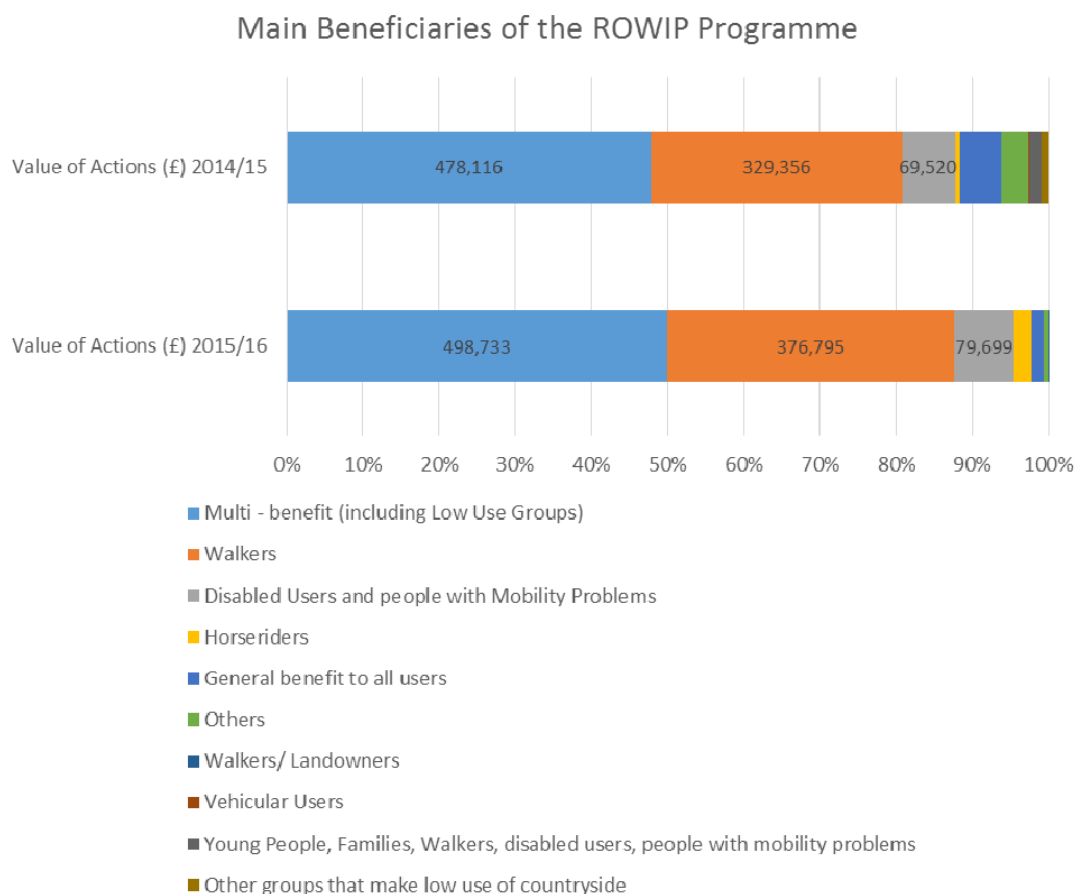
Table 15 above shows that 70 actions were "multi-benefit" i.e. benefiting more than one specific type of user. The breakdown of these actions is as follows:

- 7 actions included 'Low Use' groups and were recorded as benefitting: "walkers, disabled users and parents with pushchairs / buggies", "walkers, cyclists, disabled users, people with mobility problems, other groups that make low use of the countryside, Community First".
- 5 actions were recorded as 'multi benefit' and aimed at combinations of more able bodied users such as:
 - 2 actions benefitting specifically "walkers, cyclists and horse riders"
 - 1 action benefitting specifically "Walkers, Cyclists, wheelchair and users with mobility problems"

The same premise applies to horse riders and cyclists. Even though there are just 24 actions specifically for "walkers, cyclists and horse riders", an analysis of all 185 actions show that they are also represented in actions specifically targeted at low use groups as well as in combinations of different users. Also any actions that benefit horse riders and cyclists will generally be multi benefit because improvements on bridleways and cycle routes will also benefit walkers.

8% of the overall financial allocation has been used for actions aimed at specifically benefitting people with mobility problems.

Chart 2



6. FUNDING FOR GROUPS THAT MAKE DISPROPORTIONATELY LOW USE OF THE COUNTRYSIDE 2015-2016

As stated above, whilst there was no requirement for 2015/16 to deliver a specific project aimed at better meeting the needs of people with disabilities, Communities First areas, ethnic minorities or other groups who make a disproportionately low use of the countryside. Where authorities reported specific projects, these are included below.

Table 16: Type of 'low use' group, number and value of actions

Beneficiary	Number of Actions 2015/16	Value of Actions (£) 2015/16	Value (£) as a % of beneficiaries 2015/16	Number of Actions 2014/15	Value of Actions (£) 2014/15	Value (£) as a % of beneficiaries 2014/15
Multi - Benefit	7	23,894	26	13	87,806	47
People with	9	66,323	74	8	63,347	34

mobility problems						
Disabled Users	0	0	0	2	6,173	3
Young People, Families	0	0	0	2	14,249	8
Other groups that make low use of the countryside	0	0	0	4	10,495	6
Other	0	0	0	3	6,090	3
TOTAL	16	£90,217	100%	32	£188,160	100%

Those who have benefited from the 7 multi-benefit actions included:

- Walkers, Cyclists, wheelchair and users with mobility problems;
- Family users, mobility impaired, including the use of powered access;
- Used by local walking to health groups as a safe starter walk;
- Disabled users, walkers, dog walkers, families with pushchairs.

Table 17: Type of work and value of work delivered for 'low use' groups 2015-2016

Beneficiary	Value of Actions (£) 2015/16	Value of Actions (£) 2014/15
a) improve existing linear access	69,963	154,494
b) create new linear access	3,654	
c) improve other access opportunities	16,600	32,855
h) Other	0	811
Total	£90,217	£188,160

Works delivered for 'low use' groups have been similar to previous years and have included:

- Prepare design, engineering drawings and consents for the construction of a multi user route - walkers, wheelchair use, cyclists.
- Provide visual signage and confidence markers, benches and seats and site route information board.
- Car park provision with sealed surface route, passing places, benches and seats providing scenic route above the haven waterway. Ideal for all access ability groups.

Works delivered during 2015-2016 have been wide ranging, yet again enabling many actions to be delivered against more than one action type. It is encouraging to see that local authorities are continuing to deliver works on the ground that "tick more than one box" and therefore getting the most out the RFP.

END

This paper was prepared by:

Susan Jackson (ROWIP Funding Officer),

Richard Dearing (Water Recreation & Access Advisor)

September 2016

Appendix 1

1. NB in 2015-2016 WG amended some conditions in response to feedback from local authorities.

The specific conditions affected by this were:

- Introduced in Yr3, all authorities to deliver at least one network improvement that will also assist public understanding of, or conservation of, local biodiversity': **Removed in favour of focus on the more general duties**
- Introduced in Yr3, local authorities were allowed to use RFP funds in the Coastal Zone (CZ) when the Coastal Access Improvement Programme (CAIP) changed the focus of the programme from the CZ and Wales Coast Path to just focus on the WCP in time for the official launch of the Path in May 2012. **Requirement removed but still a high priority:**
- Authorities each deliver at least one improvement aimed at better meeting the needs of the disabled, Communities First, ethnic minority or other groups who make a disproportionately low use of the countryside. In all their 'on the ground' improvement work on rights of way, the access authorities should also aim to comply, wherever possible, with the statutory guidance issued by the National Assembly under Section 69 of the CROW Act and with Natural Resources Wales' associated guidance 'By All Reasonable Means' [and therefore adhering to the Least Restrictive Access principle to benefit as many users of the countryside as possible]. **Removed in favour of focus on the more general duties**

List of ROWIP Funding Programme (RFP) Conditions implemented by Welsh Government and Natural Resources Wales during 2015-2016 set out in section 11 of the ROWIP offer letter: (these were in addition to the usual NRW grant offer conditions)

11. Additional conditions specific to this project or programme of works:

- a) In addition to Paragraph 2 of the above conditions, the applicant must comply with any other requirements relating to protected habitats and species issued by NRW.
- b) Progress reports are to be submitted with all claims plus an end of year report in a format to be agreed. These reports will include information on progress with the achievement of agreed interim milestones and target outputs.
- c) Authorities must claim 40% of their funding allocation by December 2015.
- d) If there are clear signs of a likely under spend NRW/WG will reserve the right to reclaim the monies and utilise them elsewhere or agree to extra funding for authorities who can effectively use any potential under spend.
- e) Local Authorities will be expected to apply their own audit systems in using ROWIP programme funding and ensure that their external auditors (WAO) cover this in their annual programme of audit

- f) In all 'on the ground' improvement work on rights of way, the access authorities should comply with the principles of least restrictive access and also aim to comply, wherever possible, with the statutory guidance issued by the national Assembly under Section 69 of the CROW Act and with NRW's associated guidance 'By All Reasonable Means'
- g) The Local Authority must make the ROWIP available on the internet. Details of the relevant web link should be forwarded to Susan Jackson once this condition is met.
- h) Authorities will submit information about the level of funding which they intend to invest in access management work (as evidenced in their planned budget documentation) for financial year 2015-16. The Director of Service will provide confirmation that the ROWIP Programme funding being allocated will be additional to their planned funding for general countryside management work and that the new funds will not displace the authority's own funding and resources for rights of way work.
- i) The ROWIP funding will be separate and additional money for priority works and will not be suitable for match funding in relation to NRW's countryside grant.
- j) NRW will not be responsible for ensuring that authorities have met this condition. For the purposes of this programme, displacement of funding shall be considered as any cut in budget allocated for 2015-16.
- k) Eligible expenditure as from the 1 April 2015 will be paid, **provided the signed acceptance is received by the Partnership & EU funding team within 1 month of the date of the offer letter**
- l) **Eligible costs**
The resources from us are capital monies and will therefore need to be used in a way consistent with current accounting guidance on capital expenditure. Where costs can be legitimately capitalised as part of the ROWIP programme, items that may be considered for funding can include the following:
 - i) New staff employed to deliver key elements of the ROWIP programme. This might include the costs of staff employed to work on the Definitive Map, website development and other related publicity activity and to identify and remove obstructions from rights of way where these costs can be legitimately capitalised as part of the ROWIP programme
 - ii) Capital investment in improvement works (including bridge works, upgrading of footpath surfaces, new drainage works, and diversions and new sections of rights of way promoted by the local authority).;
 - iii) Capital investment in improvement works (including bridge works, upgrading of footpath surfaces, new drainage works, and diversions and new sections of rights of way promoted by the local authority).
 - iv) New way marking, furniture (stiles, etc.) and new information boards, etc. on rights of way
 - ii) Specific improvements designed to meet the needs of those with mobility problems (meeting the guidance referred to in paragraph 12 iv. below

- m) In cases of doubt as to whether a specific item is eligible for funding under these arrangements, the local authority should consult with their own Finance Department to ensure that it is a legitimate use of capital resources. [They will need to record this for audit purposes].

- n) **Funding in the Coastal Zone**
Since 2010/11 ROWIP Funding Programme eligible costs include ROWIP priorities within 2 kilometres of the coast (the 'coastal zone') as long as they are not already being funded through the separate Wales Coast Path Development Programme. Following the opening of the Wales Coast Path in May 2012, improvements to routes which connect inland communities to the Path are likely to create popular circular routes, and these should be treated as a priority for ROWIP funding by coastal authorities.

- o) For the purposes of the ROWIP Funding Programme, work to deliver the Wales Coast Path is not an eligible cost and ROWIP funding should not be used as match funding for the Wales Coast Path Development Programme.