

Rights of Way Improvement Plan Appendices

2023-2033



Contents Page

Section	Page
Appendix 1 MKCC and national strategies that link to the RoWIP	3
Appendix 2 Consultation - User Survey	8
Appendix 3 Consultation - Landowner Survey	17

Appendix 1

MKCC and national strategies that link to the RoWIP

MK Sustainability Strategy 2019-2050

This strategy sets out a vision for Milton Keynes to be the world's greenest and most sustainable city, striving to be carbon neutral by 2030 and carbon negative by 2050 while creating one of the world's most truly sustainable economies and models for growth. This objective is to be achieved, amongst others, through minimising transport emissions and ensuring clean air. The RoWIP supports this vision by working towards providing a rights of way network that is suitable and useable by walkers and cyclists replacing their car journeys with active travel. It also contributes to promoting the use of local rural businesses like country pubs.

[2019 01 15 sustainability strategy v4.pdf](#)

The Council Plan 2022-2026

The Council Plan sets out how Milton Keynes Council will deliver its Strategy for 2050. The Strategy for 2050 is the long-term vision for the city and the future, seeking to ensure that everyone in Milton Keynes can lead happy, healthy lives. The Council Plan sets out the corporate priorities for the period between 2022 to 2026.

The key objectives are for Milton Keynes to be:

A thriving City - To continue to improve the city as a unique regional and national economic powerhouse, with a growing cultural significance that builds on its success and innovates for the future.

A Progressive City - Everyone in Milton Keynes deserves to have the same opportunities and chances in life, where people are valued, feel safe and are encouraged to participate in their community and lead healthier, fulfilled lives.

A Sustainable City - To ensure that Milton Keynes grows sustainably and deliver value for money services that put tackling climate change at the heart of our actions.

<https://www.milton-keynes.gov.uk/sites/default/files/2022-06/Council%20plan%202022-2022.pdf>

Plan:MK 2016-2031

This plan sets out the Council's strategy for meeting the Borough's needs until 2031, it forms part of the Council's Development Plan.

Policy CT2 Movement and Access states that development proposals will be required to minimise the need to travel, promote opportunities for sustainable transport modes, improve accessibility to services and support the transition to a low carbon future. Development proposals will be permitted that protect and where possible enhance access to public rights of way.

Policy CT3 supports walking and cycling within Milton Keynes.

Policy SD1 – Place Making Principles for Development Facilitates the conditions to enable clear connectivity between strategic developments, people, wildlife through existing Green Infrastructure delivery of new and improved Green Infrastructure

Appendix C Open Space and Recreation Facility Provision: Green Access Link sets out how developments should provide green corridors along certain transport routes and public rights of way (footpaths, redways, roads other than grid roads) as well as historic hedgerows. They may support a range of habitats important for nature conservation and /or provisions for walking, running and cycling.

[Plan:MK 2016-2031 \(milton-keynes.gov.uk\)](#)

Milton Keynes Mobility Strategy 2018-2036

A key outcome of this strategy is to protect the environment through the maintenance, or improvement of, air quality, reduce transport pollution and CO2 emissions, protect the natural environment and promote improved public health and wellbeing.

[Transport Policy | Milton Keynes City Council \(milton-keynes.gov.uk\)](#)

Milton Keynes Green Infrastructure Strategy 2018

Milton Keynes (MK) has an extensive network of green and blue infrastructure. These spaces and features provide a wealth of social, economic and environmental benefits to our borough. Within the city, green infrastructure(GI)was embedded from the outset and has created an almost unique modern urban landscape character. These spaces provide an extensive recreation resource, fundamental to our communities' health and wellbeing as well as creating an attractive setting that attracts investment, supports community cohesion and provides a space for biodiversity.

<https://www.milton-keynes.gov.uk/planning-and-building/planning-policy/green-infrastructure-strategy>

Milton Keynes Joint Health and Wellbeing Strategy 2018-2028

This strategy discusses how being healthy is about Lifelong Wellbeing for everyone and about being able to lead fulfilling lives, and to be actively involved in families and communities. It has aims to:

- Make it easier for children and young people to eat well and become more active
- Promote access to green spaces and public transport for children and young people

[HWB Strategy 2018-2028 FINAL.pdf](#)

Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan (LCWIP) 2023

The LCWIP provides a plan for the development of the active travel network across the City of Milton Keynes authority area. It explains how a long list of network improvements were developed with analysis at both the interborough and local levels to identify long and short distance improvements. In addition to this, wider recommendations have been made to increase usage and improve accessibility for all.

[MKCC LCWIP Report.pdf \(milton-keynes.gov.uk\)](#)

Open Spaces Assessment report 2022

The report provides the Council with up-to-date information on open space location, coverage and provision. It provides a comprehensive assessment of the current level of provision of the different types of open space within the borough of Milton Keynes. It provides detail on its condition, distribution, overall quality and accessibility. The report provides a direction for the future provision of open space in MK Borough that should be accessible, high quality and sustainable.

Report awaiting adoption.

National Policies that link to the RoWIP

Rights of Way Circular 1/09 Version 2 Guidance for Local Authorities (Defra, October 2009)

This circular gives advice to local authorities on recording, managing and maintaining, protecting and changing public rights of way.

Planning permission and public rights of way:

7.2 The effect of development on a public right of way is a material consideration in the determination of applications for planning permission and local planning authorities should ensure that the potential consequences are taken into account whenever such applications are considered.

7.8 In considering potential revisions to an existing right of way that are necessary to accommodate the planned development, but which are acceptable to the public, any alternative alignment should avoid the use of estate roads for the purpose wherever possible and preference should be given to the use of made up estate paths through landscaped or open space areas away from vehicular traffic.

[Corporate cover and copyright page for consultations \(publishing.service.gov.uk\)](#)

National Planning Policy Framework (July 2021)

National Planning Policy Framework (July 2021) para. 92: 'to achieve healthy, inclusive and safe places', which specifically encourage social interaction, minimise crime and disorder and the fear of such, and enable and support healthy lifestyles.

- National Planning Policy Framework (July 2021) para. 93: to 'plan positively for the provision and use of shared spaces... support the delivery of local strategies to improve health, social and cultural well-being...guard against the unnecessary loss of valued facilities and services...and ensure an integrated approach to considering the location of housing, economic uses and community facilities and services'.

- National Planning Policy Framework (July 2021) para. 98: to be 'based on robust and up-to-date assessments of the need for open space, sport and recreation facilities ... and opportunities for new provision.'

- National Planning Policy Framework (July 2021) para. 100: 'Planning policies and decisions should protect and enhance public rights of way and access, including taking opportunities to provide better facilities for users, for example by adding links to existing rights of way networks including National Trails.'

National Planning Policy Framework (July 2021) para. 104: 'Transport issues should be considered from the earliest stages of plan-making and development proposals, so that:

c) opportunities to promote walking, cycling and public transport use are identified and pursued

National Planning Policy Framework (July 2021) para. 106: 'Planning policies should:

b) be prepared with the active involvement of local highways authorities, other transport infrastructure providers and operators and neighbouring councils, so that strategies and investments for supporting sustainable transport and development patterns are aligned;

c) identify and protect, where there is robust evidence, sites and routes which could be critical in developing infrastructure to widen transport choice and realise opportunities for large scale development;

d) provide for attractive and well-designed walking and cycling networks with supporting facilities such as secure cycle parking (drawing on Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plans)

National Planning Policy Framework - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk)

Appendix 2

Consultation – User Survey

1. Approximately how often do you use or visit the countryside/public rights of way/natural space?

Daily	20
Several times a week	31
Once a week	6
Several times a month	7
Once a month	1
Several times a year	3
Never	2

2. If you never visit the countryside/public rights of way/natural space, or don't go as often as you would like to, are there any particular reasons for this?

I'm too busy	0
I don't feel safe or confident	1
I can't get there easily, don't have transport	1
I don't know where to go / how to get there	0
I have limited mobility or health problems	1
The condition of the path surfaces	1
Vegetation issues on paths	1
The condition of gates/stiles/bridges on routes	0
Too many routes include the need to walk/ride/cycle in roads	1
Other	1

3. Do you feel you get out to natural spaces as much as you would like to?

Yes	39
No	29

4. What are the particular reasons for why you feel you don't go as often as you would like to?

I'm too busy	13
I don't feel safe or confident	4
I can't get there easily, don't have transport	3
I don't know where to go / how to get there	1
I have limited mobility or health problems	3
Vegetation issues on paths	10
The condition of gates/stiles/bridges on routes	5
Too many routes include the need to walk/ride/cycle in roads	7
Other	3

5. When you visit the countryside/public rights of way/natural space, do you always visit the same place?

Always	1
Mostly	23
Sometimes	44
Never	0

6. Do you know about the following information?

What a Public Right of Way is?	58
That you can ride a bicycle on a public bridleway but not on a public footpath?	46
Where you can get information regarding Public Rights of Way?	31
How to report issues on the rights of way network?	17
What the countryside code is and where to find it?	35

7. What is / are the main reason(s) why you visit the countryside/public rights of way/natural space around Milton Keynes?

Walking	62
Running	12
Horse Riding	0
Cycling	31
Off-road vehicular activity	0
Other	7

8. Where do you normally walk, horse ride or cycle most often?

Country parks/linear parks	38
Woodland	5
Countryside	11
Urban areas	6
Canal towpaths	4
Other	4

9. Would you consider volunteering for work associated with Public Rights of Way?

Yes	17
No	51

10. Which Milton Keynes Parish or local area would you be interested in volunteering for?

2 respondents (12%) answered Bow Brickhill for this question.

Bow Brickhill, Wolverton Parishes, Bletchley, Wolverton and Greenleys, Wolverton & Bradwell, Stony Stratford, Neath Hill, Bedford Estates, Wavendon Woods, Aspley Woods, Hanslope, Furzton, Pennyland, Redhouse Park, I already volunteer for 2 Parishes, any, but my mobility is limited, I already look after 9 parishes. I don't need any more.

11. How do you decide where to walk, ride or cycle for your visit to the countryside/public rights of way/natural space?

Follow a path and see where it goes	30
Use a map to plan a route	32
Ask friends, family or colleagues	14
Follow a leaflet, guide book or website	15
Use a mobile app or GPS	26
Know area well	34
Join an organised group	15
Other	0

12. When visiting the countryside/public rights of way/natural space, how far do you travel from home?

Within 1 mile	17
1-5 miles	35
5-15 miles	30
15-30 miles	14
Over 30 miles	7

13. How do you usually get from home to the start point of your visit?

Walk or run	19
Horse ride	0
Cycle	14
Car	35
Public transport	0

14. During your visit, what features are important to you?

Wildlife	48
Circular routes	46
Long distance routes	18
Facilities (e.g seats / toilets)	25
Car parking spaces	29
Pub / café / shop on routes	19
Sites of interest on or close to your route	26
Hard surfaces	12
Access for disabled or those with mobility issues	3
Access by public transport	8
Information boards	14
Special events / activities	4
Well sign posted routes	27
Other	5

15. Are you a member of a walking, cycling, or riding group, or similar?

Yes	24
No	44

16. Do you have any suggestions on how the rights of way network could be made more physically accessible for all types of user?

ID	Responses
1	Suggestions on how hard the routes are I know not all are suitable to people with mobility issues maybe a rating system
2	designated section of redways for cyclists
3	When I walk the dog, I have to avoid some routes with high stiles as we can't get over them, more accessibility there would be useful. Also more cycle paths in the borough.
4	Transport links, hard path surfaces, borrowable rough-terrain wheelchairs
5	ensure all bollards enable a tandem cycle to pass through safely, i take blind people out on a tandem twice a week and it is a pain to have to stop dismount in order to negotiate bollards
6	replace stiles with wide gates
7	Ensuring paths are accessible by all means including disabled access as possible.
8	More wheelchair friendly access gates. Parking spaces near entrances to RoW. More information on websites or social media about accessible routes.
9	Keep the routes maintained. For example, there are a lot of overgrown bushes, trees which obstruct footpaths and redways across Mk. This makes it dangerous for pedestrians and cyclists to use these.
10	Better maintenance of footpaths and Redways. Introduce right to roam.
11	No
12	Better surfaces, some in MK are in real need of repairs.
13	Better public transport so you don't need a car to get to some places
14	Better maintained non concrete paths keeping the paths natural but accessible during wetter weather.
15	Ensure obstructing hedges are kept trimmed so there is enough space for e.g. two wheelchairs to pass one another
16	flatter paths with non-curving sides. It needs to improve the quality of ride for buggies, wheelchair users and cyclists. Improved views of the landscape especially for wheelchair users. Like making the river visible from the path side of the river.
17	Keep entrances clear.
18	Removing dead ends if possible. In Bow Brickhill there are two paths that are dead ends onto private land with a warning not to trespass so have to turn around and go back. Some routes are overgrown
19	Paths wider and better maintained
20	Consider those pinch points where redway planting constrains the network - can they be prioritised for vegetation management or replanting
21	Maintain surface to ensure not too many potholes etc
22	None
23	n/a
24	Rights of ways differ depending where you are - multiple options are available. However my routes are supposedly to be challenging. Do not want tarmac or flat routes
25	Reduction of kissing gates and styles.
26	Keep paths well maintained. More seats for those who need to stop more.

17. Please write in the space below what specific changes or improvements you think would be useful to the rights of way network in and around Milton Keynes, or any other comments relating to the draft improvement plan (found in on the MKC consultations page) that you may have.

ID	Responses
1	I feel they do a good job covering a high area. Maybe being aware of when paths start to disappear or taken back by farm land
2	Spots for safe campfires and picnics
3	You need to consider access from places in MK that are further out, such as Hanslope and Castlethorpe. In order to encourage more walking and cycling, safer cycle routes need to be put into place from the villages. At the moment I would not consider cycling on the roads as it is too dangerous. Could cycling paths be put into place on the verges between these villages and Milton Keynes. Hanslope pays one of the highest rates of council tax in MK, but with the least benefit of the redway and cycling networks.
4	Please restrict fishing on the towpaths. Often their equipment is in the way of walkers and the other day two of them were digging the ground next to the canal
5	More rights of way, well connected from urban areas
6	as above
7	Very few, its an excellent network in MK, invariably in good condition, BUT, there are 2 issues: - CYCLISTS RIDING TOO FAST as if they own them, even on Redways but particularly on ordinary paths - supervision of condition of rural footpaths in general and checking the big developers as they run roughshod over bridleway and footpath boundaries (Fairfield for example), they should be prosecuted.
8	None at present.
9	Replacement of removed or fallen waymark posts in countryside areas. Clearer marking of which RoW or other paths can be used, or not used, by which category of user in rural areas - including more information on meaning of waymarks. This should include electric scooters.
10	Keep the routes maintained. For example, there are a lot of overgrown bushes, trees which obstruct footpaths and redways across Mk. This makes it dangerous for pedestrians and cyclists to use these.
11	Stop major housing and warehouse developments in countryside.
12	Better maintenance by farmers
13	Above resurfacing, in some cases better signage, sometimes better lit paths where old lighting is broken.
14	Signage to show people which side of the path/red way they should walk, enforcement against illegal use of escooters, lower maximum speed limit for escooters/cycles
15	adding to the connectivity with new rights of ways, better upkeep by land owners with overgrown foilage
16	Some of the cycle routes have appalling surface. To bumpy to ride on.
17	Make passing rules clearer to all users e.g. once saw Nordic walkers taking up the whole footpath and bullying a wheelchair user onto the grass because they felt entitled to walk three abreast. Encourage cyclists and escooter users to utilise bells. Enforce a loose 15mph speed limit for wheeled vehicles.

18	At road crossings we need a bylaw to restrict the height of and bushes adjacent to the path to 1m. This is so path users can see any cars if they are jogging or cycling/scootering but more importantly so the drivers can see them. In many places path users can not be seen from the road until they are at the curb
19	separate redways between cycles and walking as bicycles and scooters coming up behind you without warning is dangerous
20	For Milton Keynes the Redways and paths need repairing. There are so many paths that aren't even, potholes, tree root damage or plants/trees. Should also look into private property where they have allowed plants/trees to overgrown and restrict or block the path.
21	Vastly improve the redways, repair holes and cracks, trim the trees and bushes, more lighting at night time, maybe some CCTV cameras all around to make people feel safer, more patrols on the redway. We constantly have a motorbike tearing up stretches of the red way near us. All it needs are some big improvements, no need to think of other ways.
22	Have notices up to tell people not to ride bikes or scooters on the pavement as I constantly have people doing both and there are going to be accidents.
23	The dead ends when running on paths, cycle parking in the villages to encourage people not just drive to places to walk or run. Info on how to improve an overgrown right of way and whether the parishes can help
24	consider the routing of finger board - are they shortest route, scenic route or aimed at safest (not necessarily direct or pleasant to walk or cycle)
25	Please re-pave the redways which are in poor condition. Also please heed the several safety concerns of more vulnerable citizens.
26	More picnic/ benches seating.
27	Can't think of anything
28	MK is great already
29	Extend the redway network. Keep redways clear of rubbish and maintained. Improve awareness, many people do not realise the wealth of countryside which exists in MK and the surrounding areas. Ensure that new build estates are properly connected to the redway network.
30	Littering is the main issue I have - the amount of rubbish people just throw on the ground is staggering. Unfortunately it's close to impossible to change people's behaviour, therefore I would like to see more bins along footpaths etc. However, I appreciate that, in reality, this isn't a practical solution due to the cost implications.
31	Permissive access rights to continue in Asley Woods/Wavendon Woods. Woburn Sands has no country park or adequate green space of its own even with SEMK. More land in SEMK development framework should be given to create a country park for existing and new residents. Narrow linear paths in built up area are insufficient and noisy with a train line. Space away from noise is important. This is part of planning process and with MK exceeding Housing targets SEMK housing numbers should be reduced for a wider buffer and better natural green space around Woburn Sands (not just sports fields).
32	More signage advising all users of their responsibilities ie dog/horse fouling
33	More information regarding the rules , maybe a qr code on a notice board so people can scann it and get more information on what is allowed in that specific area.

18. What age group are you in?

16-25	3
26-35	9
35-54	25
55 +	29
Prefer not to say	2

19. What is your gender?

Male	31
Female	28
Non-binary	3
Prefer not to say	5
Other	0

20. What is your employment status?

Working full time	35
Self employed	5
Working part-time	6
Unemployed	1
Retired	17
Student	0
Sick	0
Registered Disabled	0
Prefer not to say	4

21. Which of the following best describes your ethnic background?

White	64
Mixed/Multiple ethnic groups	0
Asian/ Asian British	1
Black/ African/Caribbean/Black British	0
Other ethnic group	1
English/Welsh/Scottish/Northern Irish/British	61
Irish	1
Gypsy or Irish Traveller	0
Any other White background, please describe	2

White and Black Caribbean	0
White and Black African	0
White and Asian	0
Other	0
Indian	1
Pakistani	0
Bangladeshi	0
Chinese	0
Other	0
African	0
Caribbean	0
Other	0
Arabic	0
Other	1

Appendix 3

Consultation – Landowner Survey

1. Please tell us the level of problems you have had as a direct result of public access crossing your land.

	Not a problem	Problem – but not serious	Serious problem
Trespass	3	4	2
Damage to crops	5	2	1
Worrying livestock	5	2	1
Out of control dogs	4	4	0
Vandalism	6	3	0
Gates left open	4	1	3
Litter	4	3	2
Fly tipping	1	6	2
People exceeding their rights (e.g. horse on footpath, motors on bridleways)	1	4	3
Dog fouling	4	4	0

2. Which of the following statements best describes your attitude to public access?

I would be agreeable to further access across my land	0
I welcome public paths/public access across my land	1
I don't mind people coming onto my land as long as they act responsibly	8
I would prefer to have no public access across my land	0

3. Who do you think has responsibility for the maintenance of stiles and gates on public footpaths and bridleways?

Milton Keynes City Council	2
You/relevant landowner	5
Relevant Parish council	0
Shared	2

4. Are you aware of your legal responsibilities for reinstating paths across cultivated land?

Yes	9
No	0

5. Would you support having stiles replaced by stock-proof gates in order to improve access for those with mobility issues?

Yes	8
No	1

6. Where a stile or gate is not required for stock-proofing purposes, would you support having those structures removed to leave a gap in order to improve access for those with mobility issues?

Yes	4
No	5

7. Would you support additional routes across your land in order to improve the network i.e to create circular routes or to avoid busy roads etc?

Yes	3
No	6

8. Biodiversity off-setting is a scheme where landowners can receive grants for offering up parts of their land for improvements to wildlife habitat. Would you be interested in such a scheme on your land or along any public right of way?

Yes	5
No	3

9. The use of Public Rights of Way can support the rural economy through rural tourism, farm shops, cafes, as well as rural sports and activities. Do you agree? What more could we do to support this?

ID	Responses
1	No commercial operation based on the PROfW would be viable here.
2	Broadly agree, as long as access is clear and not problematic for the landowner
3	Design and publish walk leaflets
4	Yes - Early adoption of new highways constructed within developments would encourage more growth and direct people to these facilities. Intersecting rights of way twinned with early adoption of new highways would assist. Some highways take tens of years to adopt.
5	Yes. Develop routes to support dog walkers and other residents around new housing areas to reduce 'crowding' on those PROWs already in existence.
6	Yes. Making sure all rights of way are clearly marked and accessible, ie. not blocked by fallen trees, overgrown bushes, nettles etc. Developing longer paths/routes and circular trails that avoid walking along main roads, but take in villages and places of interest. Also where walking/riding beside a main road is unavoidable keep the verge well cut so that users can stay off the road as much as possible.

10. Do you have any specific suggestions or further comments on how the right of way team can better support landowners or improve the rights of way service?

ID	Responses
1	Prevent access to farm land by motorbikes.
2	Continue supplying plenty of signage for landowners when needed. Continue replacing gates when needed. Perhaps more information type signage on what access is allowed and where, to improve knowledge for network users ie no cycling allowed on footpaths. Also improved communication with residents who have network access through their gardens, which impacts on neighbouring landowners' networks, as sometimes this is problematic.
3	We are a rural farm and estate and have suffered due to urban sprawl and a significant increase in people using the rural area during recent lockdowns. Unfortunately, we have experienced a huge increase in walkers etc that feel entitled to behave exactly as they see fit and not within the law. There needs to be more done to encourage people to enjoy the rural areas sensibly and responsibly.

4	Already providing an excellent service
5	Payment of agreed invoices still outstanding from last year
6	Regularly check on PROW signage and provide replacements where missing.
7	Why not give all your landowners a call once a year just to see if they are facing any new issues or have any questions or suggestions.

11. Do you have any comments relating to the draft improvement plan? Please find this attached in the e-mail sent to you.

ID	Responses
1	Can't find the draft improvement plan.
2	None that are noteworthy.
3	No suggestions, seems like a good first draft.
4	I think people forget that many paths, bridleways and rights of way originally came into existence as routes for people to walk to their work and home again and have subsequently fallen out of use because our way of life has changed. I think its probably wrong to spend a lot of time trying to find and reinstate old and historic paths that probably go to one place and no further, but it would be much better use of time to try and develop paths and bridleways that join up with each other, thus creating a network of off road paths/routes that people could enjoy, on foot, on horseback, in a wheelchair or on a bike. From your previous questions, this may well be something you have already planned to do.
5	The document mentions Green space but should also highlight blue space: Urban blue infrastructure and spaces such as canals, rivers, docks and reservoirs and associated towpaths have the opportunity now and in the future, to make a significant contribution to the health and wellbeing of individuals and communities, nature (ecosystems) as well as the planet. A systematic review looking specifically at blue space interventions for health and wellbeing concluded that blue space interventions can have a direct benefit for health, especially mental health and psycho-social wellbeing. There is also some evidence for greater social connectedness during and after interventions. It highlights how mental health, especially psycho-social wellbeing can be

improved with investment in blue spaces. In the studies included in this review, nature/water were mentioned frequently by participants as beneficial for their overall sense of wellbeing, as well as an appreciation for the calming effect of being by water. These benefits are similar to those recorded for visits to green space, and the Trust urge the Council to recognise the benefits of being by water, include the canal towpath in the rights of way improvement plan and recognise the benefits it brings to the area. The canal towpath can play an important role in active travel and there is evidence elsewhere of increased usage after towpath improvements. In June 2020, the Trust undertook evaluation of two towpath improvement projects, one in West Yorkshire and the other in Birmingham. The scheme monitored screenline counts of cyclists undertaken by West Yorkshire Combined Authority. At the two locations, post-scheme cycle usage increases of 85% and 71% respectively were observed, compared with the pre-intervention baseline. External data showed that cycling usage in Leeds increased by 7% from 2014 to 2017, suggesting that the increases in towpath usage were driven by the improvements rather than a reflection of wider societal patterns. Improvements to the towpath in Milton Keynes could result in similar increased usage. There are many opportunities to use towpaths to support health initiatives such as Green (and blue) Social Prescribing. Participants in a CRT green social prescribing programme have taken part in canoeing and stand-up paddleboarding courses. Initial evaluations of these programmes have explored the impact of participation on mental wellbeing, physical activity, loneliness, self-efficacy, and nature connectedness. A 2022 evaluation of the Trust's Nottingham Waterways & Wellbeing Partnership Programme found that participants had increased positive mental wellbeing and levels of physical activity after completion of the activity/course. Qualitative data showed that nature and place were an important component of the participants' overall positive experience. Again, increased promotion and improvement may show similar results in Milton Keynes. The towpath is part of the Sustrans cycle route and an excellent commuter opportunity for residents of Leighton Buzzard to cycle into MK. It provides access opportunities for angling in both rural and urban areas. It should receive further consideration in the document. The Trust collected data on the number of towpath users during each of the covid lockdown periods in three locations in MK. The data collected showed a large increase in use during the first lockdown compared to the pre-pandemic baseline, indicating the value local residents put on the ability to use the canal for safe local walks at a time when recreation further afield was prohibited. Increased usage continued during the subsequent lockdowns,

	before returning to largely pre-pandemic levels later. This date can be shared with the local authority if this would be useful? We hope that the comments provided are clear and helpful and that your next revision will address these points. We are willing to continue to work with you, to meet and discuss these points.
--	---

Town and Parish Council and other Stakeholder responses

All Town and Parish Council, and other stakeholder responses to the Draft RoWIP can be made available upon request.

Rights of Way
rightsofway@milton-keynes.gov.uk

www.milton-keynes.gov.uk

Civic Offices, 1 Saxon Gate East, Central Milton Keynes, Milton Keynes,
MK9 3EJ

