

CYNGOR SIR POWYS COUNTY COUNCIL

County Council
12th July 2018

REPORT AUTHOR: County Councillor Aled Davies, Portfolio Holder for Finance, Countryside and Transport

SUBJECT: Question from Graham Taylor

The survey undertaken as part of the review of the Rights of Way Delivery Plan (ROWIP) revealed that the main problem encountered by users of footpaths and bridleways was the lack of signposting and waymarking. No other issue was raised more often; 75% of residents in the survey raised it. This is supported by many of the complaints the Council receives about problems with the rights of way network.

The Council is very keen to promote health and well-being through the use of the countryside and to stimulate the local economy by attracting visitors to walk and cycle in Powys. The clear lack of signage and waymarking is a major barrier to residents and visitors wishing to do this.

Can the Cabinet Member please ensure that the new ROWIP, that is currently being prepared, accords the highest priority to a programme of works designed to address this major issue raised by residents?

Response

Thank you for your question Mr Taylor and I apologise that I cannot be at full Council.

The Rights of Way Improvement Plan although being a statutory document, also supports the goals of key national and local strategies; particularly those relating to:

- Supporting the local economy
- Improving the nations' and residents health and well-being, and
- Creating a more sustainable environment

The Plan also sets out how it will contribute towards key objectives in the County Council's Cabinet Vision 2025 and the Public Service Board's 2040 Vision. Working with internal and external partners will be crucial to achieving these aims and goals.

As part of the ROWIP Review process, a number of surveys and consultations were undertaken. The results for Question 8 of the general public survey showed that 75% of respondents had encountered issues with *signage and way-marking*. This was

closely followed by *surface issues* at 70%, *stiles/gates* at 68% and *obstructions* at 56%. Question 12 asked what discouraged use of the public rights of way network. The highest response was *obstructions* at 23%, followed by the *surface* at 18%, and then *crossing private land* at 13%. The results indicate that although *signage and waymarking* is a commonly encountered issue, other issues are more important when it comes to discouraging use of the public rights of way network

The Council is of the opinion that as obstructions discourage people from using public rights of way, it would not be helpful or advisable to sign and waymark a route that is obstructed. Once a public right of way is cleared of obstructions, then waymarking is undertaken, providing confidence to the public that the path is open and available.

The draft ROWIP to be consulted on, outlines a move to prioritise working with Communities showing an interest in working on their local public rights of way network. The Council would assist and facilitate the Community in undertaking work in their area.

The BBNPA are currently putting a draft ROWIP together, having completed the assessment stage. Issues with signage also came out strongly in their questionnaire. Along with vegetation, this was the most highlighted issue. Although they are not yet at the stage to draft actions, they have indicated the intention to include actions to deal with signage.