



RIGHTS OF WAY IMPROVEMENT PLAN FUNDING PROGRAMME (RFP)
2014-15

END OF YEAR OUTPUTS REPORT.

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Executive Summary

The Rights of Way Improvement Plan (ROWIP) Funding Programme established in 2008, has provided an important boost for the implementation of local authority ROWIPs in Wales.

In 2014/15 the Welsh Government provided £1million. This was administered by NRW to the 24 authorities involved in implementing ROWIPs.

The funding was used to deliver a range of activities across the whole of Wales - in every authority area. All information gathered in this report has come directly from the local authorities.

- ***People's experience of using paths and routes in Wales***

Work that will directly impact the experience of people using paths and routes is the most funded; with work on 'physical improvement to existing linear access' accounting for the majority of the funding in 2014/15 with a total £760,505 being spent on improvements on the ground which affect how easy routes are to use. Of this, £300,000 was spent on routes that are promoted, such as regional trails, National Trails or linking to the Wales Coast Path.

In 2014/15 authorities reported a further 794km of rights of way were now easier to use and that £31,975 of the funding was spent on 11 projects to make new access connections.

- ***Improvements that benefit a range of people's activities***

Once again over half of the funding was used on projects which benefit more than one user group, with projects that had a "general benefit to all users" and projects that were "multi benefit" (benefiting more than one user type) together accounting for 53% of the total value of projects funded this year.

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 allocated in 2014-15. This brings the total funding to date to £9.9million.

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 2014-2015, the seventh year of the RFP. Similarly, financial and output information in this report relates to all 24 authorities receiving funding.

During the 7 year funding period, there have been a number of conditions which local authorities have to adhere to. In 2014/15 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 2014/15, please see Appendix 1.

2. KEY ACHIEVEMENTS

Key achievements of the funding in 2014-2015 are:

1. Practical improvements on the ground:

£760,505 (or 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.

2. Improvements that benefit more than one group - including walkers, cyclists and horse riders:

The trend to improve rights of way for more than one user type continues. Projects that had a “general benefit to all users” and projects that were “multi-benefit” (benefiting more than one user type) together accounted for 53% of the total value of projects and 40% of the total number of projects funded this year. This shows that RFP delivers actions for

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.

many different activities and ranges of ability. This year “multi –benefit including Low Use Groups” was the category noted for the most actions (increasing to 48% of the funding value compared with 38% in 2013/14). 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,

- 40% of multi-benefit projects catered for the group of users “walkers, cyclists and horse riders”
- 7% 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 33% 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, Horseriders, Carriage Drivers, Vehicle Users”. There were many different combinations of users.

3. 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 32 specific actions aimed at making access easier for groups that make disproportionately low use of the countryside, the funding for these specific projects totalled £188,160.

4. Status of routes and improved infrastructure.

A further 794km of the rights of way network is now easy to use following improvements which the RFP and other funding sources has contributed to in 2014-15

The majority of the routes improved in 2014/15 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 2014/15 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 £999,910 (99.9% 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.

Table 1: Overall funding for RFP actions in 2014-2015

Organisation	Funding Amount (£)
WG funding	1,000,000
LA spend	150,366
Other sources of funding*	173,134
Total RFP (£)	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 2014-15 (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 £173,134 and included:

- Safe Routes
- Cardiff Walking for Health
- Carmarthenshire County Council Streetscene
- Walking with Offa
- Private sector Businesses
- Rural Development Plan

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).

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 2014) to assist budget management and help us ensure that all the money is utilised in year. All authorities met this requirement and 51% of the whole RFP budget was claimed by December 2014, significantly above the 40% condition.

All other claims were submitted on time with the appropriate documentation. Table 2 above shows the funding offers for 2014/15. 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 2014-2015

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	37,103
Carmarthenshire	54,607	0	54,607
Ceredigion	53,521	0	53,521
Conwy	47,410	0	47,409
Denbighshire	40,022	0	40,022
Flintshire	37,699	0	37,699
Gwynedd	76,594	0	76,594
Merthyr Tydfil	23,931	0	23,932
Monmouthshire	41,304	0	41,303
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	23,864
Powys	122,668	0	122,667
Rhondda Cynon Taff	39,519	0	39,519
Swansea	37,286	0	37,275
Torfaen	28,334	0	28,259
Vale of Glamorgan	31,136	0	31,135
Wrexham	35,666	0	35,666
Total	1,000,000	0	999,910

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.

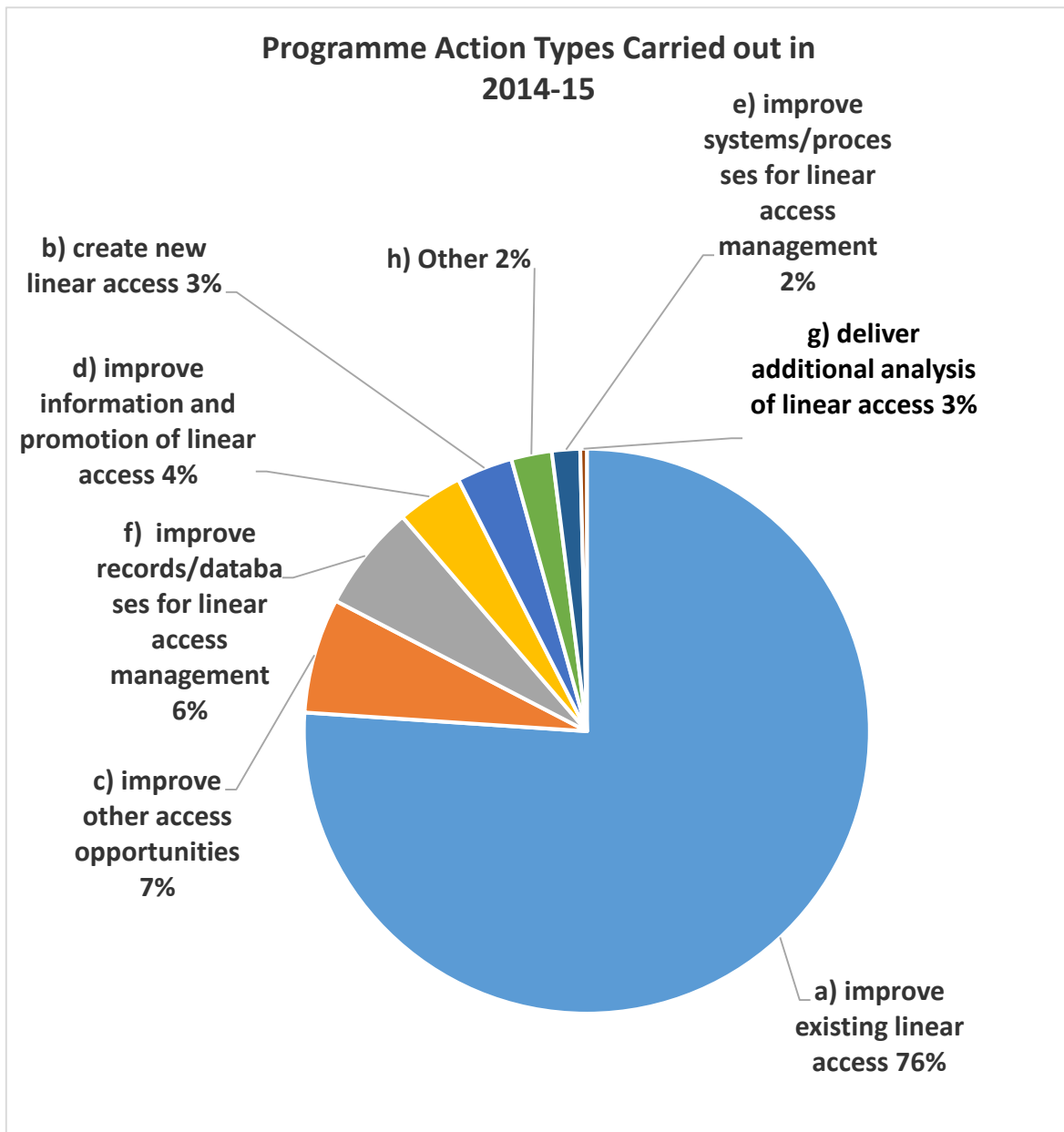
Actions were grouped as follows:

- 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.

Table 3 and **Chart 1** below show the breakdown of number of actions that were delivered in 2014-15 (in value order). A detailed breakdown of who benefited from these actions is provided further on in the report.

Programme Action Type	Number of Actions	Value of Actions (£)	Value of actions as a % of allocation
a) improve existing linear access	132	760,505	76%
c) improve other access opportunities	12	65,760	7%
f) improve records/databases for linear access management	7	60,711	6%
d) improve information and promotion of linear access	17	37,950	4%
b) create new linear access	11	31,975	3%
h) Other	5	23,182	2%
e) improve systems/processes for linear access management	3	16,098	2%
g) deliver additional analysis of linear access	1	3,733	0%
Total	188	999,914	100%

Chart 1



In 2014-2015, 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 15 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).

£792,480 has been spent on improving existing linear access and the works completed are very similar to previous years such as:

- Installation, repair and upgrading of bridges
- Boardwalks – Installation of Anti-slip measures on boardwalk deck
- Benches – to increase accessibility of routes by allowing users of the paths to sit and relax along the way and give everyone an opportunity to stop and admire the view as part of their visit
- Installation of furniture and barriers to prevent illegal use
- Surfacing works – to improve the surface so users can use the routes easily
- Linking routes together in urban areas
- Major vegetation clearance to improve access and increase biodiversity
- Abutment Works
- Creation & Improvement of PROW links between communities and within Coastal Zone

There were 11 project that created new linear access, examples of these include:

- Bridgend - Creation of 2 new footpaths. One to provide a link between Footpaths 9 and 7 St Brides Minor and the 2nd to create a circular route through woodland north of Footpath 3 St Brides Minor.
- Pembrokeshire County Council - A connecting path from a new skate park to PP28/38 and linking to a river path PP28/32 PP96/2 to Uzmaston.
- Swansea - Upper Killay - Footpath creation
- Merthyr Tydfil - Trails network – Creation of rights of way to formalise promoted routes.
- Vale of Glamorgan – Cwm Colhuw - Improve path through Nature Reserve

Table 4 below shows the route lengths improved to meet the Wales benchmark indicator 'Easy to Use' standards². 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.

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

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).

Table 4: Status and Length of Route which RFP has helped make ‘Easy to Use’ during 2014/15 (including contributions from other sources of funding).

Status	Km of network 'easy to use'
Footpath	475
Cycle track	24
Bridleway	216
Restricted Byways	25
Byway Open to All Traffic	54
Total	794

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.

Other infrastructure installed includes:

- Bridges
- Provision of combined cycle/pedestrian counter
- Benches
- Picnic benches suitable for wheelchair and pushchair access

Table 5: Infrastructure installed new or replaced under RFP 2014/15.

New/Replacement Infrastructure	No of item
Stiles	84
Gates	532
Bridges	101
Fingerposts	272
Waymark posts	294

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

Table 6: Infrastructure removed under RFP 2014/15.

Removed Infrastructure	No of item
Stiles	97
Gates	31

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 £792,480 spent on linear access, the table below shows that 38% of this (£298,425) 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 2014/15

Type of Trail	No of Actions	Value of Actions (£)	Value as a % of total
Regional Trail	13	73,713	25%
Wales Coast Path	10	70,789	24%
National Trail	3	37,225	12%
Other	22	116,698	39%
Total	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 the National Cycle Network
- Specifically named trails

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 2014/15 to which 2.3% of the overall funding was allocated to improve other access, reflecting the emphasis placed on linear access in the ROWIPs themselves.

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

Table 8: Types of Access improved under category c) improve other access opportunities 2014/15

Type of Access	No of Actions	Value of Actions (£)	Value as a % of total
Natural Green Space	2	2,638	4%
PROW Land	1	0	0%
Other	9	63,122	96%
Total	12	65,760	100%

Of the 9 'other' projects some included,

- Project to include improving a path to make the riverside in the Priory Groves, Brecon accessible to all. An accessible picnic site will also be created by the river.
- Improving access to multi user routes allowing people with mobility issues to access routes more easily.
- Hire of specially adapted mini bus with tail lift to transport wheelchair and mobility scooter users to attend programme of guided walks.

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

This action type ranked second most popular to fund (in terms of number of actions) and accounted for 4% 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 2014/15

Type of information	No of Actions	Value of Actions (£)	Value as a % of total
Off Site	8	7,376	19%
Signage & Waymarking	1	2,472	7%
Events	1	3,485	9%
On site	1	3,000	8%
Other	6	21,617	57%
Total	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 2014/15

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	Value of Actions (£)	Value as a % of total
Maintenance	3	16,098	100%
Total	3	16,098	100%

Projects include:

- Training for volunteers and staff on bridge inspection
- Continue the maintenance programme on Promoted trails network in partnership with external bodies such as Probation Service and Keep Wales Tidy
- Improve interface with volunteers on mapping systems

Table 11: Action type f) improving records/databases for linear access management 2014/15

Type of Action	No of Actions	Value of Actions (£)	Value as a % of total
Bringing the definitive map together	4	44,712	74%
Developing/Improving electronic PROW mgmt system	1	1,425	2%
Digitising the Definitive Map	1	10,579	17%
Other	1	3,945	7%
Total	7	60,661	100%

Work on the Definitive Map has still featured in 2014-2015, there has been a consistent level of input in bringing the Definitive Map up to date during the 7 year funding period which shows that this action type continues to underpin rights of way management and is an ongoing feature of ROWIPs.

There were 3 fixed term appointments working on Definitive Map work which were fully funded by the RFP. Identifying the cost of employing the staff is not possible as the local authorities were asked to detail costs on a project basis rather than by staff in post.

Table 12: Action type g) delivering additional analysis of linear access 2014/15

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

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

Table 13: Action type h) Other 2014/15

	No of Actions	Value of Actions (£)	Value as a % of total
Other	5	23,182	100%
Total	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:

- ‘Upper Garw Valley Reclamation site. Provision of 2 new bridleways (Grid Ref. SS 89829337 - SS 89919315 & SS 90049299 - SS 90099233) Increasing Bridleway provision as part of the realignment/reinstatement of RoW and following request from users/Community Council. h)Other: b)create new linear access, f) improve records/databases for linear access management’
- ‘Working with housing developers to create one new small link path and widen (and surface - developers paying) an existing footpath to enable families with pushchairs and people in wheelchairs better access between new housing development and existing village amenities (and vice versa) h)Other: a) improve existing linear access, b) create new linear access, f) improve records/databases for linear access management’

Table 14: Actions which included a Biodiversity element 2014/15

There were a variety of projects that also assisted public understanding, or conservation, of local biodiversity. Whilst for 2014/15 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	Value of Actions (£)	Value as a % of total
Biodiversity Projects	32	200,724	100%
Total	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 country 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.

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 2014/15 (see also Chart 2 below)

Beneficiaries	Number of Actions	Value of Actions (£)	Value as a % of total
Multi - benefit(including Low Use Groups)	68	478,116	48%
Walkers	89	329,356	33%
General benefit to all users	8	52,786	5%
Disabled Users and people with Mobility Problems	10	69,520	7%
Others	5	35,455	4%
Other groups that make low use of countryside	3	10,495	1%
Horseriders	2	7,465	0.7%
Vehicular Users	1	2,472	0.2%
Young People, Families, Walkers, disabled users, people with mobility problems	2	14,249	1%
Total	188	999,914	100%

In this year's programme, 5% of the actions were of "general benefit all users" and 48% were "multi benefit" i.e. benefitted more than one group of users. Together, these projects accounted for 53% 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 likely 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 accounted for 33% of the RFP financial allocation and 47% of the overall number of actions.

One of the conditions throughout the previous 6 years of the funding period was that all local authorities had to include at least 1 action that benefitted '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.

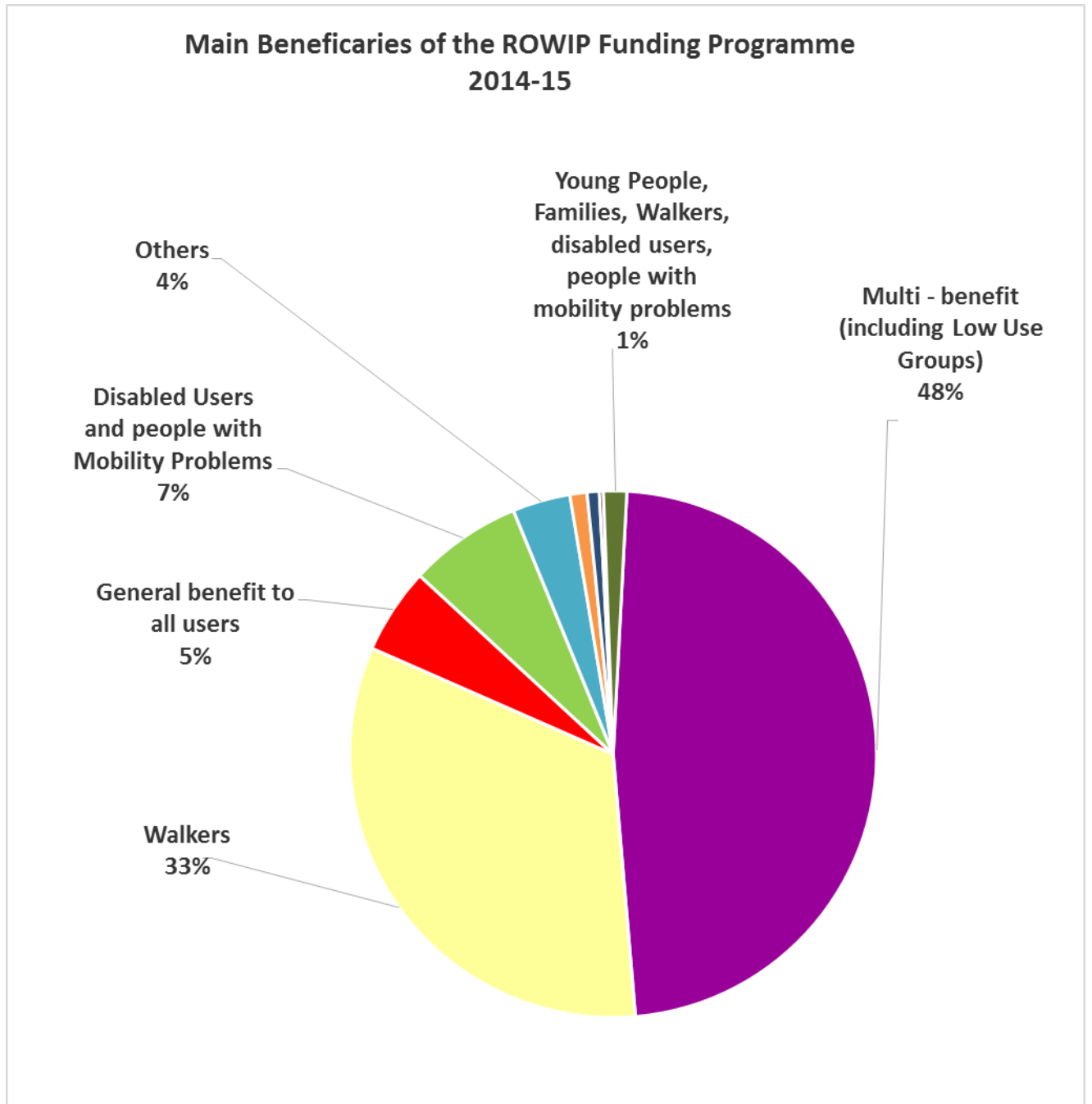
Table 15 above shows that 68 actions were “multi-benefit” i.e. benefiting more than one specific type of user. The breakdown of these actions is as follows:

- 13 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”.
- 68 actions were recorded as ‘multi benefit’ and aimed at combinations of more able bodied users such as:
 - 61 actions benefitting specifically “walkers, cyclists and horse riders”
 - 2 actions benefitting specifically “walkers, cyclists, horse riders and landowners”
 - 4 actions benefitting specifically “walkers, cyclists, horse riders and carriage drivers, vehicular Users, landowners”
 - 1 action benefitting specifically “walkers, horse riders, cyclists and carriage drivers”

The same premise applies to horse riders and cyclists. Even though there are just 19 actions specifically for “walkers, cyclists and horse riders”, an analysis of all 188 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.

It is very encouraging to see 7% 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 2014/15

As stated above, whilst there was no requirement 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	Value of Actions (£)	Value as a % of beneficiaries
Multi - Benefit	13	87,806	47%
People with mobility problems	8	63,347	34%
Disabled Users	2	6,173	3%
Young People , Families	2	14,249	8%
Other groups that make low use of countryside	4	10,495	6%
Other *	3	6,090	3%
TOTAL	32	188,160	100%

Those who have benefited from the 13 multi-benefit actions included:

- Young People, Walkers, Disabled Users, People with mobility problems, young families, cyclists
- Walkers, horse riders, vehicle users, cyclists
- Low use users as well as some users with mobility limitations

The "other" in this category was some Walkers which they had improved the steps making it more accessible. It is interesting to note that the number of projects is similar to the previous year (34 in 2013/14) but with some reduction in value of work (£203,711 in 2013/14). Only one authority had not completed information about this type of project in full. The breakdown in Table 17 below shows the value of different 'Action Types' i.e. the type of work carried out. The majority of works for 'low use' groups relate to improving existing linear access.

Table 17: Type of work and value of work delivered for ‘low use’ groups 2014/15

Action Type	Value of Actions (£)
a) improve existing linear access	154,494
c) improve other access opportunities	32,855
h) Other	811
Total	188,160

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

- re-surfacing of routes to enable access for wheelchair users
- installation of easy access furniture and benches for people with mobility problems
- boardwalk access
- purchase of a mobility scooter for guided walks
- creation of a path for people with disabilities

‘Other’ category this year was only £811 and related to work:

- To create one new link path and widen an existing footpath at Parc Derwen, Coity (Grid Ref. SS 92008161)

Works delivered during 2014-2015 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

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Appendix 1

1. NB in 2014/15 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 2014-2015 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 waymarking, 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 at 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.