



‘Countryside Access; Our Way Forward’



HARTLEPOOL
BOROUGH COUNCIL

**HARTLEPOOL BOROUGH COUNCIL
PUBLIC RIGHTS OF WAY
IMPROVEMENT PLAN
APPENDICES 2007**

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Tees Valley Equestrian Study

In December 2004, Hartlepool Borough Council jointly financed a Tees Valley Equestrian Study along with the Countryside Agency, Middlesbrough Council, Darlington Borough Council and Stockton Borough Council. The North East Community Forest commissioned consultants McAuley-McGee Associates to carry out an in-depth study of the Tees Valley area. Redcar and Cleveland Borough Council had already completed their own study and so it was agreed that the rest of the region would benefit from a similar analysis.

The Study Aims and Objectives were to:

- Increase the understanding and raise the profile of the Equestrian Leisure Sector within the Tees Valley sub-region
- Increase awareness amongst Local Authority planning and transport staff about the needs and demands of the Equestrian Leisure Sector
- Highlight the need for greater acknowledgement within the Local Planning Structure of the ability of the Equestrian Leisure Sector to contribute to the social cohesion, wellbeing and environmental sustainability of rural and urban fringe areas
- Enable more effective targeting and wider publicity for the opportunities afforded through the Single Payments Scheme (Environmental Stewardship) and the Rural Development Scheme

The study focused on three key areas to assist in the future sustainable development of the sector:

- Quantifying the scale of the Equestrian Leisure Sector within the Tees Valley (including its economic contribution to the local economy)
- Determining the supply of the off-road riding network and identify key issues associated with the network
- Examination of the local planning and transport policies to assess whether they adequately consider the present and future demands of the equine sector

The full report and Executive Summary can be found on the Tees Forest website at www.teesforest.org.uk/equestrianfullreport.htm; however, the Recommendations from the full report are listed below:

1. Work should be set in hand to create a Tees Valley “Festival of the Horse”
2. A ‘Tees Valley Trail’ should be established, ‘wrapping’ around the conurbation of Tees Valley with further connections to Cumbria, Durham and North Yorkshire
3. The development of a framework partnership agreement between the key agencies with one nominated lead agency to provide the first point of contact.
4. The nominated lead agency, with the support of the partnership, should seek to promote a business cluster group; to identify and address issues of common concern to the sector, develop an effective interface with agencies, encourage competition and seek new markets for the local product.

HBC Viewpoint Results

Q1 Which of the following Rights of Way have you heard of?

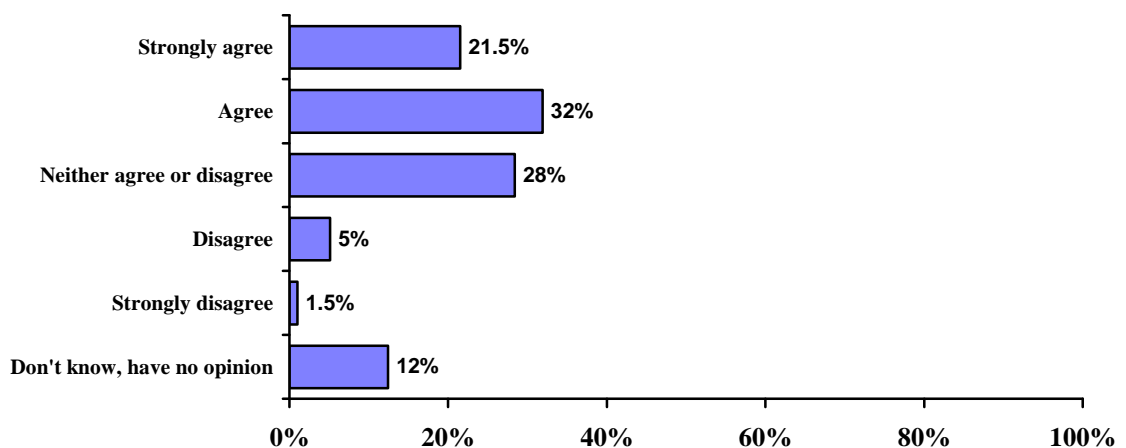
	%
Hart to Haswell Walkway	64
The National Cycle Network	36
Tees Valley Cycling Events Leaflet	12
Three Villages Native Tree Walk	10
The 5 Tees Forest Walk Leaflets	8
Brickworks Trail Loop Walk	6
None/no answer	29

Q2 Which of the following Rights of Way have you used in the last 12 months?

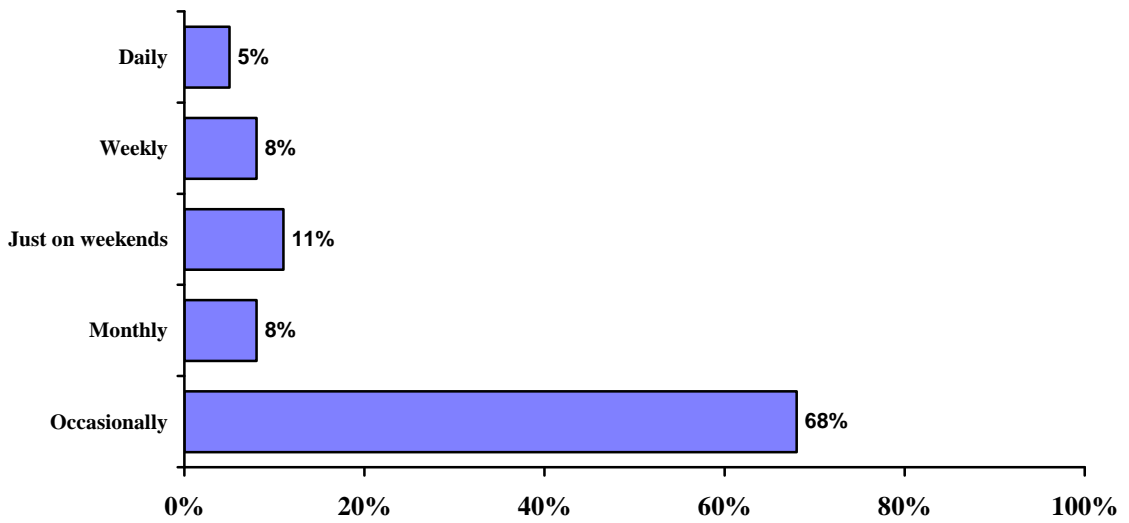
	%
Hart to Haswell Walkway	18
The National Cycle Network	8
Three Villages Native Tree Walk	2
Brickworks Trail Loop Walk	1
5 Tees Forest Walk routes	1
Tees Valley Cycling Events routes	1
None/no answer	77

Q3 How strongly do you agree or disagree with the following statement:

“I would use Rights of Way more if there was more information available on them”



Q4 How often have you used any Rights of Way in the last 12 months?



Q5 What activities have you done on a Right of Way in the last 12 months?

	%
Walking	80
Cycling	34
Running	3
Horse Riding	2
Other	1
No answer	2

Q6 What prevents you from using the Rights of Way more?

	%
Don't know where to go	28
Do not have enough time	27
Too busy	21
Do not feel safe	16
Health problems	14
Limited mobility	12
Not interested in walking/cycling/riding	10
Lack of available route	8
Worried about getting lost	7
Restrictions on where I can go	7
Lack of safe crossings on main roads	5
Spoilt by modern development	5
Lack of public transport	5
Poor condition of gates/stiles	4
Plough/cropping of paths	4
Sharing use with other path users	1
Other	2
No answer	13

Q7 When visiting the countryside, how do you decide where to go?

	%
Word of mouth	42
Brochures and leaflets	38
Maps	29
Signpost/information boards	22
Always know about route	19
Saw other people using the route	7
Internet sites	7
Organised group walks	6
Other	2
No answer	18

Q8 How do you feel the Council could improve access to the Hartlepool countryside?

	%
Publish more leaflets	40
Make paths suitable for pushchairs and	36
Maintain the existing Rights of Way	34
Improve existing rights of way	33
Improve signs and way markings	33
Create new routes to walk along	32
Create more circular routes	32
Create better links from urban areas	30
Create new paths to use with bikes	28
Improve car parking facilities	28
Link more paths together	27
Provide more events e.g. guided walks	23
Ensure obstructions are moved	19
Create safe crossings at major roads	18
Replace stiles with kissing gates	16
Create new paths to use with horses	6
Other	2
No interested/have no opinion	8
No answer	6

Q9 Which of the following are most important to you and would encourage you to use the Rights of Way more?

	%
Facilities e.g. seats/toilets	47
Circular routes	43
Wildlife	43
Sites of special interest on route	42
Pub/café on route	40
Car parking	39
Information boards	37
Obstruction free paths	36
Trees/forest	31
Water features	27
Special events	23
Access for disabled	21
Public transport links	15
Open areas	13
Long distance routes	11
Other	1
Not interested/have no opinion	10
No answer	6

Countryside and Rights of Way Quiz

Introduction

The questionnaire was devised in order to assist in our quest to raise awareness of public rights of way and the wider countryside. A user group that are often over looked, and as a result are poorly represented, are 11 to 16 years olds. Within this age band we have a prime user group within the Hartlepool Borough.

It was envisaged that the quiz would not only get young people thinking about countryside matters but also give us some insight into education projects that we may need to pursue in the future.

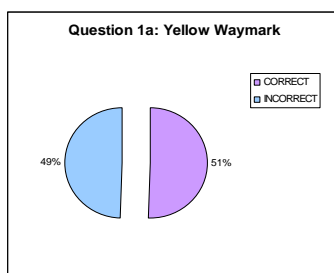
Method

A quiz, consisting of 8 key awareness questions, was circulated around local schools that were willing to take part in the survey.

Results

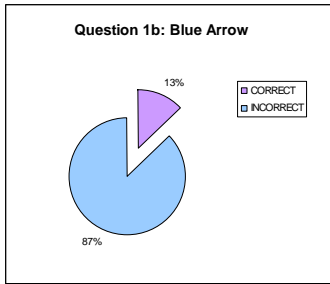
Question 1a: Yellow Arrow

Footpath Waymark	Number of students	Percentage
CORRECT	46	51
INCORRECT	45	49



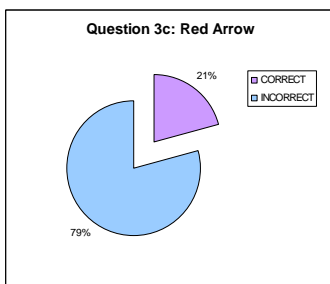
Question 1b: Blue Arrow

Bridleway Waymark	Number of students	Percentage
CORRECT	12	13
INCORRECT	79	87



Question 1c: Red Arrow

Byway Waymark	Number of students	Percentage
CORRECT	19	21
INCORRECT	72	79



Question 2a: Is a Row a Highway?

ROW = Highway	Number of students	Percentage
TRUE	12	13
FALSE	79	87

Question 3b: To Stray from ROW is an Act of Trespass?

Act of trespass	Number of students	Percentage
TRUE	12	13
FALSE	75	82
DON'T KNOW	4	5

Question 2c: Is it an offence to ride a motor vehicle on a ROW?

Motor vehicle offence	Number of students	Percentage
TRUE	70	77
FALSE	18	20
DON'T KNOW	3	3

Question 3a: ROWs Allow access to? (Countryside)

Question 3b: ROWs cross? Land (Private)

Question 3c: You should always close? (Gates)

Countryside knowledge	Number of correct answers	Percentage
Access to Countryside	60	43
Private Land	70	50
Closing Gates	83	60

Question 5a: Can horses use a public footpath?

Horses on Footpath	Number of students	Percentage
YES	19	21
NO	68	75
DON'T KNOW	4	4

Question 5b: Can cyclists use a public byway?

Cycles on Byway	Number of students	Percentage
YES	67	74
NO	19	21
DON'T KNOW	5	5

Question 5c: Can walkers use a public bridleway?

Walkers on Bridleway	Number of students	Percentage
YES	47	52
NO	39	43
DON'T KNOW	5	5

Question 8: Why do you think ROWs are important?

Why are ROW important	Number of students	Percentage
DON'T KNOW	30	33
COUNTRYSIDE ACCESS	15	16
PREVENT A JAM	4	4
SAFETY	15	16
PREVENT TRESPASS	10	11
FREEDOM	2	2
CONVENIENCE	4	4
REDUCE CONFLICT	6	7
THEY ARE NOT IMPT	2	2

Summary

The results show that very few students are familiar with waymark colours. Hartlepool's public right of way network is primarily made up of footpaths and so the majority of students are unlikely to have seen bridleway or byway waymarks. However, only 50% recognised a yellow arrow as a symbol for a public footpath. This highlights the need for signs to be appropriately worded stating the correct status as well as the coloured arrow.

Few students picked up on a public right of way being a highway and even less (75%) believed that straying from the right of way was an act of trespass. It may be worth reinforcing, or even introducing, the idea of trespass and the terms of access within the countryside. This may be particularly relevant in certain areas where trespass is a major cause of conflict between users and landowners. Only 20% of students were unaware that it is an offence to drive a vehicle on a footpath or bridleway.

Generally there was an acceptable level of knowledge on how to behave in the countryside. However this could always be improved by including local schools in the countryside code initiative.

There seems to be a lot of confusion over who can use a bridleway, but generally students were aware of the different uses of rights of way.

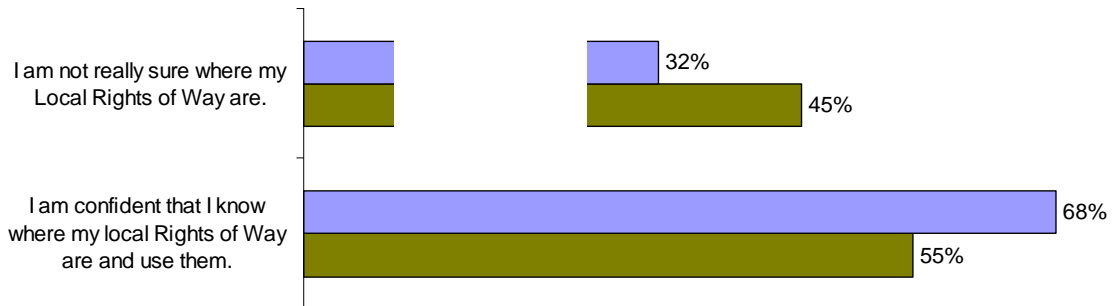
The last question asking why rights of way were important got a variation of answers. However 33% of students failed to think of a reason or simply didn't know why they are important. This is an area that could be worked upon perhaps by linking this with improving the student's general knowledge on rights of way. Some integration into the 'Walk the Way to Health' campaign may also reinforce the importance of countryside access.

Use and Demand Survey Results

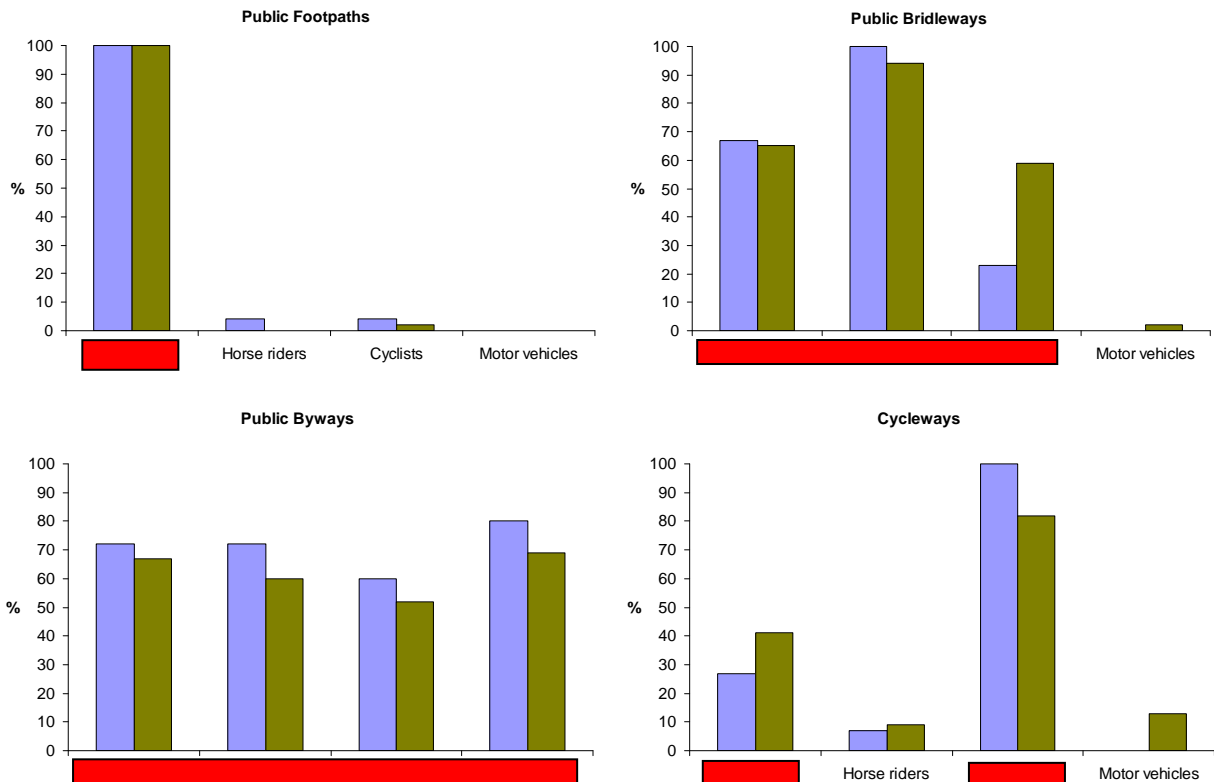
Two slightly differing questionnaires were sent out to landowners (L) and user groups (UG) and the results are presented below, in all cases **landowner** responses are shown in **blue** and **user** responses in **green**. The results are presented together where the questions were the same.

Section 1 - Perception

L1 / UG 1 Which of the statements below best describes you?

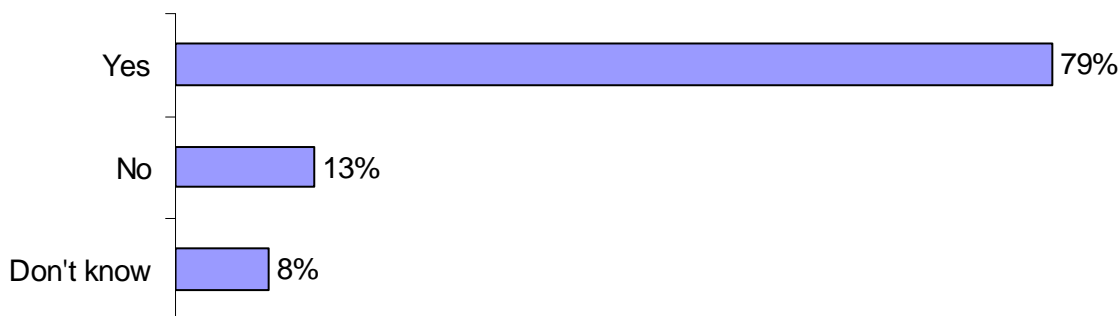


L2 / UG 2 Thinking about the different types of Rights of Way, as shown below, please tick which user groups you think can use which paths. (Correct answers highlighted)

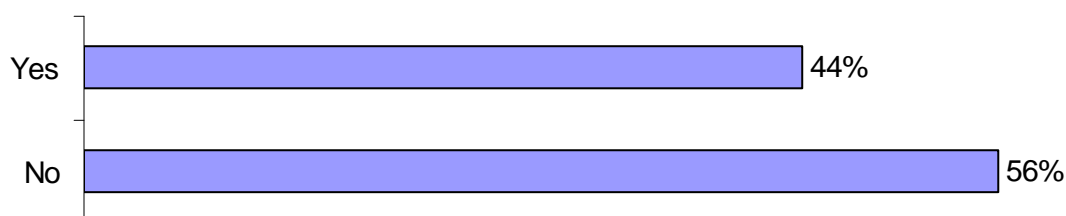


Section 2 – Participation – Landowners

L3 Within the last 12 months have members of the public used the public rights of way that cross your land?



L4 Would you like more information regarding the Public Rights of Way that cross your land?



L5 Have you heard of or used any of the following:

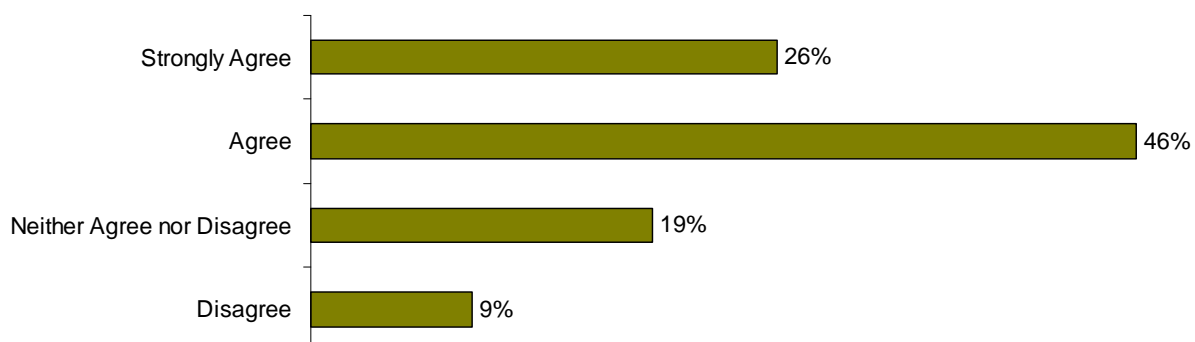
(Data presented as % of respondents who answered the question)

Heard of	Used	
60	17	The Hart to Haswell Walkway
47	3	Tees Forest Walks leaflets - in and around Hartlepool
47	7	The National Cycle Network
40	10	The Three Villages Native Tree Walk
13	3	The Brickworks Trail Loop Walk
10	0	Tees Valley Cycling Events Leaflet
13%		No / No Response

Section 2 – Participation – User Groups

UG 3 Please say how strongly you agree or disagree with the following statement.

I would use more public paths if there were improved information available about them.



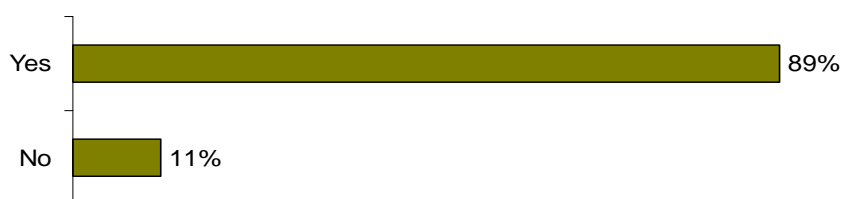
UG 4 What information do you normally use in deciding where to visit the countryside?

(Tick more than one if applicable)

(Data presented as % of respondents who answered the question)

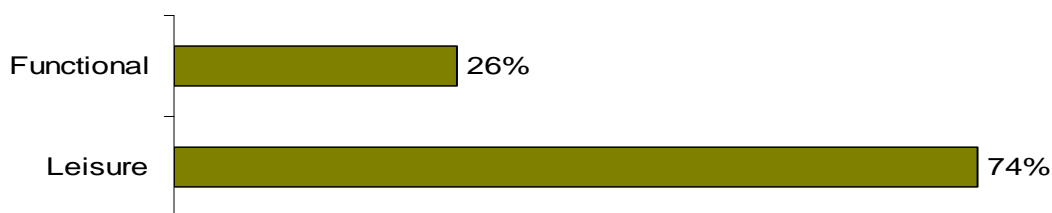
66	Maps		
61	Brochures / leaflets		
48	Signposts / information boards		
43	Organised group walk		
30	Was told about it by friends /relatives		
27	Always known about the route		
18	Saw other people using the route		
11	Internet		
7	Other:	Books	HMSO National Trails Wainrights
		Specialist guide books	
		Go with rambling group	

UG 5 Within the last 12 months have you 'used' public rights of way or other routes in and around Hartlepool Borough?



If not, why not:	Limited mobility
(where reasons given)	Do not know routes

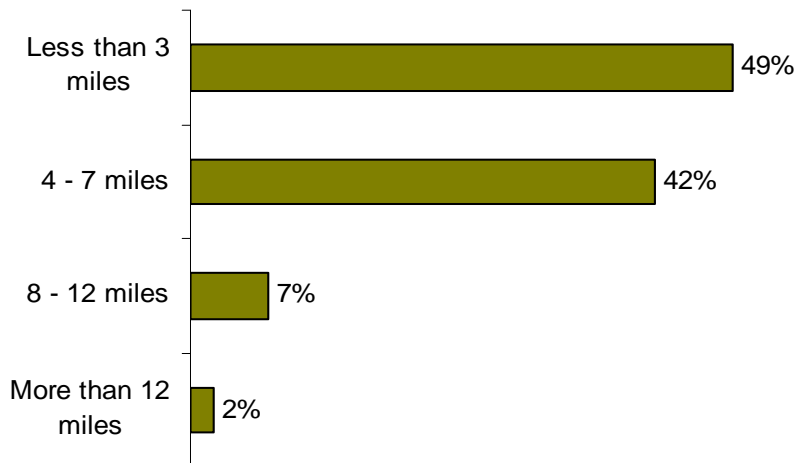
UG 6 When using public rights of ways, are the journeys:



UG 7 Which one activity do you normally prefer when undertaking an activity?



Which distance do you normally prefer when undertaking an activity?

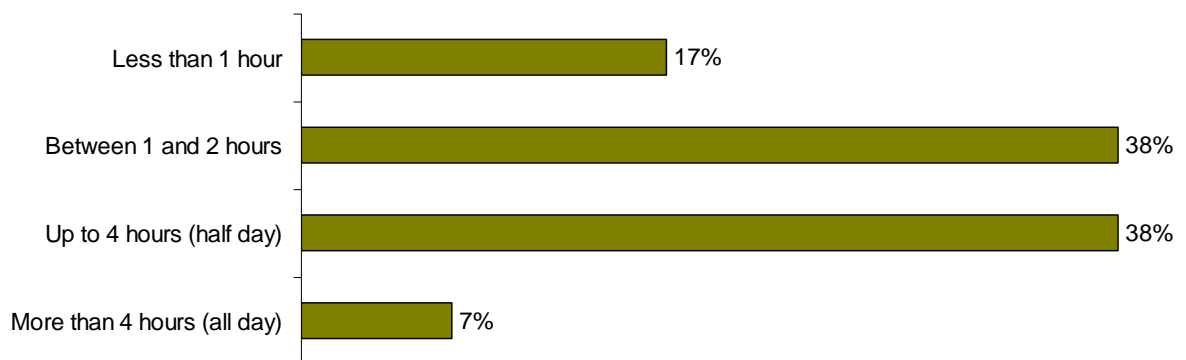


UG 8 During this activity did you use: (tick more than one if applicable)

(Data presented as % of respondents who answered the question)

83	Rural footpaths
67	Quiet country lanes
61	Minor roads
61	Urban footpaths / cycle tracks
56	Bridleways / byways
54	Former railway lines
4	Other: Seashore
	Forests
	Riversides
	Country Parks

UG 9 Disregarding the time it may take you to get from home to the start of a visit / activity how long did the visit / activity take?



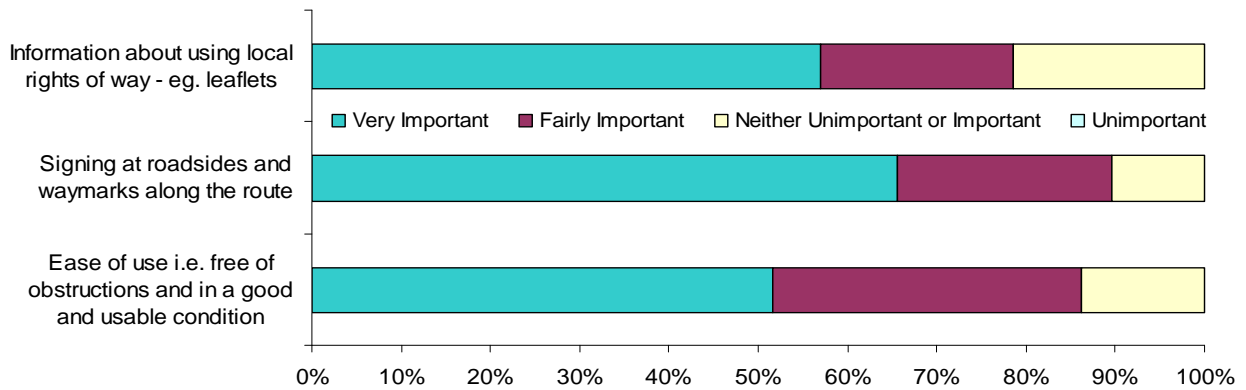
UG 10 Have you heard of or used any of the following:

(Data presented as % of people who included each as one of their options)

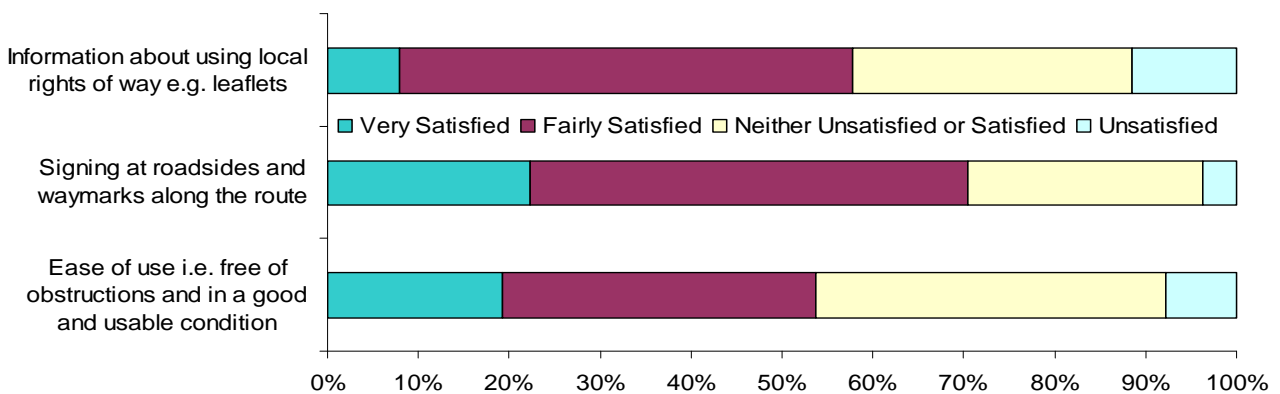
Heard of	Used	
82	76	The Hart to Haswell Walkway
61	29	Tees Forest Walks leaflets - in and around Hartlepool
61	29	The National Cycle Network
37	32	The Brickworks Trail Loop Walk
34	13	The Three Villages Native Tree Walk
26	5	Tees Valley Cycling Events Leaflet

Section 3 – Feedback - Landowners

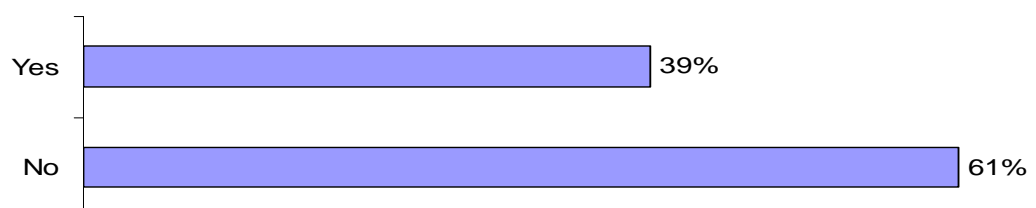
L 6 We would like to know how important the following are to you regarding the users enjoying rights of ways?



L 7 We would like to know generally how satisfied you are with the following?

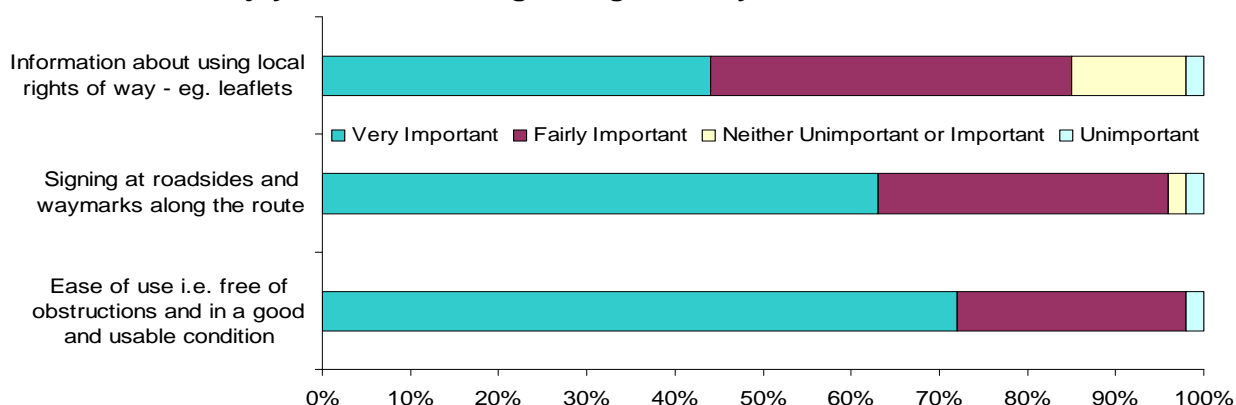


L8 Have you ever suffered verbal/physical intimidation from users who use the rights of ways that cross your land?

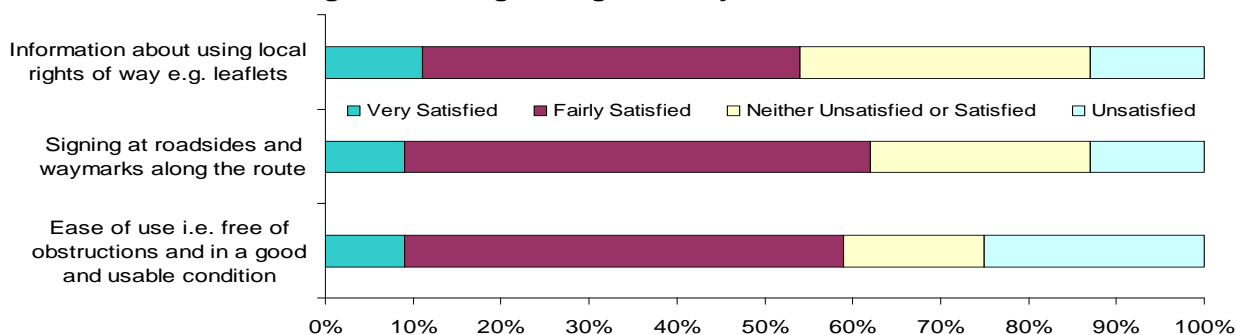


Section 3 – Feedback – User Groups

UG 11 We would like to know how important the following are to your enjoyment when using the right of way?



UG 12 We would like to know generally how satisfied you are with the following when using the right of way?



UG 13 If you do not engage in recreational activity as often as you would like to, are there any particular reasons for this? (Tick more than one if applicable)

(Data presented as % of respondents who answered the question)

30	Too busy	
30	Don't know where to go	
28	Lack of available routes	
25	Restrictions on where I can go	
23	Lack of safe crossings on main roads	
20	Poor condition of gates, stiles etc.	
20	Health problems	
15	Limited mobility	
15	Ploughing / Cropping of paths	
13	Do not feel safe	
13	Worried about getting lost	
10	None	
10	Spoilt by modern developments	
8	Lack of public transport	
5	Sharing use with other path users	
5	Others (please specify)	If wet paths are slippery
		Attractive and varied countryside features are lacking

UG 14 When walking, riding or cycling which of the following hazards do you most frequently encounter? Please tick all you encounter frequently

(Data presented as % of respondents who answered the question)

64	Overgrown paths	
59	Muddy / boggy / flooded routes	
29	Broken glass or cans	
27	Poor signing and way marking	
25	Busy road crossing	
25	Slippery path surfaces	
20	Overhanging trees	
20	Blocked paths	
20	Gates difficult to open	
11	Speed of motor traffic	
11	Narrow grass verges	
11	Other (Please specify)	A-frames too narrow for cycles
		Unauthorised horses and motor-cycles
		Motorcycles using footpaths
		Right of Way ploughed up
		Not many ramps for scooter use
9	Missing bridges	
9	Volume of motor traffic	
7	Slippery road surfaces	
5	Road crossing	
2	Hidden drainage ditches on verges	

UG 16 Do the routes and land to which you have access meet your current walking, cycling or horse riding needs?

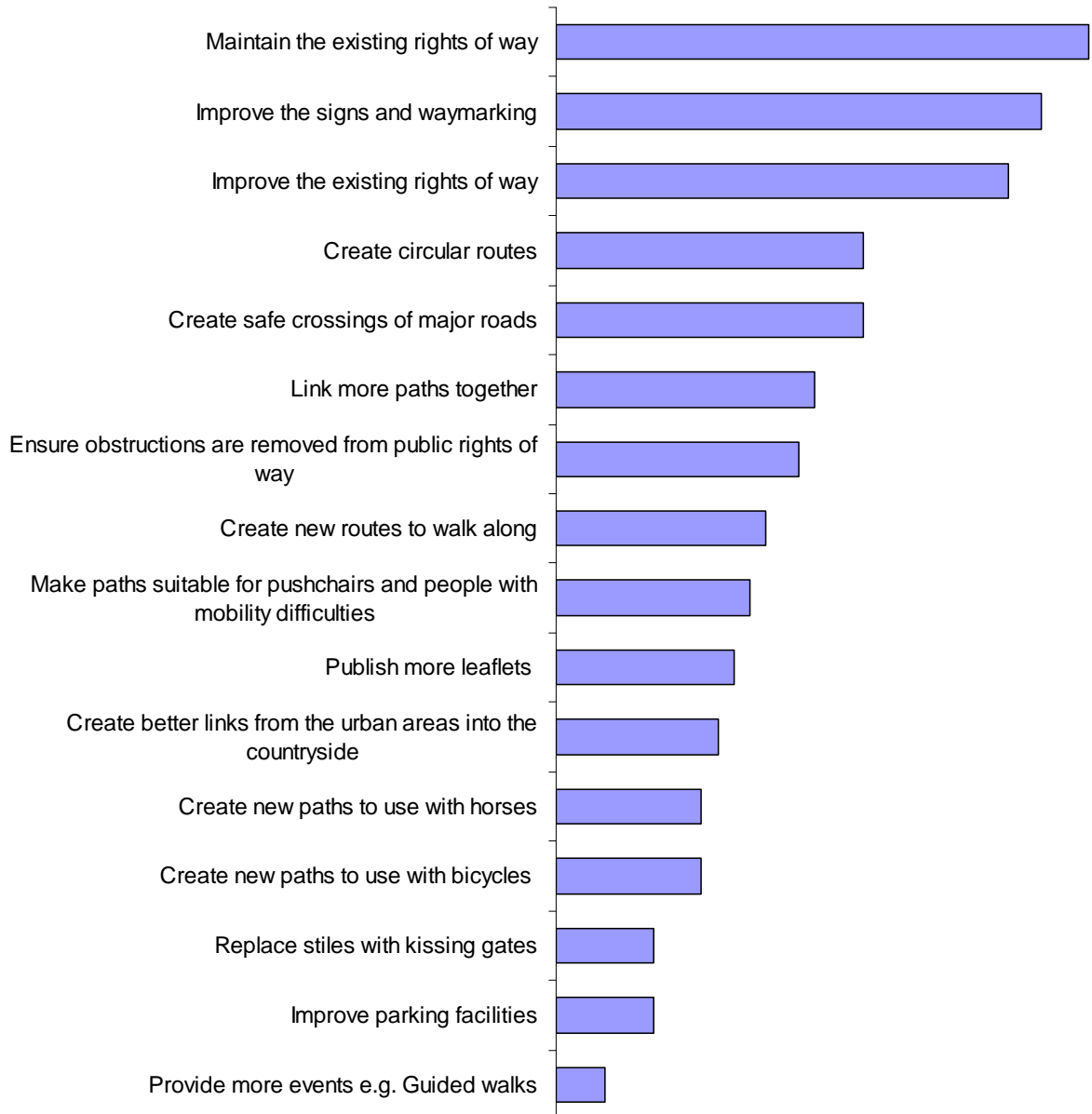


UG 17 Have you ever suffered verbal/physical intimidation whilst walking, riding or cycling?



Section 4 – Improvements – Landowners

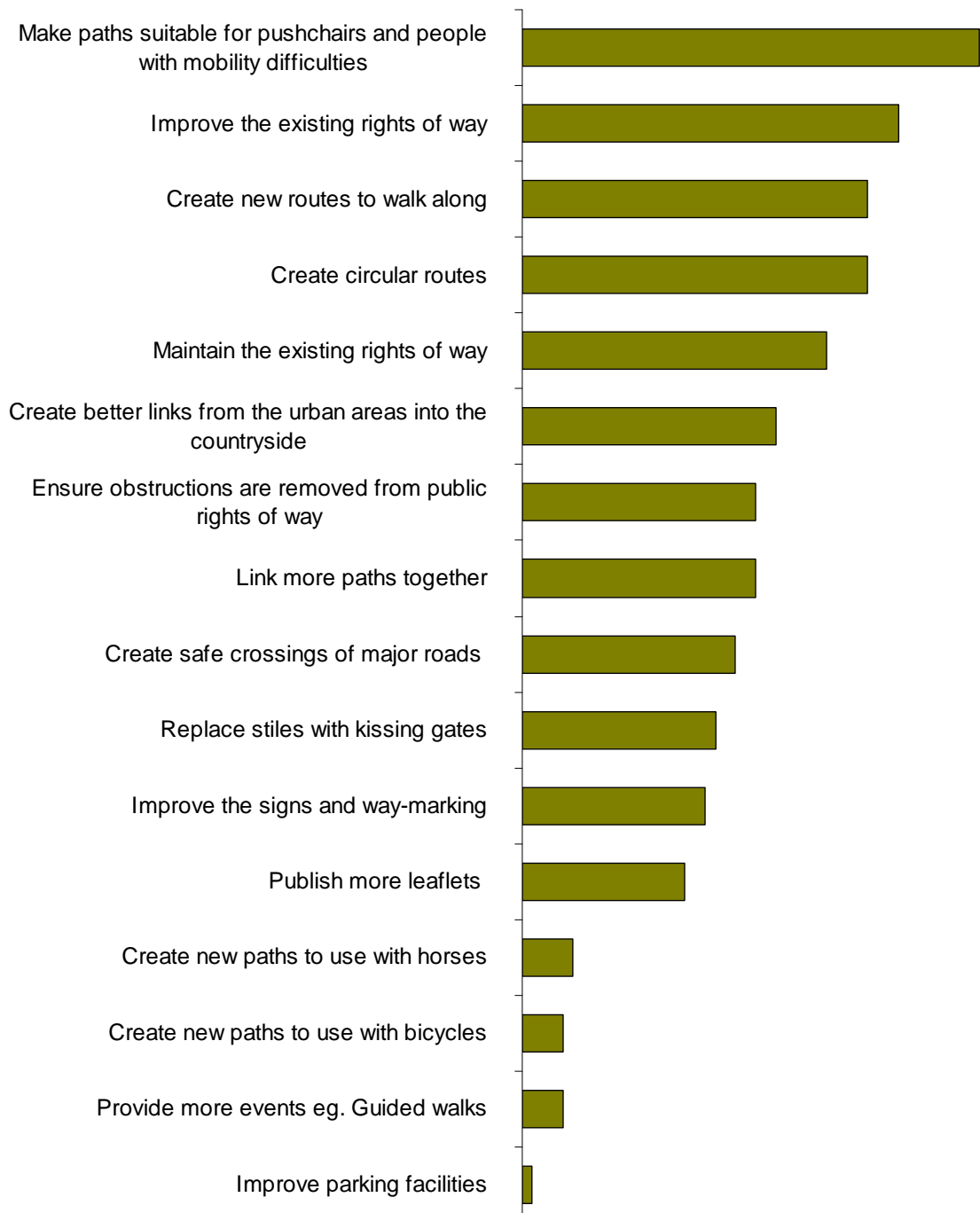
L9 What are the five most important things we could do to improve access to the Hartlepool countryside? (In order of preference 1-5)



Section 4 – Improvements – User Groups

UG 18 What are the five most important things we could do to improve access to the Hartlepool countryside? (In order of preference 1-5)

(Data presented as ranked responses, relative to each other)



UG 19

If you have not used or had difficulty in using the public rights of ways, please tick the boxes below that are most appropriate in explaining why.

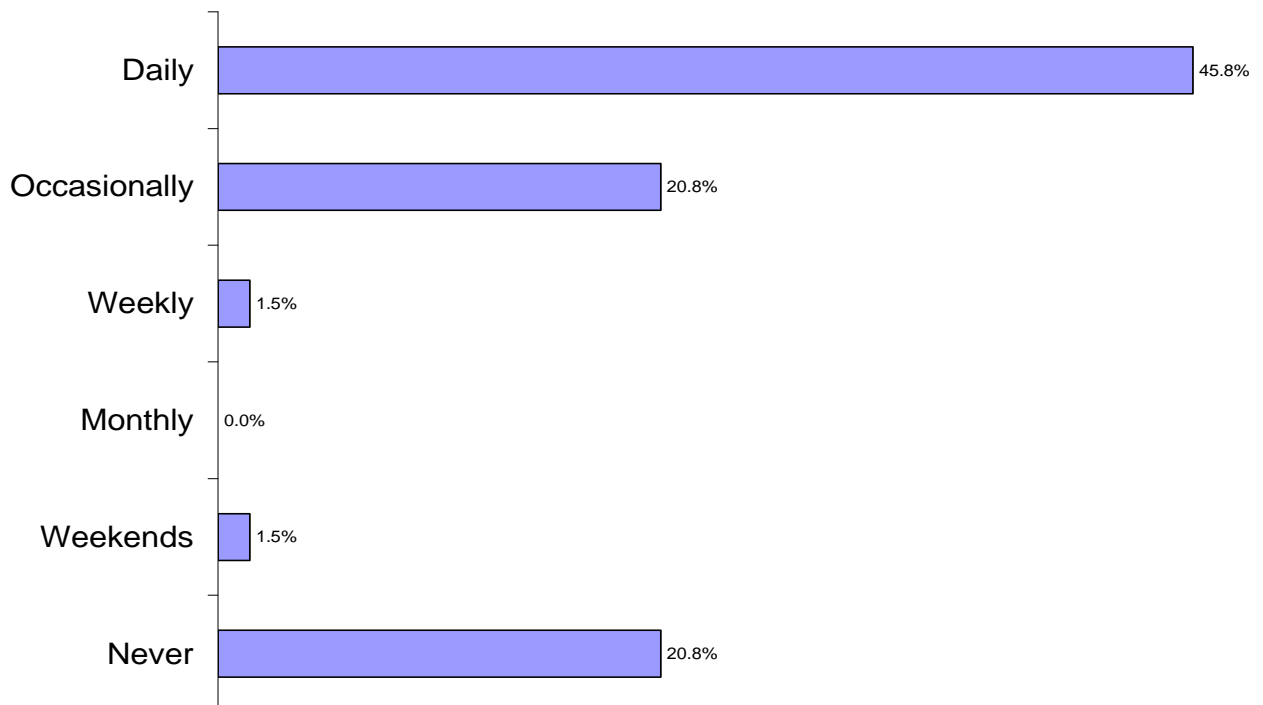
(Data presented as % of respondents who answered the question)

31	Health problems	
27	Poor condition of gates, stiles etc.	
24	Restrictions on where I can go	
24	Ploughing / Cropping of paths	
21	Lack of available routes	
21	Limited mobility	
21	Others (please specify)	Path surfaces
		Lack of information
17	Worried about getting lost	
17	Don't know where to go	
17	Lack of public transport	
14	Do not feel safe	
14	Too busy	
14	Lack of safe crossings on main roads	
10	Spoilt by modern developments	
7	Sharing use with other path users	

Section 5 – User Profile – Landowners

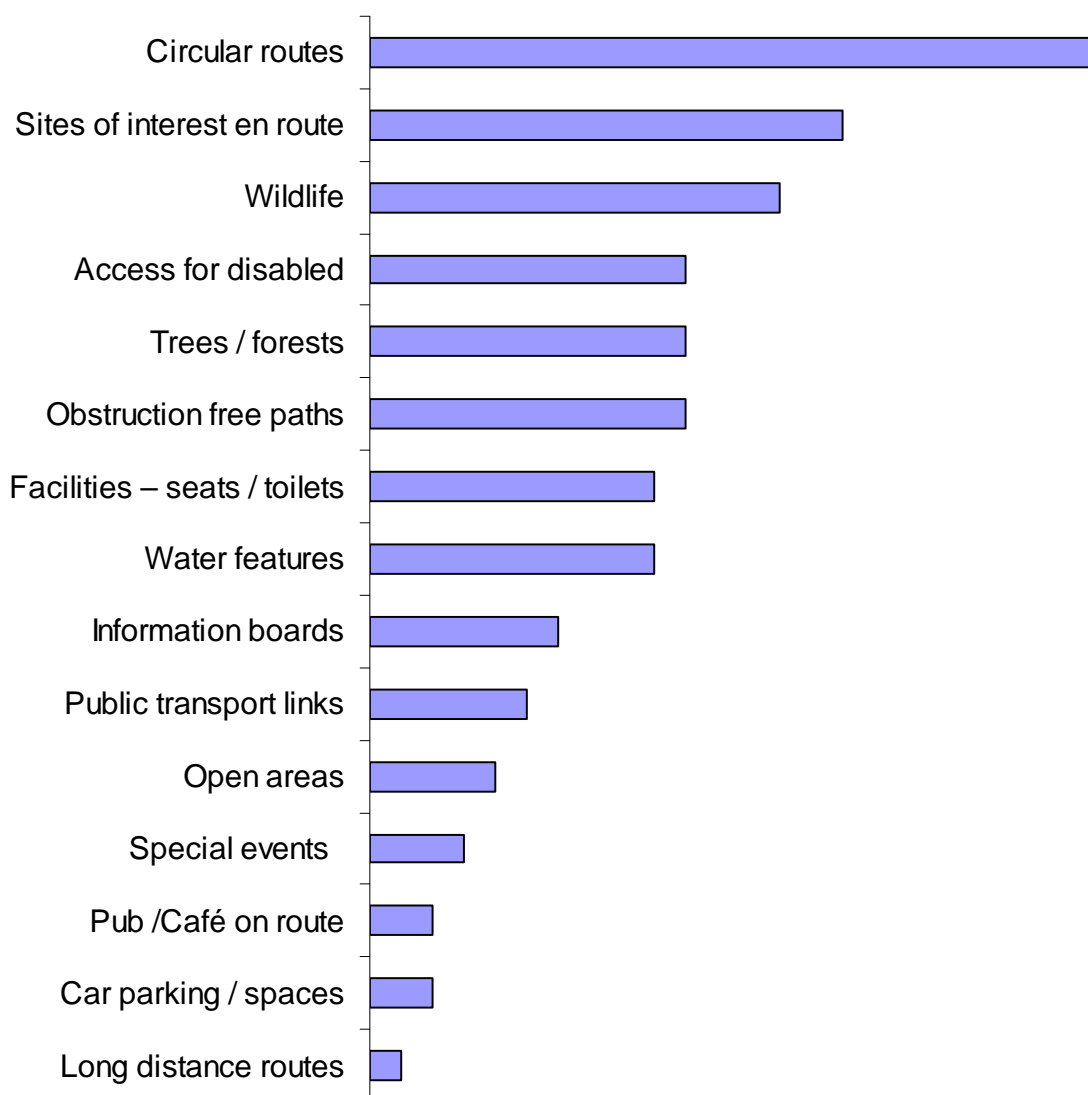
L10

How often have the public used rights of way over your land in the last 12 months?



L11 Please indicate in order of preference which of the following 3 features about the countryside is important to you? (1,2,3)

(Data presented as ranked responses, relative to each other)

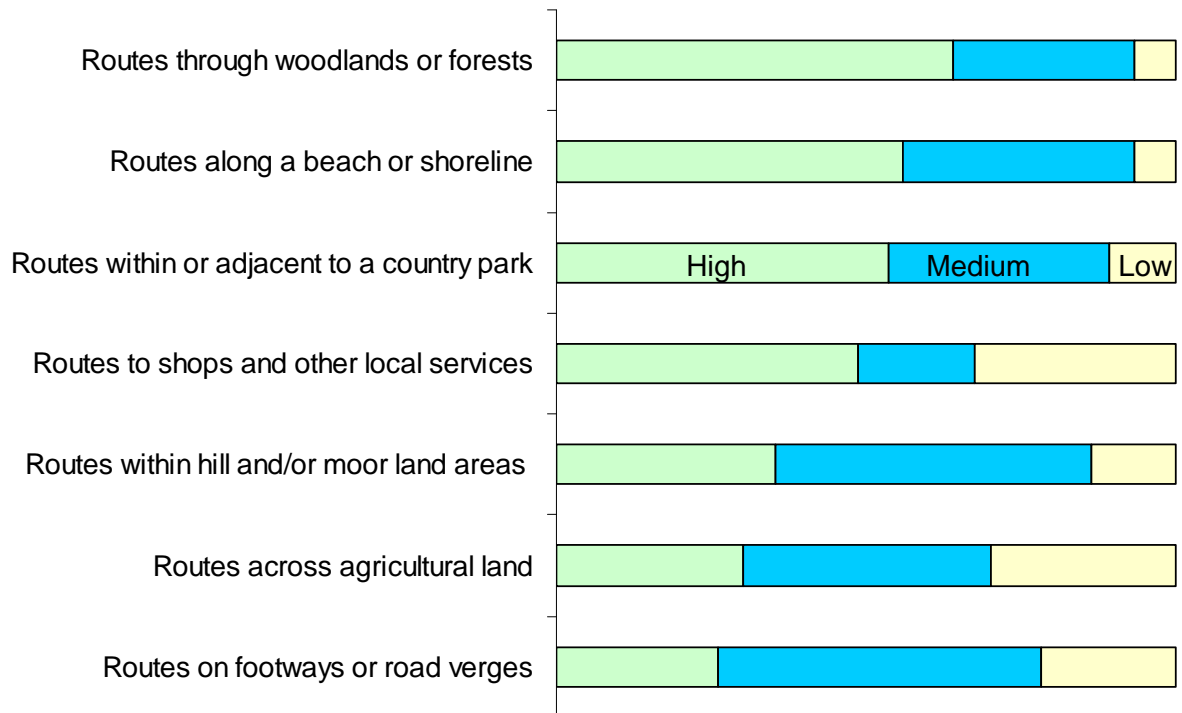


L12 When visiting the countryside, yourself, what information do you normally use in deciding where to go?

(Data presented as % of respondents who answered the question)

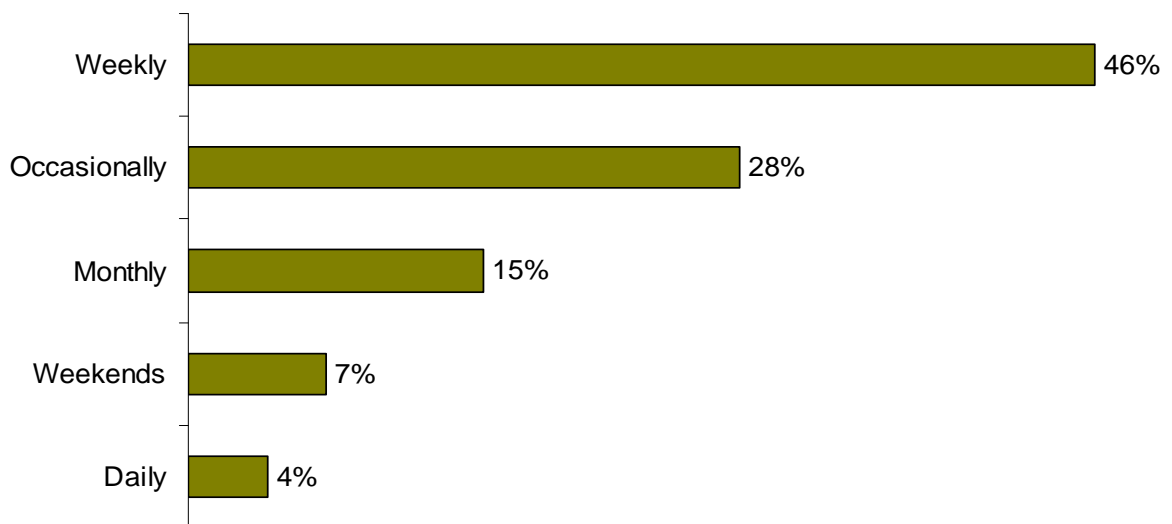
56	Maps
44	Brochures / leaflets
37	Signposts / information boards
30	Was told about it by friends /relatives
22	Always known about the route
21	Was told about it by friends / relatives
4	Organised group walk
4	Saw other people using the route
1	Other Horse Routes
0	Internet

L13 How high or low would you rate your preference for each of the following types of route?



Section 5 – User Profile – User Groups

UG 20 How often have you used the public rights of way in the last 12 months?



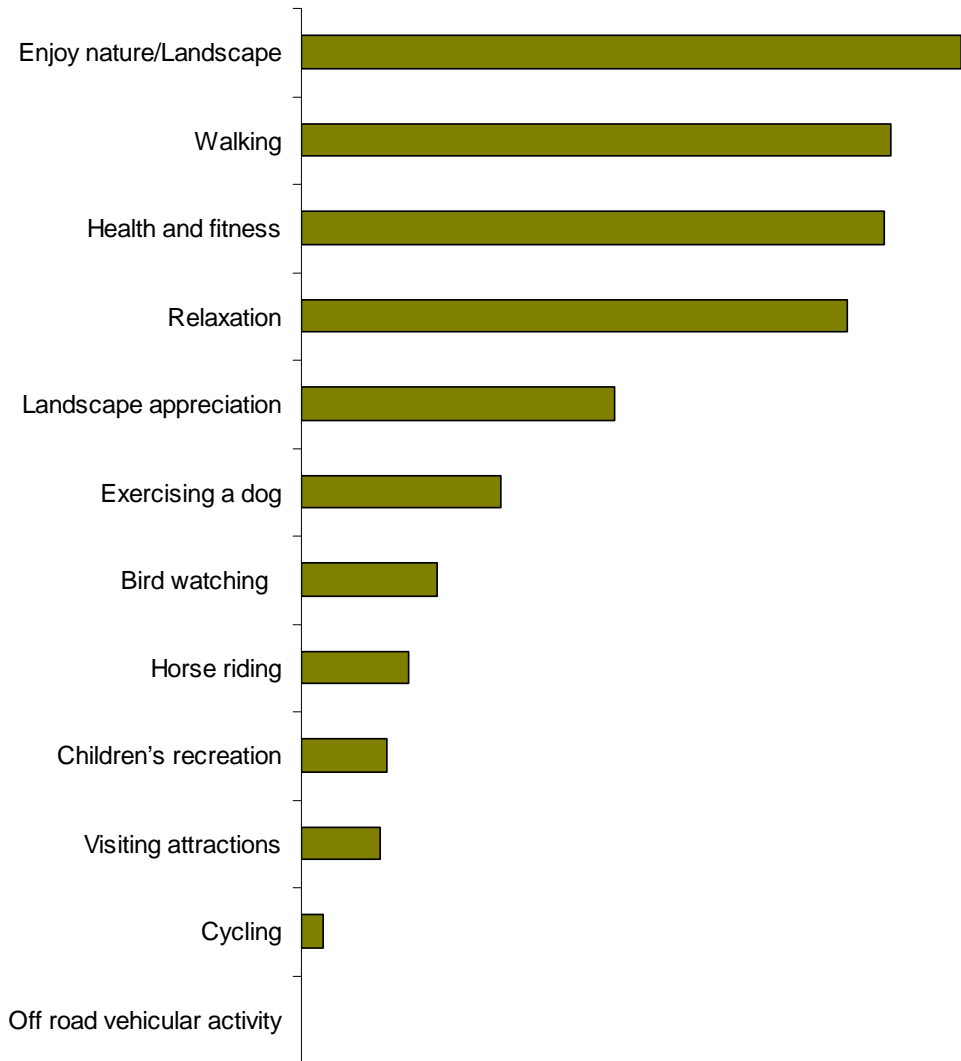
UG 21 If you use the public rights of ways for recreational/leisure purposes, are the trips:



UG 22

Choose the main five reasons why you 'use' or visit the countryside in order of importance? (1, 2, 3, 4, 5)

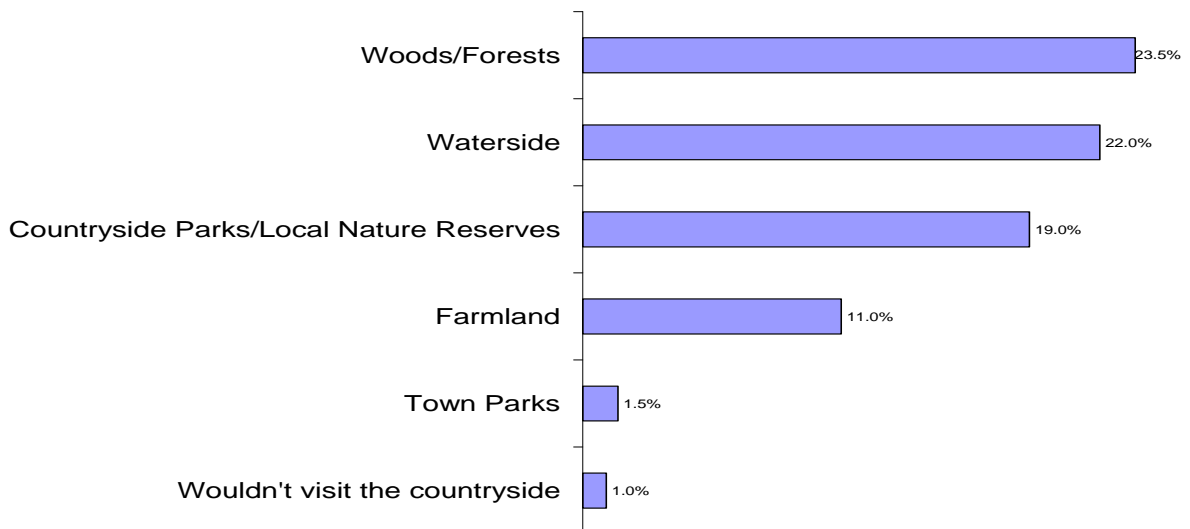
(Data presented as ranked responses, relative to each other)



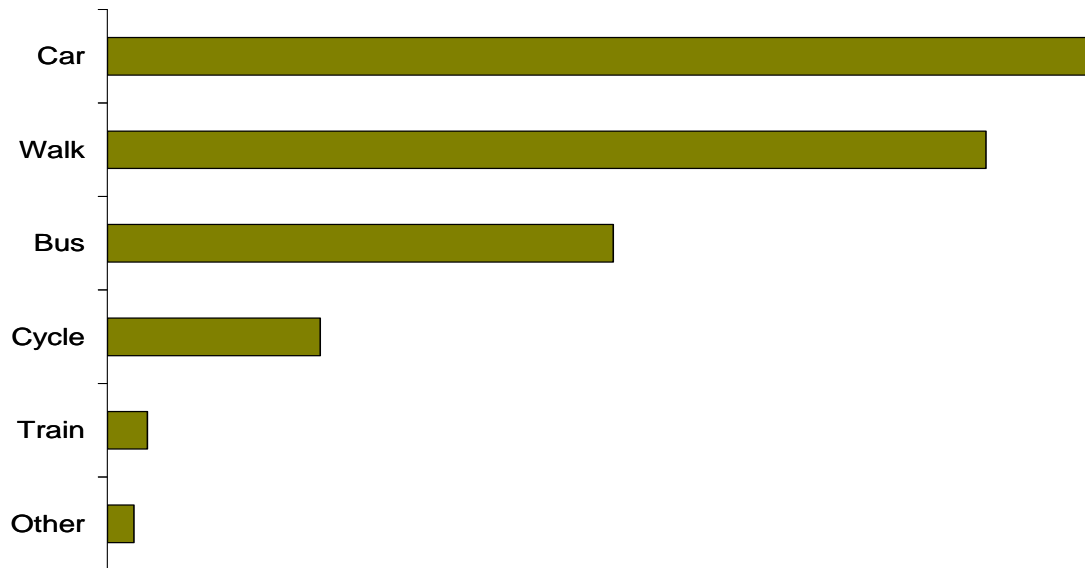
UG 23

Select the types of countryside, around Hartlepool, that you prefer to visit.

(Data presented as % of respondents who answered the question)

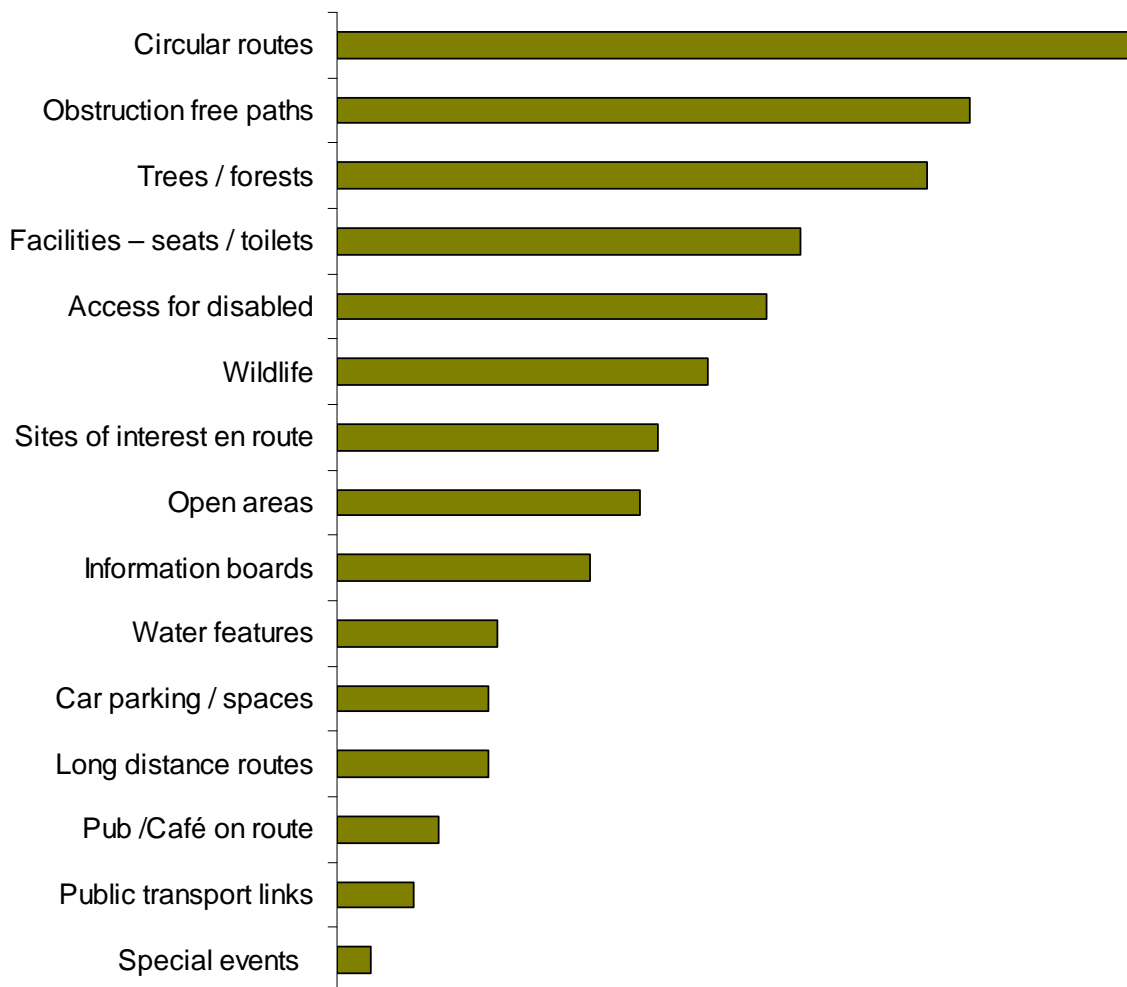


UG 24 How do you/would you travel to the countryside?



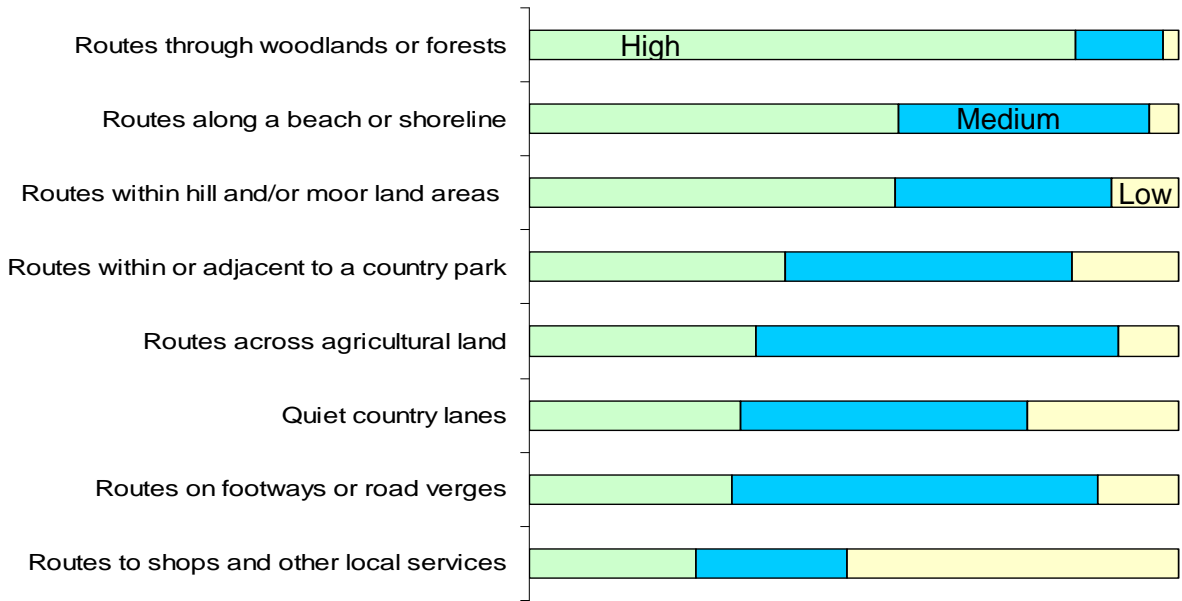
UG 25 Please indicate in order of preference which of the following five features about the countryside is important to you? (1,2,3,4,5)

(Data presented as ranked responses, relative to each other)

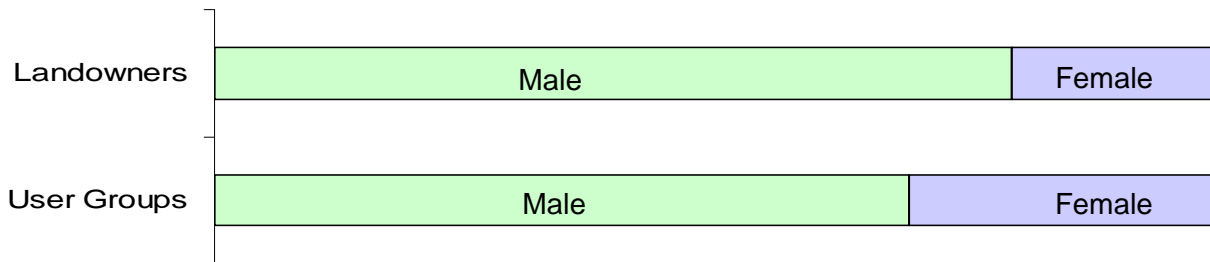


UG 26

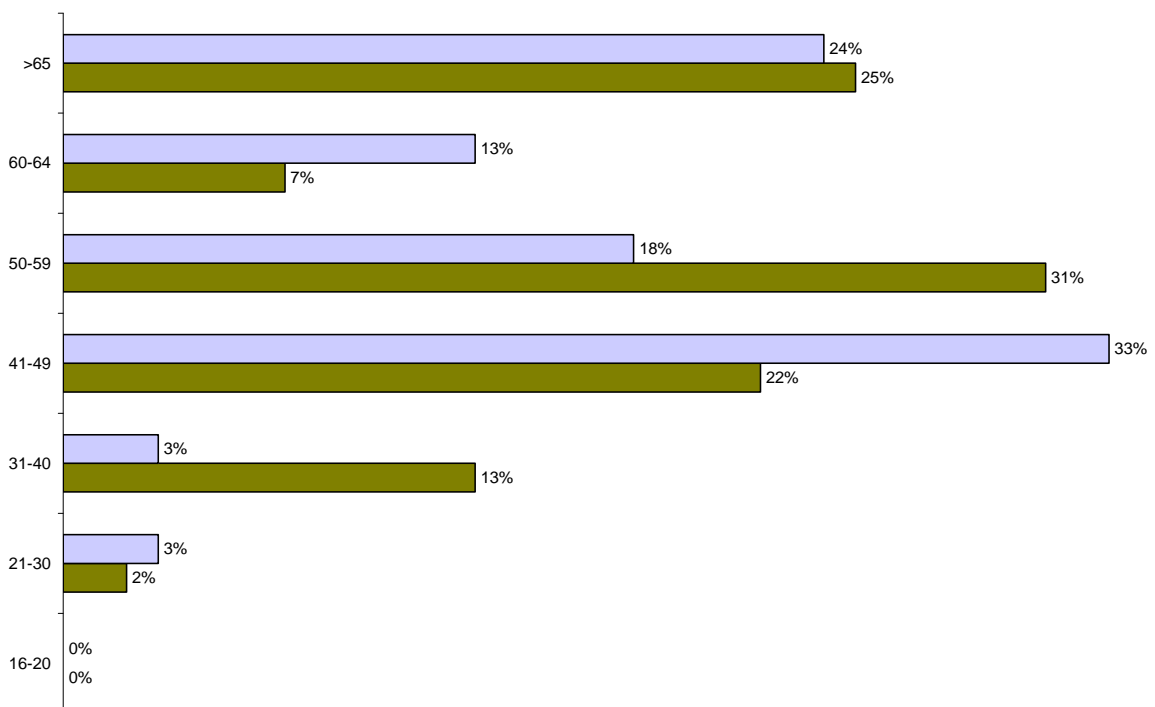
How high or low would you rate your preference for each of the following types of route?



L14 / UG27 Which sex are you?

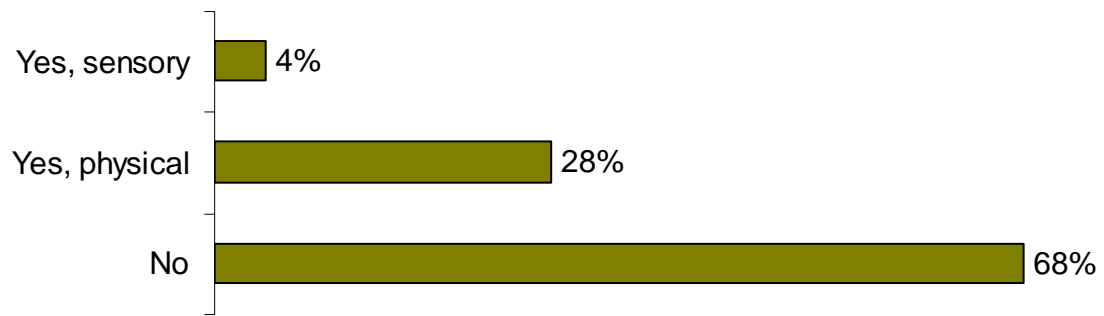


L15 / UG28 Which age group are you in?



UG29

Is your mobility restricted by disability or long-standing illness?



Recreation Audit Sites of Interest

Abbreviations of Parish Names

DP	-	Dalton Piercy
E	-	Elwick
G	-	Greatham
GD	-	Greatham Detached
H	-	Hart
HP	-	Hartlepool
NB	-	Newton Bewley
S	-	Seaton

* Map reference refers to the Maps in Section 11. The first number refers to the Parish Map and the second to the 'Features of Interest' section within the map. The numbering of each Rights of Way, e.g. HP31 is related to the 'Parish' that they are situated in and the reference number chosen for their particular path. This system goes back to the original Definitive Map (1952) and its denotation of each path on this map. This system is still used today.

Map Ref*		Footpath links
	Historical / Archaeological	
1 - 4	Hart to Haswell Walkway (also a LNR)	HP 31
1 - 6	Hart Manor and Fish Ponds	H 1, 6
1 - 7	Hart Saxon Church	H 1
1 - 8	Brus Wall	H 6
1 - 9	Hart Windmill	H 4, 17
2 - 3	Route of Old Sunderland Road (Hartlepool Golf Course)	HP 31
2 - 6	Spion Kop Cemetery (also a LNR)	HP 31, 32
2 -11	Heugh Lighthouse	HP 31 Promenade
2-12	Heugh Battery	HP 31 Promenade
2-13	Town Wall	HP 31 Promenade
2-15	Saint Hilda's Church	HP 31 Promenade
3 - 1	Catcote Romano-British Village	HP 9,10
3 -20	Submerged Forest	n/a
3 -21	Seaton Wreck	n/a
4 - 4	Salt Production Site – Medieval – Seaton Common	S 1a, 1b

4 -11	Brine Pumping Area (Salt Marsh Farm)	S 11
5 -2	WWII Tank Defences – Greatham	G 1
5 - 3	WWII Pill Boxes	G 1
5 - 4	Greatham Hospital	G 13
7 - 1	Claxton Earthworks	
10- 2	Elwick Windmill	E 9
10- 3	Elwick Manor and Fish Ponds	None
10- 4	High Burntsoft (Medieval Rig and Furrow field system)	None
11- 2	Amerston Manor and Fish Ponds	E 20
	WWII Pill Boxes – Middle Warren	None
	WWII Tank Defences – Seaton Dunes	S 1a, 1b
	Industrial	
	Magnesite/Steetley/Britmag – Hartlepool 31	
4 - 7	Oxford Zinc Works	S 1b,2
4 - 9	Power Station	None
4 -12	Phillips Petroleum Storage Facility	S 10,11
4 -13	Corus Pipe Mill	S 10
	Coastal	
2	North Sands Coastal Walkway	HP 31
2	Headland Coastal Walkway	HP 31
2 -15	Marina	HP 1 Promenade
3	Carr House Sands and Seaton Sands	HP 1, Promenade S 1a, 1b
	Parks	
3 - 4	Ward Jackson Park	HP 8,11
3 - 7	Burn Valley Gardens	HP 10
3 -14	Rossmere Park	n/a
3 -18	Seaton Park	n/a
	Recreation Grounds	
2 - 5	King George V – Indirectly via H'pl 31 and Coastal Walkway	
2 - 7	Central Park – Indirectly via H'pl 31 and Coastal Walkway	
2 - 9	Friar terrace – Indirectly via H'pl 31 and Coastal Walkway	
2 -10	Town Moor – Indirectly via H'pl 31 and Coastal Walkway	

2 -22	Grayfields	
3 -10	Rift House	
3 -13	Rossmere Way (next to Rossmere Park) – No direct rights of way connections	
3 -15	Staby House – No direct rights of way connections	
3 -17	Dodds Field – No direct rights of way connections	
	Allotments	
2 - 4	Nicholson's Field – No direct rights of way connections	
2 - 8	Olive Crescent – No direct rights of way connections	
2 -21	Chester Road – No direct rights of way connections	
2 -23	Thornhill Gardens – No direct rights of way connections	
2 -24	Throston	HP 22
2 -25	Thompson Grove – No direct rights of way connections	
3 - 3	Catcote	HP 9,10
3 - 5	Briarfields	HP 40
3 - 8	Burn Valley Gardens	HP 31
3 - 9	Waverley Terrace – No direct rights of way connections	
3 -11	Stranton – No direct rights of way connections	
3 -12	Brierton Hospital – No direct rights of way connections	
3 -16	Haswell Avenue – No direct rights of way connections	
3 -19	Woodcroft – No direct rights of way connections	
4 - 1	Station Lane	S 4,5
5 - 7	Greatham	G 8,9
	LNR's and SSSI's	
2 - 1	Hart to Haswell Walkway (LNR)	HP 30,31
2 - 2	Hart Warren Dunes (LNR + SSSI)	HP 31
2 - 6	Spion Kop (LNR)	HP 30,31
3 - 2	Summerhill (LNR)	DP 1, HP 8-11
4 - 3	Seaton Dunes and Common (LNR + SSSI)	S 1a, 1b, 2
5 - 1	Greatham Beck (LNR)	G 1, GD 1, HP 16
	NNR's	
4 - 6	Teesmouth National Nature Reserve	S 1a, 1b, 2
4 -10	Seal Sands	S 1a, 1b, 2
	Countryside Parks	
3 - 2	Summerhill (HBC) – see LNR's and SSSI's	DP 1, HP 8-11

6 - 1	Cowpen Bewley (SBC) – G12 and 14	G 12, 14
	Community Woodlands	
1 - 1	Hartmoor Farm	H 10
1 - 5	Springwell Farm	H 16, HP 2,36
3 - 6	Family Wood	HP 10
	Areas of Special Landscape	
1 - 2	Thorpe Bulmer Dene	H 9, 11, 13, Hart to Haswell
1 - 3	Silverhills Plantation	
	Amerston/Embleton	
	High Burntoft	E 20-22
	Villages	
1	Hart	H 3,4,7,9-11,13,17
5	Greatham	G1,3,4,12,13,14,15,19-21
6	Newton Bewley	
9	Dalton Piercy DP 1, 2, 3, 4	NB 1,2
10	Elwick E 1, 2, 3, 4, 6, 7, 8	
	Private Nature Reserves	
9 - 1	The Howls (DP)	
9 - 2	The Batts (DP)	DP 2, E 6
10- 1	Crookfoot Reservoir (Hartlepool Water Authority)	DP 1, 2
	Burns, Becks, Streams and Creeks	Private
1	Bellows Burn to Crimdon Beck	
	The Burn	
	Hart Beck to middle Warren Beck to The Slake	
10	Char Beck and Boggle Beck to Dalton Beck to Greatham Beck to Greatham Creek	
	Amerston Beck to Close Beck to North Burn to Claxton Beck to Greatham Creek	
1-10	Wind Turbine - Hart	
2-19	Hartlepool United, Victoria Park	
4 - 5	North Gare Breakwater	
4 - 8	Teesmouth Field Centre	
5 - 6	Sheaf Thrower Sculpture	
8 - 1	Disused Quarry, Brierton	
10- 3	Castle Eden Walkway	
10- 4	Wind Turbine - Elwick	
10- 5	Wind Turbine - Elwick	

Publications Promoting Access in the Borough

Walk Leaflets

Walk Your Way to Health In and Around Hartlepool

Pack of 10 self-guided walking leaflets ranging from 2½ to 9½ miles within the Borough of Hartlepool (HBC Sports Development and Countryside Access Team)

Also available for download from:-

www.hartlepool.gov.uk/walk-leaflets

Hart to Haswell - A Journey Through Time

A guide to the 9 miles of the Hart to Haswell Walkway (Hartlepool Borough Council)

Enjoying the Tees Forest

Set of 5 self-guided walks within the Borough of Hartlepool (Tees Forest, Hartlepool Borough Council Countryside Access)

The Brickworks Trail Loop

Self-guided walking leaflet covering a 4.5 mile walk between Greatham Village and Cowpen Bewley Woodland Park (Stockton Borough Council/Hartlepool Borough Council)

Events Guides

Hartlepool Borough Council Website

www.hartlepool.gov.uk/events

Wild About Hartlepool (published twice yearly)

Countryside Events Programme including walks and cycles around the Borough's rights of way (HBC Countryside Wardens)

Tees Valley Cycling Events (published yearly)

Cycling events programme covering the whole of the Tees Valley including Hartlepool Borough (Sustrans/HBC/DBC/SBC/MC/R&CBC)

Self Guided Walks Leaflets

During 2006, Hartlepool Borough Council's Countryside Access Team went into partnership with the Sports Development Team to produce a set of walks leaflets that could be used as independent guides for people wishing to access the countryside and historical landscape around Hartlepool Town. The idea was to give people a chance to take an individual leaflet out and to walk the route by themselves or in an informal group. It could also be that some people needed to improve their fitness and health and so the project was able to use some of the Walking the Way to Health Initiative funding that Sports Development had.

The set of walks eventually came to 12 in number, covering as much of the Borough as possible, including some walks in the Town and Headland.

The majority of the walks are circular with a few being linear. They range from 2½ miles (4 kilometres) to 9 miles (14½ kilometres).

The next few pages show a small collection of some of the walks and are represented as a double page spread with the outside covers appearing first and then the inside presentation, which includes a map and text.

If you are interested in obtaining a full set of the walks, you can either purchase them from the Libraries, Tourist Information Centre, the Historical Quay or Summerhill Visitors Centre.

Alternatively they can be downloaded for free from the Council's website at: www.hartlepool.gov.uk/walk-leaflets.

Go on have a look at them and try one or two out. It can open you up to a new world - The Countryside - and it's all free!

Transport

Hart Village is situated 2½ miles to the north west of Hartlepool.

By Bus – bus stops are located in Hart Village and bus times can be obtained by calling the Traveline number on 0870 608 2 608.

By Car – From Hartlepool take the A179 north and then westwards (Hart Road), Hart is signposted from a roundabout. In the village take a right turn past the post office following the signposts for St Mary Magdalene Saxon Church.

Car parking is available next to the church.

The Countryside Code

- Be safe - plan ahead and follow any signs
- Leave gates and property as you find them
- Protect plants and animals, and take your litter home
- Keep dogs under close control
- Consider other people.

Safety Information

- There is no such thing as bad weather! Wear clothes appropriate for the weather on the day
- It is always advisable to wear a pair of boots for support and to keep your feet dry
- If walking on your own always inform another person where you are going and what time you expect to return
- Always take a small amount of food and drink in case you start to feel tired
- If possible, carry a mobile phone or some small change in case of an emergency
- Carry any personal medication and a first aid kit for blisters and minor cuts.

Any obstructions or problems found on these routes can be reported to the Countryside Access Team on 01429 523524, or rightsofway@hartlepool.gov.uk

These leaflets can also be downloaded from www.hartlepool.gov.uk/walk-leaflets

Hart – Nesbitt – Sheraton Circular

(Distance approximately 4½ miles, 7½ km)

1



This walk is mostly through farmland and also includes a steep sided river valley/dene and woodland. Parts of the path can be muddy and slippery during wet weather; there are moderate to steep ascents and descents, and several stiles to cross.

For a more detailed description of the route and/or up to date information about the path, please call the Countryside Access Team on 01429 523524, or visit: www.hartlepool.gov.uk/rightsofway



Illustration by Andy Paciorek

Facilities available on this walk:

There are pubs and shops in Hart Village.

From the car park next to St Mary Magdalene churchyard ① walk westwards, keeping the Primary School on your right, down Magdalene Drive. Turn right onto Butts Lane ②.

Keep left where the lane splits just out of Hart ③ and continue along Butts Lane. Keep right where the lane meets a bridgeway sign ④. Continue along the tarmac road until you reach Thorpe Bulmer Farm. Bear left before the pond ⑤ and keep the red brick house on your right. Walk down the track towards a conifer wood. With the conifers on your right, walk down field edge path.

These plantations of Scot's pines were originally planted to supply the local mines with pit props. The mines are long gone but stands of conifers now provide an important habitat for red squirrels.

At the end of the path, enter the wood through a gap in the fence ⑥. Walk down the steps and cross a bridge over Bellows Bum. Follow the path up the other side of the valley until you meet a grassy track ⑦.

Cross over the track onto a field edge path. Follow the path ahead and northwards. Turn left at the corner of the field. You now head towards a white bungalow and the farm lane ⑧. Turn left onto the lane and head southwards until you reach Bellows Burn Lane ⑨.

Turn right into the lane and continue until you come to a Public Bridgeway sign, shortly afterwards, on your left. Go through a gap in the hedge ⑩ and onto a field edge bridgeway path. Follow the path ahead, southwards, join a farm track and continue to walk in the same direction. 300 metres before reaching Sheraton Farm turn left onto a footpath ⑪ heading east towards an old sheepfold ⑫. Cross over a stile, then a

bridge over Bellows Burn keeping the sheepfold on your left. Follow the path as it heads to the right, southwards, by the side of the stream through a gorse-filled valley.

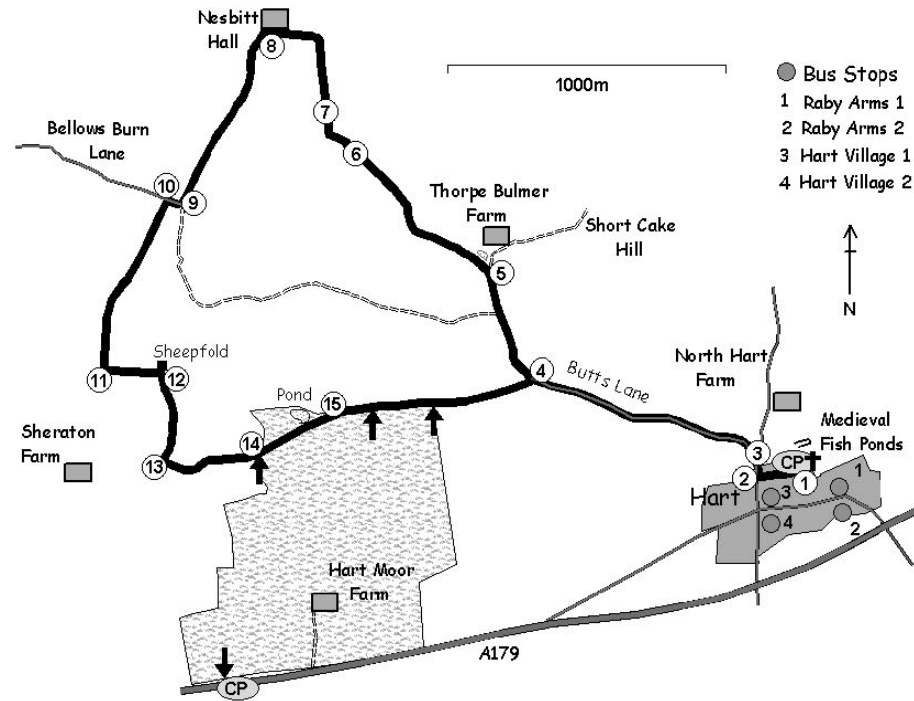
At the southern end of the valley, turn left through a bridlegate ⑬ and uphill onto a track that becomes a field edge path. Continue taking the cross-field path ahead. Cross the field heading east towards and through a bridlegate into a pasture field ⑭.

You are now on Hart Moor Farm. Access across the land is provided through a Countryside Stewardship Agreement. The entry points are marked on the map with arrows. Signs at these

points will tell you more about the routes around the Farm you may take.

There are two areas of woodland planting to the east and west of Hart Moor Farm, this is Community Forest and access is also permitted here.

Walk a little to your left, in a northeasterly direction, towards a fenced off pond. Keep the pond on your left, follow the fence to a bridlegate. At the gate turn right into an enclosed green lane ⑮. Continue along until you reach Butts Lane (tarmac surface). Turn right into the lane back towards Hart and take Magdalene Drive back to the church car park.



Transport

The Headland is situated approximately 3 miles to the north and east of Hartlepool.

By Bus – Middlegate bus station is located on the Headland, there are also bus stops near Brus Tunnel and at the north end of the walk in Clavering, bus times can be obtained by calling the Traveline number on 0870 608 2 608.

By Car – From Hartlepool centre take the A179 north for ½ mile, turn right at the roundabout signposted Headland. Pass Throston Engine House on the left and turn left up Thorpe Street. At the end turn left into Marine Drive where parking is available.

The Countryside Code

- Be safe - plan ahead and follow any signs
- Leave gates and property as you find them
- Protect plants and animals, and take your litter home
- Keep dogs under close control
- Consider other people.

Safety Information

- There is no such thing as bad weather! Wear clothes appropriate for the weather on the day
- It is always advisable to wear a pair of boots for support and to keep your feet dry
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- Always take a small amount of food and drink in case you start to feel tired
- If possible, carry a mobile phone or some small change in case of an emergency
- Carry any personal medication and a first aid kit for blisters and minor cuts.

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These leaflets can also be downloaded from www.hartlepool.gov.uk/walk-leaflets

Spion Kop - Croft Gardens Circular

(Distance approximately 3 miles, 4½ km)

5



This walk is on tarmac paths and includes some of the Promenade. There are no steep ascents or descents or stiles.

For a more detailed description of the route and/or up to date information about the path, please call the Countryside Access Team on 01429 523524, or visit: www.hartlepool.gov.uk/rightsofway

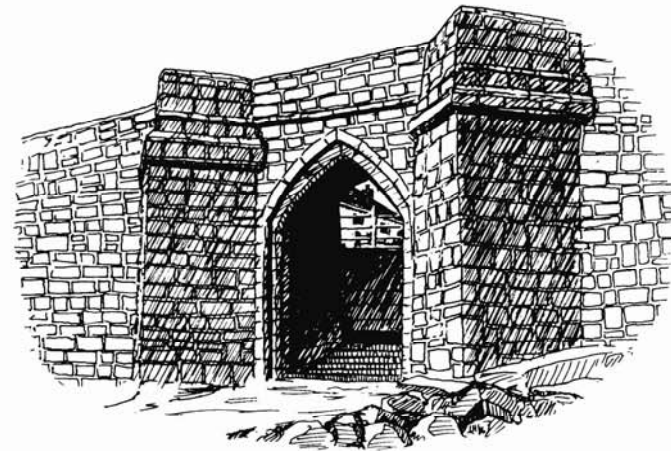


Illustration by Tees Archaeology

Facilities available on this walk:

There are pubs and shops in Hart Village.

From Marine Drive ① at the northern end of the Headland with sea on your left, walk straight ahead and take the first opportunity to descend onto the Promenade ②.

Continue to walk in this direction for approximately one mile until you reach Heugh battery and the Lighthouse ③.

Heugh Battery was built in 1859 with two six-inch guns installed in 1899. There were several gun batteries defending the town at this time, including Lighthouse Battery, which has now been demolished. The original lighthouse was built in 1846, the light, which was switched on in 1847, could be seen from 18 miles out to sea. The lighthouse was destroyed during the bombardment as it was in the way of the Heugh Battery guns. The current lighthouse was built in 1926-7.

Keep to the Promenade passing the Lighthouse and, a little bit later on, the War Memorial on your right ④.

Walk along the Promenade as it narrows, going between some houses on your right and railings on your left until you come to a point where the Heugh breakwater is down on your left ⑤. The Promenade continues and you will pass across a slip road ⑥ down to the Lighthouse on the pier at Fish Sands. The path goes past the 'Harbour of Refuge' pub to a point on the Town Wall, above Fish Sands ⑦.

The town wall dates from the 14th century in parts, including the Sandwell Gate where the wall

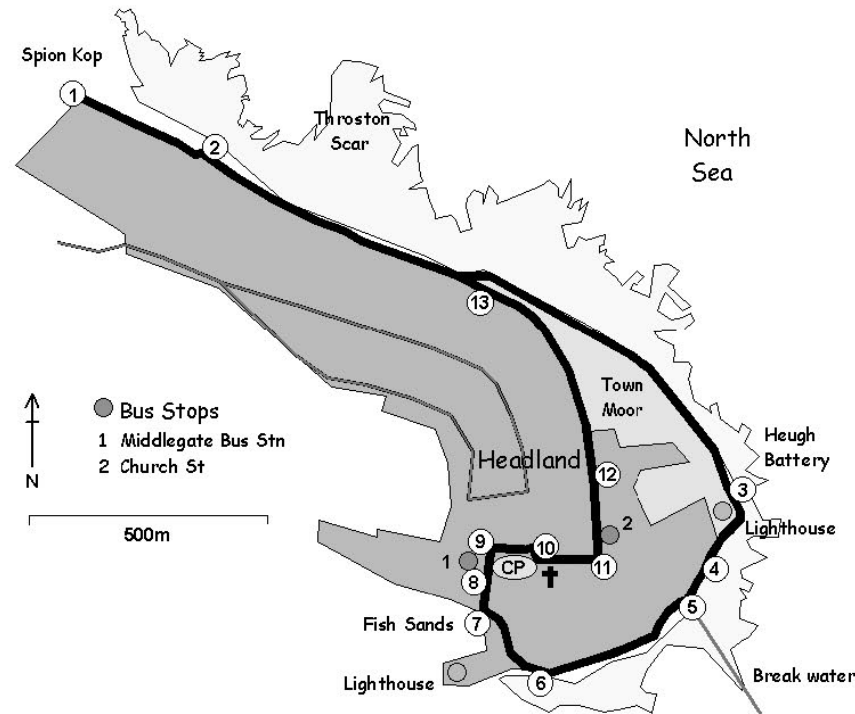
is over eight feet thick. The walls were the original town defences. Hartlepool was the chief port for the powerful Prince Bishops of Durham and often under attack from both the sea and Scottish invaders.

With the Town Wall behind you, cross over road and walk towards Croft Gardens. Cross another road and enter into the Gardens ⑧. Go through the centre of the Gardens towards Borough Hall ⑨.

At end of the Gardens is Middlegate where you should turn right and walk uphill towards the

'Cosmopolitan' pub, which is situated on the left corner of Middlegate and St Hilda's Crescent. At the pub turn right into St Hilda's Crescent with St Hilda's church facing you ⑩.

The road bears left past the old and derelict Morrison Hall. After the Hall turn left into Friarage Gardens ⑪ carry along in the same direction whereupon you will enter Marine Crescent ⑫, Moor Parade and finally Marine Drive ⑬. With the sea now on your right retrace your steps to the starting point, at the top of Marine Drive.



Transport

Greatham is situated approximately 2 miles to the south of Hartlepool.

By Bus – bus stops are located in Greatham Village and on the Tees Road, north of the entrance to Teesmouth NNR, bus times can be obtained by calling the Traveline number on 0870 608 2 608.

By Car – From Hartlepool centre take the A689 south for 2 miles, turn left at Sapper's Corner, signposted Greatham. Car parking is available street-side in Greatham village.

The Countryside Code

- Be safe - plan ahead and follow any signs
- Leave gates and property as you find them
- Protect plants and animals, and take your litter home
- Keep dogs under close control
- Consider other people.

Safety Information

- There is no such thing as bad weather! Wear clothes appropriate for the weather on the day
- It is always advisable to wear a pair of boots for support and to keep your feet dry
- If walking on your own always inform another person where you are going and what time you expect to return
- Always take a small amount of food and drink in case you start to feel tired
- If possible, carry a mobile phone or some small change in case of an emergency
- Carry any personal medication and a first aid kit for blisters and minor cuts.

Any obstructions or problems found on these routes can be reported to the Countryside Access Team on 01429 523524, or rightsofway@hartlepool.gov.uk

These leaflets can also be downloaded from www.hartlepool.gov.uk/walk-leaflets

Greatham to Seal Sands Walk

(Distance approximately 3 miles, 5 km)

8



This walk crosses farmland and follows a good path along Greatham Creek. There are a couple of stiles, some steps and a busy road to cross.

For a more detailed description of the route and/or up to date information about the path, please call the Countryside Access Team on 01429 523524, or visit: www.hartlepool.gov.uk/rightsofway



Illustration by Andy Paciorek

Leaflet 8 (Front)

Facilities available on this walk:

There are pubs and shops in Greatham Village.

Starting in Greatham High Street ① head south past the 'Sheaf Thrower' sculpture on your left and the Hospital of God on your right, take side road on right into Parish Row ②.

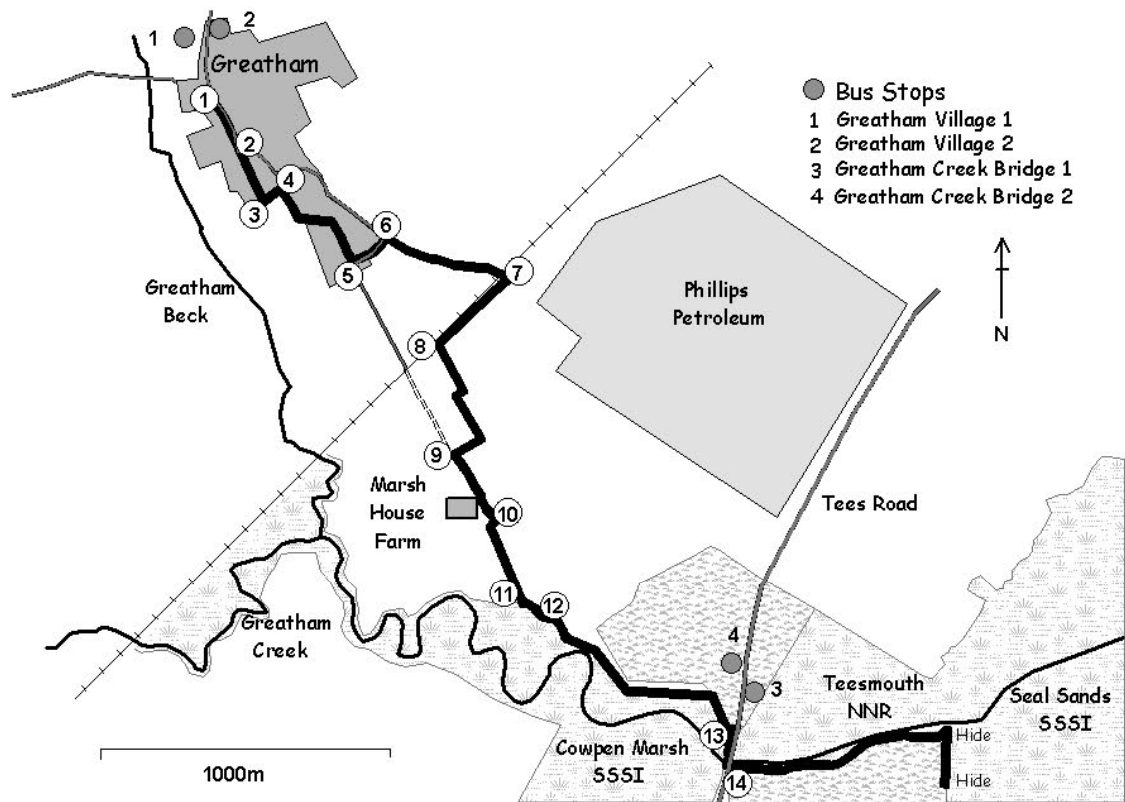
The Sheaf Thrower sculpture was erected in 1995 and commemorates the sheaf-throwing contest that has taken place annually at Greatham Feast for over 500 years. The birds perched in his hair represent a local rookery.

At the end of this street go through a gap in the wall ③ and follow the enclosed footpath uphill to the left. Go through the kissing gate and turn right along Egerton Terrace ④, pass the Primary School, take the footpath signed to the left alongside the playing field. Take the path to the right down Hill View. Turn left onto Marsh House Lane ⑤ and right into Thorntree Lane ⑥, signposted Public Footpath.

Cross the railway ⑦ and turn right onto a public footpath, go through a kissing gate and head down an enclosed path. Take the path to the left around the edge of a field ⑧ keeping the factory and private car park on your right.

Turn left onto a lane ⑨, down towards Marsh House Farm, cross a stile and go through a gateway. After the gateway, follow the footpath signs to a stile on your right ⑩. Cross the stile and follow the footpath as it heads south towards an electricity pylon ⑪. Keep the arable field on your right hand side and pass the pylon, walking towards Greatham Creek.

The Creek and surrounding land is part of Cowpen Marsh Site of Special Scientific Interest



(SSSI) which is marked on the map. This designation identifies the site as nationally important and gives it special legal protection. You may see wading birds such as curlew and redshank feeding and common seals hauled out along the Creek when the tide is low.

With the Creek on your right follow the footpath as it skirts alongside. Take the steps up and over the mound ⑫ descending to a footpath on a raised flood bank, by the side of Greatham

Creek. Follow along until you reach the Tees Road (A178). Cross the road, turn right and cross the main road bridge over Greatham Creek ⑬. Turn left towards an interpretation sign ⑭, which shows a plan of the Teesmouth National Nature Reserve (NNR). You can follow the track ahead and view the birds from hides provided.

To finish to walk, reverse the directions to take you back to the start, at the statue on the Green, in Greatham.

List of Consultees

Rights of Way Improvement Plan Consultees List (152 Groups and Individuals)

Organisations/Others/User Groups/Local Authorities (58)

Age Concern
Autumn Club
Brierton Parish Council
Black Minority Ethnic Forum
Central Area Forum
Connexions Tees Valley
Corus
Dalton Piercy Parish Council
Darlington Borough Council
Downs Syndrome North East
Durham County Council
Easington DC
Elwick Parish Council
Elwick Villagers Association
Expamet Rambling Club
Greatham Parish Council
Guide Dogs for the Blind
Hart Parish Council
Hart Primary School
Hart Village Hall Association
Hartlepool Access Group
Hartlepool Blind Welfare
Hartlepool Borough Council - Councillors and Staff
Hartlepool Boys Brigade
Hartlepool Carers
Hartlepool Cycle Forum
Hartlepool Deaf Centre
Hartlepool District Scout Council
Hartlepool Golf Course
Hartlepool Mind
Hartlepool Motorcycle Action Group
Hartlepool Physically Handicapped and Able Bodied (PHAB)
Hartlepool Rambling Club
Hartlepool Residents - via leaflets, Hartbeat Magazine and Viewpoint 1000 Survey

Hartlepool Special Needs Support Group (HSNSG)
Headland Parish Council
LARA (Trail Riders Fellowship)
Middle Warren Action Group
Middlesbrough Council
Natural England
New Lyke Wake Walk Club
Newton Bewley Parish Meeting
North Area Forum
Phillips Petroleum
Seaton Carew Golf Course
South Area Forum
Stockton Borough Council
Sustrans – Tees Valley Region
Tees Archaeology
Tees Forest – part of the North East Community Forest Ltd
Tees Valley Health Walks Co-ordinator
Tees Valley Local Access Forum
The All Ability Forum
The British Horse Society
The Ramblers Association
The Tees Valley Wildlife Trust
Throston Residents Association
Tyne & Wear Local Access Forum

HBC Tenants

Hart Small Holdings

Landowner/Farmer (72)

Mr. M. Allan
Mr. D.W. Appleton
Mr. I.R. Appleton
Mr. M. Armstrong
Mr. C.G. Atkinson
Mr. G. Bailes
Mr. G. Barker
Mr. T. Bell
Mr. Bellerby
Mr. R. Blyth
Mr. S.I. Brewis
Mr. G.W. Browell
Mr. J. Brown
Mr. F. Brown + Son
Mr. P. Clapham
Mr. F.A. Claghan
Mr. D.G. Clayton

Mr. J. Collingwood
Greatham Estates
Mr. G. Cracknell
Messrs Crozier
Mr. R.A. Darling
Mr. I.S. Dresser
Mr. D. Dryden
Mr. R. Dryden
Mr. S. Dryden
Mr. Fewster
Mr. A. Forbes
Mr. M. Ford
Mrs. S. Grant
Mr. D. Grayson
Mr. M. Harle
Mr. J. Herbert
Mr. A. Cook
Mr. R. Howell
Mrs. M. Hunter
Mr. G. Hutchinson
Mr. H. Hutchinson
Mr. M.J. Hutchinson
Mr. N. Hutchinson
Mr. P. Hutchinson
Mr. S. Hutchinson
Mr. N. Jackson
Mrs. James
Mr. B. Jobson
Mr. J.K. Johnson
Mr. P. Lawless
Mr. D. Lithgo
Mr. L. Marsay
Mr. E. Morgan
Mr. J. Musgrave
Sir R. Norman
Mr. D. Ogle
Mr. R. Percy
Mr. Ridley
Mrs. P. Robinson
Mr. G. Rose
Mr. R Sanderson
Mr. S. Sanderson
Mr. J. Scotson
Miss D.J. Seymour
Mr. J. Shadforth
Mr. Stephenson
Mr. H.D. Sturrock
Mr. D.W. Thompson

Mr. Thorton
Mr. B. Wilkinson
Mr. C. Wilkinson
Mr. G. Wilkinson
Mr. S. Wilson
Mr. P.A. Wood
Mr. N. Evans

Landowner/Farmer/Company (7)

Atkinson + Partners
J.M.B. Farming
S.N. Bird & Sons
D.W. Dresser & Sons
H. Musgrave + Sons
P.D. Hook Broilers
F.J. Sturrock + Sons

Landowner/Farmer/Stables (7)

Mr. R. Brown
Mr. L.H. Collingwood
Mr. F. Grieves
Mr. R. Reynolds
Southbrooke Stables
Mr. H. Thompson
Mr. T. Wray

Stables (7)

Abbeyhill Farm
Crimdon Park Equestrian Centre
Four Acres
Hastings House Farm
Petersbrooke Stables
Stotfold Crest Riding School
Wolviston Livery Riding Stables

Submission to LTP2

The submission document has been produced so that the Draft Rights of Way Improvement Plan (ROWIP) is successfully integrated within the framework of the 2006 Local Transport Plan (LTP2). This is required prior to the scheduled deadline for the full ROWIP in November 2007. It is anticipated that following further research, assessment and consultation, the full Plan will contain more information, though it should be significantly similar to the core issues of this interim document.

Process Report

The current expectation is that the final ROWIP will be published in the following format. Some of the work has already commenced, the initial findings of which have helped formulate the Prioritised Rights of Way Improvements Projects found at the back of this document.

Rights of Way Improvement Plan

Executive Summary of the Whole Plan

Simple version of the tabular Statement of Action

(Date/Calendar format)

This version refers to the full Statement of Action Table, which includes information on:-

- Issues
- Reference Numbers
- Proposed Action
- Policy and Legislation Relevance
- Required Funding
- Funding Sources
- Estimated Timeframe for completion of Action
- Stakeholders/Partners

Mission Statement

Introduction

Aims

Local Rights of Way Audit/Assessment:-

Consultation

Summary of all responses of consultations and surveys with all relevant groups, communities, organisations etc.

Condition Survey

Summary of a full survey with regard to Best Value Performance Indicator – ‘Ease of use’. Other works looked at will include; Landscape Quality, Site Features and Surface Conditions.

Mobility and Visually Impaired Audit

1. Initial indications form a partial audit of the Local Access Network. This audit will be an indicator of the improvements that may need to be carried out.
2. Full audit of the whole network. This audit will take longer to complete (probably one to two years).

Recreation Audit

This will look at how the existing network links to and with different sites of interest. For example, it will show links to historical, archaeological, coastal sites as well as Parks Local Nature Sites, Countryside parks etc. From this, the Council can start to determine any deficiencies that exist and put into place projects that help to reduce or remove these deficiencies.

Position Statement

Summary of what the issues are. This will lead to the:-

Statement of Action

Text format of actions, to address the findings of the audit and assessment of the Local Rights of Way.

Small Scale/Current Projects

This is a list of projects and shows how the Council continually manages and maintains the network on a day to day basis.

Full Tabular Statement of Action

This includes and integrates the Small Scale/Current Projects, Prioritised Rights of Way Improvements Projects, as well as other work that is necessary and that needs to be done as part of the process of improving the Local Access network. It will detail:-

- Issues
- Reference Numbers
- Proposed Action

- Policy and Legislation Relevance
- Required Funding
- Funding Sources
- Estimated Timeframe for completion of Action
- Stakeholders/Partners

Map

The map shows, geographically, how the improvements sit within the current network of 'paths/routes'.

Bibliography/References

The Progress Report

The final ROWIP will include an assessment of the existing rights of way network. This will cover consultation, a Condition Survey, Mobility and Visually Impaired Audit and a Recreation Audit. The assessment has, so far, included the use of questionnaires to find out the public/landowners/user's perception of the existing network, as well as asking them for their suggestion/ideas on how they would like to see the Local Access Network of Hartlepool improved.

Three sets of questionnaires were sent out, to the:-

- General Public (Viewpoint 1000 Survey)
- Landowners (Use and demand Survey)
- User Groups (Use and demand Survey)

The aims of the Viewpoint 1000 Survey are for the Council to:-

- Listen to the community.
- Involve the local people in the Council's decisions and its policy planning and reviews.
- Consult the Viewpoint panel on important local issues.
- Discover what the community priorities for future Council activities are.

Similarly, the Use and Demand Surveys, sent out to Landowners and Users, asked the group or individual for their perceptions, assessment and suggestions for improvement.

The results from the three groups have been encouraging and indicate that the present rights of way network is open and, in general terms, user friendly. There is, however, need for further improvements in terms of linkage and higher levels of access, to meet today's users needs and expectations.

The Council has been consulting with Mobility and Visually Impaired user groups (MVI's). These meetings have been, and will, carry on being an important part of the overall rights of way management. Inclusion and consultation are key to the implementation of improvements for more inclusive access.

Another important group of potential users that have not been consulted is the BME (Black and Minority Ethnic) Group. The Council will be consulting with this group to explain the role of the Plan and what it is trying to provide for the broad community.

We are in the process of having the present rights of way network audited by one of the MVI's from Hartlepool, to find out for example where they wish to have circular walks developed and also to find out how they can access our path information, e.g. gradients, furniture etc. This information will be available to them in a format that will help to enable individuals and groups to assess the likely requirements to complete a route, fully or even partially.

Further assessment of the network has been carried out via a full condition survey of all the public rights of way. The survey results show that, at present, Hartlepool Borough Council has a path network that is 91.5% open and easy to use (for the year 2004/2005 - BVPI 178 - Ease of use).

Future work within the condition survey will include:-

- Landscape quality enjoy ability of and type of landscapes within the Borough
- Site features interpretation and seating facilities
- Desktop survey furniture, gradients, road/rail crossings and unabridged water crossings
- Surface conditions variation throughout the seasons
- Route Promotion present and future possibilities

Another audit that is starting to be carried out is looking at Recreational Links, from the existing and future network, to sites of interest. The Audit is looking at:-

- Historical
- Archaeological
- Coastal Sites
- Parks
- Local Nature Reserves
- Countryside Parks etc

From this, the Council has started to determine deficiencies that exist and are starting to put in place projects that would help to reduce or remove these shortages. Some of these deficiencies amount to small projects that create large benefits, e.g. a small boardwalk will be installed along a stretch of footpath that is permanently under water for 4- 6 months of the year. The installation of this structure will enable users to access, more comfortably, safely and easily the local footpaths that diverge from it.

This and other projects have been identified from consultation and public interaction and are starting to bring benefits to the whole of Hartlepool's Local Access Network.

Vision, Aims, Objectives and Mission Statement

Vision

Hartlepool Borough Council's vision for its Local Access Network is to:-

“maintain, develop, protect and promote access to meet user's and potential user's present and future needs”.

Introduction and Aims

The Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000 introduces a new statutory duty, on every Local Authority, to prepare a plan for improving their local rights of way. The Rights of Way Improvement Plan (ROWIP) is designed to assess the extent to which the current local rights of way network meets the present and future needs of the public. The ROWIP will also look at the need to provide opportunities for exercise and other forms of open-air recreation and enjoyment in Hartlepool. In addition, the plan will look at the accessibility of the local rights of way concerning blind or partially sighted people and other people with mobility problems.

Hartlepool Borough Council is aware that, as an 'Excellent' Authority, it can apply to be exempted from the requirement to produce a Rights of Way Improvement Plan. The exemption is stated under the provisions of The Local Authorities' Plans and Strategies (Disapplication) (England) Order 2005. However, the Council feels that in the process of delivering high quality public services, the production of a Rights of Way Improvement Plan is fundamental to a more approachable and inclusive access network.

Hartlepool Borough Council is a partner in the Tees Valley Joint Local Access Forum, which also covers Stockton Borough Council, Darlington Borough Council and Middlesbrough Council. Also, as a neighbour to Durham County Council, Hartlepool understands that the plan will provide a long-term opportunity to formulate and create a network of routes that suits everyone's needs. This is as well as improving the existing network to incorporate new legislation and any successive guidance.

The ROWIP will be published before November 2007. Hartlepool has already completed extensive consultation with all user groups, mobility/access groups, community/residential groups, public rights of way liaison groups and the Tees Valley Joint Local Access Forum. The plan will reflect the needs of the community by ensuring it reflects the priorities and objectives of the Local Strategic Partnership, Community Strategy, the Local Transport Plan, Cultural Strategy and the Tourism Development Plan as well as other national and local plans and policies. In so doing, it can then focus on the broader strategic aims of the Council and so formulate a plan that is more centred on the needs of the public.

The Council has, for some time, understood the needs of the mobility and visually impaired and through the plan is looking towards changing the character of the access facilities across the Borough, to incorporate improved countryside furniture (stiles, gates

etc.) and surfacing, where reasonably possible. This will provide a more accessible range of 'paths' that are more inclusive for those with extra requirements, who wish to experience the pleasure of accessing more of the countryside, be it urban fringe or rural.

The ROWIP will help to provide a basis for the Council to access funding through the Local Transport Plan (LTP2). The next 5-year LTP2 will run from 2006 to 2011. To achieve the funding link, a summary submission of ROWIP will be incorporated into the LTP2. The incorporated form of ROWIP will be less extensive than the final published ROWIP.

Hartlepool Borough Council aims to look at providing realistic and informed improvements to the local rights of way network. It would be too easy to create a 'wish list' of projects that may look impressive on paper, but cannot be achieved within a feasible period of time. To this end, the list of improvements included in the plan, will be as diverse, so as to include small scale as well as long-term improvements. This will help to provide a range of enhancements that make the network more accessible to a wider range of present and future users and potential users.

Mission Statement

Hartlepool Borough Council will look to:-

- Link strategically with its immediate neighbours, through improved connections to their National Routes/Trails.
- Work internally with the Local Transport Management team to help find ways for improving the Borough's Cycleways, Bridleways and Access for All routes, throughout the Borough.
- Consult and work with the Mobility and Visually Impaired Communities/Groups to improve, where reasonable, the countryside access facilities.
- Consult with and improve the needs of all legal users of the local rights of way network, be they local users or visitors to the Borough.
- Use the preparation process of the Plan to begin a strategic overview of the opportunities for better and improved access within Hartlepool's countryside.
- Increasing the public's enjoyment alongside the benefits it derives from the local countryside.
- Monitor improvements against the clear targets, during the 10 year life of the Plan.

Throughout the development of the Plan, Hartlepool Borough Council will take account of the related regional policies and nation-wide corporate aims and objectives for:-

- Healthy living.
- Improved and sustainable quality of the environment.
- Safe, easy and sustainable travel/transport.

Statement of Action

The information and interpretation of all the information gathered, has led to the production of a Statement of Action. This statement sets out the areas of the Local Access Network that are in the process of being and needing to be improved in the future. It has been compiled to reflect the needs, suggestions and priorities of the users as well as the Council's own interpretation on how the path network should be developed towards becoming a fully inclusive system of access within the Borough. It also shows how it connects with neighbouring Local Authorities and linking with their own access networks.

From the findings so far, a preliminary statement of action has been used as the basis for the compilation of the Prioritised Rights of Way Improvement list of projects, for the LTP2.

In the process of compiling the list of projects, it shows how the key elements for LTP2's delivery of transport objectives and shared priorities for transport have been drawn down showing the links to the projects.

The key elements include:-

- Accessibility
- Air Quality
- Road Safety
- Quality of life issues
- Congestion

In a wider context, the submission also links into the four new key principles for LTPs:-

- LTPs should set transport in a wider context.
- LTPs should set locally relevant targets for outcome indicators.
- LTPs should identify the best value-for-money solutions to deliver those targets.
- LTPs should set trajectories for key targets, to enable greater transparency and rigour in assessing performance.

The full Statement of Action is listed in a set of themed tables and each table sets out to show how the Council will continue to deliver improvements in as broad a fashion as possible. These are set out below:-

- Definitive Map and Statement
- Information Provision
- Promotion
- Improvement and Maintenance
- Internal Duties
- Bridleway and Cycling provision
- Consultation
- Access for All
- Higher Rights

