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RIGHTS OF WAY COMMITTEE AGENDA

Monday, 18 March 2024 at 4.30 pm in the Whickham Room

From t	the Chief Executive, Sheena Ramsey
Item	Business
1	Apologies for Absence
2	Minutes (Pages 3 - 4)
	The committee is asked to approve the minutes of the previous meeting held on xxxxxx
3	Declarations of Interest
	Committee members to declare an interest in any particular agenda item where applicable.
4	Rights of Way Applications
	Claimed Public Right of Way: Low Spen Woods, Rowlands Gill, Gateshead (Pages 5 - 22)
5	Progress on Rights of Way Matters (Pages 23 - 30)
	Report of the Strategic Director, Corporate Services and Governance and the Strategic Director, Communities and Environment



GATESHEAD METROPOLITAN BOROUGH COUNCIL

RIGHTS OF WAY COMMITTEE MEETING

Monday, 17 July 2023

PRESENT: Councillor K Wood (Chair)

Councillor(s): S Dickie, D Bradford, M Ord, J Simpson and

A Wintcher

IN ATTENDANCE: Councillor(s):

APOLOGIES: Councillor(s): A Geddes

RW59 CONSTITUTION

RESOLVED - That the Consitution of the Committee for the 2023/24 Municipal Year

be noted.

RW60 MINUTES

RESOLVED - That the minutes of the meeting held on 20 March 2023 be approved

as a correct record.

RW61 PROGRESS ON RIGHTS OF WAY MATTERS

The Committee received a report providing an update on Rights of Way Matters. The Committee were advised of updates with the regards to the following items.

- North View the order was re-advertised and the consultation period ended on 30 June 2023. Objections have been received. The Order will be sent to the Secretary of State for the Environment, Food and Rural Affairs for determination.
- Cushy Cow Lane the order was made on 8 February 2023. The objection period ended on 30 March 2023. Objections have been received. Currently officers are awaiting confirmation to see whether objections will be withdrawn. If the objections are withdrawn, the order will be confirmed, if not the Order will be sent to the Secretary of State for determination.
- Extinguishment of Bridleway WH/52 and Footpath WH194, Derwent Walk Country Park – Following approval of Committee on 21 November 2022, the Order was made on 18 January 2023. The objection period ended on 20 February 2023. Officers are awaiting confirmation as to whether objections will be withdrawn. If the objections are withdrawn, the Oder will be confirmed, it not, the Order will be sent to the Secretary of State for determination.

Councillors asked that updates are continued to be provided on the work undertaken on the Rights of Way Network. Councillors also asked for an update on the current position with regards to Lamesley 57 at Rockliffe Way, Eighton Banks.

The Committee asked for the gratitude to be expressed on record at the work Zoe
had undertaken for the Committee members, she was professional, efficient and did
such a great job.

RESOLVED -	That the information con	itained within the re	port be noted
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Chair				
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Report for Rights of Way Committee

18 March 2024

TITLE OF REPORT: Claimed Public Right of Way: Low Spen

Woods, Rowlands Gill, Gateshead

REPORT OF: Strategic Director of Corporate Services and

Governance and Strategic Director of Housing,

Environment and Healthy Communities

1. Summary

This report to Committee relates to an application to make a definitive map modification order to add a footpath at Low Spen Woods, Rowlands Gill, Gateshead to the definitive map and statement of public rights of way.

2. Purpose of the report

To provide the Rights of Way Committee with details of the claimed route and to recommend to the Committee that a precise defined route from the claim should be investigated before a recommendation is made as to whether a public footpath should be added to the definitive map and statement.

3. Background

- 3.1 The Council received an application dated 20 December 2020 to add a footpath onto the definitive map and statement of public rights of way.
- 3.2 A plan showing the route of the alleged footpath claimed is at Appendix 2 to the report. It forms a circular route over the Woods.
- 3.3 The Applicant describes the route in the application form as, "Paths leading to field (known locally as Rabbit Field) east of Hookergate School and paths in field and woods".
- 3.4 The application is made on the basis of user evidence. The application relies on the claimed path having been allegedly dedicated as a public footpath due to long use. Such dedication can arise pursuant to section 31 of the Highways Act 1980 or at common law.

4. The claimed route

4.1 The route which is subject to the claim is indicated on the plan at Appendix 2. The plan shows various routes across open land.

- 4.2 The claimed route has five entrances and exits to and from the woodland and field.
- 4.3 The claimed route is accessed via Dene View and Barkwood Road.
- 4.4 Once in the woodland, the field is accessed by either walking through the stream or by using the footbridge.

5. Land ownership

- 5.1 Land Registry documents show there are several different Landowners for the claimed route.
- 5.2 The Applicant served Notice of the application for a definitive map modification order on each individual Landowner.
- 5.3 On 27 April 2023, the Council received notification of an objection from Forestry England in their capacity as one of the Landowners.
- 5.4 Forestry England objected to the Applicant's Notice and the proposal stating the plan was not clear and did not adequately indicate the proposed footpath. In addition, it was stated that they could not determine whether the claimed route was on land owned by Forestry England.

6. The statutory requirements to add a public footpath to the definitive map of public rights of way

- 6.1 The process of adding a public right of way to the definitive map and statement of public rights of way is set out in the Highways Act 1980, and the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981. The Highways Act deals with the type and character of the evidence put forward to 'claim' the right of way in question, whilst the Wildlife and Countryside Act sets out the way in which this evidence becomes part of, in turn, an 'application', and then if the Committee so decides an 'order'.
- 6.2 Section 31(1) of the Highways Act 1980 provides: "Where a way over any land, other than a way of such a character that use of it by the public could not give rise at common law to any presumption of dedication, has been actually enjoyed by the public as of right and without interruption for a full period of 20 years, the way is deemed to have been dedicated as a highway unless there is sufficient evidence that there was no intention during that period to dedicate it."
- 6.3 The application is made under section 53(2) of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981. Section 53(2)(a) requires the Council to keep its definitive map and statement under continuous review and to make modifications as soon as reasonably practicable after the occurrence of any of the events specified in section 53(3). The relevant event is contained in s.53(3)(c)(i), namely, "The discovery by the authority of evidence which (when considered with all other relevant evidence available to them) shows that a

right of way which is not shown in the map and statement subsists or is reasonably alleged to subsist over the land to which the map relates, being a public path, restricted byway or a byway open to all traffic".

7. User evidence

- 7.1 The user evidence forms which have plans attached to them show the same claimed route as the plan attached at Appendix 2 to the report.
- 7.2 User evidence forms should have a plan attached with the extent of the route used clearly indicated.
- 7.3 The precise route walked is not defined by users and there are references to "circular walks" and "walking all routes" on the plan.
- 7.4 The user evidence therefore does not relate, refer or clearly show a defined route of a footpath.
- 7.5 The evidence in the 17 user evidence forms has been formulated into a table, which is attached at Appendix 3 to the report.

8. Use of defined route over land

- 8.1 There is a general principle that the public cannot claim a right to wander over land.
- 8.2 Both under section 31 of the Highways Act 1980 and at common law, any long use resulting in dedication can only occur over a defined route on the ground. That is a fundamental characteristic of any highway which must follow a known and defined line in contrast, for example, to recreational use of a village green.
- 8.3 In the case of R (on the application of Pereira) v Environment and Traffic Adjudicators [2020] EWHC 811 (Admin), having reviewed the legal authorities, Fordham J. stated:
- "It is, in my judgement, an error of law to allow fluctuation in the course of passage across land to constitute the maintenance of 'a course of passage', so as to support a conclusion of uninterrupted enjoyment by the public of 'a way' over land. What is needed is greater precision, the identification of what the uninterrupted 'way' is, and an analysis of whether the location in question falls within that uninterrupted 'way'."
- 8.4 Therefore, a precise defined route must be identified in order to comprise a "way" and it is that specific route which must be assessed to establish whether a public right of way subsists or is reasonably alleged to subsist.

9. Proposed defined route

- 9.1 The user evidence suggests that public rights may exist over the land in question.
- 9.2 A site visit and consideration of the claimed footpath has reduced the circular claimed route to a defined route.
- 9.3 The proposed defined route of the footpath is from the entrance to the woodland at the existing access alongside 66 Barkwood Road, continuing along the existing path towards the footbridge, over the burn in a northerly direction towards definitive Bridleway Blaydon 120/2. From here, there is an option to walk in a north westerly direction along the edge of the field to access Bridleway Blaydon 120/2 or alternatively, in a northerly direction to also access Bridleway Blaydon 120/2.
- 9.4 A plan of the proposed defined route is shown with a red line and attached at Appendix 4 to the report.
- 9.5 An extract from the definitive map is attached at Appendix 5 to the report indicating the location of the other definitive public rights of way in the area.

10. Conclusion

A claim for a definitive map modification order must follow a particular line and public use must be over a defined route. Members of the public walking across open land and taking a number of different routes does not establish a public right of way.

11. Recommendation

Approval is sought from the Public Rights of Way Committee for the following:

- To investigate and carry out informal consultation regarding the proposed defined route of the footpath as indicated on the plan at Appendix 4.
- 2) To report back to Committee with a recommendation as to whether there is sufficient evidence to make a definitive map modification order to add a footpath at Low Spen Woods onto the definitive map and statement of public rights of way.

Contact: Sonya McCool Ext. 3862 Craig Johnson Ext. 3115

1 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

None

2 EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES IMPLICATIONS

None

3 STAFFING IMPLICATIONS

None

4 ACCOMMODATION IMPLICATIONS

None

5 CRIME & DISORDER IMPLICATIONS

None

6 ENVIRONMENTAL IMPLICATIONS

None

7 HUMAN RIGHTS IMPLICATIONS

The applicable rights to be considered are the right to protection of property, right to a fair trial and right to respect for private life. However the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 and the Highways Act 1980 provides a legal basis for interference with these rights and the risk of these rights being infringed is addressed via the fact that any orders made are subject to an objection period and the statutory legal process.

8 WARD IMPLICATIONS

Chopwell and Rowlands Gill

9 BACKGROUND INFORMATION

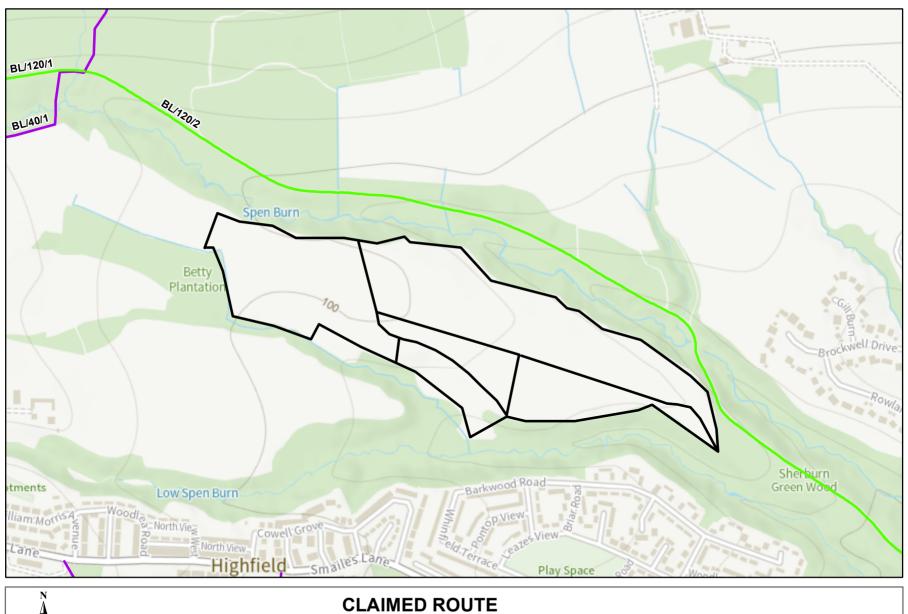
Appendix 2 – Plan of alleged footpath

Appendix 3 – User evidence table

Appendix 4 – Plan of proposed defined route

Appendix 5 – Extract from definitive map

Contact: Sonya McCool Ext. 3862 Craig Johnson Ext. 3115





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User	Do you use the route	How often	Why use it	How do you use it	Any obstructions	Did you ask permission	Are there any notices on route? Have you been stopped from using it?	Private Access right across land	Any other information
User 1	Yes	1980-2022 Weekly. This equates to 42 years of use during the relevant period.	Circular walks from home.	Foot	None stated.	No	No	No	Paths have been established by walkers in the last 40yrs and used by local people on a regular basis.
User 2 Page 13	Yes	2005-2020 Monthly. This equates to 15 years of use during the relevant period.	Rowlands Gill- Barlow.	Foot	None Stated.	No	No	No	Marked A-B on plan
User 3	Yes	2005-2020 Monthly. This equates to 15 years of use during the relevant period.	Rowlands Gill- Barlow. Dog walking.	Foot	None stated.	No	No	No	Marked A-B on plan

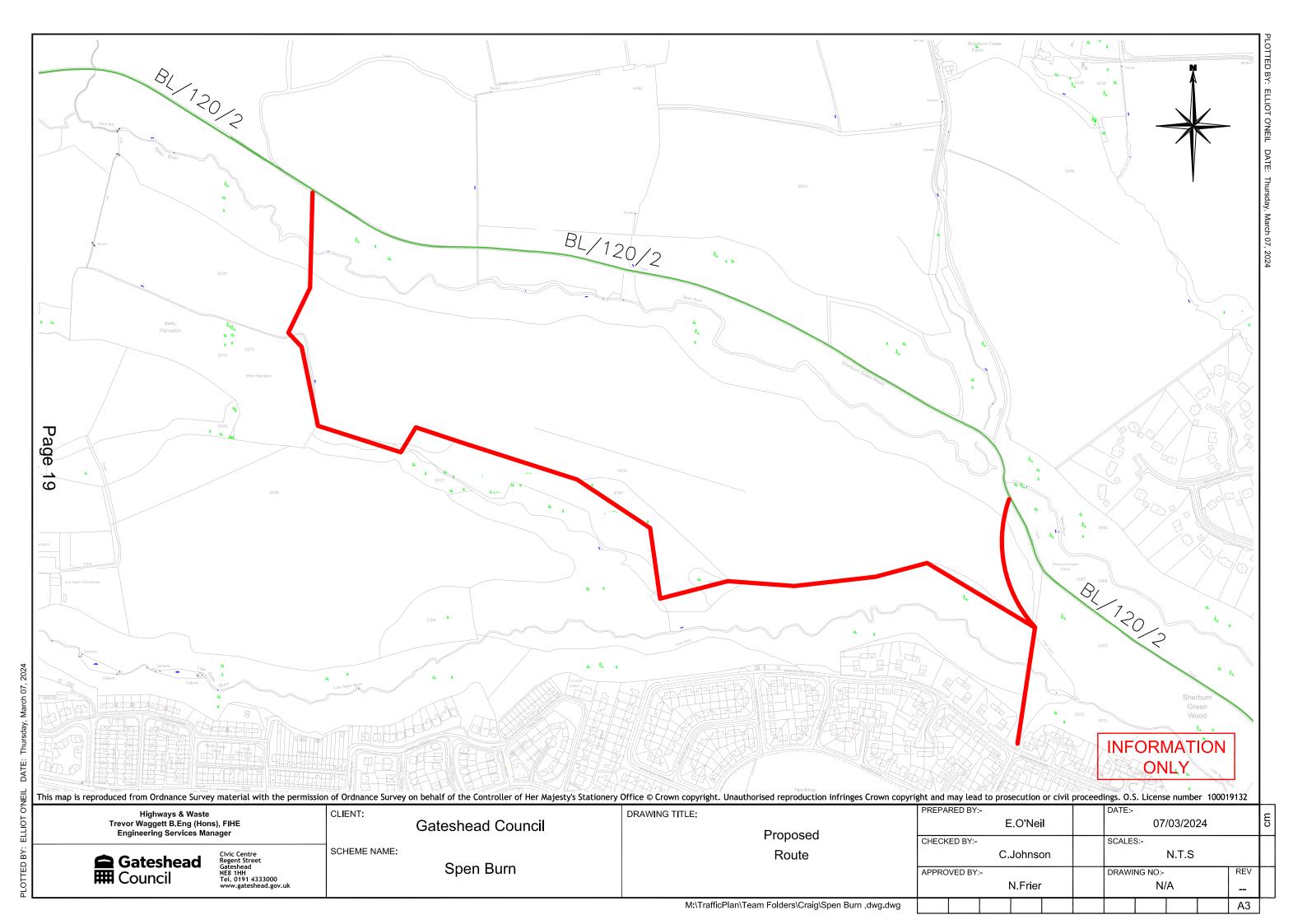
User 4	Yes	2019-2021 Daily. This equates to 3 years of use during the relevant period.	Barkwood Road -Spen Burn area. Dog walking.	Foot	Small stream	No	No	No	Route marked on plan.
User 5 Page	Yes	2017-2020 Weekly. This equates to 3 years of use during the relevant period.	Land behind Old Hookergate School. Access path on Dene View. Dog walking	Foot	None stated	No	No	No	The paths are used regularly by dog walkers, horse riders and walkers.
<u>U</u> ser 6 +	Yes	1980-2020 Weekly. This equates to 40 year of use during the relevant period.	Dog walking	Foot	None stated	No	No	No	Route marked on plan.

User 7	Yes	1997-2020	Access from	Foot	None Stated	No	No	No	Route marked
		A few times a	Dene View.						on plan.
		month.	East View to						
			Hookergate						
		This equates to	School.						
		23 years of use	Dog walking						
		during the							
		relevant period.							
User 8	Yes	1980-2021	Highfield-High	Foot	Stiles they have	No	No	No	Route marked
000.0	1.03	Less than once	Spen	. 550	marked on	110	1.0	1.13	on plan.
		monthly.	Dog walking		attached plan.				on plani
		This equates to							
		41 years of use							
		during the							
		relevant period.							
P ည (Bser 9									
ser 9	Yes	1990-2021	Not stated.	Foot	Stiles	No	No	No	Route marked
15		Weekly.							on plan.
		This equates to							
		41 years of use							
		during the							
		relevant period.							
		·							

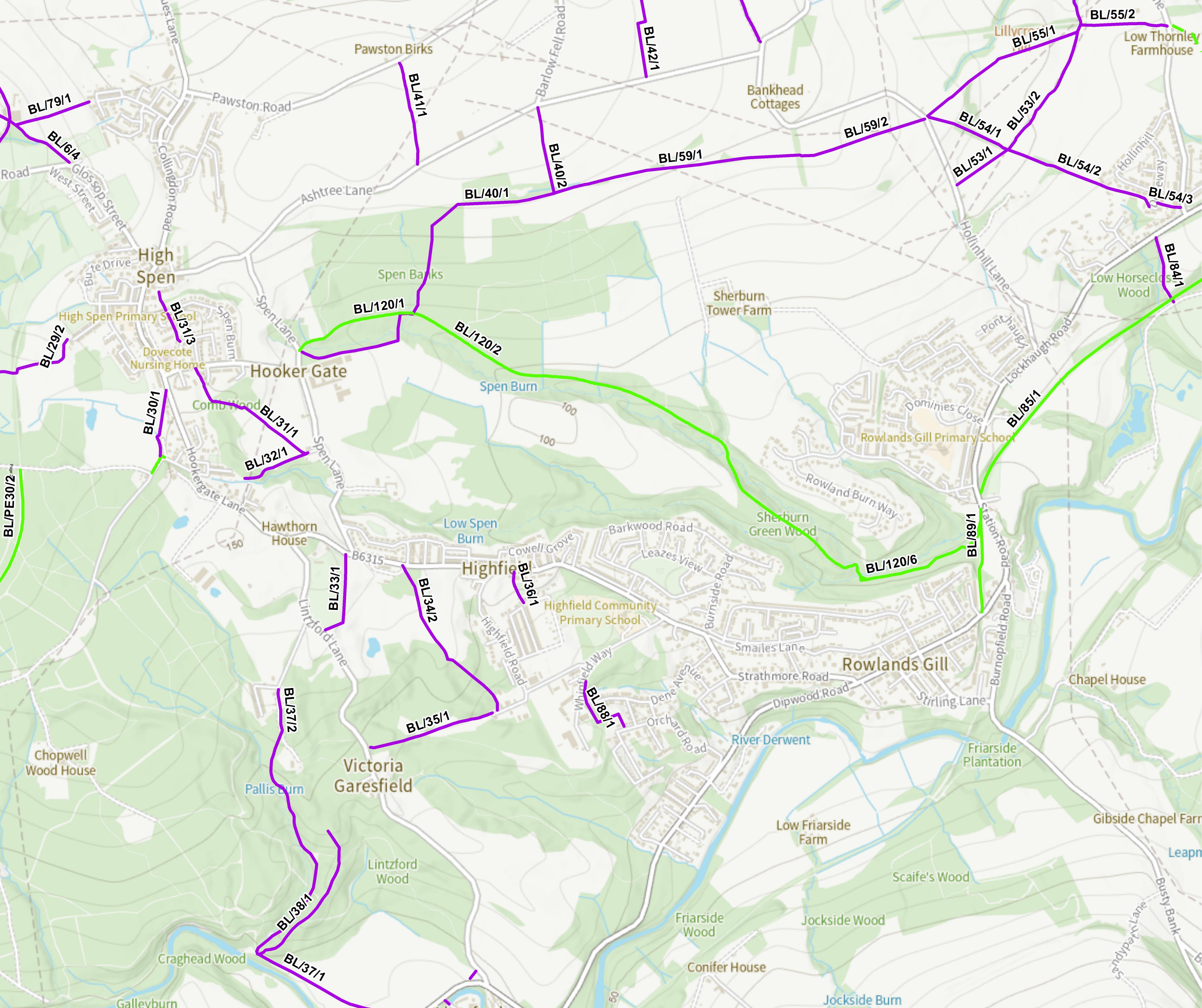
User 10	Yes	2018-2020 Daily. This equates to 2 years of use during the relevant period.	Westerly entrance - NZ15085924 To Easterly entrance NZ15915924 Dog walking	Foot	None stated	No	No	No	Links into Bridleway 120 to Blaydon.
User 11 Page	Yes	2015-2020 Weekly/monthly. This equates to 5 years of use during the relevant period.	Rowlands Gill to Chopwell. From Sherburn Gn Wood	Foot	None stated	No	No	No	
<u>U</u> ser 12 တ	No	2018-2020 Weekly. This equates to 2 years of use during the relevant period	Sherburn around the field then back to Sherburn	Foot	Fence trodden down	No	No	No	

User 13	Yes	1998-2018	Walked all	Foot	No	No	No	No	Recently moved
		Weekly	routes on plan						away.
		This equates to 20 years during the relevant period.							
User 14	Yes	2001-2021 This equates to 20 years during the relevant period.	Circular route on map back to Cowell Grove	Foot	No	No	No	No	
Pageser 15 17	Yes	2005 Weekly	Ponthaugh to Barlow	Foot	Stile difficult to access	No	Yes at farm entrance	No	

User 16	yes	2001- 2020		Foot	No	No	No	No	
		This equates to 19 years during the relevant period							
User 17	Yes	1996-2020	Dog walking.	Foot	No	No	No	No	
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Report to Rights of Way Committee

18 March 2024

TITLE OF REPORT: Progress of Rights of Way Matters

REPORT OF: Strategic Director, Corporate Services and

Governance and Strategic Director, Housing

Environment and Healthy Communities

Purpose of the Report

1. To update Committee on the progress of Rights of Way cases, plus the principle works carried out on the network between July 2023 and March 2024.

Background

2. The rights of way matters are set out in Appendix 2.

Recommendations

3. It is recommended that the Committee note the report and the updates highlighted in bold.

Contact: Sonya McCool extension 3862 and Craig Johnson extension 3115

1. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

Nil

2. RISK MANAGEMENT IMPLICATIONS

Nil

3. HUMAN RESOURCES IMPLICATIONS

Nil

4. EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY IMPLICATIONS

Nil

5. CRIME AND DISORDER IMPLICATIONS

Nil

6. SUSTAINABILITY IMPLICATIONS

Nil

7. HUMAN RIGHTS IMPLICATIONS

Nil

8. WARD IMPLICATIONS

Chopwell and Rowlands Gill, Blaydon, Ryton Crookhill and Stella, Whickham North, Lamesley, Crawcrook and Greenside, Dunston Hill and Whickham South and Sunniside, Winlaton and High Spen, Pelaw and Heworth South, Windy Nook and Whitehills, Wardley and Leam Lane.

9. BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Nil

Current Matters

Item No	Case	Ward	Application/ Proposal	Progress/Action
1	North View	Winlaton & High Spen	Definitive Map Modification Order	DMMO has been sent to the Secretary of State for the Environment, Food and Rural Affairs for determination as an opposed Order.
2	Application to add a bridleway between RB 44 and Derwent Walk	Whickham North, Blaydon	Definitive Map Modification Order	The Definitive Map Modification Order has been drafted and waiting for instruction to advertise it. This matter is currently being reviewed.
3	Claim at Thomas Street Eighton Banks Right of Way 62	Lamesley	Definitive Map Modification Order	The Order has been made but objections have been received. The papers have been prepared and the Order will be sent to the Secretary of State for the Environment, Food and Rural Affairs for determination in due course. This matter is currently being reviewed.
4	Clarty Lane – Upgrade public footpath LA/33 to bridleway	Lamesley	Definitive Map Modification Order	Documents being prepared to submit DMMO to Secretary of State for the Environment, Food and Rural Affairs for determination as an opposed Order.
"Page 25₅	Cushy Cow Lane – Upgrade public footpath RY/27 to bridleway	Ryton Crookhill Stella Crawcrook Greenside	Definitive Map Modification Order	Documents being prepared to submit DMMO to Secretary of State for the Environment, Food and Rural Affairs for determination as an opposed Order.
ப	Claim for a bridleway at Barlow Lane, Barlow	Winlaton High Spen Crawcrook Greenside	Definitive Map Modification Order	An application was received on 26th March 2020 to record a Bridleway onto the Definitive Map and Statement at Barlow Lane, Barlow. On 19th July 2021, Committee approved the making of a DMMO to add the claimed bridleway from Barlow Lane, Greenside to Barlow Lane, Barlow. Order to be made and advertised.
7	Blackhall Mill to Chopwell Upgrade public footpaths BL/11/1, BL/19/1, BL/19/2 and BL/19/3 to bridleway	Chopwell Rowlands Gill	Definitive Map Modification Order	An application was received on 14 th August 2020 to upgrade public footpaths BL/11/1, BL/19/1, BL/19/2 and BL/19/3 to bridleway status at Blackhall Mill and Chopwell. The application is currently being investigated, evidence to be reviewed and a Report will be prepared for Committee in due course.
8	Claim for a bridleway at Horsegate, Chopwell	Chopwell Rowlands Gill	Definitive Map Modification Order	An application was received on 14 th August 2020 to record a Bridleway onto the Definitive Map and Statement at Horsegate, Chopwell. The application is currently being investigated, evidence to be reviewed and a Report will be prepared for Committee in due course.
9	Mill Lane Urpeth to Riding Lane – claim to upgrade footpaths to a bridleway	Lamesley	Definitive Map Modification Order	An application was received on 19 th July 2021 to upgrade public footpaths LA/25, LA/26/1 and LA/26/2 to bridleway status at Mill Lane Urpeth to Riding Lane. The application is currently being investigated, evidence to be reviewed and a Report will be prepared for Committee in due course.
10	Extinguishment of	Whickham North	Public Path	Following approval of Committee on 21st November 2022, the

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	Bridleway WH/62 and Footpath WH/194 – Derwent Walk Country Park	Whickham South & Sunniside	Extinguishment Order	Order was made on 18th January 2023. The objection period ended on 20th February 2023. Awaiting confirmation as to whether objections will be withdrawn. If the objections are withdrawn, the Order will be confirmed. If not, the Order will be sent to the Secretary of State for determination.
11	Claim for a footpath at Low Spen Woods, Rowlands Gill	Chopwell and Rowlands Gill	Definitive Map Modification Order	Being brought to this Committee meeting.

PRINCIPAL WORKS CARRIED OUT ON THE RIGHTS OF WAY NETWORK – July 2023 and March 2024.

July 2023	Replacement fence line Long Bank- LA/46	Take down and install 442 metres of stock net fencing with 9 straining posts.	
July 2023	Install new fence line Greenside-RY/32	Install 58 metres of stock net fencing.	
July 2023	Replacement fence line Kibblesworth Bank- LA/72a	Take down and install 152 metres of stock net fencing.	
July 2023	Replacement fence line Watergate Park fencing WH/83	42m take down dispose and install.	
July 2023	Replacement fence line Watergate Park fencing WH/83	82m take down dispose and install.	
July 2023	Replacement fence line Watergate Park fencing WH/83	42m take down dispose and install.	
July 2023	Replacement fence line Watergate Park fencing WH/83	82m take down dispose and install.	
July 2023	PROW identified defects	Repaired.	
July 2023	Works to Pockerly LA/20	Strimming of vegetation and removing all fencing, barriers, gateway.	
August 2023	Strimming commenced	Strimming of the PROW network commenced.	
September 2023	Strimming commenced	Strimming of the PROW network commenced.	
January 2024	Blaydon 69 Step Replacement	Replacement of 15 steps and 5 stobs on BL69 in Blaydon Burn.	
January 2024	B98 Bridge Repair	Replacement of single deck plank on footbridge on B98 in Chopwell Woods.	
January 2024	Fallen tree on RY/68/1	Tree made safe and removed.	
January 2024	Right of Way la720/8/9/10 (west of Kibblesworth)	Lay and consolidate 40mm crusher run whinstone stone to fill in the wash out running from the bottom of the footpath to the timber grip.	
		To clean off and remove the silt to expose the timber grips running up the path, helping to divert the rainwater off the footpath.	

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February 2024	Flailing programme of Rights of Way network	Failing back PROW in various locations throughout Gateshead.
February 2024	Red Kite Waymarker Post	Replacement of waymarker post and signs on Red Kite trail off Thornley Lane, Rowlands Gill.
February 2024	Tree removal at Beggars Wood	Remove fallen elder obstructing PROW at Beggars Wood.

PLANNED WORKS TO BE CARRIED OUT ON THE RIGHTS OF WAY NETWORK – March 2024 and July 2024

Lamesley 72	Sections at Kibblesworth and Birtley	Resurfacing and drainage work.
Ryton 76 Sections from Wylam to Ryton		Resurfacing.
Lamesley 48	Black Lane from Waverley Road to Western View	Resurfacing.
Whickham 63	Landslip at Hollinside / Derwent Walk	Possible closure and rerouting of the public right of way.

AREAS OF THE RIGHTS OF WAY NETWORK WITH ASB/MOTORBIKE ISSUES

Ryton Golf Club	Ryton	Ongoing motorbike issues.	
Whitehills	Leam Lane/Whitehill Drive	Motorbike misuse and fly tipping. Access restrictions have been damaged. Repairs to boundary fence and gates are ongoing.	
Dene Road	Rowlands Gill	Ongoing motorbike issues pathway behind the industrial estate off Whinfield Way in Highfield.	

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