

# PLACE, SUSTAINABILITY AND CLIMATE CHANGE SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

23<sup>RD</sup> JANUARY 2023

## CARMARTHENSHIRE EQUESTRIAN STRATEGY UPDATE

### THE SCRUTINY COMMITTEE IS ASKED TO:-

Note progress on the development of an Equestrian Strategy for Carmarthenshire.

### Reason

The development of an Equestrian Strategy for Carmarthenshire is a commitment contained in the Carmarthenshire Rights of Way Improvement Plan (ROWIP) 2019-2029.

Officers are in the process of developing the Equestrian Strategy and this report provides an update on progress.

### CABINET MEMBER PORTFOLIO HOLDER:-

Cllr Edward Thomas – Transport, Waste and Infrastructure Services

#### Directorate

##### Name of Head of Service:

Stephen G Pilliner

##### Report Author:

Caroline Ferguson

##### Designations:

Head of Transportation & Highways

Countryside Access Manager

##### E Mail Addresses:

[sgpilliner@carmarthenshire.gov.uk](mailto:sgpilliner@carmarthenshire.gov.uk)

[cferguson@carmarthenshire.gov.uk](mailto:cferguson@carmarthenshire.gov.uk)

**EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**  
**PLACE, SUSTAINABILITY AND CLIMATE CHANGE**  
**SCRUTINY COMMITTEE**  
**23<sup>RD</sup> JANUARY 2023**

**CARMARTHENSHIRE EQUESTRIAN STRATEGY UPDATE**

In January 2020 Carmarthenshire County Council published the Carmarthenshire Rights of Way Improvement Plan (ROWIP) 2019-2029. The ROWIP sets out policies and actions for managing the public rights of way network for the 10 years 2019 to 2029, taking into account public need, relevant legislation and available resources.

A commitment within the published ROWIP (Policy 6, Action 17) is to develop an Equestrian Strategy for Carmarthenshire that is designed to '*promote and develop an accessible network for equestrian use*'.

No Welsh Authorities currently have a published Equestrian Strategy and as a result very little existing data is available to build an accurate picture of the equestrian industry.

To inform and shape the strategy, data specific to Carmarthenshire's equestrian population and available facilities was required. A comprehensive public survey questionnaire was therefore developed, aimed at equestrians, equestrian businesses, clubs and organisations, elected representatives and other interested parties. The survey was launched online 21 June 2021 and ran until 25 July 2021. Over 500 responses were received which provide a wealth of data and views.

The developing Equestrian Strategy will recognise that equestrian activities give pleasure to many people and that the equestrian industry is an important element of sustaining our rural economy. Equestrians are entitled to ride on public roads and there are over 1,600 km of unclassified rural roads within Carmarthenshire although the consultation confirms that some roads can give rise to road safety concerns. One of the key concerns highlighted by the consultation was the risk to on-road riders from vehicular traffic.

In addition to using the road network, approximately 10% of our Public Rights of Way network provide equestrian access through bridleways and byways although these are relatively clustered in geographical areas and can be quite fragmented. There are also areas of Welsh Government Forestry Estate and Country Park such as at Pembrey, Llyn Llech Owain and Mynydd Mawr which allow equestrian access and certain permissive paths.

The consultation also identified that the top two areas equestrians would like to see improvements are around more off-road riding and circular routes for riders. The Strategy will identify existing facilities for equestrians and set out a more holistic approach to developing accessible equestrian networks where possible. The Strategy will also include an Action Plan for delivery as and when budgets or grant funding permits.

Completion of the Equestrian Strategy will be dependant on available officer time and it should be acknowledged that PROW Officers are very busy in managing and maintaining an extensive PROW network. Every endeavour will be made to complete the Equestrian Strategy in 2023/24, subject to available resources. Once the Equestrian Strategy is complete it will be brought forward for Cabinet approval.

**DETAILED REPORT ATTACHED ?**

**NO**

# IMPLICATIONS

I confirm that other than those implications which have been agreed with the appropriate Directors / Heads of Service and are referred to in detail below, there are no other implications associated with this report :

Signed: S. G Pilliner

Head of Transportation and Highways

Policy, Crime & Disorder and Equalities	Legal	Finance	ICT	Risk Management Issues	Staffing Implications	Physical Assets
<b>NONE</b>	<b>YES</b>	<b>YES</b>	<b>NONE</b>	<b>YES</b>	<b>YES</b>	<b>YES</b>

## Legal

Dependant on the final actions developed within the Equestrian Strategy the legal implications of the strategy might have an impact on current enforcement practices on CCC public highway networks.

There may also be a need for Legal Orders to be processed if alterations to the network are negotiated for the benefit of equestrian users, identification of this need would be on a case-by-case basis taking account of the change being proportionate and affordable.

## Finance

The strategy as a whole is being developed with available financial resources in mind. Any actions developed in the strategy must be proportionate, demonstrate best value and will be subject to available funding. Some actions are likely to be dependant on grant funding.

## Risk Management Issues

Any improvements or enhancements to CCC equestrian provision identified in the strategy will be subject to any appropriate design standards and to robust risk assessment to safeguard the public.

## Staffing Implications

Safeguarding existing equestrian access will be taken forward with existing staff resources. The resource implications of any improvements will be considered as part of the feasibility of any proposed improvements/enhancements.

## Physical Assets

The County has an extensive road and PROW network in varying condition. A hierarchical risk-based approach is taken to maintenance of the Highway asset to achieve best value with limited available budgets. Asserting and safeguarding access rights will need to be the central focus of the strategy and any improvements where they are brought forward will need to accord to relevant design standards and appropriate risk assessments.

<b>CABINET MEMBER PORTFOLIO HOLDER AWARE/CONSULTED</b>	YES	
<b>Section 100D Local Government Act, 1972 – Access to Information List of Background Papers used in the preparation of this report:  THESE ARE DETAILED BELOW</b>		
Title of Document	File Ref No.	Locations that the papers are available for public inspection
Carmarthenshire Rights of Way Improvement Plan 2019-2029	None	<a href="#">Rights of way improvement plan (gov.wales)</a>