

7. Public Rights-of-Way Network





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7.1. Boundary issues

Birmingham shares its borders with nine other local authorities:

- Worcestershire County Council
- Dudley
- Staffordshire County Council
- Warwickshire County Council
- Sandwell
- Solihull
- Walsall.

The DEFRA guidance states that there is a duty for consultation between 'each highway authority whose area adjoins their area'. To ensure a joined-up network of rights of way developed and maintained to a consistently high standard and accessible for all members of the public, our neighbouring authorities have been asked to identify footpaths where cross-border links could be improved. So far we have received responses from Sandwell and Dudley. No other adjoining authorities have submitted requests.

• Improving links into Sandwell Valley Country Park (Sandwell)

From Silvercroft Avenue/Oxhill Road and Park Lane, there are proposals to improve access into Sandwell Valley Country Park through Handsworth Cemetery. The proposals include providing a safe crossing on Park Lane, converting existing routes to enable cycle access, generally improving the condition of the path surfaces, and linking into the Sustrans National Cycle routes that run through the Country Park.

• Improving links into Sandwell (Sandwell/Sandwell LAF)

A request has been received from Sandwell and Sandwell LAF, that BCC improve paths in Birmingham that link with their path from Farm Road to Hagley Road.

• Improving links into Woodgate Valley Country Park (Dudley)

The proposals are for improving links underneath the M5, linking the footpath network from Woodgate Valley Country Park into the countryside on the opposite side of the motorway in Dudley. The proposals will improve access into Dudley and provide better route signs.

• Ley Hill Estate

A major regeneration scheme has been identified for the Ley Hill Estate in Northfield. Part of the Draft Access Study aims to introduce new rights of way to provide access from the housing estate into the surrounding countryside in Dudley and Worcestershire. The area suffers from high levels of deprivation, so we hope that by providing more routes into the countryside, local residents will be able to benefit by, for example, improving health and quality of life.

There are other opportunities to improve cross-border access between Solihull and Sheldon with the creation of the 'Midlands Way'. However, no firm proposals have come forward from Solihull at the time of going to print.

Each of the seven West Midlands local authorities will produce their own RoWIP which will be integrated into the 2011 Local Transport Plan. Public rights of way officers in each authority have been liaising with officers at West Midlands Core Support Team who are responsible for producing the Local Transport Plan, and with each other to produce a co-ordinated approach to developing RoWIPs in the West Midlands.

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7.2. Legally defined (Definitive Map and Statement)

At present the Definitive Map and Statement for Birmingham only exists for Sutton Coldfield. The DMS was inherited in 1974, after the local government reorganisation which saw Sutton Coldfield change local governance from Warwickshire to West Midlands County Council. When the West Midlands County Council was abolished in 1986, BCC took responsibility for Sutton Coldfield. Since then, several changes have been made to the network (shown in the DMS) as a result of closures and diversion orders. Figure 10 Identifies the boundary of the DMS.

The rest of Birmingham does not have a DMS, although there is a record of approximately 2,500 public rights of way in the list of streets maintained under the 1980 Highways Act. These routes have been digitised and placed on a geographic information system, which means you can view them in a list or as a map.

Consideration has also been given to other records supporting the list of streets, including stopping-up orders, diversion orders and dedication agreements.

The Register of Definitive Map Modification Orders also reveals six routes that are being claimed as public rights of way. These are:

- The Harborne Walkway
- Nevin Grove to Rocky Lane (Perry Barr)
- Ipswich Crescent to Beeches Road (Perry Barr)
- Moseley Hall Hospital, Alcester Road to Amesbury Road
- Pershore Road to Warwards Lane.
- Wolfson Drive Birmingham University.

You can view applications for definitive map modifications on the BCC website (<http://www.birmingham.gov.uk>).

BCC has also received two requests for diverting paths in Bull's Lane and also at Minworth Sewage Disposal Works.

7.3. Specific requests for improvements to the network

Following public consultation, several requests have been received for specific routes. Before that, most requests were for closing public rights of way because of problems with antisocial behaviour and crime.

We have drafted a process for dealing with these requests – see appendix Ha+b. There are also several ongoing changes to public rights of way in relation to development and planning permissions.

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Figure 10: Extent of the current boundary of the Definitive Map



This map shows the extent of the area covered by the definitive map and statement for this area.

This map was inherited by BCC following boundary changes. The map was originally produced by Warwickshire Country Council.

Identifying areas of the city

A clear acetate overlay showing the constituencies is at the back of this document

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7.4. Working with other local authority departments, neighbouring authorities and others

As part of the first stage consultation exercise and the second stage on the draft RoWIP other Birmingham City Council directorates have been contacted to provide feedback on how the RoWIP can add value to their own programmes and objectives.

A parks strategy was approved by Cabinet in November 2006 and is now published as a supplementary planning document as part of Birmingham's Local Development Framework. Making links with these strategies can benefit both, in terms of providing access to local parks and opportunities for walking routes for the Walk 2000 programme, as well as exercise on prescription schemes (exercise programmes prescribed by Doctors to address health problems).

Constituency directors have also been consulted to identify any specific requirements they may have in their Constituency Community Plans for improving access and opportunities for recreation. Local Ward Councillors were also consulted as part of the public questionnaire consultation and presentations were made to Constituency Committees during December 2006 and February 2007, so that they could identify any issues

relating to public rights of way, walking or cycling that they had discussed with their constituents and comment on proposals identified in the draft.

7.5. Lost ways

Birmingham City Council's rights of way team have no lost ways projects.

7.6. Access land

Birmingham falls into DEFRA region 7. There is no access land in Birmingham due to its urban land use.

7.7. Publicity

The Highways Information Team in the Transportation Development Group at BCC holds the current public rights of way records and the public can access them as long as they make a specific request before they visit.

Copies of the Definitive Map and Statement are available at Sutton Coldfield Library, the Central Library and at the Highways Information Team's offices. Most of the public rights of way in Birmingham are not shown on ordnance survey maps.

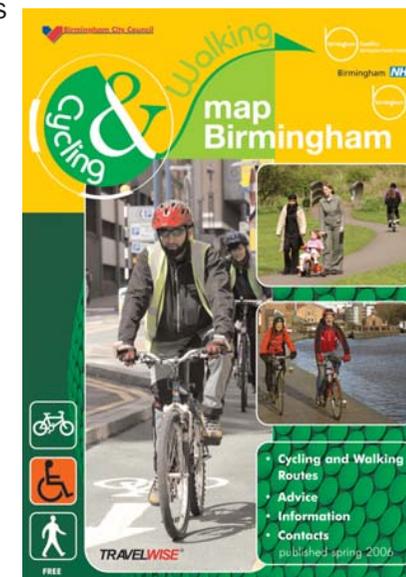
7.7.1. Walking and cycling map

Birmingham City Council produced a Birmingham walking and cycling map in Spring

2006 with Birmingham NHS. The third edition was published in Spring 2007 which included a number of minor amendments and following public comments and feedback. The walking and cycling map is not a definitive map of public rights of way across the city, as the map only shows a selection of the public rights of way network.

The map shows well-connected walking and cycling routes throughout the city, highlights links to the surrounding local authority areas, and provides the less experienced user with useful start-up advice and information about the various routes. The map also gives extra information on the location of bike shops and access points onto the canal network. The routes and information on the map include:

- national cycle network 5 (proposed route 53)
- regional cycle network 55 (proposed route 62)



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- on-road cycling
 - advisory routes
 - signed routes
 - cycle lanes on roads
 - bus lanes (cyclists can use bus lanes)
 - toucan crossings/pedestrian crossings
 - steep hills and one-way streets
- off-road cycle and walking routes, indicating user suitability
 - surfaced routes
 - unsurfaced routes
 - canal towpaths
- other Information
 - canal access ramps and steps
 - Birmingham greenway
 - Walk 2000 locations
 - cycle parking
 - bike shops
- city centre map additions
 - where cycling is allowed in pedestrian areas
 - pedestrian-only areas (cyclists dismount).

7.7.2. Walk 2000

The Walk 2000 initiative promotes walking for health in Birmingham by providing guided walks in every ward (pre-2004 boundary changes) round a 2km route of parkland or open space. The Walk 2000 scheme has three main aims:

- To waymark two kilometres of walking routes in parks and open spaces.
- To provide walking groups led by qualified walk leaders.
- To train people to become walk leaders on a nationally accredited course.



The two kilometre walking routes are being waymarked in parks and open spaces in Birmingham. The routes are marked with wooden sign posts and green footprints on the ground. There are 40 waymarked Walk 2000 routes in Birmingham, which are evenly distributed across the city (see Figure 16). One walking route was selected for each ward, but the sites were chosen before the 2004 ward boundary changes. Because of the boundary changes, some wards are now without a Walk 2000 route, but we are looking for suitable alternatives.

Some of the benefits of a guided walk programme are:

- Less-confident walkers are able to walk in the security of a group.
- It gives the opportunity to socialise with other members of the local community, which for some could be the only social contact that they have.
- Walkers will develop the confidence to try out new routes for themselves when they become more familiar with the walks.
- Walkers can set up their own walking groups with friends and family.
- Walkers benefit from taking regular exercise.

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Figure 11: Location of the Walk 2000 Routes across Birmingham

Key
● Walk 2000 Locations
□ 2004 Ward Boundary

