

Rights of Way  
IMPROVEMENT PLAN





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**Public rights of way are part of our heritage. They need to be protected and improved for two main reasons:**

- first, so that they meet the present and likely future needs of this city; and
- second, to encourage more walking and cycling.

We have consulted the people of Birmingham to get their views. To help us draw up our priorities for making walking and cycling safer and easier – particularly for local journeys – we have also assessed the condition of our rights of way, looked at how much they are used, and considered requests for changes.

The Draft plan was consulted on during December 2006 and February 2007 and we have made some changes to reflect the comments that were made. It sets out proposals to improve the network to create better accessibility and improved maintenance. The plan will also help to improve access to local facilities and provide an opportunity for planning longer journeys using public rights of way.

These measures will make it easier and more attractive for people of all abilities to cycle or walk for leisure and for travel to work, school's, shops and other local facilities.

By creating opportunities for walking and cycling to become part of our everyday lives, we will be helping to reduce local congestion, cutting air pollution and improve health and fitness.

Improving the extensive rights-of-way network and links to other areas where people can walk and cycle will benefit all communities. We can also look at opportunities in new developments to improve and extend those links.

This plan sets out a possible ten-year programme of improvements subject to availability of resources. We will review the proposals periodically to ensure they continue to meet the needs of a modern city like ours.

Councillor Len Gregory

**Cabinet Member for Transportation and Street Services**





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## Glossary of Terms

<b>BCC</b>	Birmingham City Council
<b>BME</b>	Black Minority Ethnic
<b>BVPI</b>	Best Value Performance Indicator
<b>DEFRA</b>	Department for Environment Food and Rural Affairs
<b>DMS</b>	Definitive Map and Statement
<b>IMD</b>	Indices of Multiple Deprivation
<b>LAF</b>	Local Access Forum
<b>NHS</b>	National Health Service
<b>RoWIP</b>	Rights of Way Improvement Plan
<b>SoS</b>	Secretary of State (Secretary of State or SoS refers to the SoS for the Environment, Food and Rural Affairs)

# 1. Introduction

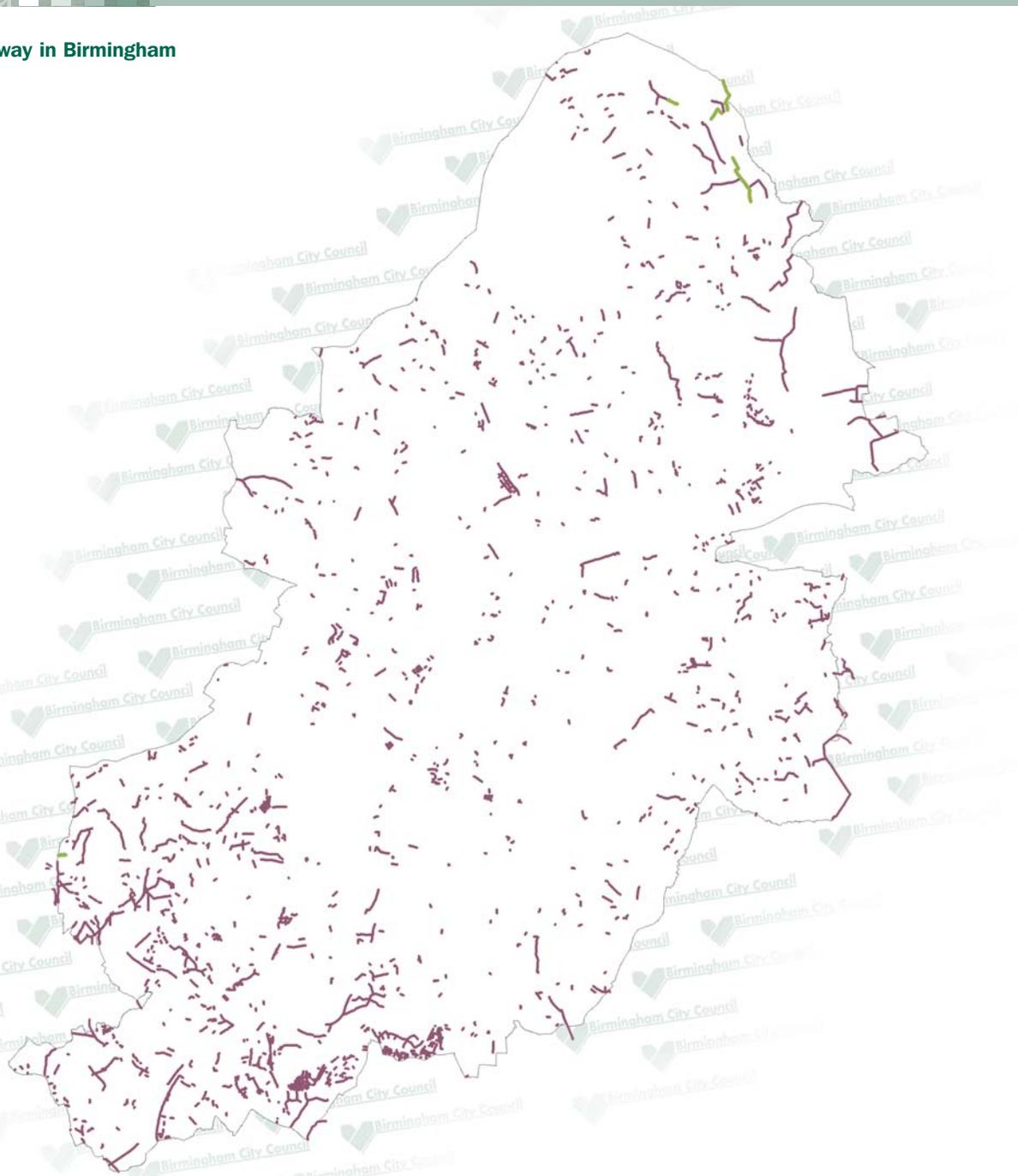


# 1. Introduction

Foreward

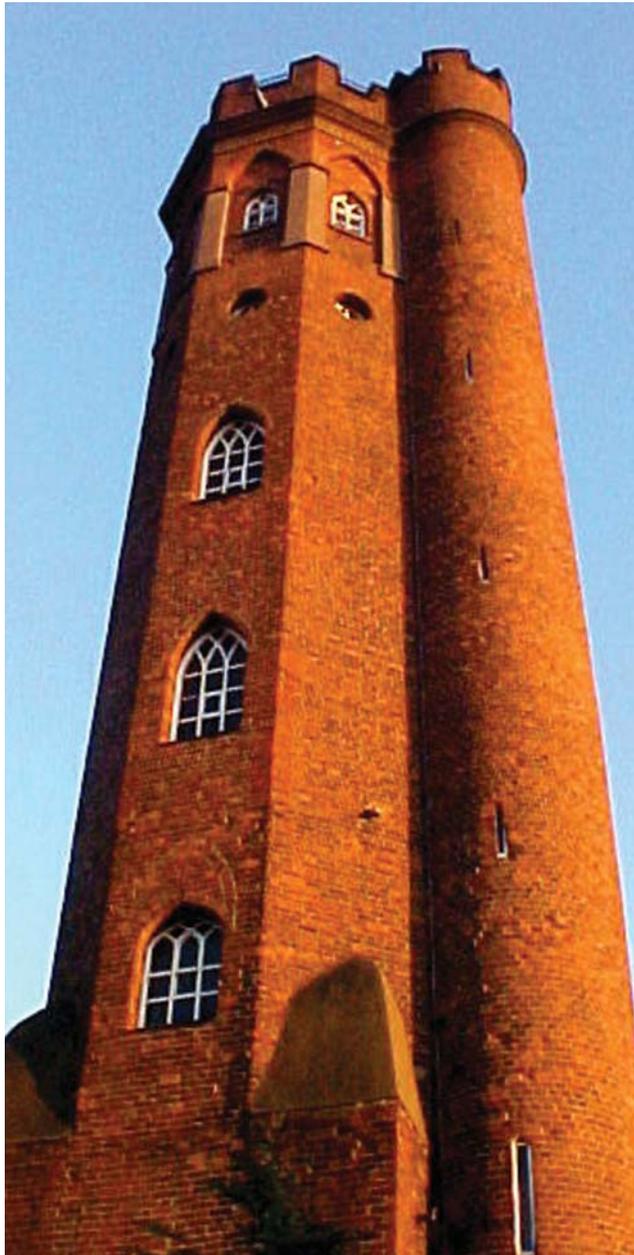
Map showing rights of way in Birmingham

- Key**
-  Bridleways
  -  Footpaths



**Identifying areas of the city**  
A clear acetate overlay showing the constituencies is at the back of this document

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## 1.1. The importance of the rights-of-way network

**Local rights of way are a significant part of our heritage and provide opportunities for recreation as well as access to all kinds of destinations. They provide a convenient means of travelling, particularly for short journeys and are an important way for many people to get fresh air, exercise, walk the dog, improve fitness, walk to school, walk to local bus, train and metro stops and to get to the local shops.**

The national rights of way survey by the Countryside Agency in 2000 showed that no local council had achieved the target for all rights of way to be properly maintained. It said there was a need for councils to be able to identify and sustain adequate investment to improve local rights of way.

It is considered that improving management and creating new relevant routes would make a significant difference to people who use or would like to use footpaths, bridleways and byways.

To do this, local councils need to understand how people use rights of way, so that they can meet the range of needs and expectations of people with varying abilities.

Rights of Way Improvement Plans (RoWIPs) were therefore seen as the means to provide this. This Plan meets the Government's aims of better

provision for walkers, cyclists, horse riders and people with visual and mobility problems, in accordance with sections 60-62 of the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000.



## 1.2. Setting the scene in Birmingham

**Birmingham is a dynamic city which is constantly changing to meet the needs and aspirations of the people who visit, live or work in it. Birmingham is the second-largest city in the United Kingdom – 2004 mid-year estimates showed the population was just under 1 million (992,400). The city covers 267.8 square kilometres, and has a population density over nine times higher than the average for England.**

# 1. Introduction

In 2004, the ward and constituency boundaries were amended ahead of a general election for administrative purposes. As a result, the number of administrative areas fell from 11 to 10.

Birmingham has a rich ethnic diversity, with about 30% of the population (2001 census) coming from non-white ethnic groups. The distribution of black and minority ethnic (BME) populations across Birmingham is inconsistent, with some areas having a very large BME population, and others having a very small BME population.

This pattern makes it relatively easy to target areas with high BME populations, but targeting these populations in the lower-density areas is often difficult. In similar consultation exercises, the BME populations' views have been under-represented, so as part of a second-phase consultation, this document will be taken to Birmingham's Black and Ethnic Minority Workers Forum for their consideration.

The average age of Birmingham's population is lower than that of England as a whole. The 2001 census found that around 15% of the population were 65 or over and about 20% reported that they had a long-term limiting illness.

Although nearly 40% of households in Birmingham do not own a car or van, Birmingham's road network is one of the most heavily congested in the country, with many, if not all of the main routes into

the city centre operating at or near capacity. An incident during peak hour has the potential to seriously disrupt traffic on several surrounding roads, as commuters take alternative routes to complete their journeys. The 2001 census indicated that 31% of the working-age population (age 16-74) made their journey to work by car, as a driver or passenger.



About 12% of journeys to work were made using public transport (bus, train, metro), with bus being the favourite, making up about 11% of journeys.

In comparison, 5% of the working population walked to work, and only 0.75% cycled (2001 census). Since the 2001 census, investment in public transport, walking and cycling has increased.

About half the working population in Birmingham travel less than 5km to work, or work at home (2001 census). The Department for Transport recommends that journeys of less than 2km are practical on foot and journeys of up to 5km are practical by bicycle. This indicates that there is considerable scope for reducing the number of journeys to work by car in favour of more sustainable modes.

As Birmingham is the economic centre of the West Midlands, attracting commuters from all over the region, efforts to reduce congestion need to be targeted, regionally and locally.

Birmingham is well known as an urban area with a rich industrial and manufacturing heritage, but it is also one of the greenest cities in Europe.

It has:

- 470 parks, recreation grounds and open spaces covering 3,200 hectares, (8,000 acres)
- five premier parks (three of which have held the Green Flag award for consecutive years)
- the largest urban park in Europe (Sutton Park)
- 140 listed nature conservation sites
- several reservoirs where recreational activities occur
- the River Cole and River Rea
- 114 miles of navigable canal
- 15 miles of improved canal in the city centre.