HAMPSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

Executive Decision Record

Decision Maker:	Executive Member for Countryside and Regulatory Services	
Date:	27 November 2023	
Title:	Management of Byways Open to All Traffic (BOAT) Update	
Report From:	Director of Universal Services	

Contact name: Jonathan Woods

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1. The decision:

- 1.1. That the Executive Member for Countryside and Regulatory Services notes the work undertaken to maintain the BOAT network as part of a current 3-year funded programme 2022-2025 including the successful introduction of a more dynamic and effective approach to seasonal closures (set out in paragraphs 15 21 of the supporting report) extending the use of measures such as gates and signage.
- 1.2. That the Executive Member for Countryside and Regulatory Services approves the trial review of the Byways Operational Procedure (BOP) as set out in paragraphs 22 - 27 of the supporting report, and the development of a work programme for 2025-2030 that will seek to reduce costs and develop a sustainable management model to be approved at a future Decision Day.

2. Reasons for the decision:

- 2.1. Byways open to all traffic (BOATs) form an integral part of the county's 2,883 miles of the Public Rights of Way network, providing connectivity for walkers, cyclists and horse riders as well as providing a network for carriage riders, and motor vehicles. The Rights of Way network is central to how people embrace the culture of Hampshire and gain access to the natural environment and special landscapes of the County, connecting with nature, whilst benefiting physically from exercise which in turn supports good mental health and wellbeing.
- 2.2. Motor Vehicles are legally allowed to use the BOATs, but the use and management of Byways is a highly emotive subject that has opposing opinions from users and communities. This paper outlines the current policy and procedure for the management of Byways identifies some initial minor changes, prior to a full review that will take place over the coming months.
- 2.3. It also reviews capital works from the current and past allocations and proposes that work be commenced to not only review our operational procedure, but also

to develop a work programme for the management of the network 2025–2030, seeking to proposing a more proactive and sustainable future.

3. Other options considered and rejected:

3.1. Not to agree a management plan for 2025/30. This option was rejected due to the need to maintain and enhance access to the natural environment in Hampshire.

4. Conflicts of interest:

- 4.1. Conflicts of interest declared by the decision-maker:
- 4.2. Conflicts of interest declared by other Executive Members consulted:
- 5. Dispensation granted by the Conduct Advisory Panel: none.
- 6. Reason(s) for the matter being dealt with if urgent: not applicable.

7. Statement from the Decision Maker:

I thank the Universal Services Select Committee for scrutinising and unanimously supporting the recommendations in the report for my decision day.

Following discussion at the Select Committee meeting, I will write to MP Rebecca Pow, Minister for Environmental Quality and Resilience regarding the need for County Councils to be able to restrict access on BOATs, particularly where the damage to the environment and local communities is greatest, without fear of costly legal challenge.

Do	Approved by: buSigned by:	Date:
(sell Oppenheimer	27 November 2023
	Executive Member for Countryside and Regulatory Services Councillor Russell Oppenheimer	