

12. Access, enjoyment and understanding

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Summary of changes

Note of changes following final comments from the Kent Downs AONB Joint Advisory Committee/ Jan/ Feb 2021

The likely increase of traffic generated in the AONB by the Lower Thames Crossing, Garden Towns and the London Resort is referenced

Reference is made to the pressure caused by off road cyclists

Our vision for access, enjoyment and understanding in the Kent Downs AONB

In 2031... the Kent Downs AONB is a place of natural beauty with opportunity and access for all people; they feel welcome to participate in quiet recreation for health, relaxation, enjoyment and for cultural and artistic expression.

Improved management ensures that the Public Rights of Way and much of the highway network is safe, quiet and convenient for walkers, cyclists and horse riders and public transport along with active travel is an attractive option to reach and enjoy the landscape. Maintenance and enhancement of the Public Rights of Way and highway network is sympathetic to biodiversity and landscape character.

The Kent Downs AONB is recognised, valued and celebrated by residents, visitors and by those who simply delight in the fact that it is there.

12.1 Overview and context

The Kent Downs AONB offers some of England's most captivating and accessible countryside. The AONB has a resident population of over 96,000 people, however a further in excess of one million live within one kilometre and over 2 million within 10km of the boundary.

The AONB has 1876km/1166miles of Public Rights of Way network which is four times the density of the national average. The Kent Downs accommodates 40% of Kent's bridleways and 50% of Kent's byways on 23% of the county land area. For this important resource to be used there is clear evidence from the Public Rights of Way improvement plan evidence base that its maintenance, connection and promotion are key.

The AONB is crossed by or adjacent to four motorways, many trunk and 'A' roads, and hundreds of smaller roads. It is served by five railway lines with 27 railway stations and numerous bus routes and services. The Port of Dover, the UK's busiest ferry terminal, as well as the Channel Tunnel terminal are both immediately adjacent to the AONB. Ashford and Ebbsfleet International stations are in easy reach.

While there is often concern about the impact of recreation, carefully managed access to attractive countryside, particularly walking, cycling and horse riding can bring physical and mental health benefits, enable people to enjoy a great landscape, reconnect with nature and provide support to the local economy. The review of payments for land management which will follow the UK's exit from the EU provides a major opportunity to invest in new, well managed access which enables and encourages a diversity of users to access the landscape as part of a package Environmental Land Management (E.L.M.) payments which will use 'public money for public good'.

Managing access in the Kent Downs

Under the Countryside and Rights of Way (CRoW) Act (2000), Countryside Access Forums for Kent as well as Medway have been established. The role of the Forums is to advise on the improvement of public access to land within Kent for the purpose of open-air recreation and enjoyment. The Countryside Access Forums also responds to Government consultations, contributes to the Kent Countryside Access Improvement Plan and steer and monitor access and recreation policy in Kent and Medway.

The Kent and Medway Rights of Way Improvement Plans

Under the Countryside and Rights of Way Act (2000), Highway Authorities have a duty to develop a Rights of Way Improvement Plan (ROWIP). Kent's ROWIP was adopted as county policy in 2018 its vision is *"To provide a high quality, well-maintained Public Rights of Way network, that is well used and enjoyed. The use of the network will support the Kent economy, encourage active lifestyles and sustainable travel choices that support health and wellbeing, and contribute to making Kent a great place to live, work and visit"*.

The Kent ROWIP identified 6 key priorities for action; to encourage active lifestyles and utilisation of the Rights of Way for all of the many benefits these bring people, to evolve the network to meet future demand, to have good knowledge of use of the network and barriers to the use, to ensure a well maintained network of public Rights of Way, ensure that statutory responsibilities are taken forward and stator compliance is delivered and to work efficiently and enhanced our understanding of when and why people use the Rights of Way network and what the barriers are to use. In Medway a revised ROWIP was adopted in April 2020, the plan sets out priorities and actions to improve Medway's public rights of way over a 10 year period. The actions, focused around four themes, target the provision of a high quality, well maintained public rights of way network which is aimed to should then help everyone to have the chance to visit Medway's outstanding countryside, including the Kent Downs. The plan is also intended to help people make active lifestyles and sustainable travel choices.

Open access land

Under the Countryside and Rights of Way Act around 0.6% of Kent and Medway has been dedicated for open access; the majority of this is chalk downland, along with registered common land and parkland within the AONB. 46% of open access land in Kent is within the Kent Downs AONB (23% of the County). Open access land is managed by Kent County Council as the Access Authority, additionally the Forestry Commission and the Woodland Trust has dedicated their land for open access. In many cases access land was already available through time limited agreements. However where large tracts of land have been mapped, for instance around Dover, there are significant access opportunities.

Coastal access

The Marine and Coastal Access Act 2009 placed a duty on Natural England to improve access to the English coast through the creation of a continuous long-distance walking route, the 'England Coast Path National Trail'. The England Coast Path has been defined along the two Heritage Coasts of the Kent Downs AONB. The path provides a Coastal Access Margin on the seaward side of the new path, similar to open access land, providing significantly more access than the path itself. The North Downs Way National Trail and the new England Coast Path National Trail are increasingly building partnership working arrangements to share experience and enhance the potential benefits of the Coast Path.

Visitors to the Kent Downs

Limited visitor information is available for the AONB as a whole; Visit Kent's research (2019) shows 66.5 million visitors for Kent, generating a total tourism value of £4.1 billion (up 7.3% compared to 2017) and supporting more than 81,000 jobs. It is also clear from Visit Kent research that visits to the countryside and heritage sites are important motivators for many visits to Kent. The current estimates for Kent Downs AONB visitor numbers is approximately 20 million visits a year, which is similar to the Cotswolds AONB.

Evidence from the Landscapes Review shows that there are around 100m visits to National Parks each year; and around 170m visits to AONBs but the benefit is not shared amongst all sections of society.

The Landscape Review states that 'statistics show certain groups especially disconnected. Most visits are made by the same (better off, less diverse) people repeatedly, and those who miss out are the older, the young – especially adolescents – and those from lower socio-economic groups and black, Asian and minority ethnic communities:

- 13% of children (under 16) and 5% of young people (aged 16-24) typically never visit the natural environment or even spend any of their leisure time outdoors.
- Children are spending less time unsupervised outside and children from black, Asian and minority ethnic, and low income, communities are even less likely to do so.
- 18% of children living in the most deprived areas never visit the natural environment at all.
- 20% fewer Visibly Minority Ethnic (VME) children go out into green spaces weekly compared to white, middleclass children.
- Children from deprived backgrounds visit 10% more than VME children.
- The numbers of children going on school visits to the countryside is shockingly low at just 6-7%.
- The groups which visit the countryside least are those aged 65 and over, members of the black, Asian and minority ethnic population and residents living in the most deprived areas of England.'

In 2020 the Kent Downs AONB Unit conducted research into the barriers to making access to the landscape more inclusive and diverse, with a particular focus on the opportunities presented by post EU agricultural support – Environmental Land Management. While detailed and considering all of the protected characteristics of the Equalities Act the findings presented some clear messages:

- There are many barriers to access including physical, economic, societal and perceptual barriers. Some of the barriers to greater diversity and inclusion are built into the language, systems and governance of National Landscapes and countryside management; they are institutional and this should be recognised in order to effect change.
- Investments in new access need to be intelligently targeted to where they will achieve real benefit
- There is an opportunity to think differently about paying to provide access, this will include improving the physical infrastructure of access but must also include non-typical investments such as paying for community engagement champions, facilitators, transport and training.
- Investment in enhancing access should not only be for areas of land or length of path but for the intensity of benefit to the recipients, for instance small areas of land can provide transformational benefit for very troubled or traumatised people. In other

areas simple changes (like short connections between public rights of way) can have a high level of benefit for low investment.

- Recipients or intended beneficiaries should be involved in the design of new access schemes.
- Investments need to be long term, it can be more damaging to have short run 'projects' that achieve some benefit then drop away; this is as true for farmers and land managers as it is for those experiencing new access.
- Providing new access should not be mandatory for farmers and land managers – it should be taken up where it makes sense to do so and farmers and land managers are willing to engage. Advisors and convenors should encourage farmers and land managers to become involved in target areas.
- Improving access can be good for everyone –farmers and land managers might benefit at least equally to those enjoying the access this might be through new payments, diversification opportunities, overcoming problematic access and overcoming social exclusion are examples.
- Land management plans should include opportunities to divert access from ecologically sensitive sites. This could be either by providing alternative routes or improving the quality of surfacing to encourage footfall along certain less sensitive routes
- Better recognition, connection and management of the public rights of way network is an important priority – which links to the findings of the ROWIPs

While it is clear that there are many people who are not benefiting from access to the beautiful landscapes of the Kent Downs, evidence from the engagement stage of this Management Plan review shows clearly that many visitor sites are now experiencing 'over visiting' such that parking facilities are often overwhelmed at weekends and the visitor experience can be harmed as well as the landscape character and qualities of the areas that people are seeking to visit.

While visitor numbers are already growing rapidly the population of Kent is destined to grow at an unprecedented pace; in the period to 2031 the population of Kent is expected to increase by about ¼ placing increasing pressure on already pressurised sites.

Investing in new sustainable and inclusive access arrangements is an important, indeed vital priority.

Walking

There is strong policy support at a national and local level to promote walking and cycling, this ranges from the National Planning Policy Framework to the Kent Active Travel Plan. The density of Public Rights of Way in the Kent Downs is four times higher than the national average. This is an invaluable asset and enables access to and enjoyment of virtually all parts of the AONB and can provide good links between the Downs and local towns and villages. The use of footpaths in the AONB is unevenly distributed with greater usage in the west and around 'honey pot' attractions.

The evidence base for the Kent Rights of Way improvement Plan identifies key priorities for the improvement and enhancement of the network which would support better use, a common theme is the enhancement of the quality of paths and bridleways including better surfaces, fewer barriers, clear signing and more accessible information. The need for clear

signing is supported by research by Cycling UK as well as the Kent Downs Test and Trial.

Of national importance is the North Downs Way National Trail which starts at Farnham in Surrey and follows the North Downs through Surrey and Kent to Dover with a loop via Canterbury. Of the 153 mile trail, 70 miles lie within the AONB. Based on data from people counters on the Trail management estimates 550,000 users on the trail in 2016 based on a 5% year on year rise in use over the last 10 years which included a 14% increase in 2015.

National Trails are promoted as long-distance routes, although user surveys show that the majority of use on the North Downs Way tends to be for shorter walks. The opportunity to upgrade appropriate sections of the North Downs Way to include cyclists and horse riders is being considered and is supported. Two regional routes, the Saxon Shore Way and Greensand Way also pass through the Kent Downs, and there are a number of county recreational routes.

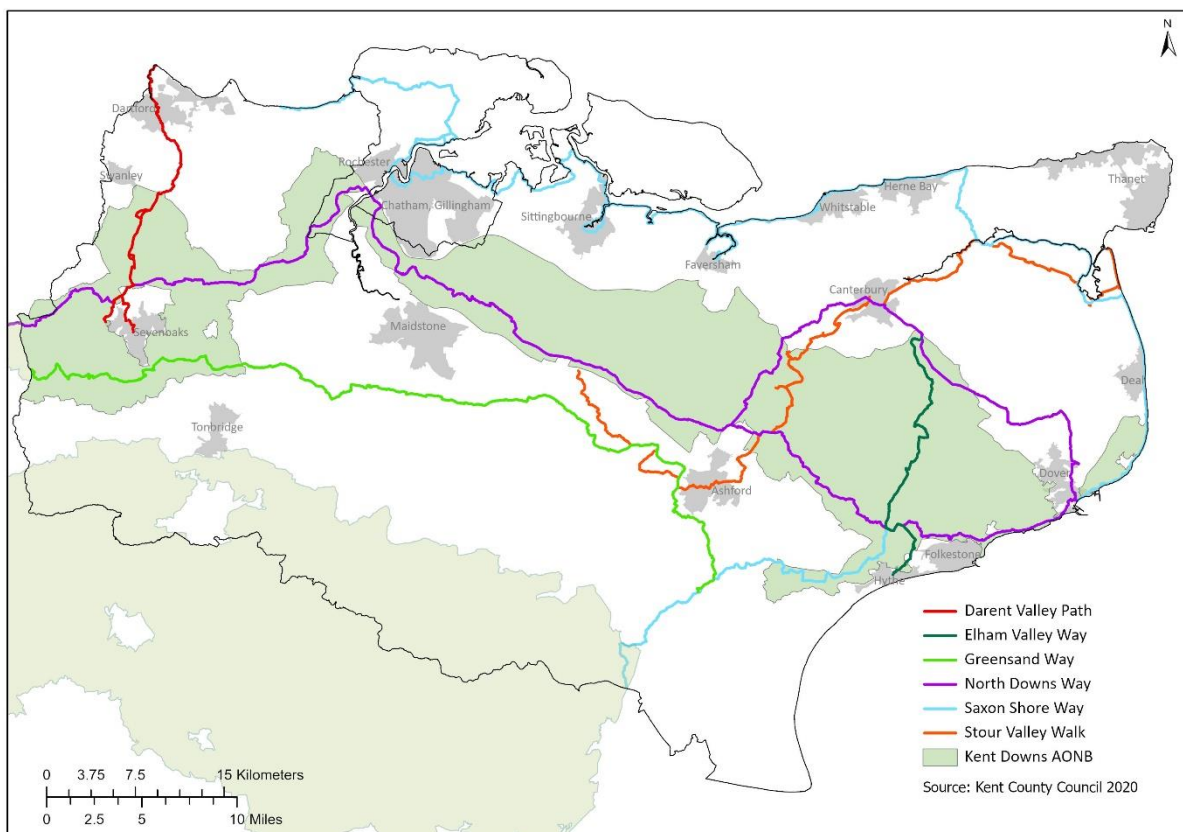


Figure 12.1 Promoted walking routes in Kent

Cycling

Cycling is increasingly popular and can be a sustainable means of transport and recreation and is generally a quiet activity with low impact on the countryside. The increased prevalence of e-cycles makes the sometimes very steep hills of the Kent Downs now much more accessible to a greater number of people on cycles. Opportunities for off-road cycling in the AONB have been developed by Sustrans and Cycle UK however in certain circumstances the increasing popularity of off road cycling is putting pressure on the Public

Rights of Way network, at the same time some cyclists and other users stray from permitted routes and cause damage to paths, farmland and sensitive habitats or historic sites. Sections of two National Cycle Routes and two regional routes pass through the AONB and the Pilgrims Cycle Trail, from Rochester to Canterbury, provides an arterial route through the Kent Downs. There are also a number of locally promoted on and off-road cycle routes. Dedicated cycling routes are proposed as an effective and low impact link between the Kent Downs and nearby urban and growth areas.

Following a significant increase in requests for cycling information along the North Downs Way, a partnership with Cycling UK and Sustrans has been established to create a linear multi user route to allow cyclists, horse riders and mobility vehicles to explore the Trail and AONB. A combination of proximity to large urban populations, the advance of cycle technology (mountain bikes/ e-bikes) and the rapid rise of cycling is driving the need to provide infrastructure and information for these purposes.

Horse riding and driving

Although the network is limited, 40% of Kent's bridleways are in the AONB, making the Kent Downs a significant area for horse riding in Kent. The latest information (provided for the previous AONB Management Plan) estimates 100,000 riders in Kent, 50,000 regular riders, and horse numbers between 30 and 40,000 (Land Use Consultants/KCC). Evidence from the British Horse Society (BHS) and the Public Rights of Way teams (from maintenance spend) indicates that the increasing use of bridleways is damaging the route fabric. The BHS in Kent estimates a population of 90 horses per kilometre of bridleway, creating significant pressure on the network. Horse riding, driving and equine events provide important opportunities for access, exercise, health and wellbeing and can provide access opportunities for those with disabilities and mental health therapeutic needs.

Horse riding, like cycling and walking is increasingly difficult and dangerous on rural roads because of the volume and speed of traffic and the bridleway network in Kent is limited.

Other opportunities for informal countryside recreation are generally provided on the many open access sites, picnic sites and facilities across the AONB. These include 12 Country Parks and picnic sites, 44 Village Greens (44.9ha) and 48 areas of Registered Common Land (442.7ha). Access for informal recreation is also available at a number of National Trust properties concentrated on the Greensand Ridge south of Sevenoaks, parts of the White Cliffs Heritage Coast, Forestry Commission-owned woodland and sites owned and managed by Kent Wildlife Trust and the Woodland Trust.

Organised events

The continued strong growth in organised events for a range of outdoor activities including cycling sportives on-road and trail (cross-country), running, duathlons, triathlons, sponsored walks, orienteering and geocaching has increased substantively. Events are led by a range of organisations including charitable bodies, sports clubs, and increasingly local events companies specialising in running and cycling events, such as Nice Work based in East Sussex which operate several events in and around Kent. Local running clubs are also active in this area, such as Istead and Ifield Harriers (North Downs Run) and Centurion Running (North Downs 50 and 100). In 2017 Pilgrims Hospice ran a walking challenge from Wye to Dover. In its second year of running in 2019 the event attracted 500 walkers with plans to develop this further. The North Downs Way alone sees over 10,000 people/ year take part in these events with new events appearing at around 4 new events each year. Inevitably this leads to an increase in users training for these events and training for other similar events in

other locations. Transport connections to large populations make the landscape and trail attractive assets for event organisers.

Access for Artistic and Cultural expression

The Kent Downs has long provided an important location for the creation and research of many creative projects. In recent years this activity has increased with artists and cultural practitioners focussed on outcomes that are more sustainable and connect to environmental concerns. There are several areas of the AONB where people can access and enjoy great art; there is an opportunity for the partnership to provide infrastructure and partnerships that can support this work. New opportunities arise from the National Association for AONBs Arts Strategy and the bid for a Medway City of Culture in 2025.

Field sports

The Kent Downs landscape lends itself to pheasant shooting and hunting with extensive areas of woodland and tree cover and arable and mixed farm use. It is estimated that game bird shooting generates at least £10 million per annum for the local economy and is one of the most economically important uses for Kent Downs woodlands. However, conflicts arise because of overstocking with pheasants; woodland management for game birds; the impact of the stocked bird populations on wild plant and animal communities and the landscape impact of game bird cover crops. A collaborative project with the Game Conservancy Trust has produced best practice guidance for game bird management in the Kent Downs.

Fishing is also popular although the Kent Downs offers limited scope for course and freshwater fishing, such as along the river and gravel pits of the Great Stour valley. Sea fishing is also popular off parts of the Heritage Coast, such as St Margaret's Bay and Samphire Hoe where national competitions are held.

Country motor sports

Country motor sports are growing in popularity and are of special relevance in the AONB as the Kent Downs (23% of Kent's land area) accommodates 53% of the byways. Activities include events on public roads such as car tours, treasure hunts and road rallies along with green-laneing and trail riding on byways. While responsible users promote good practice and respect for others, the use of byways and unmetalled roads by 4x4 vehicles and motorbikes, although legal, can lead to significant conflicts with other users because of disturbance, safety issues and damage to the Rights of Way surface. There remains illegal use of footpaths and bridleways by motorised vehicles, and the use of byways to access the wider landscape. These and other recreational activities can negatively affect the tranquillity of the AONB which is a much-valued component of natural beauty.

Road users

The rural road network of the Kent Downs is often of ancient origin and its pattern is an important part of the special character and qualities of the landscape. The Kent Growth and Infrastructure Framework identifies traffic growth and congestion as an important issue in Kent and the Kent Downs is not immune; the roads of the Kent Downs provide well used north south links through the county and are also used as an important way to access the landscape and the main UK Europe transport routes pass partly through or very close by the AONB. A series of major infrastructure and development proposals, such as the Lower Thames Crossing, London Resort and 'garden' towns outside the AONB have the potential of increasing traffic through the AONB. Greater reliance on the car is partly thought to be because people perceive roads to be dangerous to walk or cycle. The KCC road safety rural campaign states that rural roads account for 3/5 of road fatalities, which are focused on

roads to and from urban areas.

The historic and ancient routeways and paths are susceptible to damage by modern vehicular use, detracting from the enjoyment of the area by walkers and cyclists and damaging the fabric of the lane.

Access for people with restricted mobility

Greater recognition of the needs of socially excluded groups, and legislation including the Disability Discrimination Acts 1995 and 2005, and subsequently the Equalities Act are leading to enhanced efforts to meet the needs of all, including people with disabilities, on low incomes or without access to private transport.

Research from the Kent Countryside Access Improvement Plan has shown that 18% of people with a disability never visit the natural environment, compared with 8% of the non-disabled population. Research found that disabled people visited the countryside to enjoy views, the landscape and to relax and they perceived the countryside as inherently rewarding and beneficial to the same degree as the wider population, especially for the psychological benefits. In addition, accessing the natural environment gave people with disabilities a sense of continuity between their disabled and non-disabled selves, and a sense of achievement.

For people with mobility restrictions there are a growing number of promoted routes and sites and user groups are taking active and welcome steps to support wider access for all.

Health and well-being

There is compelling evidence for the health and well-being benefits of contact with nature and access to the countryside. With a rapidly increasing urban population in Kent and London along with the impacts of the Covid-19 pandemic, there is a special focus on the role of the Kent Downs landscape in providing these significant multiple benefits. The evidence base for the Rights of Way Improvement plan added to this saying *'Our research showed that the clear majority of PROW users experienced only positive feelings relating to vitality and happiness when using the network, showing how valuable the network is in improving people's quality of life through health and wellbeing benefits.'* This evidence base is being recognised in the NHS and in the early years of the plan the NHS will be recruiting 'link workers' to connect prescribers with local agencies which can provide support for a wide range of people for instance with long-term conditions, need support with their mental health, are lonely or isolated or have complex social needs which affect their wellbeing.

Education and children

Over the next 20 years, today's children and young people will become tomorrow's decision makers. If we are to secure a future for this precious landscape, and our environment more generally, we should actively encourage understanding and education for young people. The close proximity of substantial urban areas to the Kent Downs AONB offers a special opportunity to promote exciting and engaging activities for schools and families. The disconnection between children and the natural environment has been described as 'Nature Deficit Disorder' and its consequences and the opportunities to address it have been documented in a National Trust report. One of the 'stand out' recommendations of the Government's Landscape Review was to offer all children a night under the stars.

There are many opportunities to reconnect children with nature (and dark night skies), link education activities to the national curriculum and to strengthen the understanding,

enjoyment and celebration of the AONB landscape.

Information and interpretation

At the heart of enjoyable countryside recreation is high quality accessible information that helps visitors plan their use of the Kent Downs and increases the understanding and satisfaction of their experience. Information is currently available in a variety of forms but tends not to be coordinated and may display unconscious bias. The Landscape Review as well as the Rights of Way Improvement Plan have identified the need for better information and clearer signing as a priority for the future management of National Landscapes to benefit visitors and local people alike.

No specific AONB visitor centres exist, although many of the existing centres do provide information about the Kent Downs.

12.2 Access, enjoyment and understanding - main issues, opportunities and threats

- a. There is a structural inequality in the access and enjoyment of the beauty of the Kent Downs, a variety of groups and individuals experience significant barriers to enjoying the landscape, research has shown many ways to help overcome these barriers.
- b. The very rapid growth trajectory for Kent will generate new opportunities for and pressures from access for enjoyment, health and well-being.
- c. There is a need to identify how the CRoW Act open access sites can bring wider benefits and links to education and information provision.
- d. Differences in requirements and uses between rightful PRoW users (horse riders, cyclists, motorbikes, 4x4s and walkers, those with dogs) can result in conflicts.
- e. Conflicts between rightful PRoW users and illegal users, fly-tipping, dumping and path obstruction.
- f. The increasing popularity of horse riding and off road cycling which is focused particularly on the AONB, putting pressure on the rights of way network farm land and wildlife sites. The need to enhance, extend, connect and improve fragmented Public Rights of Way network and secure higher rights on PRoW without harming the characteristics and qualities of the AONB.
- g. Estimated day visitor numbers are high and increasing and peaked during the Covid pandemic. Pressure on the special characteristics and qualities of the AONB as well as particular countryside routes, sites and areas can be very high but unevenly distributed, concern about 'over visiting' has been reported by farmers and land managers, managers of wildlife sites and managers of visitor attractions.
- h. Need to ensure that the PRoW network is accessible and welcoming, well signposted, way-marked, connected and maintained using materials and equipment appropriate in design and sustainably sourced.
- i. Improving the rural road network for its landscape quality, connectedness and safety in order to promote active travel and quiet countryside recreation is an important

opportunity.

- j. Need to increase and enhance people's understanding of and access opportunities to the AONB, its landscape and countryside practices and to provide coordinated support and information in a number of formats appropriate to their setting.
- k. Need to maximise coastal access opportunities through the newly defined England Coast Path National Trail and support the enhanced management of the coastal corridor.
- l. Need to promote exciting and engaging education and interpretation schemes for children and young people both in and out of the school context.
- m. The opportunity to promote the availability and use of safe non-car based countryside transport and recreation opportunities and seek integrated public transport initiatives.
- n. The opportunity to secure health and well-being benefits through diverse and inclusive social and green prescribing in the Kent Downs.

12.3 Access, enjoyment and understanding - aims

A landscape that provides:

1. Sustainable opportunities and facilities to enable everyone to safely and sustainably enjoy and understand the AONB countryside without detracting from it; where structural, perceptual and physical barriers to access are removed and minimised.
2. A legally defined, well maintained, connected and promoted Rights of Way and permissive path network that provides safe, welcoming, well designed connected and satisfying routes for walkers, cyclists and horse riders where conflicts between rightful uses are minimised.
3. New, safe and attractive routes and connections between public rights of way and a highway network which is increasingly available and safe for walkers, cyclists and horse riders.
4. Access where illegal or damaging recreational activities are actively controlled.
5. Special places, events, media and appropriate support available throughout the year for people of all ages and backgrounds to learn about their environment, enjoy and benefit from the AONB landscape, know they are there and celebrate its diversity and richness.
6. Innovative and stimulating opportunities for all people to be involved artistically and culturally and to exercise and improve their health and well-being, in tranquil and inspiring surroundings.

12.5 Access, enjoyment and understanding - principles

- AEU1 Co-ordinated investment in making access more diverse and inclusive for recreation, access, education, and health and well-being across the Kent Downs AONB will be

pursued.

- AEU2 Investment to secure sustainable, high quality, low impact and easy access, multi-user routes, safer highways and high-quality public transport options from towns and growth areas to the Kent Downs AONB will be pursued.
- AEU3 Diversions and stopping up of PRoWs will be resisted unless it can be demonstrated that they will not have a detrimental impact on opportunities for access and quiet enjoyment of the Kent Downs AONB landscape and historic character.
- AEU4 The sustainable and enhanced management and promotion of Public Rights of Way, permissive paths and open access sites will be pursued.
- AEU5 Mechanisms will be supported to resolve conflicts between rightful users of Public Rights of Way. Where there are irreconcilable conflicts from legal but damaging activities, quiet recreation will be supported above other activities.
- AEU6 Robust mechanisms to resist and overcome illegal use and poor maintenance which harm the opportunity to explore and enjoy the Kent Downs AONB will be pursued where design is in accordance with the Landscape Design Handbook.
- AEU7 Improvements to the Rights of Way Network to overcome barriers provide and improve countryside access, health and well-being opportunities, including, connecting with NHS social prescribing, enhanced way-marking, signposting and maintenance, new routes and establishment of higher rights which conforms with Kent Downs AONB policies and design guidance, will be pursued. Support for investment in access from the new Environmental Land Management payments will be pursued.
- AEU8 High standards of landscape and recreational management including the management of 'over visiting', provision of accessible visitor facilities, new accessible access opportunities and increased opportunities for learning and health enhancement, artistic and cultural expression through a coordinated strategy and programme of training, community support, events, guided walks, cycle rides and gateway routes and sites will be pursued.
- AEU9 Initiatives for children, schools and youth groups which encourage interest in and learning about the AONB and reconnection with nature will be pursued.
- AEU10 Support will be given to the North Downs Way and England Coast Path National Trails as the main promoted routes in the Kent Downs, the establishment of a North Downs Way multiuser route will be supported.
- AEU11 A reduction in the need to travel by car will be supported through new and improved measures to provide integrated, attractive and affordable public transport and through promoting and supporting safe active travel to and within the Kent Downs. New business, community and other initiatives in support of the vision, aims and policies of the Management Plan will seek to relate to existing public transport and active travel links.
- AEU12 Sustainable solutions to problems of rural traffic will be supported, particularly in rural settlements or where there is a conflict with landscape quality or walkers, cyclists and

horse riders.

AEU13A strategic approach to the use of road signage, furniture, design and maintenance that conserves and enhances the local character and distinctiveness and encourages non-motorised access will be pursued through the adoption and implementation of the Kent Downs AONB Rural Streets and Lanes Design Handbook.

AEU 14 Proposals which detract from the amenity and enjoyment of users of the Public Rights of Way network will be resisted.