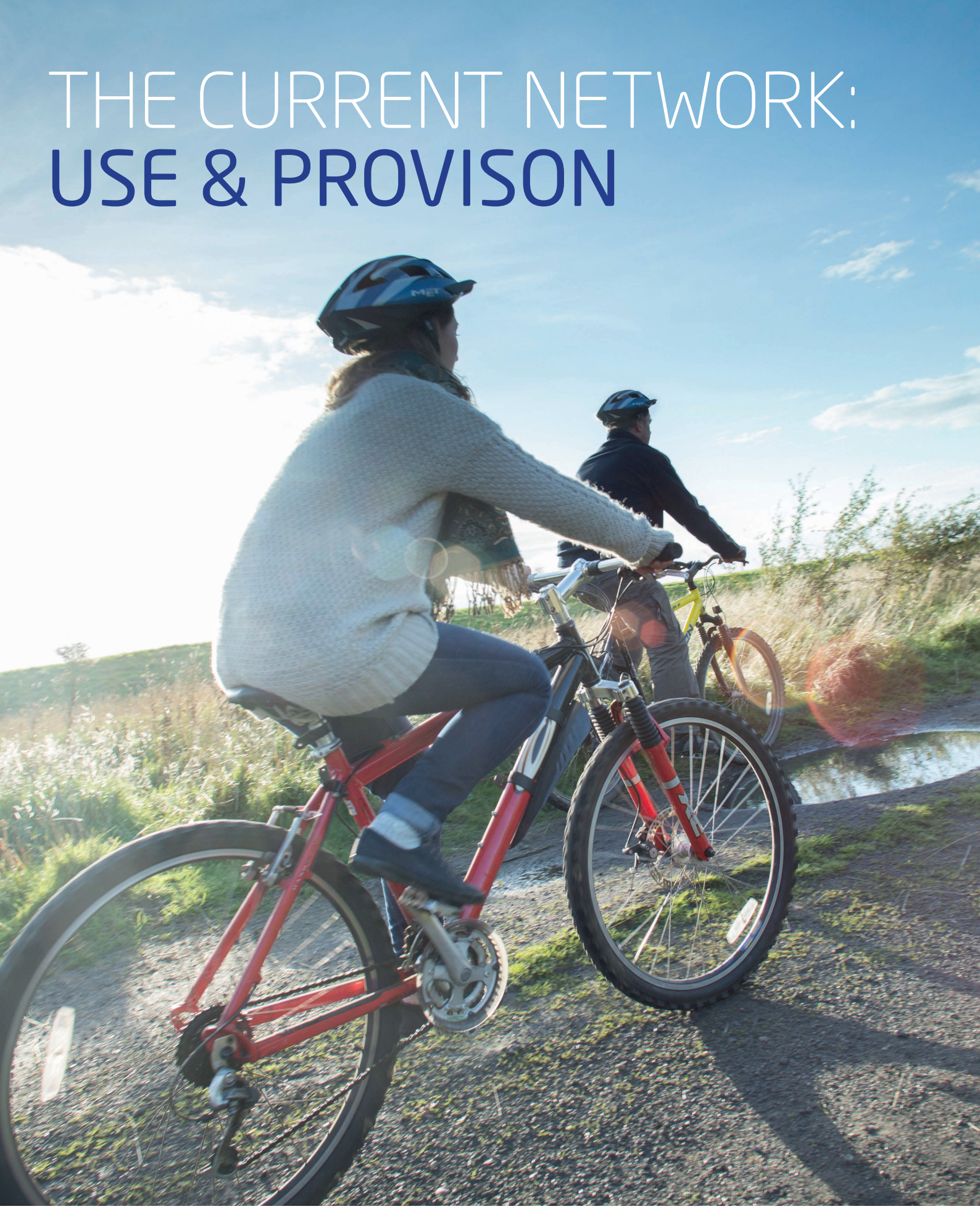
THE CURRENT NETWORK: USE & PROVISON



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THE CURRENT NETWORK:USE & PROVISON

INTRODUCTION

The county of Kent, like the rest of England and Wales has a network of paths which are legally protected as public highways. These paths form a unique resource freely available to the public which can be used to access places of work, education and other facilities; to explore the countryside and coast and provide important links between Kent's communities.

Although Kent County Council has a 6,900 km network of public rights of way (PROW) the percentage of higher status paths including byways, restricted byways and bridleways is lower than the national average.

RIGHTS OF WAY STATUS AND DISTRIBUTION

The definitive map and statement is a legal record held by the county council of the existence and alignment of recorded PROW in Kent. The network map is a working copy of the definitive map and shows the current PROW network including completed diversions, extinguishments and creations. The distribution of each type of PROW throughout the county is shown on the maps below. Map 1 shows all paths recorded on the network map with footpath status only, and Map 2 shows the limited distribution of higher status paths: byways, restricted byways and bridleways also recorded on the network map.

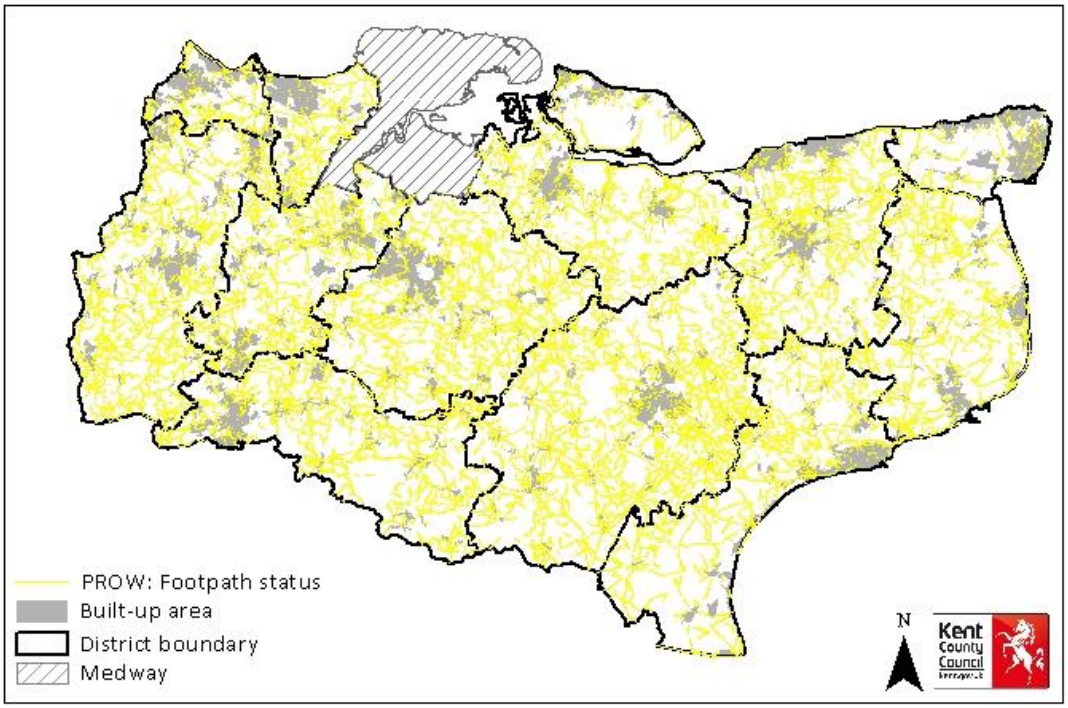
PUBLIC RIGHTS OF WAY ASSET

The Rights of Way and Access Service adopted asset management principles for the management of the network in 2007. Following a full survey of the network concluded in 2007, the Service has used inspections and public reports to continue to update the asset condition information it holds and to use this information to determine how and where to invest in the network. All work programmes are established based on a simple cost benefit analysis which seeks to ensure that those projects that most closely meet the County Council's statutory requirements and the objectives set out in the Rights of Way Improvement Plan (ROWIP) are prioritised.

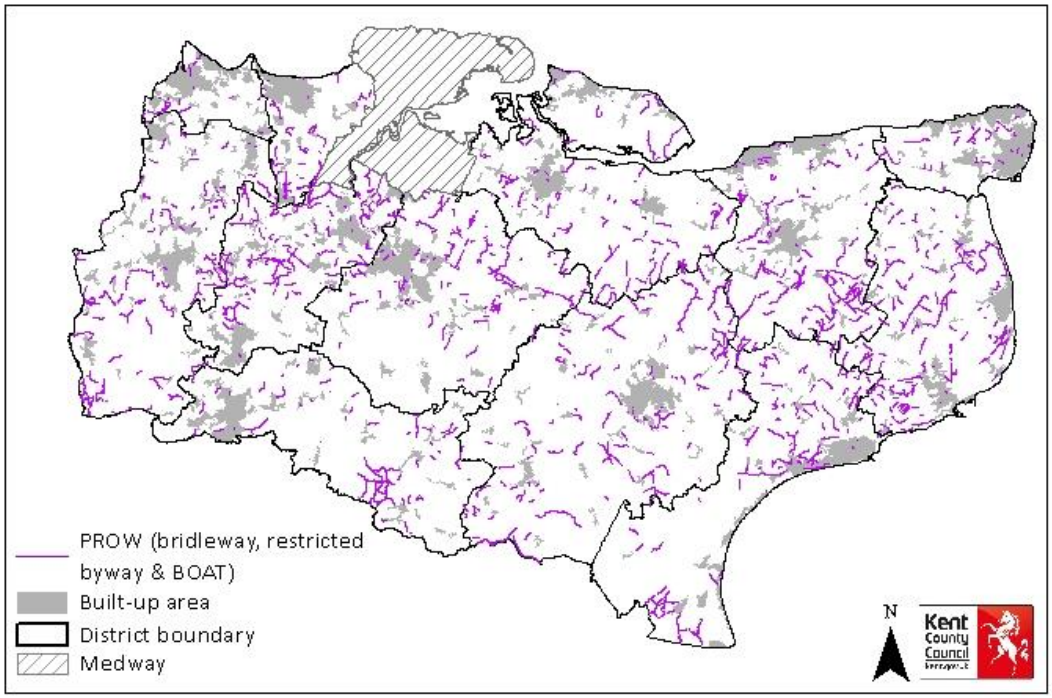
The network asset comprises of many elements, some of which are entirely the responsibility of the County Council, such as the surface of publicly maintainable highways, fingerposts, waymark posts, barriers and many of the footbridges bridges found on the network. The County Council is obliged to contribute to the upkeep of

some elements of the asset such as stiles, gates and bridges where there is a shared liability.

Map 1



Map 2



The value of the asset at current replacement costs, for those elements for which the County Council is responsible, is calculated as £108 million with an annual requirement of £2.4 million to maintain the network in an optimum condition.

The asset comprises:

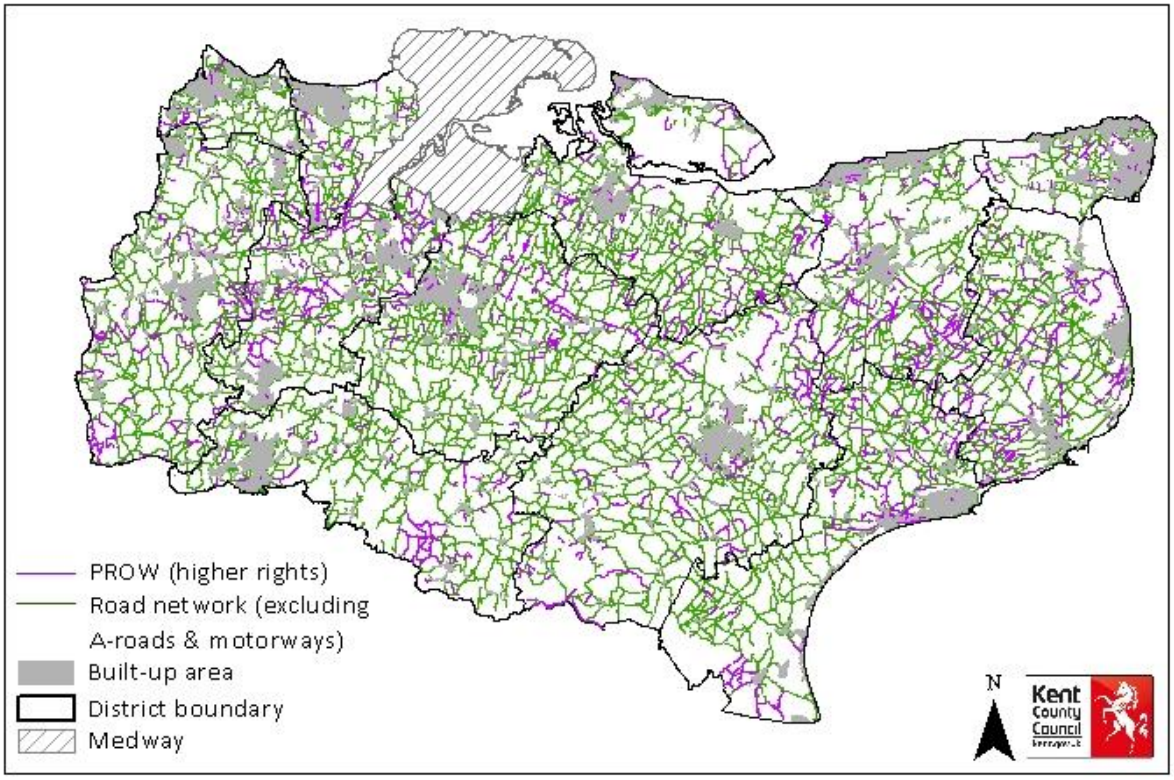
Stiles	7837
Gates – All types	10037
Fingerposts	14655
Sleeper Bridges	1433
Bridges	1613
Aggregate paths	412Km
Metalled paths	735Km
Unmade paths requiring vegetation clearance. (Optimum)	1758km

LIMITATIONS TO THE NETWORK

Only 16.65% of Kent's PROW network is available to equestrians and cyclists. Less still 5.5 % is available to carriage drivers, and 3.35% available to motor vehicles. In reality less is available, as many byways are subject to traffic regulation orders. Those PROW carrying higher rights are shown on Map 2 above. Many higher right routes are only available if heavily trafficked roads are used to access them.

Creating new links to these paths will increase the network available to horse-riders, cyclists and potentially carriage drivers. Using fragmentation analysis to identify where these higher status routes link to quieter, less well used roads we can investigate potential improvements to the network. Map 3 below highlights such links and shows where the road network (excluding A-Roads and motorways) connects to the higher status PROW network.

Map 3



Where quieter roads are not available, verges on the faster roads may be a viable option to provide these links. Further investigation into the highway network and potential links will be carried out over the next 10 years. This information will be made available to PROW Officers to assist with making informed responses to planning applications and other civil engineering projects.

Stiles - The use of stiles on the network as a means of stock control can act as a barrier to PROW users. People with a wide range of mobility issues from wheelchairs users, ambulant disability, those who are elderly or those with young families may find stiles impassable or difficult to use.

The PROW and Access Service are committed to removing stiles and have a policy **not** to authorise new stiles on the network. Over the past 10 years the number of stiles on the network has been reduced by an impressive 38%. Table 1 (below) shows this reduction of the stile asset over the past 10 years.

Table 1	2017	2012	2007	Difference 2007-2012	Difference 2012-2017	Total Difference 2007-2017
Total	7837	9706	12725	- 3019	- 1869	- 4888

Table 2 (below) shows the numbers of stiles remaining by district and the length of network affected by stiles for each district as well as the county as a whole.

Table 2 District	Total Links	Total Network Length (km)	No. of Stiles	Length Free from Stiles (km)	Length Affected by Stiles (km)	Percent Network Stile Free	Percent Network Affected by Stiles
Ashford	3583	1232.88	1990	719.9	513.0	58%	42%
Canterbury	2038	642.02	482	507.1	135.0	79%	21%
Dartford	423	127.59	53	112.6	15.0	88%	12%
Dover	2191	650.75	398	545.6	105.1	84%	16%
Gravesham	611	199.92	179	149.6	50.3	75%	25%
Maidstone	2508	792.83	1186	500.9	292.0	63%	37%
Sevenoaks	2272	758.34	972	501.2	257.1	66%	34%
Shepway	1726	638.62	861	392.5	246.1	61%	39%
Swale	1770	605.30	204	538.7	66.6	89%	11%
Thanet	514	118.31	28	103.1	15.2	87%	13%
Tonbridge and Malling	1840	550.34	457	435.4	114.9	79%	21%
Tunbridge Wells	1607	581.55	1027	314.1	267.5	54%	46%
Total	**21083**	**6898.44**	**7837**	**4820.6**	**2077.9**	**70%**	**30%**

Map 4 (below) shows the distribution of paths across the county which are stile free and those that have at least one stile in place upon them.

Map 4

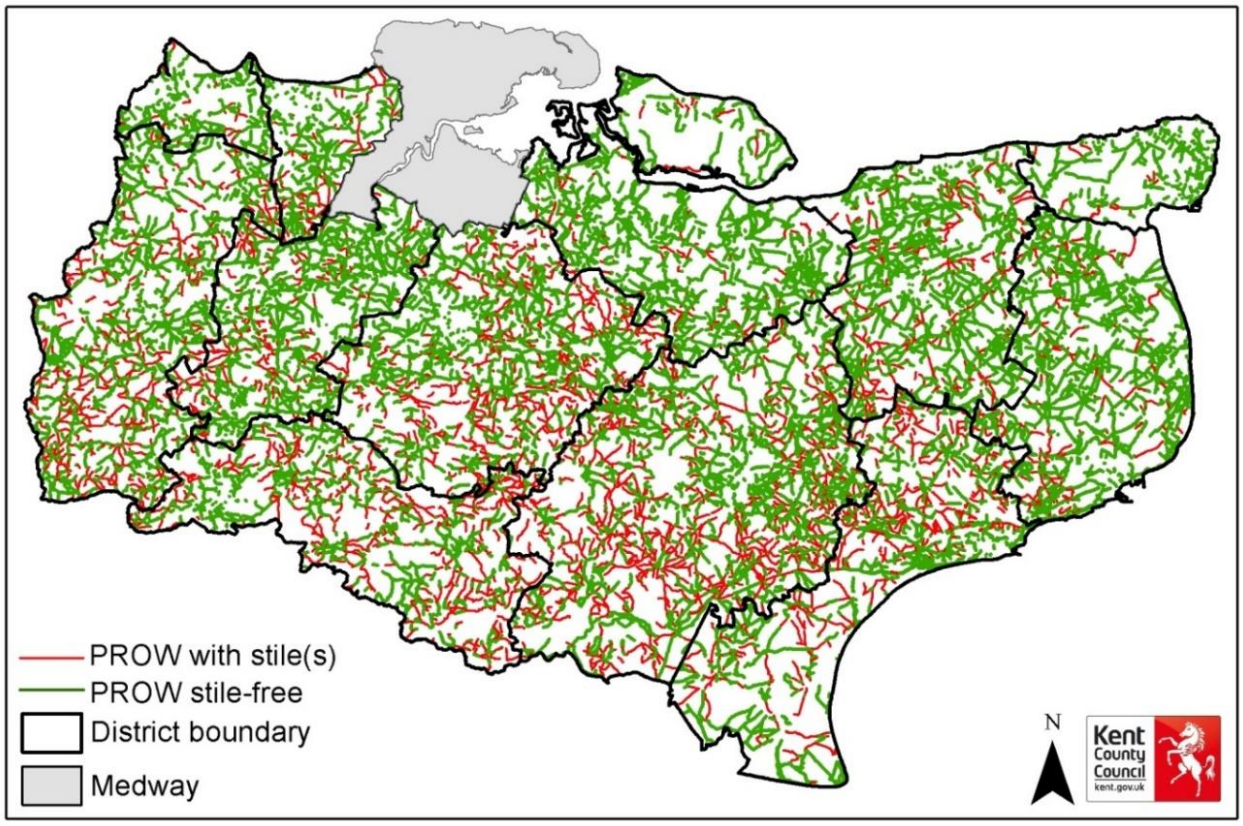
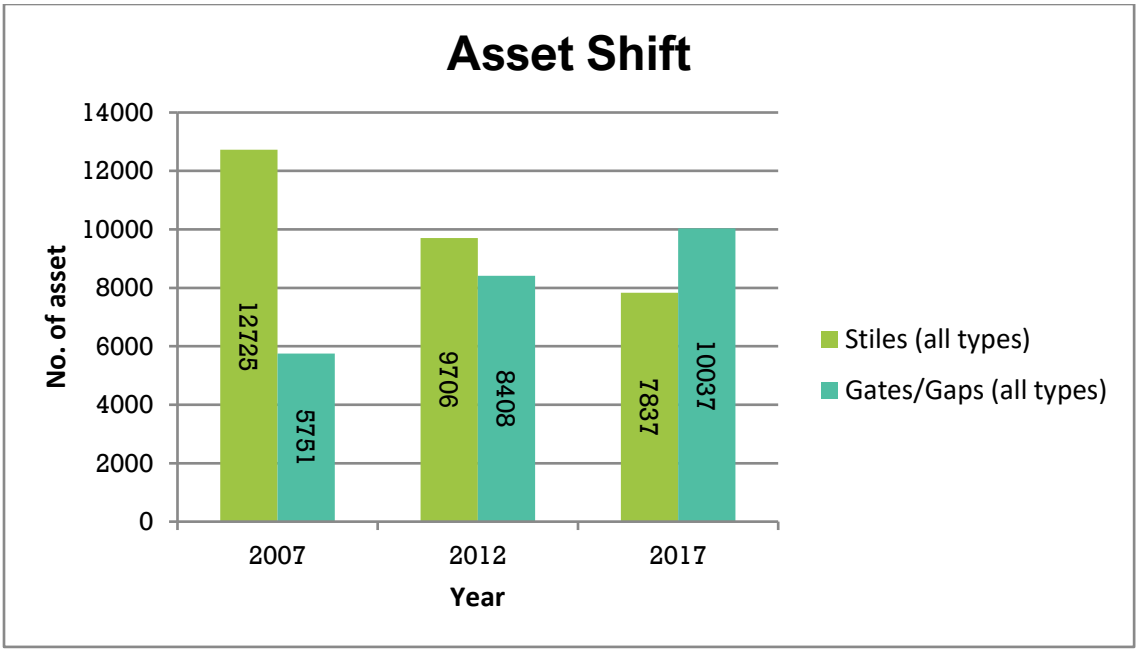


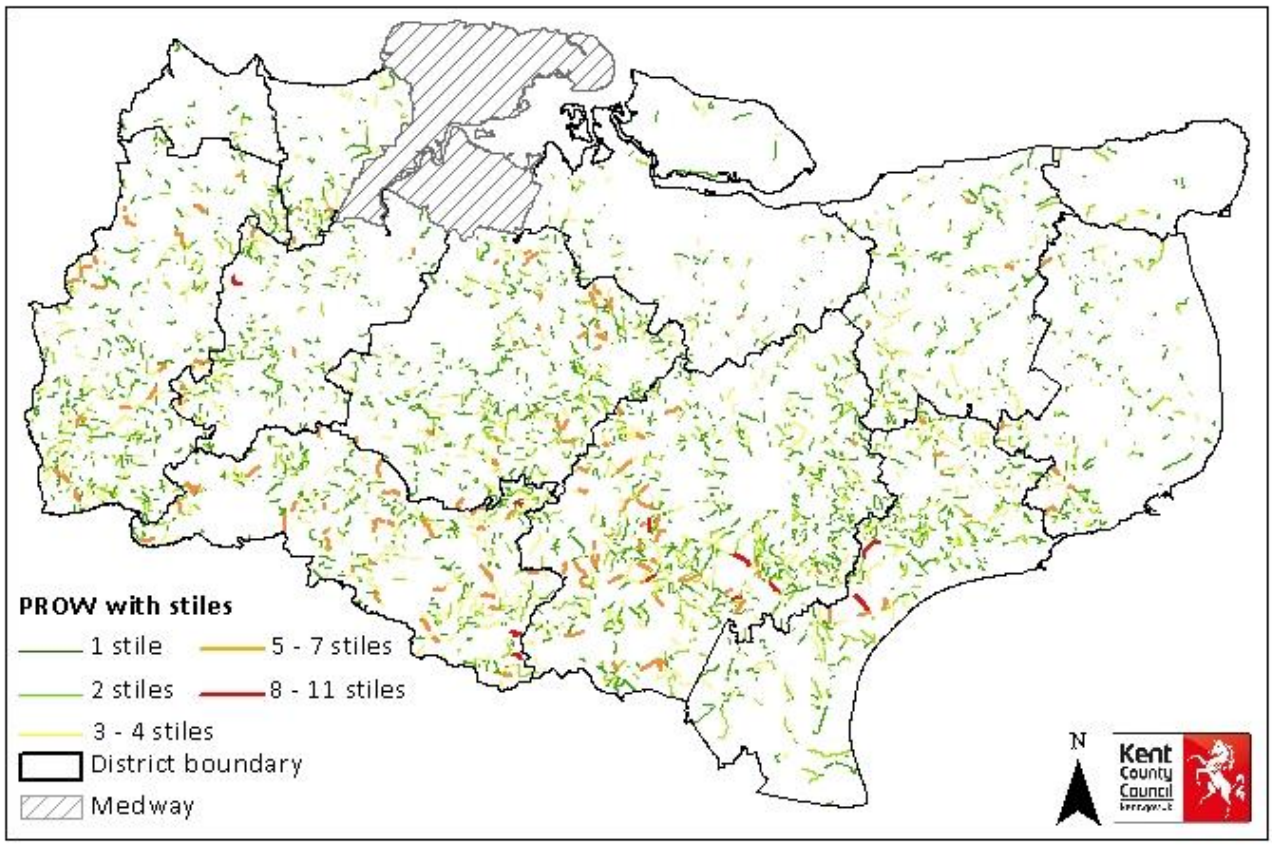
Chart 1 below shows how the stile and gate assets have dramatically changed over the past 10 years. These changes have resulted in a more accessible network, reducing the number of restrictions to users with different ranges of mobility issues.

There are routes where the removal of one stile can have a greater impact on the network, making the route stile free and accessible to more users. Map 5 below shows which paths have stiles on the network and the number of stiles that need to be removed, to make the route stile free. This information will be made available to PROW Officers and will act as a useful tool to target limited resources.

Chart 1


Asset Shift
14000
12000
10000
8000
6000
4000
2000
0
No. of asset
12725
5751
9706
8408
7837
10037
2007
2012
2017
Year
Stiles (all types)
Gates/Gaps (all types)

Map 5


PROW with stiles
1 stile
2 stiles
3 - 4 stiles
5 - 7 stiles
8 - 11 stiles
District boundary
Medway
N
Kent County Council

COASTAL ACCESS

Following the introduction of the Marine and Coastal Access Act 2009, the County Council has been working in partnership with the Natural England to establish the Kent stretches of the England Coast Path. This is a new National Trail walking route that will eventually circumnavigate the entire English coastline. In addition to the creation of a linear walking route, the project secures access rights for the public to explore beaches and land along the coastline – known as 'Spreading Room'.

When the National Trail is complete, the path will be approximately 2,700 miles long, making it one of the longest promoted coastal walking routes in the world. Due to the scale of the project, the trail is being developed in stretches around the country. The first stretches of the Coast Path in Kent, between Ramsgate and Camber, were opened to the public on the 19 July 2016. This provided a 106 km (66 mile) trail across the South East, connecting coastal communities and bringing tourism opportunities to the region. Work is currently in progress to develop the remaining stretches of coast path along the North Kent coast, which should hopefully be open to the public by 2020.

ACCESS TO GREEN SPACE

Evidence around the health and wellbeing benefits provided by access to green space are well documented, further details can be found within the 'Policy and Literature Review' and 'Benefits of Using the PROW Network', two of the evidence base, supporting documents available online and on request.

The Kent Nature Partnership's Health and Nature subgroup produced a natural green space needs assessment, which identified those areas where there is both a low prevalence of the population being physically active and a low level of natural green space provision.[1] In this assessment green space is defined as 'places where human control and activities are not intensive, so that a feeling of naturalness is allowed to predominate' (as described by Natural England). Green space includes 'all open space of public value, including not just land, but also areas of water such as rivers, canals, lakes and reservoirs, which offer important opportunities for sport and recreation and can also act as a visual amenity'. Throughout the report 'accessibility to green space' (including 'access of green space') refers to a site being accessible via some form of public right of way.[2]

Map 6 below shows levels of access to semi-natural green space sites of various sizes. People living in the darker green areas have access to the most semi-natural green

[1] (Bennett, Davies, Hodgson, Pett, & Witts, 2016)
[2] (Bennett, Davies, Hodgson, Pett, & Witts, 2016)

space sites, whereas those in the orange and yellow areas have poorer levels of access. This assessment was used to prioritise areas for future action and investment, based on levels of population deprivation, size and need and can be used by the PROW and Access Service to identify future projects. Populations with a high levels of physical inactivity and with limited access to natural greenspace close to home were found in Thanet, Ashford, Swale, Gravesham, Dover and Canterbury.

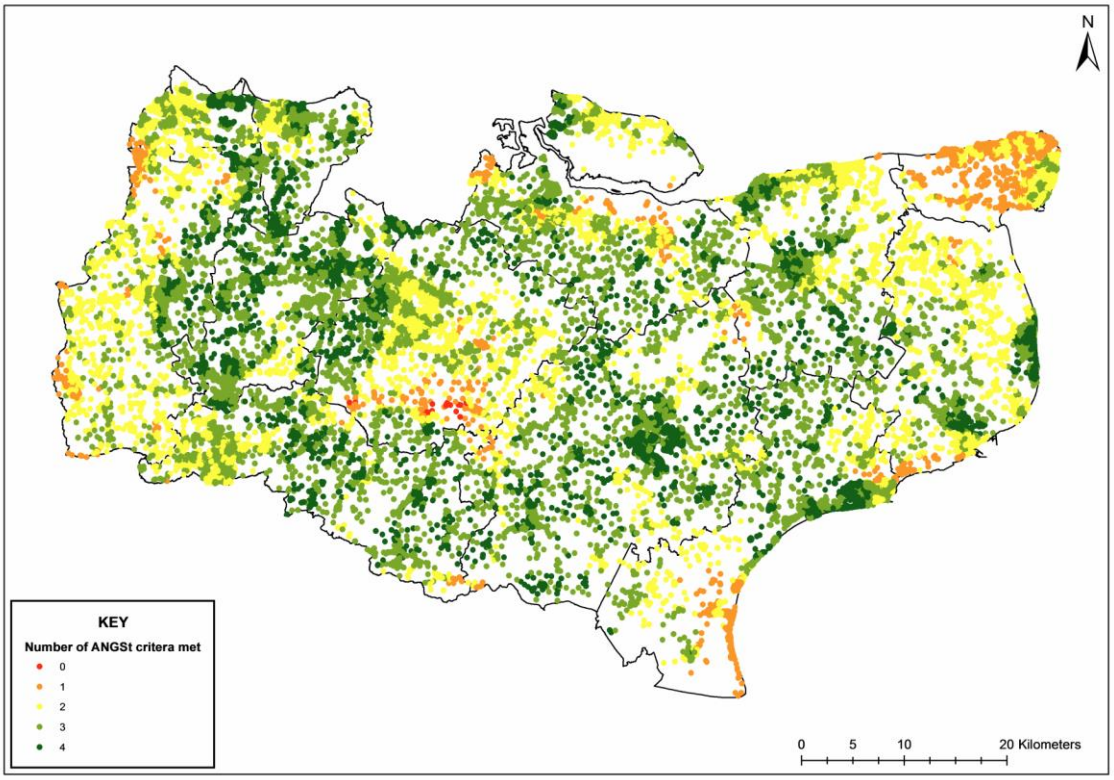
The Marmot Review[3] recognised the importance of good quality open and green space in tackling health inequality and highlighted that fair distribution of health, wellbeing and sustainability are important social goals. Health and wellbeing is influenced by a wide range of factors which include the local economy and the built and wider environment. The review also recognised that the availability and quality of access to green space is not evenly distributed, with those in deprived urban areas often having less access to health-improving green space.

In 2015, Public Health England published analysis of Kent's performance on health inequalities against Marmot Review[4] objectives. Overall, Kent scored significantly worse than the England average for 'Utilisation of outdoor space for exercise/health reasons'.[5] There is also great inequality between different areas of Kent. The Indices of Multiple Deprivation combine data drawn from seven domains (income, employment, education, skills, health, crime, housing and the environment), producing an overall deprivation score for geographic areas, Map 7 below, shows the Indices of Multiple Deprivation for areas in Kent.

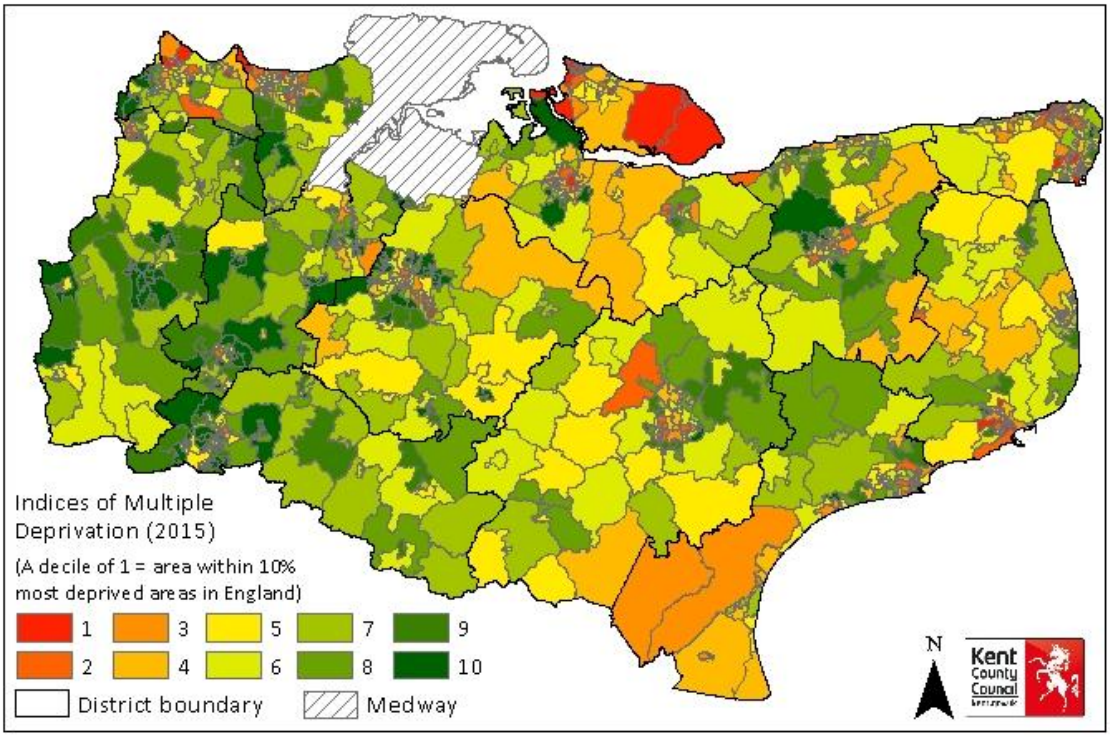
The overall percentage of the population in good health is shown on Map 8 below, comparing areas with access to greenspace, deprivation and good health there appears to be a correlation, where less deprived areas have better health and good access to green space. The Rights of Way and Access Service will use the information available on health inequalities, areas of deprivation and current access to green space to focus efforts on the areas that will have greatest impact in reducing health inequalities.

[3] Fair Society, Healthy Lives (The Marmot Review) (2010)
[4] Fair Society, Healthy Lives (The Marmot Review) (2010)
[5] 2013/14 figures. (Kent Public Health Observatory, August 2016)

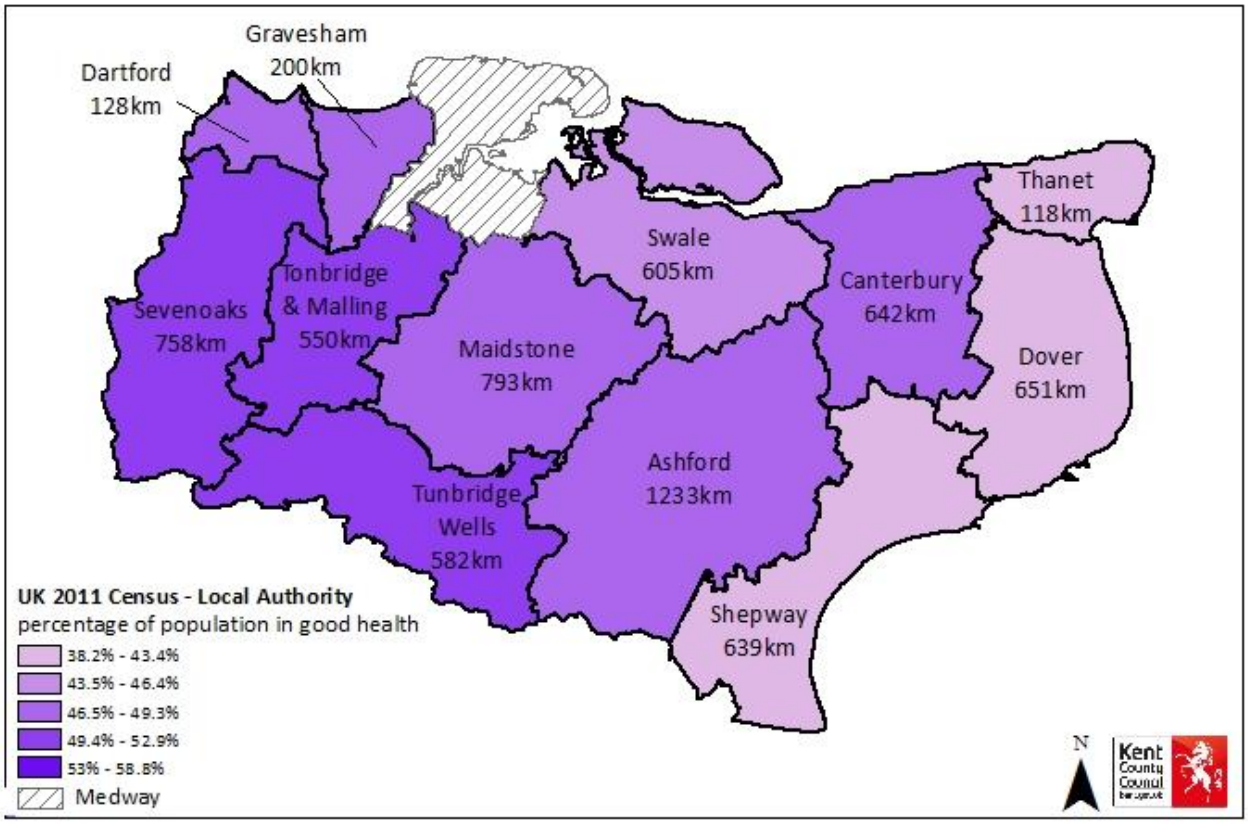
Map 6


N
KEY
Number of ANGSt critera met
0
1
2
3
4
0 5 10 20 Kilometers

Map 7


Indices of Multiple Deprivation (2015)
(A decile of 1 = area within 10% most deprived areas in England)
1
2
3
4
5
6
7
8
9
10
District boundary
Medway
N
Kent County Council

Map 8

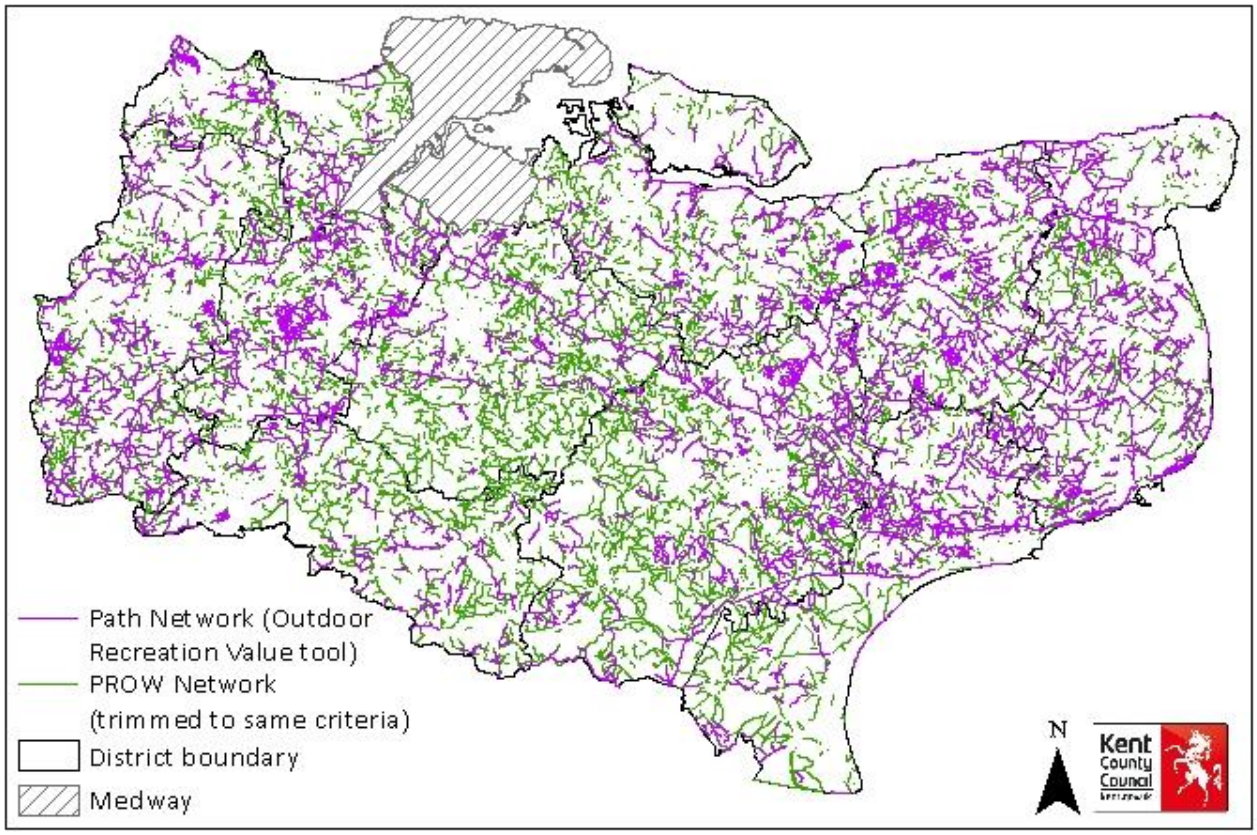


OUTDOOR RECREATION VALUATION (ORVAL)

ORVal, although currently a pilot tool, provides further evidence of the value and benefits that are derived from publicly accessible space and the PROW network. This map-based web application has been developed by the Land, Environment, Economics and Policy (LEEP) Institute at the University of Exeter, with support from DEFRA.

ORVal calculated the distribution of accessible green space through the inclusion of paths through the countryside, along the coast and on beaches, as well as recreation areas such as parks and nature reserves. The total path network that ORVal has included in this calculation is an underestimate, Map 9, below shows the additional PROW network that should be included when calculating the total distribution of accessible green space in Kent.

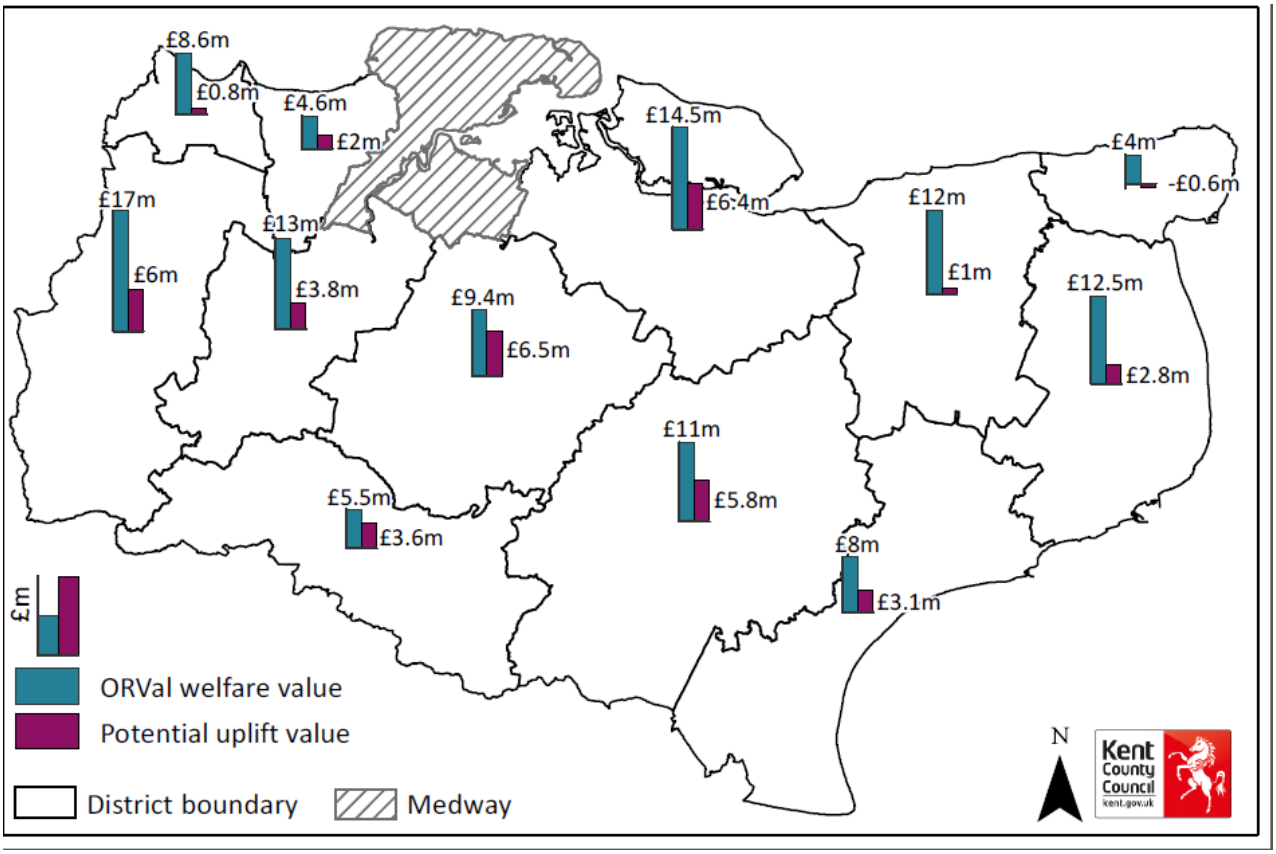
Map 9



WELFARE VALUE

ORVal shows the usage and welfare values that are generated by the accessible green space either as an individual site or as a region. The welfare refers to sense of wellbeing or utility that each person feels because of their experience. The welfare value for green space is the figure for the monetary equivalent of the welfare enjoyed by a person because of having access to the green space. Map 10 below shows the welfare value calculated by ORVal along with the potential uplift value that the additional PROW network would incur. In economics this welfare value is often referred to as an economic value, or willingness to pay. Such values can be used when applying cost-benefit analysis to assess future planning applications and projects that impact on the PROW network and other accessible green space.

Map 10


£8.6m
£0.8m
£4.6m
£2m
£14.5m
£6.4m
£4m
-£0.6m
£17m
£6m
£13m
£3.8m
£9.4m
£6.5m
£12m
£1m
£12.5m
£2.8m
£11m
£5.8m
£5.5m
£3.6m
£8m
£3.1m
£m
ORVal welfare value
Potential uplift value
District boundary
Medway
N
Kent County Council
kent.gov.uk

WALKING AND CYCLING

WALKING

Walking has been described as "*the nearest activity to perfect exercise*", being the easiest, most accessible, cost effective, and enjoyable way for most people to increase their physical activity.[6]

Kent offers the walker the entire PROW network to help explore Kent's countryside and coast, with footpaths contributing to 83% of the network alone.

People walk for several reasons which range from an everyday necessity to travel to work, to walking as part of a group as a leisure activity. Walking provides many benefits, which relate to the individual walker as well as the overall environment in which the walking takes place.

Evidence for Health and Wellbeing

Within 20 years, the reduction in the prevalence of seven diseases (type 2 diabetes, dementia, cerebrovascular disease, breast cancer, colorectal cancer, depression, and ischaemic heart disease) because of increased physical activity alone, primarily through active travel, would save roughly £17 billion (in 2010 prices). This does not include the additional health benefits through reduced air pollution from an increase in active travel.[7]

Active children also do better. Physical activity is essential for healthy growth and development, it increases cognitive outcomes and school attainment and improves social interaction and confidence.[8]

Evidence for Tackling Inequality

The findings from the 'Walk this Way' project highlighted the importance of walking in promoting exercise in inactive people and also recognising the important of information provision, signage and good quality paths especially in areas of need.[9]

In areas of deprivation, where access to greenspace may be limited, increasing walking can be a particularly effective and low-cost way of increasing physical activity.

[6] (Heron & Bradshaw, 2010)
[7] (Jarrett, et al., 2012)
[8] (All-Party Parliamentary Commission on Physical Activity, 2014)
[9] (Heron & Bradshaw, 2010)

Evidence Supporting Kent's Economy

45% of international visitors to the South East between 2006 and 2011 walked in the countryside, compared with 24% for the whole UK; the second highest of any UK region. 25% of international visitors to the South East walked by the coast, compared with 8% for all the UK. Outdoor activities, especially walking, were highlighted as being popular in the South East. [10]

The total spend in England attributable to walking from overseas visitors was £286m in 2015, while £99m was attributable to cycling.[11]

CYCLING

Participation in cycling is increasing and there is great demand for safe, traffic free routes in Kent. Cycling provides an excellent form of low cost exercise that contributes to personal health and wellbeing as well as providing benefits to the local environment. People cycle for many reasons from sport and training, leisure trips with the family, to commuting to work or school.

Kent offers the cyclist a wide range of routes to enjoy from more natural cross-country leisure routes to direct surfaced routes linking to places of work and other facilities. There are several promoted routes specifically catering for the cyclist including the Crab and Winkle Way and the Viking Coastal Trail. In addition to the road network there are 698 miles of available PROWs in the form of bridleways, restricted byways and byways. There are 504 miles of cycle network, which include three National Cycle Routes and five Regional Cycle Routes.

Evidence for Health and Wellbeing

A large cohort study (263,540 participants) concluded that cycle commuting was associated with a lower risk of cardio vascular disease, cancer and all cause mortality and that walking commuting was also associated with a lower risk of cardiovascular disease. The report states the initiative to encourage and support active commuting could reduce risk of death and the burden of important chronic conditions.

Evidence for Tackling Inequality

Vision for Kent's prioritises tackling physical and mental health disadvantage include through physical activities, includes cycling and better and more accessible cycling infrastructure, especially to help regenerate deprived areas.

[10] (BDRC Continental for Visit England, 2016)
[11] (BDRC Continental for Visit England, 2016)

Road traffic air pollution impacts most on the disadvantaged with increased risk of respiratory diseases and other illness. People in the 10% most deprived areas in England experience worst air quality, suffering for example 41% higher concentrations of nitrogen dioxide than the average.[12] Cycling contributes towards reducing road congestion and improving road traffic air pollution.

Evidence for Supporting Kent's Economy

Cycle tourist on average spend more: around 9% per head per trip, or around £81 per head per trip.[13]

Physical activity programmes in the workplace have resulted in reductions of absenteeism between 33% and 50%. An increase in physical activity of more than one hour per week, easily achieved by cycling to work, would be expected to lead to a measurable reduction in levels of absenteeism.[14]

The health impacts of tourism and leisure cycling can be assigned economic values. One estimate suggests that, adjusted to 2010 prices, the UK economy benefits by £30.84 in health care cost savings and £52.14 in productivity savings (i.e., reduced work absences due to sickness), for every regular cyclist. An example of estimated cost savings for provision is that, because of the participation of Near and Far Residents and Near Day Trippers, the Viking Trail in Thanet in Kent generates, at 2010 prices, an annual health care cost saving to the Kent economy of £114,111, and a saving to the local economy of Thanet of £75,486.[15]

[12] (Walker, Fairburn, Smith, & Mitchell, 2003)
[13] (Raje & Saffrey, 2016)
[14] (Davies & Jones, 2007)
[15] (SPEAR, Canterbury Christ Church University, 2011)

HORSE RIDING AND CARRIAGE DRIVING

Equestrians have the most significant contribution of all the leisure activities on the PROW Network, despite the lack of certainty over levels of participation, compared with walking and cycling, horse riding is statistically a minority leisure activity, but one which continues to appeal and retain demand.[16]

Kent offers the equestrian a wide range of routes to enjoy the countryside and coast. In addition to the road network horse riders have access to 698 miles of bridleways, byways and restricted byways.

Evidence for Health and Wellbeing

There is limited documented evidence available on the benefits of horse riding or carriage driving specifically, although such benefits from physical activity have been proven and these effects are increased in areas of green space. Horse riding and activities associated with horse riding are classed as moderate intensity exercise and therefore participation in such activities will provide the benefits gained from physical activity.

The recent British Horse Society /Brighton University study showed significant physical and mental benefits to those who choose horse riding as their recreation and exercise.

Evidence for Tackling Inequality

Horse riding is chosen above many other sports by some demographic groups – disabled people, women and those aged over 45 – who are otherwise less likely to exercise.

Evidence for Supporting Kent's Economy

The equestrian industry contributes £8 billion a year to the UK economy and is the second largest rural employer after agriculture.

Fifteen years ago, SEEDA 2003 document "The Land Based Economy of Kent" estimated that the equestrian economy was worth £100 million since then the British Equestrian Trades Association National Equestrian Survey 2015, estimates the economic value of horse industry £4.3 billion

A recent small study in West Sussex (a reasonable comparison with Kent) found that horse owners spend between £4000 and £15,000 per horse per year.

British Equestrian Trade Association (BETA) (2006); National Equestrian Survey 2006; Tourism South East (2001); A Strategy for Equestrianism Tourism in the South East

Estimated to be 30,386 horses in Kent, service providers such as farriers, vets, instructors, feed merchants, horse transporters, saddlers, dentists and suppliers of hay, straw, fencing and stables all work mainly within a limited local area.

KEY FINDINGS – PRIORITIES AND NEEDS

Identified Need	Current Provision Evidence	Potential ROWIP Objectives
Higher Status PROW Links	Only a small percentage, less than 17% of the network can be legally used by higher right use. Creating higher status new links to these paths will increase the network available to motorised vehicles, carriage drivers, horse riders and cyclists.	Further investigation into the highway network and potential links will be carried out over the next 10 years. This information will be made available to Officers to assist with making informed decision on planning applications and other projects. Using fragmentation analysis to identify where these higher status routes link to quieter, less well used B roads we can investigate potential improvements to the network. Where quieter B roads are not available, verges on the faster roads may be a viable option to provide these links.
Remove Stiles from the Network	Stiles act as a barrier to people with mobility issues limiting the network available to them and preventing access to certain areas.	The PROW and Access Service will continue to uphold our policy not to authorise stiles on the network. PROW Officers will utilise new data showing how many stiles are present on each route to target resources for most effective results.
Improve Provision of Access to Green Space	Comparing areas with access to greenspace, deprivation and good health there appears to be a correlation, where less deprived areas have better health and good access to green space.	Utilise information available on health inequalities, areas of deprivation and current access to green space to focus efforts on the areas that will have greatest impact on reducing health inequalities. Populations with a high level of physical inactivity and with limited access to natural greenspace include Thanet, Ashford, Swale,

		Gravesham, Dover and Canterbury.
Outdoor Recreation Valuation (ORVal) – Welfare Value (Willingness to Pay)	The welfare value for green space is the figure for the monetary equivalent of the welfare enjoyed by a person because of having access to the green space. In economics this welfare value is often referred to as an economic value or willingness to pay.	The welfare value will be considered when applying cost-benefit analysis to assess future planning applications and projects that impact on the PROW Network and other accessible green space.

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