

The Devon Network

Access Route	Legal Users
Footpath	
Cycle Track	
Bridleway	
Restricted Byway	
Byway Unsurfaced County Road (UCR)	

Figure 8: Legal Users of the Different Types of Right of Way

The rights of way network provides access to the countryside with different types of users being allowed access via different types of route, as shown in Figure 8.

As at summer 2004 there was a total of 4,969 km of rights of way in Devon (see Table 2). Walkers are the only user group able to use the full extent of the recreational network and the majority of that network – 3,735 km – is exclusive to their use, being footpath only. Cyclists can access all the network available to equestrians and additionally have off-road cycletracks, which they share with walkers.

Through the Best Value Review it was identified that the rights of way network can be complemented and improved through the use of the unsurfaced county road (UCR) network. In Devon there is a large number of such unsurfaced, or unmetalled, routes. In 1997 the DETR

produced a document 'Making the Best of Byways' which provides advice on the maintenance and management of byways open to all traffic and UCRs. The supporting report notes that there was significant use of byways (defined as including unsealed RUPPs, BOATS and unclassified county roads) of:

- 45% Recreation;
- 36% Agriculture;
- 14% Non Recreational; and
- 5% Gypsies/Travellers.

Figure 9 indicates the relative amounts of each type of right of way found in the county. It is not possible at this time to include the off-road cycle track figure but it is hoped that this will be available in the final document.

Table 2: Lengths of Rights of Way in Devon and Neighbouring Counties (km)

	Devon	Cornwall	Somerset	Dorset
Area (sq km)	6564	3563	3451	2542
Footpath	3735	3606	4770	2790
Bridleway	1166	565	957	1731
Byway	68	174	6	20
RUPP	0	0	296	0
Total	4969	4345	6029	4541

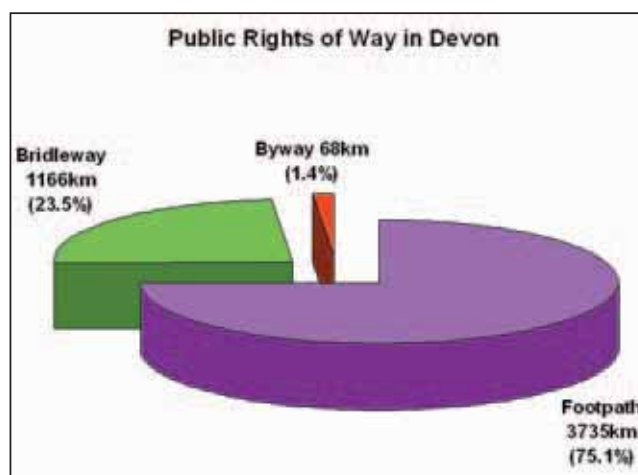


Figure 9: Relative Lengths of Rights of Way in Devon (Cycle Tracks and UCRs not Included)

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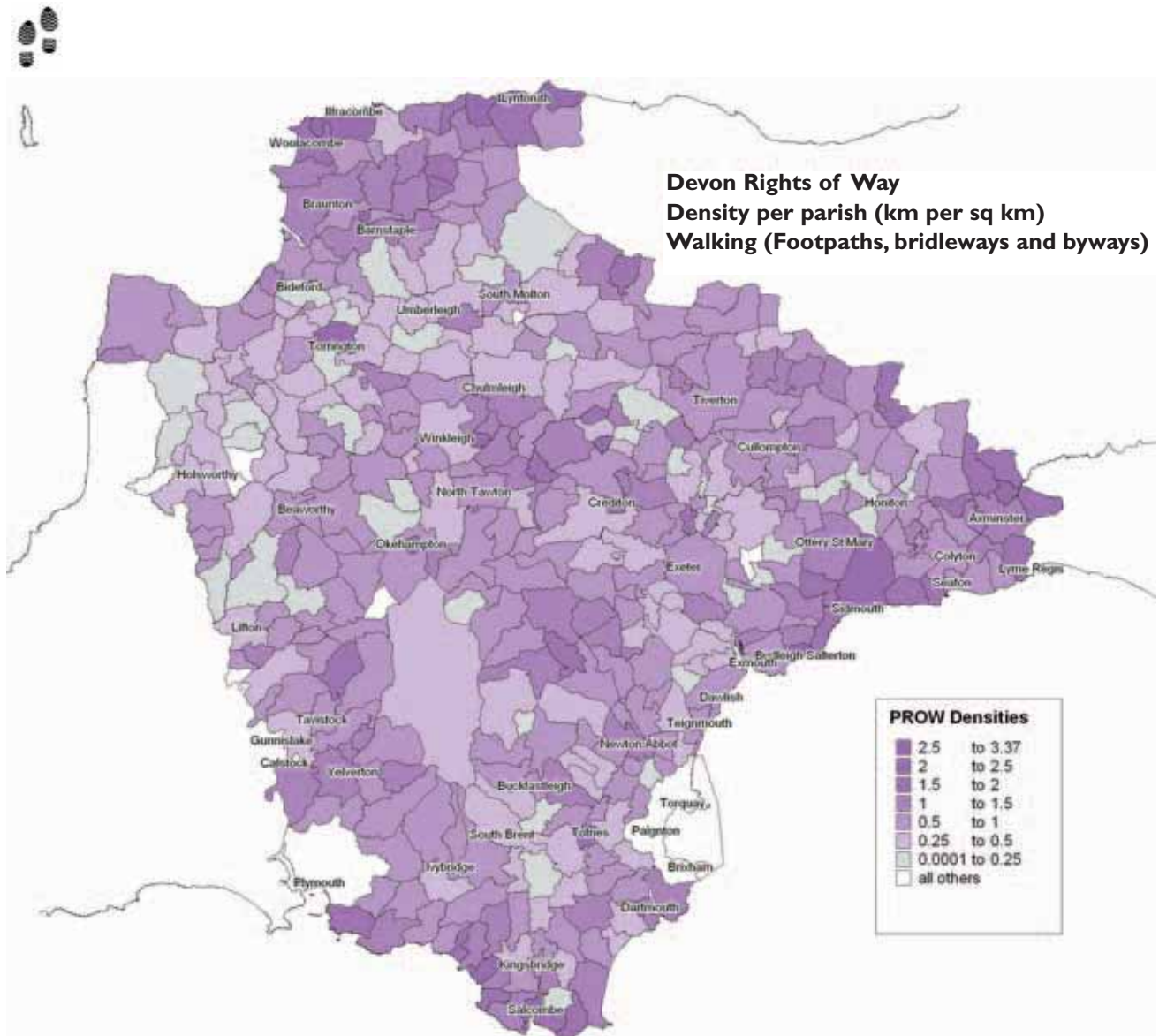


Figure 10: Rights of Way Available for Walkers (km/sq km)

The distribution of rights of way is uneven – there are some parishes with no off-road access at all, for example Bridgerule in Torridge and Clyst Honiton in East Devon. Figure 10 shows the total amount of rights of way on a parish basis in terms of kilometres per sq. kilometre – this total resource is available for walkers.

It can be seen that there is a generally low density across the central sections of Torridge and North Devon, with

comparatively better provision in the coastal parishes with perhaps the exception of Woolfardisworthy and Berrynarbor. The Definitive Map Review (see Legal section 22 for further information) has not reached either of these parishes so there may be unrecorded rights here.

In East Devon and the South Hams a similar picture is seen with higher densities of routes generally found in the coastal parishes, with the exception of Charleton in the South Hams.

2 Horse-riding and cycling

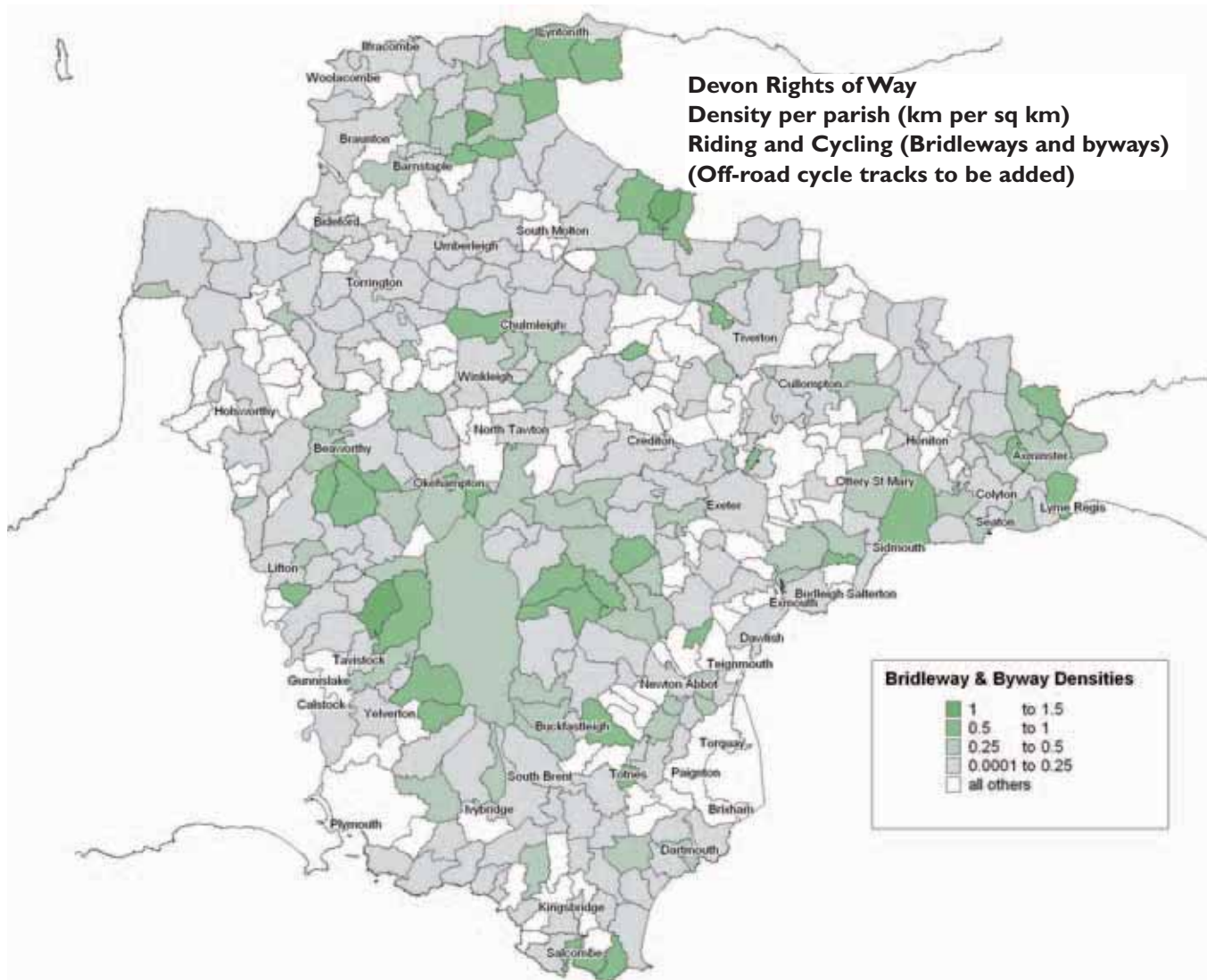


Figure 11: Rights of Way Available for Horse-riders and Cyclists (km/sq km)

Figure 11 shows the comparable situation for horse-riders and cyclists. It should be noted that at this time the off-road cycle tracks are not included but it is expected that this information will be available in the final version of the Rights of Way Improvement Plan. Cyclists have additional off-road access in some parishes where disused railway lines have been utilised, for example parts of the Tarka Trail in North Devon.

As can be seen there is much less off-road access available to these users, with higher densities seen around the two National Parks, as well as some parts of West, Mid and East Devon. The majority of these routes will be unsurfaced bridleways and byways generally used by horse-riders and mountain-bikers, along with walkers, and not necessarily so suitable or desirable for 'road' cyclists.

There are 132 parishes with no off-road provision available for these users.

3 Off-roading & Horse-and-carriage driving

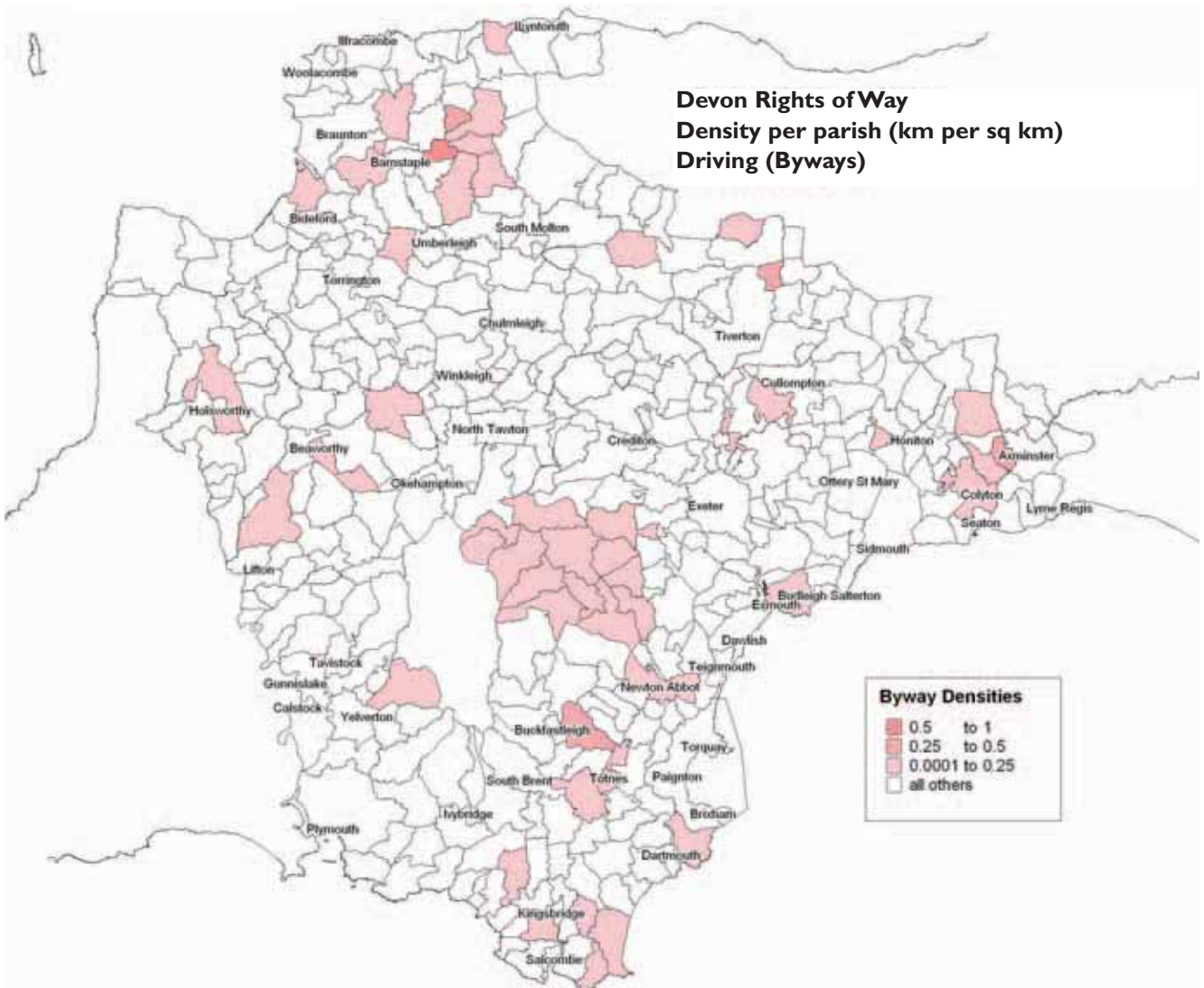


Figure 12: Rights of Way Available for Horse-and-carriage Drivers and Off-road Vehicular and Motor-bike Users (km/sq. km)

The rights of way network for horse-and-carriage drivers and off-road vehicular and motor-bike users is shown in Figure 12.

The availability is much lower again, with a grouping in some parishes around the two National Parks, and odd parishes elsewhere.

There are only 53 parishes with any off-road provision available for these users.

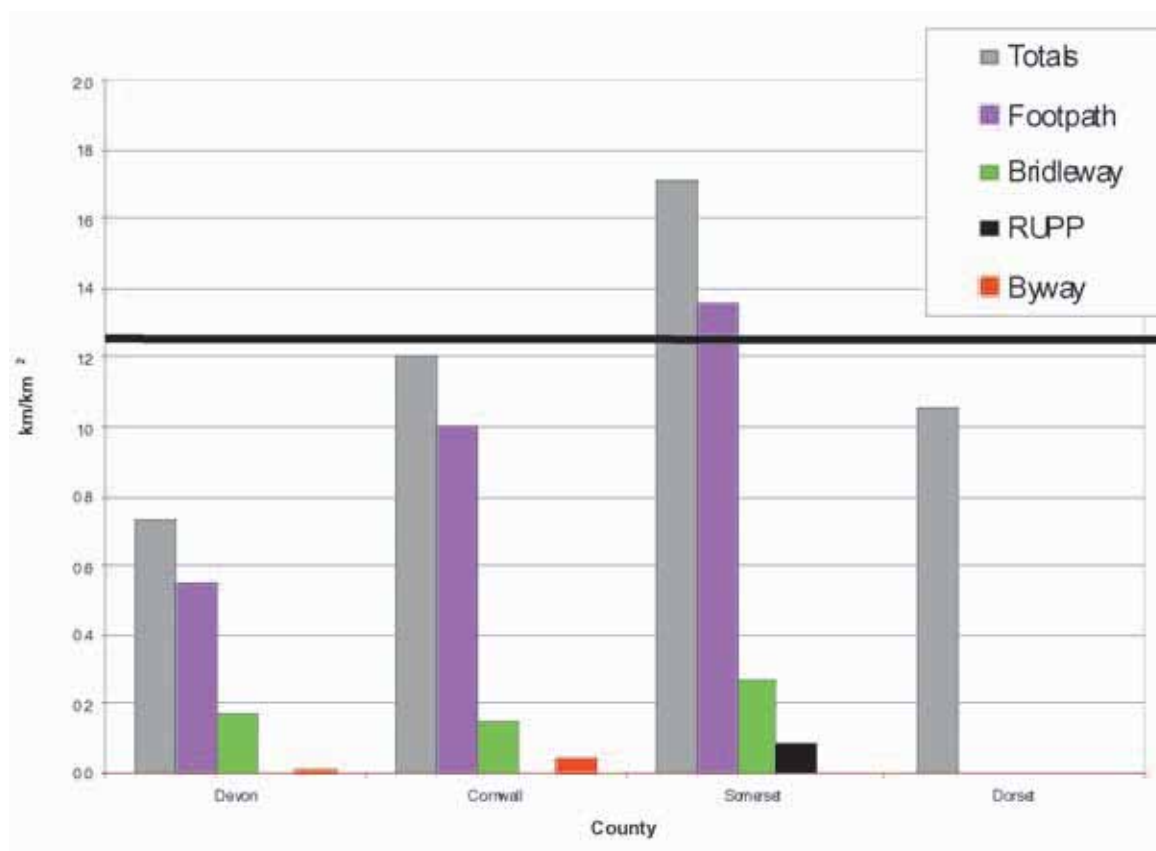


Figure 13: Density of Rights of Way by County

These figures show how variable the number and the types of route are across the county. In comparison to neighbouring counties Devon has a relatively low provision of off-road access, whether considering the density of rights of way available by area of the counties or by population density. For example, Figure 13 shows the density of rights of way per sq. km for the counties Devon, Cornwall, Somerset and Dorset. The Unitary Authority areas of Plymouth and Torbay are not included as they are not directly comparable due to their urban nature. The national average density is 1.23 km/sq. km whilst Devon has an average of 0.74 km/sq. km (0.85 km/sq. km including UCRs) – it should not be assumed that we should expect to reach the national average density, nor even that it is itself an appropriate level of provision.

Care must be taken in looking at the distribution of the network on a parish basis as even this is quite a coarse level, taking no account of parishes where there is good provision but which is effectively unusable due to the effect of a feature such as a river or main road causing severance. For example, in West Devon the parishes of Beaworthy, Germansweek and Bratton Clovelly appear to have good off-road riding provision in comparison with other parishes at 9.41, 8.7 and 19.15 km of bridleway respectively and the neighbouring parishes of Halwill, Sourton and Okehampton Hamlets are also relatively well-served. However, this takes no account of the fact that 12 of these bridleways end on the A3079, making them difficult and undesirable to use, whether on foot, horse or bicycle. These local factors need to be taken into account when looking at access improvements.