

Open Report on behalf of Chris Padley, Chairman of the Mid Lincolnshire Local Access Forum

Report to:	Mid Lincolnshire Local Access Forum
Date:	11 October 2011
Subject:	Gaps in the Network

Summary:
This report provides details of the problems raised by gaps in the network.

Recommendation(s):
That the views of the Forum be sought.

Background

The problems of short gaps in the network are one that has often been brought up at the East Midlands regional LAF Chairs' meeting. It is one shared by LAFs throughout the region and appears to be of equal concern in other regions too.

There are many instances where definitive map rights of way stop short of making a junction with another right of way or highway. Often the gap is very short and not occupied by any significant physical obstacle. These appear to be simply errors or omissions in the original surveys. These gaps sometimes make unusable an entire path, or even network of paths, that are or are of potential value. In other cases, although a gap is currently passable by a non-definitive route, these are at risk of being blocked at any time with no way of preventing it. There is the additional concern that if this problem is not addressed before 2026 it will become much worse thereafter.

One of the consensuses that has come out of LAF Chairs' meetings since their inception is that users expect RoWIPs to be more inclined towards providing specific concrete improvements to the network, such as by providing additional links and closing gaps in the network such as these, and less general and aspirational in their targets. These gaps in the network problem are seen by most LAFs in the region as one suitable for tackling via RoWIPs.

We want all of our LAFs to take this problem to our authorities and ask them to identify what the obstacles are to resolving these problems, whether they are in lack of resources, the issue being given low priority, technical difficulties with the law, (e.g. the grounds for making diversions or additions not fitting this need), lack of availability of legal teams, or whatever they may be. We would like them to

concentrate on the kind of case where, on the face of it, closing the gap should not be a problem on the ground, such as where the gap to be closed is a short length of field headland, across quiet field access way, etc, there is a fairly obvious simple diversion that could make this so. We are not at the moment looking at the kind of case where a quarry, new development, missing-bridge of long span, etc, forms a serious physical difficulty in closing a gap.

We hope to see how much of a pattern there is to the nature of the problem and the reasons for the slow rate of resolution, which may help us to suggest changes at whatever level is needed.

Conclusion

N/A

Consultation

N/A

a) Policy Proofing Actions Required

N/A

Appendices

These are listed below and attached at the back of the report	
Appendix A	None

Background Papers

The following background papers as defined in the Local Government Act 1972 were relied upon in the writing of this report.

Document title	Where the document can be viewed
None	

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