Lincolnshire COUNTY COUNCIL

Report Reference: 7.1

Open Report on behalf of the Executive Director for Communities

Report to:	**South Lincolnshire and Rutland Local Access Forum**
Date:	**25 January 2012**
Subject:	**Countryside Access and Rights of Way Improvement Plan Update – Lincolnshire County Council**

Summary:
A report outlining the progress made in the implementation of the Lincolnshire Countryside Access and Rights of Way Improvement Plan.

Recommendation(s):

That the Forum notes the contents of the report.

1. Background

The responsibility to produce a Rights of Way Improvement Plan is a statutory duty arising from the Countryside and Rights of way Act 2000. The Lincolnshire Countryside Access & Rights of Way Improvement Plan (ROWIP) was adopted by the County Council on 3 April 2007.

The ROWIP is being implemented under four themes, each with a strategic aim and supporting the wider social objectives of the County Council including the aims of the LTP2:

- Sustainable Transport – *Strategic Aim to increase the use of the network for sustainable transport and utility trips*
- Health and Well-being – *Strategic Aim to make it easier for people to incorporate exercise into their daily lives and lead healthier lifesty*les
- Rural Economy and Tourism – *Strategic Aim to support local businesses and tourism through access improvements*
- Social Issues – *Strategic Aim to enable more people to enjoy walking and riding*

There is also a separate strand of Core Tasks that will assist in the management of the network and access opportunities.

The Countryside Access & Rights of Way Improvement Plan Year Action Plan is attached as Appendix A.

The RoWIP also shows links to the Lincolnshire Assembly's Community Strategy with common themes in encouraging greater walking, cycling and use of public transport, improving safety, improving access to key services, supporting the local economy and the health agenda.

2. Summary

Year 5 Progress Report

Network Management-
The highway divisions have continued to make general improvements through improved maintenance and enforcement works. In the period April 2007 to October 2011 these have included;

- 734 stiles provided or repaired,
- 1229 new roadside signs,
- 1566 routes waymarked,
- 433 gates provided or repaired,
- 303 new bridges,
- 266 stiles replaced with kissing gates,
- 214 stiles removed.

Improvement Schemes – The ROWIP year 5 improvement programme is now drawing to a close with efforts continuing to be focused on improving paths in close proximity to villages and towns and improving paths which form part of promoted routes.

Improvement Schemes completed during the last three months at;

- Skegness Public Footpath Nos. 307 and 308 –surface improvements
- Upton Public Footpath No. 50 –surface improvements
- Viking Way - Installation of benches
- Gedney Public Footpath No. 15 –surface improvements

Additional schemes will be undertaken at;

- Sleaford Public Footpath No. 17 –surface improvements
- Skellingthorpe Public Footpath No. 15 –surface improvements

Publicity and Promoted routes

2 new Lincolnshire Walks leaflets have been published for Woodhall Spa and Stainfield.

The Lindsey Trail –

- Trail maps have now been completed.
- Access improvement works have been completed.
- Surface improvements have been completed.
- Willingham Woods Interpretation boards and trail leaflet nearing completion.

- A permissive path agreement has now been made with the Forestry Commission to enable the use of Willingham Woods by carriage drivers and horse riders.

3. Consultation

Scrutiny Comments

n/a

Executive Councillor Comments

n/a

Local Member Comments

n/a

Policy Proofing Actions Required

n/a

4. Appendices

These are listed below and attached at the back of the report	
Appendix A	Countryside Access & Rights of Way Improvement Plan Action Plan

5. Background papers

No background papers within Section 100D of the Local Government Act 1972 were used in the preparation of this report.

This report was written by Andy Savage - Senior Countryside Access Officer, who can be contacted on 01522 782070 or andrew.savage@lincolnshire.gov.uk.

Implementation Progress of Core Tasks

Core Tasks

Ref	Action	Target date	Progress at April 2011
CT1	Review the Definitive Map Modification Order Priorities Policy and Public Path Order Policies in line with the RoWIP, to give a potentially higher priority to key routes that will improve or increase access.	2008	DMMO policy completed. PPO policy to be published.
CT2	Review the current Path Priority System for the maintenance and enforcement of PRoW	2008	Maintained under review.
CT3	Review Maintenance and Enforcement Policies for PRoW and publicise to farmers, landowners and the public	2008 – 2009	Draft Enforcement Manual completed.
CT4	Review current Parish Paths Partnership scheme and explore new ways to increase community involvement	2008	Consultation report now completed. Analysis of scheme commence underway.
CT5	Undertake whole network condition survey	Complete by 2010	Survey complete. Carried out through the proactive inspection regime which ensures all paths receive an inspection at least once in a three year period.
CT6	Seek opportunities to reduce the number of unnecessary stiles and barriers on the PRoW network	Throughout Plan life 2007-2012	Continue to remove unnecessary stiles and barriers and replace stiles with kissing gates as appropriate. Survey of promoted routes now underway routes to identify unnecessary stiles and barriers. 214 stiles were removed as unnecessary and 266 stiles were replaced with gates.

CT7	Continue to fully sign and waymark the PRoW network	Throughout Plan life 2007-2012	Continue to sign and waymark the network. Promoted routes surveyed to identify routes requiring signing or waymarking. 1229 new roadside fingerposts installed either in new locations or to replace those in poor condition.
CT8	Continue the annual programme of vegetation clearance on PRoW	Throughout Plan life 2007-2012	Additional paths added to the schedule during ROWIP implementation years 1 - 4 as necessary and in line with improvement schemes and the development of new promoted routes. Austerity measures resulted in the re-examination of vegetation cutting schedule during implementation year 5.
CT9	Continue to ensure that the public has access to designated areas of Open Country and Registered Common Land under CRoW Act 2000	2008	-Access Land Management Plan reviewed. -Access land inspection regime introduced. -Interpretative panels installed at South and West Commons in Lincoln. -Woodnook Valley, Grantham – Access controls and signage installed. -Lincoln Commons leaflets to published for South and West Commons in Lincoln.
CT10	Continue to provide information and promote wider use of the PRoW Network	Throughout Plan life 2007-2012	Promotion of the network through various media including the LCC website, County News and local and national press. Searchable database of leaflets now available on the LCC Countryside website. 38 Lincolnshire Walks Leaflets have been published (since Apr 07) 8 Lincolnshire Cycling Leaflets have been published (since Apr 07) Outdoor Guide produced (Lincolnshire Tourism)

			Visitor Guide produced (Lincolnshire Tourism) ‘Countryside for All’ pack produced. ‘Walk more in Lincolnshire’ produced in association with stakeholder groups. ‘Countryside Access’ education pack produced. LCC Countryside microsite reviewed.
CT11	Develop longer distance routes and trails	Throughout Plan life 2007-2012	Viking Way - All permissive sections reviewed for relevance and maintenance. Marine and Coastal Access Act 2009 now given Royal Assent. Further support to be given to Natural England in the event of the trail being implemented. Partnership Working • Spires & Steeples Trail now launched. • Lindsey Trail –completed. Macmillan Way – Programme of infrastructure improvements undertaken around Boston and Surfleet. Save the Children walk – Assistance provided in route development.

Sustainable Transport

Ref	Action	Target date	Progress at April 2011
SOA1	Identify and improve off road routes linking communities with schools, employment centres and local services	Throughout Plan life 2007-2012	Comments submitted regarding reviews of Community Travel Zones for Lincoln and Louth. Senior Countryside Access Officer included on a transport studies group. Links to SOA39 mapping. Improvements implemented on the following routes; 1. Claxby BOAT 753 – Improvement works 2. Lincoln Footpath No. 3 – Improvement works to increase accessibility to pushchairs. 3. Louth Public Footpath No. 11 – Improvement works to improve access to school. 4. Crowland Public footpath No. 6 – Surface improvement works undertaken at Wheatsheaf Yard. 5. North Somercotes Public Footpath No. 30 – Surface improvements works undertaken on previously uneven village path surface. 6. Goulceby Public Footpath No. 25 – Surface improvement works undertaken on village path. 7. Wainfleet St Mary Public Footpath No. 323 –Access improvement works undertaken on village path in conjunction with parish council. 8. Branston Public Footpath No. 14 – Seating installed on village path. 9. Tattershall Public Footpath Nos. 222 and 225 – Footpath connecting Tattershall village and Tattershall castle upgraded to full accessibility standard. 10. River Glen Access Improvement works – Works have been undertaken in conjunction with the Environment Agency to replace all stiles with kissing gates on the public footpath beside the River Glen.

			11. Market Rasen No. 167 – Surface improvement works. 12. Doddington No. 8 – Surface improvement works. 13. Skellingthorpe No. 3a – Surface improvement works. 14. Skegness PF 297 (vine Walk) – Surface Improvement Works. 15. Horncastle PF 76 - Surface Improvement works. 16. Lincoln PF 60 – Surface improvement works undertaken between Doddington Road and Hartsholme Country Park. 17. Saxilby PF 204 – Surface improvement works. 18. Holton le Clay PF 1 – Surface improvement works. 19. North Somercotes PF 32 – Surface improvement works School Lane to Warren Road. 20. Scotton PF 4 – Surface improvement works. 21. Quadring PF 5 – Bridge upgraded between village and primary school. 22. Boston PF1 – Bridge upgrading works. 23. Horncastle PF80 – Resurfacing works. 24. Glentham PF 844 – Resurfacing and revetment works. 25. Market Rasen PF 162 – Resurfacing works. 26. Conningsby PF 224 – Resurfacing works. 27. Skegness PF 307 – Surfacing works. 28. Upton PF 50 – Surfacing works. 29. Gedney PF No. 15 – Surfacing and revetment works
SOA2	Improve enforcement and management of urban rights of way to combat litter, fly tipping and dog fouling	2011	LCC Divisions and Borough Councils contacted regarding issues of flytipping on public rights of way to highlight areas experiencing excessive flytipping. Borough Councils contacted to clarify protocols for dealing with dog fouling on public rights of way
SOA3	Seek improvements for non motorised travel in proposals for new developments. Schemes funded through developer contributions	Throughout Plan life 2007-2012	Work with planning authorities to ensure that maximum public benefits are realised

			Comments are submitted on planning applications as they arise. Comments submitted to: -Stamford – Newstead Development Proposals consultation. -Lincoln Eastern Bypass
SOA4	Develop walking and cycling from public transport interchanges	2011	Develop routes from Transport hubs. Walking leaflets completed from railway stations (Methringham and Sleaford). Information included in Getting Around Lincolnshire (Lincs CC)
SOA5	Promote use public transport on leaflets and website	Throughout Plan life 2007-2012	Continue to promote public transport options on publications and web site. Information is added to promotional material (ie Lincolnshire Walks. Lincolnshire walks information included in the Lincoln Area Bus Guide. Lincolnshire walks information now displayed at selected bus stop locations. Bus stop information to be displayed on the revised CAMs Web system. ADT participation in the Lincolnshire County Council 'Walk, Bike and Share …'event.

SOA6	Public rights of way guidance for planning authorities and developers	2008	Meetings held with planning authorities to standardise the format and promotion of orders. Specific guidance to developers and district councils is still outstanding. Public Rights of Way guidance to be produced for planning authorities and developers.

Health and Well Being

Ref	Action	Target date	Progress at April 2011
SOA7	Improve infrastructure on paths used for health walk initiatives	Throughout Plan life 2007-2012	Programme of improvement works on health walking routes including infrastructure and surface improvement works now completed.
SOA8	Reduce number of unnecessary barriers on PROW	Throughout Plan life 2007-2012	Continue to remove unnecessary stiles and barriers identified during routine maintenance works on identification of funding. 214 stiles were removed as unnecessary and 266 stiles were replaced with gates.
SOA9	Ensure cross field paths are reinstated after ploughing	Throughout Plan life 2007-2012	Draft Enforcement Policy Manual completed.
SOA10	Improve routes in areas of highest health deprivation in Lincolnshire.	2012	Areas of highest health deprivation identified and mapping information sent to LCC highways divisions. Undertake improvement works in highlighted areas to increase network accessibility. Works undertaken in Skegness and Boston. Walking and cycling information distributed to 18 health centres in highlighted areas (March 10).

SOA11	Undertake accessibility audit of the network	2011	Following consideration full network accessibility survey considered impossible to undertake. Full network condition survey therefore used to obtain accessibility information. Carry out access audit of promoted routes. 60 Lincolnshire Walks surveyed by the end of September 2011.
SOA12	Develop a range of key routes in conjunction with disability groups.	2012	5 Countryside for all routes published using Aggregate Levy Sustainability Funding.
SOA13	Promote health walking schemes and help partners with development of new schemes.	Throughout Plan life 2007-2012	Promotional links established and support mechanisms in place. Assistance with further development as required. Ongoing. PCT funding expansion of health walks schemes and GP referrals. Funding secured through “Choosing Health”. Support given to Boston leisure and health walks to produce 6 walks. Attendance at the ‘Getting out There’ event. ‘Explore the Lincolnshire Countryside’ – Posters published July 10. Funding provided in association with Lincolnshire PCT to enable the creation of additional access in the Westgate Wood extension at Boston. Anderby health walking group now established. 2 bridges installed at Anderby.
SOA14	Promote benefits of rights of way to wider range of potential users	Throughout Plan life 2007-2012	Assistance provided in the Wolds Walking Festival and Countryside Events Programme.

			Attendance at the 'Sustainable Schools Showcase' to promote countryside access to young people. Attendance at 'Walk it, Bike it, Share it'. 'Walk more in Lincolnshire' leaflet produced in association with stakeholder groups. Lincolnshire articles published in the East Midlands LAF newsletter. Articles placed in the Countryside Events programme 'Countryside Access' education pack published.
SOA15	Produce targeted information for doctors surgeries, health centres in areas of highest health deprivation	Throughout Plan life 2007-2012	Continue to produce targeted information for GP surgeries on an annual basis on identification of funding. 6 Adverts and editorial articles featured in various editions of the 'Lincolnshire New GP Community Health Care Magazine'.
SOA16	Publicise barrier free routes	Throughout Plan life 2007-2012	Data collection now complete. Audit all routes included in Lincolnshire Walks leaflets. 60 Lincolnshire Walks surveyed by the end of September 2011. 5 Countryside for all routes promoted using Aggregate Levy Sustainability Funding.
SOA17	Promote responsible countryside access	Throughout Plan life 2007-2012	Promote responsible countryside access through a variety of media and organisations – countryside website. Countryside Code promoted on Countryside web site.

			Promotion of the network through various media including the LCC website, County News, Agenda magazine and local and national press.

Rural Economy and Tourism

Ref	Action	Target date	Progress at April 2011
SOA18	Identify and develop circular and linear recreational routes to and from countryside / heritage tourism sites	2011	Identify routes in the influence of tourism sites and implement improvement works as required. 2 Limewoods cycling leaflets published. Limewoods Signage – All public rights of way signage in the Limewoods area extending from Bardney to Wragby, Fiskerton and Faldingworth replaced with oak finger posts. Missing link dedicated to create circular walking route at Bassingham. North Willingham No. 523 – Surface improvement works undertaken through Willingham Woods. Tattershall Public Footpath Nos. 222 and 225 – Footpath connecting Tattershall village and Tattershall castle upgraded to full accessibility standard. River Glen Access Improvement works – Works have been undertaken in conjunction with the Environment Agency to replace all stiles with kissing gates on the public footpath beside the River Glen.

			Horncastle PF 76 - Surface Improvement works. Lincoln PF 60 – Surface improvement works undertaken between Doddington Road and Hartsholme Country Park. Scotton PF 4 – Surface improvement works. Anderby PF 16 and 22 – 2 new bridges to be provided on existing footpaths in the LCCP area. Middle Rasen BW 514 – surface improvement works. Claxby with Moorby BW 194 – surface improvement works Fiskerton Public Bridleway No. 221 – bridge improvements Skegness PF 307 – surface improvement works. Viking Way – Installation of benches. Gedney PF 15 – Surface Improvement works.
SOA19	Improve the maintenance and management of routes close to popular areas of the county and key tourist attractions.	2011	Identify routes in the influence of tourism sites and designated areas and implement improvement works as required. See SOA 18 Gedney access improvements. Infrastructure improvements on Gedney 'Lincolnshire walk' undertaken.

SOA20	Improve maintenance and promotion of promoted routes and county trails	2011	Audit of Lincolnshire Walks routes undertaken to identify infrastructure and waymarking/ signage improvements and improvements to vegetation cutting regime.
SOA21	Support and encourage new tourist attractions to include walking and cycling through the planning consultation process.	Throughout Plan life 2007-2012	Highways divisional staff comment on planning applications as they arise. Suggest recommendations for improved walking and cycling provision during the planning consultation process.
SOA22	Support partners with development of new trails	Throughout Plan life 2007-2012	Support partners with the development of new trails as necessary. -Spires and Steeples Trail launched 3 May 2008. -Spa Trail works completed. -Support given to South Holland Borough Council to develop a series of walking and cycling routes. -Support given to Limewoods project to assess potential for linking woodland sites with off road routes. -Nottinghamshire Strategic Cycle Network – Support given to the provision of a strategic cycle network between Sherwood Forest and Lincoln city centre. -Support and advice provided to ASR- Leisure in the development of Cycle Touring Routes in the Northern Wolds. -Save the Children route. Support provided to initial route development. -Macmillan Way – Infrastructure improvements to be undertaken between Boston and Surfleet in conjunction with the Environment Agency. -Viking Way – benches installed at Walesby and to the south of Lincoln. -The Lindsey Trail carriage driving route to be opened in spring 2012.

SOA23	Develop a Lincolnshire Coastal trail	2012	Marine and Coastal Access Act provided Royal Assent in November 2009. Further support to be given to Natural England in the event of the trail being implemented.
SOA24	Provide public transport information at key sites and promoted routes	Ongoing	Continue to publish Travel Line information on walking and cycling leaflets. Lincolnshire walks information now displayed at selected bus stop locations. Lincolnshire walks information included in the Lincoln Area Bus Guide.
SOA25	Produce walking cycling and riding information in a variety of formats and for holiday accommodation providers	Ongoing	Lincolnshire Tourism have produced 15 Walking Discovery Packs as part of the 2008 marketing campaign promoting Lincolnshire as a short break destination for walking, cycling and golf. Packs are available to accommodation providers. Outdoor Guide produced (Lincolnshire Tourism). Lincolnshire Outdoor Guide distributed to TICs in Lincolnshire, Cambridgeshire, Nottinghamshire, Leicestershire, Northamptonshire, Norfolk and South Yorkshire. 5 Countryside for all routes published. Searchable database of Lincolnshire Walks produced. 38 Lincolnshire Walks Leaflets produced. 8 Lincolnshire Cycling Leaflets produced.

SOA27	Develop a range of information panels at gateways sites/ villages to promote access opportunities and local services available	2012	Explore possibility of providing interpretation panels to P3 parishes (pending review).

Social Issues

Ref	Action	Target date	Progress at April 2011
SOA28	Improve quality of waymarking to increase user confidence and assist land managers	Throughout Plan life 2007-2012	1229 new roadside fingerposts installed either in new locations or to replace those in poor condition. Limewoods Signage – All public rights of way signage in the Limewoods area replaced. Promoted route survey completed.
SOA29	Identify all missing bridges on key network routes, develop and implement a work programme	2010	Missing bridges identified. Reduced funding prevents further action at this time.
SOA30	Implement programme of signing selected unsurfaced unclassified county roads	2011	Officer time spent to identify UCRs and gap analysis using GIS of PROW network and other access. Programme of signage based on demand and necessity currently under implementation.
SOA32	Develop a programme of improved vegetation cutting on key routes close to settlements with parish councils	2009	Programme of improved vegetation cutting in place on key routes. Additional paths added to the schedule during ROWIP implementation years 1 - 4. Austerity measures will result in re-examination of vegetation cutting schedule during implementation year 5. P3 scheme review currently underway.

SOA33	Complete audit of busy road crossings and implement prioritised programme of improvements	2011	Audit of road and rail crossings now complete. Short list of most 'hazardous' crossings forwarded to LCC Divisions, Lincolnshire Road Safety Partnership, Highways Agency and Network Rail. Austerity measures prevent any further action at this time.
SOA34	Improve management of existing routes available for motorised users and carriage drivers.	2011	Audit of unsurfaced UCRs completed. Preparation of management plan underway.
SOA35	Identify all cross boundary links with neighbouring authorities to ensure consistency of maintenance and promotion.	2011	Identify cross boundary links and issues. Prepare programme of improvements and clarify maintenance responsibilities as appropriate.
SOA36	Pilot a project to prepare signage incorporating distance and destination information to key routes.	2012	Limewoods Signage – All public rights of way signage in the Limewoods area replaced.
SOA37	Support highway divisions with the implementation of Quiet Lanes.	2012	Funds no longer available to undertake Quiet Lanes project in Greater Lincoln and Gainsborough Division pilot area.
SOA38	Develop a range of circular routes for cyclists and equestrians in areas of highest demand. Identify suitable roadside verges and "behind the hedge" links to create safer links between existing routes and improve management of those links identified. Support DEFRA schemes that increase access and link PRoW.	Throughout Plan life 2007-2012	Officer time spent on ROWIP area priorities mapping. LAF sub group consulted but detailed network analysis still needed involving user groups. 8 Lincolnshire cycling leaflets produced. Old County Bridle Trails to be reviewed. Undertake consultation with users to identify potential 'behind the hedge' routes. A number of potential routes have already been highlighted during the road crossing audit. Consultation responses provided to Natural England in response to Higher Level Stewardship Applications.

SOA42	Implement programme of staff training to raise awareness of diversity issues relating to countryside access	Throughout Plan life 2007-2012	Disabled Access Audit training event held for LCC PRoW staff in November 09.
SOA43	Identify existing routes that meet needs of restricted mobility users and publicise	2011	5 Countryside for All routes published.
SOA44	Develop and implement an accessibility policy in conjunction with disability groups	2009	Accessibility Guidance produced.
SOA45	Develop links with organisations to implement a programme of themed guided walks, rides and events	Throughout Plan life 2007-2012	Continuing to build on existing contacts and partnerships. Funding required to implement countryside access projects. Involvement in the Wolds Walking Festival, Spires and Steeples Trail and other guided walks programmes, events and walking festivals as necessary.
SOA46	Develop policies and guidance which explain how the authority manages PROW and access	2011	Policy areas identified and included in officer work programmes.
SOA48	Improve driver awareness of equestrians	2011	Equestrian leaflets distributed through Lincolnshire Road Safety Partnership as part of Driver Improvement Programme.
SOA49	Produce Countryside Access newsletter	2011	Produce 6 monthly ROWIP newsletter on the web site.