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NOTE – At the commencement of the meeting there will be a public forum for up to 15 minutes which will offer members of the public the opportunity to make statements or ask questions.



A statutory advisory body to Lincolnshire County Council, North East Lincolnshire Council and other providers of outdoor recreational access

County Offices
Newland
Lincoln
LN1 1YL

15 April 2024

Lincolnshire Joint Local Access Forum Meeting

A meeting of the Lincolnshire Joint Local Access Forum will be held on **Tuesday, 23 April 2024** at **2.00 pm** in **Committee Room One, County Offices, Newland, Lincoln Lincs LN1 1YL** for the transaction of the business set out on the attached Agenda.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Debbie Barnes".

Debbie Barnes OBE
Chief Executive

Membership of the Lincolnshire Joint Local Access Forum

Councillor Ian Carrington, Lincolnshire County Council
Councillor James Cairns, North East Lincolnshire Council
Wendy Bannerman, Users of Public Rights of Way
John Beaven, Users of Public Rights of Way
Barry Clifton, Users of Public Rights of Way
Peter Hinton JP MBA, Users of Public Rights of Way
Tina Irving BSc PgDip, Users of Public Rights of Way
Malcolm Kaszics, Users of Public Rights of Way
Dr Ian Lacey FRCGP, Users of Public Rights of Way
Lizzie Loring, Users of Public Rights of Ways
Peter McKenzie-Brown, Users of Public Rights of Way
Chris Padley, Users of Public Rights of Way (Chairman)
Barry Robinson, Users of Public Rights of Way
Stephanie Round BA Hons; MSc Econ, Users of Public Rights of Way
Lucie Skates, Users of Public Rights of Way
Angie Tomlin, Users of Public Rights of Way
Nigel Wass, Users of Public Rights of Way

Victor Clark, Other Interests

John Law, Other Interests

Lauren Sharpe, Other Interests

**LINCOLNSHIRE JOINT LOCAL ACCESS FORUM AGENDA
TUESDAY, 23 APRIL 2024**

Item	Title	Report Reference
1	Apologies for Absence	
2	Declarations of Interest	
3	Public Questions	
4	Minutes of the meeting on 3 October 2023	(Pages 5 - 10)
4a	Introduction to Local Access Forums <i>(To receive a verbal report and presentations from Andrew Fletcher (Public Rights of Way and Access Manager- Lincolnshire County Council) and Matthew Chaplin (Public Rights of Way Mapping Officer), which introduces members to the Local Access Forum and discusses the role of the Forum and how it fits in with the decision-making structure in both Lincolnshire County Council and North East Lincolnshire Council)</i>	(Verbal Report)
5	Lincolnshire Joint Local Access Forum Terms of Reference <i>(To receive a report by Emily Wilcox, Democratic Services Officer, which asks the Forum to approve the Lincolnshire Joint Local Access Forum Terms of Reference)</i>	(Pages 11 - 16)
6	Lincolnshire County Council Rights of Way Improvement Plan 2025 <i>(To receive a report from Andrew Fletcher, Public Rights of Way and Access Manager – Lincolnshire County Council, which consults the Forum on the Lincolnshire County Council Rights of Way Improvement Plan 2025)</i>	(Pages 17 - 204)
7	Countryside For All <i>(To receive a report from John Law, which provides an update on Countryside For All)</i>	(Pages 205 - 208)
8	Definitive Map Modification Orders <i>(To receive a report by John Law, which invites the Forum to discuss the process for reporting Definitive Map Modification Orders (DMMO)s to the Forum)</i>	(Pages 209 - 210)
9	Lincolnshire Joint Local Access Forum Webpage <i>(To receive a report from John Law, Lincolnshire Joint Local Access Forum, which invites the Forum to discuss opportunities for the promotion of the Forum through a webpage)</i>	(Pages 211 - 212)
10	Work Programme <i>(The Forum are invited to consider its planned work programme)</i>	(Pages 213 - 214)

11 Future meeting dates

The next meeting is scheduled for Tuesday 22 October 2024. The Forum is asked to agree the following dates for future meetings:

- Tuesday 22 April 2025
- Tuesday 14 October 2025

Democratic Services Officer Contact Details

Name: **Emily Wilcox**
Direct Dial **01522 552334**
E Mail Address emily.wilcox@lincolnshire.gov.uk

Please Note: for more information about any of the following please contact the Democratic Services Officer responsible for servicing this meeting

- Business of the meeting
- Any special arrangements

Contact details set out above.

All papers for council meetings are available on:
<https://www.lincolnshire.gov.uk/council-business/search-committee-records>

Agenda Item 4



A statutory advisory body to Lincolnshire County Council, North East Lincolnshire Council and other providers of outdoor recreational access

LINCOLNSHIRE JOINT LOCAL ACCESS FORUM 3 OCTOBER 2023

PRESENT: CHRIS PADLEY (CHAIRMAN)

Representing Independent Members: Jon Thornes MBE, Victor Clark and John Law

Officers: Andrew Fletcher (Public Rights of Way and Access Manager), Chris Marsh (Senior Highways Officer) and Emily Wilcox (Democratic Services Officer)

Also in attendance:

1 ELECTION OF VICE-CHAIRMAN FOR 2023/24

There were no nominations for Vice-Chairman for 2023/24. The Forum would operate without a nominated Vice-Chairman for the remainder of the year.

2 PUBLIC QUESTIONS

There were no questions from members of the public.

3 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor I Carrington, Angie Tomlin, Sharon Hayes, Sheila Brookes and Sandra Harrison.

4 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

5 MINUTES OF THE MEETING ON 7 JUNE 2023

RESOLVED:

That the minutes of the meeting held on 7 June 2023 be approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

6 INTRODUCTION FROM ANDREW FLETCHER, PUBLIC RIGHTS OF WAY AND ACCESS MANAGER

The Forum welcomed Andrew Fletcher, the newly appointed Public Rights of Way and Access Manager to the Forum. Andrew provided insight into to his previous career experience, which included working in Public Right of Way since 2002.

7 FRIENDS OF GROUP

Consideration was given to a report by John Law, which invited the Forum to discuss establishing a Friends of Group. Due to a lack of Forum members present, it was decided that this item be reconsidered when the proposal could be discussed thoroughly, and the remit of the group and roles needed be agreed.

In response to a question, it was clarified that as many groups could be set up as needed. Friends of Group was made up of volunteers who would assist with raising funds by appointing a treasurer and secretary for the Forum and its subgroups and participate in other activities to improve right of way issues. At the current time, there was a lack of resource to carry out all tasks currently, particularly given that Lincolnshire was a large County. It was felt that a Friends of Group would assist with capacity and fundraising issues.

RESOLVED:

That the report be noted and the report be reconsidered at a future meeting.

8 CONSTRUCTION SITES IN THE COUNTRYSIDE

Consideration was given to a report by John Law, which invited the Forum to consider the impact of construction sites in the countryside asked the Forum to agree whether John Law should continue to work on the project referenced in the report and agree the next steps of the project.

Due to a lack of Forum members present, it was agreed that this item be reconsidered at a future meeting.

Further information on the project would be sent for circulation by the Democratic Services Officer to the Forum which would allow members to respond with their views.

RESOLVED:

That the report be noted and that the item be reconsidered at a future meeting of the Forum.

9 PERMISSIVE ACCESS

Consideration was given to a verbal report by John Law, which invited the Forum to discuss Permissive Access issues. The report referred to a proposal on 30 June 2022, where the Forum had given approval for a letter to be sent to the relevant DEFRA minister and Members of Parliament on behalf of the LAF. The Forum was advised that this had not yet been actioned and volunteers were sought to write the letter on behalf of the Forum.

RESOLVED:

That the verbal update be noted.

10 COUNTRYSIDE FOR ALL

Consideration was given to a report from John Law, which invited the Forum to consider an update on Countryside For All.

Further to the report, the Forum was advised that the National Lottery Funding bid would no longer be going ahead as it could not be applied for by organisations which have an income of over 250,000 as it was unlikely that income of over 250,000 were likely to get money for it and alternative sources of funding would be sought.

In relation to the Grantham Canal (land leading to the towpath at Casthorpe Road), the Forum were shown a number of images of the unsafe gate and path and were asked to consider whether the path could be placed on the Definitive Map prior to February 2024, so that Lincolnshire County Council could allocate funding to replace the damaged and unsafe gate. Further to this, the report requested that Lincolnshire County Council investigate what improvements could be made to the track from the road to the towpath, and inform the Forum once completed.

The Public Rights of Way and Access Manager explained that the request for a deed of dedication had previously been recorded, however following staff changes the request had not progressed further.

The dedication of rights on the definitive map wouldn't necessarily record a transfer of the issue as the highway's authority. A new rights of way order would need to be created for it to be added to the definitive map and statement of public rights of way, but this would not necessarily transfer the maintenance responsibility to the Council.

The importance of ensuring that the relevant staff had instructions on how to maintain and inspect land to make sure it was safe for public use through permissive access was highlighted. It was agreed that the Forum issue advice to Lincolnshire County Council's property team to suggest that it develops its policies regarding permissive access on Council owned land, whilst

highlighting the issue of safety on the Grantham Canal land leading to the towpath at Casthorpe Road) for consideration.

RESOLVED:

1. That the report be noted;
2. That advice be issued from the Forum to Lincolnshire County Council's Property Services Team to suggest it develop its policies regarding permissive access on Council owned land, whilst highlighting the issue on Grantham Canal (land leading to the towpath at Casthorpe Road) for consideration.

11 THE DISABILITY SUB GROUP

Consideration was given to a report by John Law, which invited the Forum to consider a report on the Disability Sub-Group.

The sub-group had expressed their disappointment in the lack of funding applications for Changing Places Toilets. It was thought that the funding just contributed to the costs of building the sites, but a breakdown could be found on the UK government's website on changing places toilets.

The Democratic Services Officer agreed to follow up on the query regarding for funding for Changing Places Toilets in Lincolnshire.

The Disability sub group were aware of proposed changes by Natural England to some nature reserves across on some areas of the East Coast and Mablethorpe. Further details would be provided by John Law to those interested.

The area of land around Sandilands Beach was owned by the National Trust. The disability sub-group were aware of the impassibility of the path on the railway and were looking at a route to access. Victor Clarke agreed to assist John Law with this outside of the meeting to assist with progressing this matter further.

RESOLVED:

That the report be noted.

12 FUTURE WORK OF THE LOCAL ACCESS FORUM

The Forum discussed the current effectiveness of the Local Access Forum and the perceived lack of power and influence that the Forum had.

Attendance at meetings had declined significantly over recent years and a lack of resource from active members such as for fundraising and volunteering to subgroups was impacting capacity.

The Public Rights of Way and Access Manager explained that the Forum was a statutory requirement and that members giving up their time to attend should feel they are supportive and productive.

Members were in agreement that there needed to be a 'refresh' of how the Forum was ran to ensure that, this would include assessing the membership of the forum, its duties and its responsibilities and how it could best influence decisions and advice the Council.

The Forum sought to raise its profile, membership and influence and officers and members highlighted the potential to make the Forum more a more useful network and bring greater benefits.

The Public Rights of Way and improvement manager would work with the Democratic Services Officer and other members to establish a way forward to refresh the Forum and its terms of reference to have maximum impact. The Forum would be consulted and input into ideas throughout the process.

It was suggested that attendance might improve is membership could be related to a group rather than an individual.

RESOLVED:

That Officers work with the Forum on a 'refresh' of the work of the Forum to improve its profile and impact.

13 FORWARD WORK PROGRAMME

Members were invited to input into a future work programme.

The Public Rights of Way and Improvement Manager suggested that the Forum are consulted on a number of Nationally Strategic Projects that have been proposed, such as solar farms and reservoirs. A review of the public rights of way policies and procedures, and a review of the Rights of Way Improvement Plan is also planned for the coming year.

The Democratic Services Officer also agreed to look into the possibility of creating a shared group between Lincolnshire Joint Local Access Forum members in which applications and consultations could be shared in between meetings.

The meeting closed at 3.16 pm

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Agenda Item 5



A statutory advisory body to Lincolnshire County Council, North East Lincolnshire Council and other providers of outdoor recreational access

Report to:	Lincolnshire Joint Local Access Forum
Date:	23 April 2024
Subject:	Lincolnshire Joint Local Access Forum Terms of Reference

Summary:

The Terms of Reference for the Lincolnshire Joint Local Access Forum are set out at Appendix A. The Forum is asked to approve the proposed Terms of Reference for the Lincolnshire Joint Local Access Forum.

Actions Required:

To approve the Lincolnshire Joint Local Access Forum Terms of Reference, as set out at Appendix A.

1. Background

Local Access Forums are established under sections 94 and 95 of the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000 and are governed by The Local Access Forum (England) Regulations 2007. The Terms of Reference set out at appendix A are designed to reflect the contents of the legislation and ensure that the Forum conducts its activities on a basis that is compliant with legislative requirements.

The Regulations can be found at the following link: [The Local Access Forums \(England\) Regulations 2007 \(legislation.gov.uk\)](https://www.legislation.gov.uk/uksi/2007/1447)

2. Conclusion

The Terms of Reference set out at appendix A have been written to ensure that the Lincolnshire Joint Local Access Forum operated in accordance with legislation and guidance.

3. Appendices

These are listed below and attached at the back of the report:

Appendix A	Lincolnshire Joint Local Access Forum Terms of Reference
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This report was written by Emily Wilcox, Democratic Services Officer who can be contacted on emily.wilcox@lincolnshire.gov.uk

Appendix A

LINCOLNSHIRE JOINT LOCAL ACCESS FORUM

TERMS OF REFERENCE

1. Introduction

Function and Purpose

Section 94 of the countryside and right of way act 2000 (CROW), requires local highways authorities to establish advisory bodies known as local access forums.

Local access forums are required by law to advise certain bodies about certain public access issues, specifically:

- Advise as to the improvement of public access to land in the area for the purposes of open-air recreation and the enjoyment of the area, and as to such other matters as may be prescribed (S.94 CROW 2000)
- Public access to land in the area for 'any lawful purpose' other than the purposes already mentioned above (reg 22 of the Local Access Forum Regulations 2007)

The local access forums (England) regulations 2007 underpin the provisions set out in the CROW Act 2000 and these have been taken into consideration in defining these terms of reference.

The bodies to whom the Local Access Forum are to give advice and provide feedback are defined in statute.

In order to deliver the legal requirements of the Local Access Forum, authority has been delegated to the Executive Director – Place to establish new forums, withdraw from joint forums, merge forum and to publish annual Local Access Forum Reports under the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000, Section 94 and statutory regulations.

The Joint Lincolnshire Local Access Forum covering the administrative areas of Lincolnshire County Council and North East Lincolnshire Council was agreed in May 2019. Any variation of this arrangement would be required to follow the provisions in the Local Access Forum Regulations 2007.

2. Membership

In accordance with the Local Access Forum Regulations 2007, a Local Access Forum should consist of at least 10 but no more than 22 members.

The Membership will include one member appointed by the Leader of Lincolnshire County Council and one member appointed by the Leader of North-East Lincolnshire County Council.

All other members must be representative of either:

- User of local rights of way
- Owners or occupiers of access land
- Other interests relevant to the Lincolnshire Joint Local Access Forum

These representations will be as evenly balanced as reasonably practical.

Members must not be a serving District or County Councillor or appointed to a national park authority.

Members are appointed or reappointed by Lincolnshire County Council for a term of three years, unless they offer resignation in writing to the Head of Democratic Services, or their appointment is terminated in accordance with the Local Access Forum Regulations 2007.

A member of the Local Access Forum who is directly or indirectly interested in any matter brought up for the consideration at a Forum meeting must disclose the nature of their interest in the meeting.

3. Administration of the Forum

Local Arrangements for the secretariat will be provided by Lincolnshire County Council's Democratic Services.

Officers providing technical advice on relevant subject matters will be provided by both constituent members of the Joint Local Access Forum.

The Local Access Forum (LAF) may from time to time, as it sees fit, establish Ad Hoc sub-groups involving a reduced number of forum members, to consider particular issues. No direct action can be taken by a sub-group unless previously authorised by the LAF.

The LAF may conduct site visits to consider and discuss access and open-air recreational issues affecting the local area.

The LAF undertakes to support its members to meet any training requirements to support them in their roles.

Expenses by the membership of the LAF will be administered in line with Lincolnshire County Council's Members Allowance Scheme.

4. Conduct of Meetings

The Local Access Forum will meet a minimum of twice in any municipal year and all meetings of the Forum will be open to the public.

Meetings will be administered in accordance with the constitutional provisions applying to committees of Lincolnshire County Council, unless specified differently within these terms of reference.

The Quorum for meetings is 25% of the membership at the time of the meeting, or 3, whichever is the greater.

Substitute members are not accepted for the Lincolnshire Joint Local Access Forum

The Chairman and Vice-Chairman of the Forum will be appointed from amongst the members of the Forum for a term of three calendar years.

On any occasion in which a vote needs to be taken a simple majority vote will be taken by the Chairman. If necessary, the Chairman will have the casting vote.

The Forum will operate access to information rules in accordance with the requirements for committees set out within the constitution of Lincolnshire County Council.

5. Reporting Arrangements:

The Forum will produce an annual report on the discharge of its functions which will be published and submitted to Natural England in accordance with legislative requirements.

The Forum will design its own forward work programme which will drive agenda items for each meeting.

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Agenda Item 6



A statutory advisory body to Lincolnshire County Council, North East Lincolnshire Council and other providers of outdoor recreational access

Report to:	Lincolnshire Joint Local Access Forum
Date:	23 April 2024
Subject:	Lincolnshire County Council Rights of Way Improvement Plan 2025

Summary:

The Council has started the process to review and publish a new Rights of Way Improvement Plan (RoWIP), to be published in 2025. The first stage of the process is to consult key stakeholders, including the Local Access Forum (LAF), prior to undertaking any statement of needs consultation. The original RoWIP for Lincolnshire was created in 2007, and a draft revised plan was consulted upon (but not formally adopted) in 2014. The report outlines the process of developing a revised RoWIP and the initial project schedule for RoWIP 2025.

The advice of the Local Access Forum is being sought as to what the current and likely future needs will be of the rights of way network for all users, and the approach planned for the development of the ROWIP 2025.

The report recommends that the Local Access Forum consider how it will be able to respond and support the Council during the development of the plan and recommends that the Forum consider developing a sub-group to consider the detail of the ROWIP, prepare recommendations to the LAF proper to assist in the issuing of formal advice, and respond to consultations in between LAF meetings.

Actions Required:

Provide advice to the Council for the following:

1. From a strategic perspective, in the Forum's opinion what are the current and likely future needs of the public from the perspective of
 - a. Walkers
 - b. Runners
 - c. Disabled users
 - d. Horse Riders
 - e. Cyclists

- f. Carriage Drivers
- g. Off Road Motorcycling
- h. Off Road Vehicle Users

2. Are there other specific user groups that have not been listed above and should be considered?
3. Provide initial advice regarding the approach to be taken for the preparation of the new RoWIP 2025
4. Decide how the LAF wishes to be engaged with the RoWIP process, and whether to create a Local Access Forum sub-group to examine proposals and plans in detail and provide initial guidance to the Council during the development of the plan and to the LAF to assist with the preparation of formal advice.

1. Background

The RoWIP is one of the Council's key strategic documents for public rights of way. The plan assesses the anticipated needs of the public rights of way and wider access network and identifies where changes should be made to meet the current and likely future needs of the public.

A RoWIP is intended to last for 10 years, after which it should be reviewed, and a decision made whether to amend the original plan or not. The outline process for reviewing an RoWIP is as follows:

- Initial consultation with key stakeholders
- Make an assessment of needs for the local public rights of way network, considering the following:
 - The Definitive Map and Statement of Public Rights of Way and any applications for changes
 - The current condition of the network
 - Any improvement requests for the network
- Assess:
 1. To what extent routes are available to different groups of users
 2. Routes that are not suitable for all or some users
 3. Inconsistencies on individual rights of way
 4. Opportunities to improve the network
- Assess whether the existing RoWIP statement of action adequately meets the needs identified.
- If the plan requires amendment, prepare a new statement of action, identifying how the Council plan to manage local rights of way for each type of user based on the assessment above.
- Publish a draft plan and undertake a full public consultation, giving a minimum of 12 weeks for comments to be received.

- Publish a revised RoWIP, after making necessary changes that have been identified following the public consultation.

The first Lincolnshire County Council RoWIP was published in 2007 and expired in 2012. A second RoWIP process commenced as a light touch review and a draft plan was published in 2014. The Council is looking to restart this process and publish a revised RoWIP in 2025.

A considerable time has passed since the last assessment of need and the Council is seeking advice from the Local Access Forum as to the current and likely future needs of the public for access to the countryside and the public rights of way network, and the approach proposed for the development of the RoWIP 2025.

In contrast to the position when the original RoWIP was developed, the Council has the benefit of a wealth of knowledge about the condition of the network and the assessments of need undertaken as part of the existing Improvement Plan 2007-2012 and Draft Revised RoWIP 2014 processes. It is therefore not considered necessary to undertake a full public consultation for the statement of need but instead undertake a light touch approach using the original plans as a basis to undertake a fresh analysis. This will then feed into the preparation of fresh statement of action which will form the draft RoWIP 2025.

The proposed light touch consultation exercise would involve consultation with the following key stakeholders:

- District Councils, Town Councils and Parish Councils
- Lincolnshire Local Access Forum
- Neighbouring Highway Authorities
- Natural England
- User groups
 - Ramblers
 - British Horse Society
 - British Driving Society
 - Trail Riders Fellowship
 - Green Lane Association (GLASS)
- National Farmers Union (NFU)
- Country Land and Business Association (CLA)
- Canal & Rivers Trust

The initial outline project plan timescale for the ROWIP 2025 is as follows:

Task	Start	Finish
Review existing documentation and existing policies	April 2024	May 2024
Develop statement of need	May 2024	June 2024
Undertake statement of need consultation	June 2024	Sept 2024
Develop draft RoWIP 2025	Sept 2024	Dec 2024
Undertake draft RoWIP 2025 public consultation	Dec 2024	May 2025
Prepare final RoWIP	May 2025	June 2025
Adoption of final RoWIP	June 2025	Sept 2025
Publication of final RoWIP		Sept 2025

The LAFs advice will be key throughout the process of development of the plan. It is recommended that the Forum consider the creation of a working group that will be able to respond on behalf of the Forum during meetings, and report back to the Local Access Forum at each formal meeting.

2. Conclusion

The Forum is invited to consider the report and actions required.

3. Appendices

These are listed below and attached at the back of the report:

Appendix A	Countryside Access and Rights of Way Improvement Plan 2007-2012
Appendix B	The Draft Lincolnshire Rights of Way Improvement Plan 2014- 2019

This report was written by Andrew Fletcher, Public Rights of Way and Access Manager, Lincolnshire County Council.

Appendix A

Countryside Access and Rights of Way Improvement Plan

2007–2012



To obtain further copies of this document please contact:

- By Post:** Access Development Team
Lincolnshire County Council
Development Directorate
4th Floor
City Hall
Lincoln
LN1 1DN
- By Telephone:** 01522 782070
- By Fax:** 01522 553149
- By Email:** countryside_access@lincolnshire.gov.uk
- By Web:** www.lincolnshire.gov.uk/rowip (available to download)

This information can be provided in another language or format. For all enquiries please contact the above number.

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Ezt az információt megadhatja más nyelven vagy formátumban is. Ha bármilyen kérdése merülne fel, kérjük hívja fel a fenti telefonszámot.

Эта информация может быть предоставлена на другом языке или в другом формате. По всем вопросам пожалуйста звоните по вышеуказанному номеру.

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Bu bilgiyi başka bir dilde veya formatta temin edebilirsiniz. Diğer sorularınız için lütfen yukarıdaki numarayı arayınız.

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Countryside Access and Rights of Way Improvement Plan

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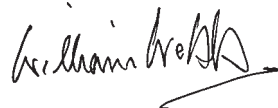
Foreword

I am delighted to introduce the first Countryside Access & Rights of Way Improvement Plan (ROWIP) for Lincolnshire: a new duty arising from the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000. The network of footpaths, bridleways and byways is a unique resource for walking, cycling and riding. Rights of Way are important for short local journeys to the shops, for taking children to school, walking the dog and are a significant recreational resource to access the countryside. They are a part of our heritage, and are there for all to enjoy.

We have been investing in and improving our access network over a number of years, but there is much more to do. The ROWIP will build on this work and provides an opportunity to move beyond our statutory duties and strengthen partnerships to deliver a more relevant, accessible network of paths to a wider range of people of all ages and abilities. It is for that reason that the ROWIP has been produced around a wider social agenda of improving health, sustainable transport and social inclusion. The economic

value of rights of way was clearly demonstrated during 2001 when the Foot and Mouth Disease epidemic resulted in the closure of many paths, preventing visitors from accessing the countryside.

The preparation of the Rights of Way Improvement Plan has given us all an opportunity to take an objective look at the access network and the way in which it is managed. The Statement of Action sets out a targeted programme for delivering improvements and shows Lincolnshire County Council's commitment to providing a network of rights of way, suitable for the needs of today's users of the countryside.



Councillor William Webb
Executive Councillor for Highways

Executive Summary



Our Vision for the Rights of Way Improvement Plan in Lincolnshire

To have an integrated network of rights of way that is relevant for today's needs, bringing added benefits to residents and visitors by supporting wider interests including sustainable transport, rural economy & tourism, health benefits and quality of life issues.

Public rights of way are becoming an increasingly important means by which people can gain access to the countryside. They are a significant part of our heritage and in modern society they have become a major recreational resource.

Government has recognised the wider benefits that can be delivered from a well-maintained and easy to use network of public rights of way, and these benefits reach further than simply being used for recreational and leisure purposes. Public rights of way are recognised as an important local resource for people to gain fresh air and exercise, to walk the dog, take the children to school, travel to work, or to reach local shops and services.

They also have a role to play in contributing to wider issues such as sustainable transport, health and social inclusion. Path networks are used both by local residents and visitors, which benefits tourism and the local economy.

The Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000 (CROW) requires each Highway Authority in England and Wales to publish a Rights of Way Improvement Plan (ROWIP) by November 2007. The production of the ROWIP follows a prescribed process set out in statutory guidance issued by the Department for the Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (DEFRA).

The County Council is required to make assessments of:

- The extent to which local rights of way meet the present and likely future needs of the public
- The opportunities provided by local rights of way for exercise and other forms of open-air recreation and the enjoyment of the authority's area
- The accessibility of local rights of way to blind or partially sighted persons and others with mobility problems, and
- Such other matters relating to local rights of way as the Secretary of State may direct

Lincolnshire's Rights of Way Improvement Plan (ROWIP)

The ROWIP process provided an opportunity for us to take an objective and strategic view of our public rights of way network and other opportunities for access in Lincolnshire, and it sets out a strategy for the future development of our rights of way network to better meet

the needs of today's users. The plan identifies the changes necessary to improve the access network for walkers, cyclists, horse riders, motorised users and people with mobility problems.

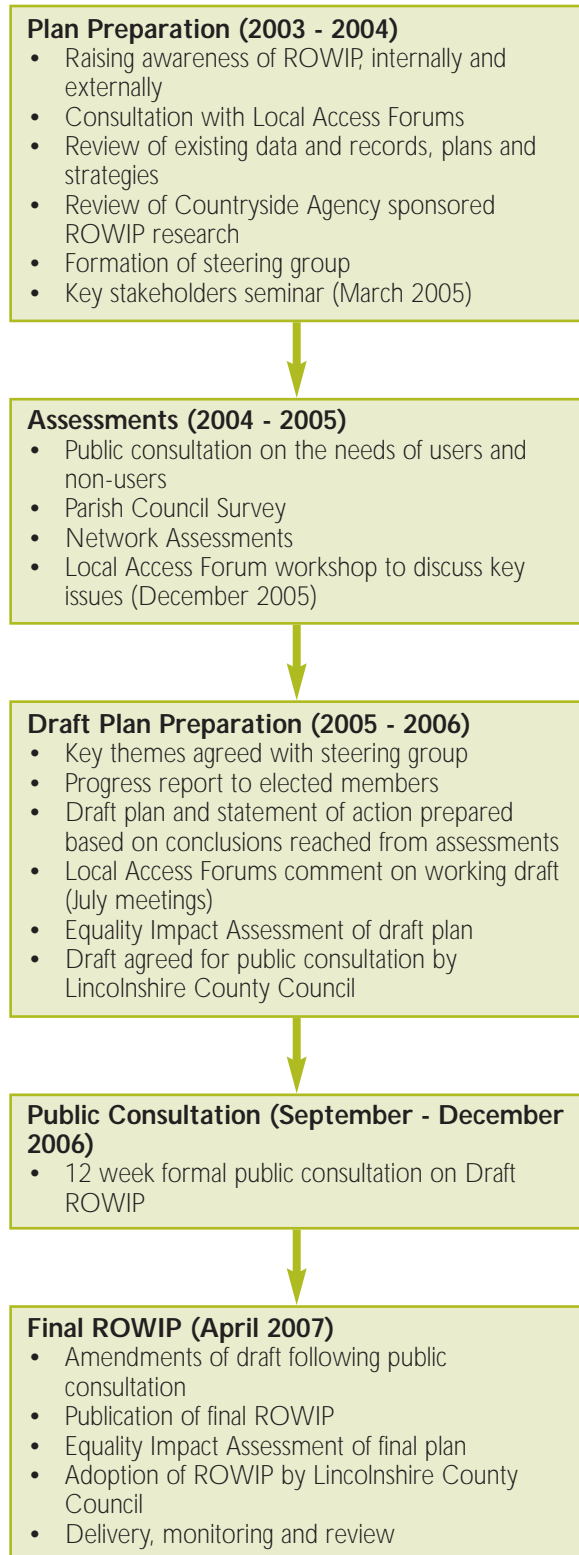
During 2004 and 2005, we undertook our largest ever consultation exercise looking at the issues surrounding the current use of the public rights of way network, which resulted in over 3000 responses from the public. We also sought views from key stakeholder organisations, parish councils and our two **Local Access Forums**. A network assessment was undertaken to look at the extent of the access resource in Lincolnshire for a variety of users including walkers, cyclists, horse riders, carriage drivers, and motorised users.

A draft plan was published in September 2006, followed by a 12-week period of public consultation. An Equality Impact Assessment has been completed for this plan, to ensure that the policies and actions contained are in accordance with the county council's corporate equality and diversity policies. No adverse impacts were identified.



*Lincolnshire Wolds Walking Festival.
Photo courtesy of East Lindsey District Council*

Figure 1
The stages of preparing the ROWIP for Lincolnshire



Key Findings And Focus For Improvements

The rights of way network is fragmented. Cyclists and horse riders in particular need a better connected network of paths and trails.

Better signing, waymarking and maintenance will encourage greater use of the network

People want more promotion and better information in formats that meet their needs

The path network needs to be safer for vulnerable users by improving crossing points on main roads

We need better engagement with local communities through improved information about what we do and assisting those who want to take a more active role in helping to maintain and develop the access network

How is this plan structured?

The ROWIP has been written with a thematic structure, demonstrating the contribution rights of way can make to the wider social agenda, rather than simply concentrating on path network infrastructure. We hope that we can show how the benefits that an integrated, easy to use and accessible rights of way network can make with the delivery of wider objectives. The plan focuses on four themes selected by the ROWIP Steering Group and were identified following the use and demand research and network assessments.

Sustainable Transport

Traffic growth in Lincolnshire now exceeds regional and national levels. Local rights of way can be a convenient means for travelling short distances in both urban and rural areas to take children to school, travel to work or reach shops and services. Better route provision and maintenance is likely to increase levels of use. Increasing levels of walking and cycling will assist with tackling congestion and reducing carbon emissions.

Health & well-being

Significant numbers of residents in the East Midlands lead completely sedentary lives with only around 20% of residents achieving 3 periods of 30 minutes of moderate exercise per week. The rights of way network provides opportunities for increasing physical activity and can improve both physical and mental health. A good network of rights of way, which are easy to use and follow, can enable people to incorporate exercise into their daily lives, improving physical and mental health.

Rural Economy & Tourism

The countryside provides opportunities to take part in active outdoor recreational activities, as well as quieter forms of recreation such as enjoying nature and watching wildlife. Lincolnshire has a long established tourism industry based on the coastal resorts, heritage, attractive villages and countryside and the Lincolnshire Wolds Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty. Visitors to path networks spend money - improving the provision, quality of access and promotion can benefit tourism and the local economy through increased visitor spend.

Social Issues

The current profile of visitors to the countryside does not reflect the diversity of the population. Certain groups including ethnic minorities, people with disabilities and young people are underrepresented visitors to the countryside. Social exclusion and deprivation affects communities across Lincolnshire. Improving the public rights of way network will make the network accessible to a wider range of users and abilities than at present. Increasing accessibility will improve access to those on low incomes or without transport to jobs and services, promote social inclusion and reduce health inequality.

Statement of Action

The Statement of Action identifies tasks that will be undertaken to address the issues raised through the consultation process and developed through the four themed chapters. The actions are drawn from conclusions reached from the assessments in broad generic terms and so the plan does not contain site or path-specific assessments or actions. More detail will be set out in our annual work programmes.

For the ROWIP to be implemented successfully, it will be necessary for the County Council to work in **partnership** with other organisations. Many of the actions will be reliant on obtaining both **internal and external funding**, in order to maximise benefits to the public.

Key partners and potential sources of funding include:

- Local Authorities
- Local Transport Plan
- East Midlands Development Agency
- Local Strategic Partnerships
- Natural England
- Sport England
- Primary Care Trust
- Sustrans
- National Lottery funding

The implementation of other activities will require us to make adjustments to the way in which we currently deliver our services and require the effective targeting of resources.

We will produce an **annual report** to show the progress made against the objectives and timescales published in the plan. Our **Local Access Forums** have a role to play in assisting us with the prioritisation and implementation of the ROWIP. We will make progress reports widely available through our Local Access Forums, newsletters and website to interested parties and organisations. It is intended to undertake a review of the ROWIP during 2011/12 in line with the preparation of the 3rd Local Transport Plan.

The ROWIP is intended for use by those working and implementing areas of policy including recreation and leisure provision, transport, planning, land management, health and social issues.



Part 1

Background and Assessments

Background

Scope And Context

Making The Assessments

Analysis And Summary Of Assessments

Background

The 2001 Census revealed that in Lincolnshire:

- The population has grown by 10% since 1991
- North Kesteven is the fourth fastest population growth area in England and Wales
- East Lindsey and West Lindsey are the most sparsely populated districts in the East Midlands with only 0.7 people per hectare
- The county has a rapidly ageing population
- 19% of Lincolnshire's population have a long term illness
- Few of Lincolnshire's population use public transport to travel to work
- Non-white ethnic groups make up a total of 1.3% of the population

Lincolnshire is the fourth largest county by area in England, covering an area of 5921sq km (2286 square miles) or 5% of England and is the fourth most sparsely populated. The population is just over 673,000, but the population density of just 1.1 people per hectare reflects the highly rural nature of the county. The county is situated within the East Midlands region, where it makes up a third of the area.

The largest urban area in the county is the city of Lincoln with a population of 86,000. The next largest towns are Grantham (38,000) and Boston (37,100) with the remaining market

towns reporting a population of less than 23,000. One third of the county's population lives in settlements of less than 3000. This highly dispersed population creates fundamental difficulties in the provision and delivery of services.



Geographically, Lincolnshire is on the periphery of the East Midlands region and has a long history of traditional industries based around agriculture, tourism and manufacturing. This situation is beginning to change as the county recognises the need to diversify and make economic and physical connections to regional, national and international networks.

The county is predominantly an agricultural area, renowned for the high quality and quantity of its produce. It is therefore not surprising to find that the vast proportion of public rights of way cross land in agricultural production. Lincolnshire has seen an increase in population of ethnic minority groups in recent years. The population of migrant workers has been notable in the south east of the county as workers are employed in agriculture and food processing industries.

The county does suffer from low biodiversity and has a low proportion of woodland. There are areas of high landscape value too,

namely the Lincolnshire Wolds, which is a landscape of national importance and the only Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty in the East Midlands region. The County also has four National Nature Reserves, including The Wash estuary – an internationally important area for nature conservation. The Lincolnshire coast attracts large numbers of visitors each year and in 2003, it is estimated that over 8 million day trips were made to the East Lindsey area, with £233 million spent by tourists.

What Are Public Rights of Way?

All public rights of way are highways, which the public are entitled to use at any time. There are four categories of rights of way, classified according to the nature of their use (see Figure 2).

Who looks after public rights of way and access land in Lincolnshire?


















Lincolnshire County Council has responsibility for public rights of way and access as:

The highway authority – to protect and maintain public highways; including rights of way

The surveying authority – to maintain the legal record of public rights of way (known as the definitive map and statement)

The access authority – powers to create access points to land mapped as open country and registered common land under the CROW Act 2000.

Figure 2
Public rights of way and who can use them

Path	Used by	Waymark used to indicate route
Public footpath	 Walkers	
Public bridleway	  Walkers, cyclists & horse riders	
Restricted byway* (RB)	    Walkers, cyclists, horse-riders and carriage drivers	
Byway open to all traffic (BOAT)	      Walkers, cyclists, horse-riders, carriage drivers & motorised vehicles	

* "Restricted Byway" is a new category of right of way introduced by the Countryside & Rights of Way Act 2000 and replaces routes formerly recorded as Roads Used as Public Paths.



Previous Strategies

Since 1996, the County Council has been following the Milestones Approach to manage its responsibilities for the rights of way network. The Milestones statement contained a series of component tasks requiring completion in order to meet the national target that all rights of way should be:

- Legally defined
- Properly maintained
- and well publicised

The Definitive Map and Statement

The definitive map and statement is the legal record of public rights of way held by each surveying authority in England and Wales. The map and statement provides conclusive evidence of the public rights that exist over a way shown on the map. Other private rights may also exist, for example to property, but the County Council does not hold this type of information.

The County Council is required to keep the definitive map and statement up to date and ensure that it is accurate. The map can be changed by way of a Definitive Map

Modification Order (DMMO). Applications supported by evidence to change the map can be made by the public, or can be initiated by the County Council. These are investigated and researched by the Definitive Map Team, based at Lincoln. Like many other authorities, Lincolnshire has a growing caseload of applications to change the definitive map, as many routes were not recorded when it was originally drawn up. This reflects the national picture of the relatively low importance placed on this area of work in the past and subsequent under-resourcing.

The CROW Act, which imposed a “cut-off” date of 2026 for documentary evidence-based applications, is likely to result in many new applications in the coming years. This means that despite additional funds being allocated to this area of work in recent years, the backlog is likely to grow. However, the longer-term public benefit could be the recording of additional paths, and the filling of gaps in the network. Natural England’s project “Discovering Lost Ways” (DLW) has been established to research historic rights of way before the 2026 cut off date for claims based on historic use. The number of potential unrecorded rights of way in Lincolnshire is unknown and the DLW project is due to start in Lincolnshire during 2007.

The public can also apply to permanently alter the path network. Applications are normally made by landowners who seek to change the legal line of a path running over their land. Changes can be made to divert, extinguish or create public rights of way, and are known as Public Path Orders (PPOs). The County Council also responds to consultations from other local authorities that may also make PPO’s affecting routes in Lincolnshire,

particularly where paths need to be diverted to enable development to take place.

The County Council currently has 167 applications and in 2006 introduced a revised priority system for dealing with DMMO applications, which was produced in consultation with the two Local Access Forums for Lincolnshire.

We will review the DMMO policy and establish a new priority system for PPO applications in light of the ROWIP and Discovering Lost Ways project, to potentially give a higher priority to key routes that will improve or increase connectivity and access.

Statements of Action 40, 41 & CT1

Over the last two years the County Council has been working to produce an electronic copy of the definitive map (although it will not, in legal terms, become the new definitive map for the foreseeable future), and a project to transfer the information shown on the paper definitive maps onto our computerised mapping system has now been completed. This replaces the previous paper-based copy and is used for day-to-day working purposes. This information has been included in a computerised Countryside Access map, showing rights of way, cycle routes, permissive access and Access Land. The map can be viewed online at www.lincolnshire.gov.uk/countryside

Maintenance And Enforcement

The maintenance and enforcement of public rights of way is the responsibility of the County Council. Highway divisions have rights of way teams to undertake inspections,

implement maintenance work and carry out enforcement action. Boston and South Holland Highway division has a smaller network of rights of way and so operate a system where generic highways staff undertake maintenance and enforcement work, with the council's contractor doing the maintenance work.

Lincolnshire has a wide network of unclassified county roads (UCRs) and minor roads. Some of these routes are unsurfaced and are commonly referred to as "green lanes". The maintenance of these routes is the responsibility of the county council's highway divisions, although there has been a long standing issue regarding the levels of maintenance these routes currently receive.

*Figure 3
Highway Division Areas in Lincolnshire*



Countryside Access and Rights of Way Improvement Plan

The County Council is working with the two Local Access Forums and has agreed a signage policy for the unsurfaced UCRs.

Since 1994, the highway divisions have followed a priority system for maintenance and enforcement of public rights of way, based on the prioritising of individual paths, depending on whether they are promoted routes or considered locally important.

We will review the path priority system for maintenance and enforcement in conjunction with the Local Access Forums in light of the ROWIP.

Statements of Action 46 & CT2

We will review our maintenance and enforcement policies for public rights of way with the Local Access Forums and publicise them to farmers and landowners.

Statements of Action 46 & CT2

Working With The Community



The County Council has local agreements with 88 parish councils, under the Parish Paths Partnership (P3). Parishes in the scheme

undertake practical maintenance work to help improve the rights of way network in their area, the cost of which is reclaimed from the county council.

Farmers and landowners also have a vital role to play in looking after rights of way. They are responsible for maintaining gates and stiles on their land, reinstating paths after ploughing, keeping paths clear of growing crops and the cutting back of overhanging vegetation. In such a large arable county the non-reinstatement of paths after ploughing or crop sowing is a big issue for users of the countryside.

The County Council works closely with the farming community to ensure that paths are reinstated and kept clear of growing crops. To aid farmers and landowners, the County Council recently updated its ploughing and cropping advisory leaflet.

Recent reforms in the way farmers are paid to produce food and crops reinforce the need for them to comply with existing legislation, including their responsibilities towards rights of way. Under the cross compliance scheme farmers are required to keep rights of way clear from obstructions and nuisances, and to meet their existing obligations regarding the reinstatement of paths after ploughing and cropping. Failure to comply could mean that the government payments they receive are significantly reduced. The cross compliance and payments system is administered by the Rural Payments Agency (RPA).

The County Council currently works with a number of individuals, organisations and Parish Councils to promote the use of the network. For instance, we check the status and

maintenance levels of proposed trail routes, prior to their publication in guides or other promotional material.

We will review all ways of working with communities, including the current Parish Paths Partnership scheme and prioritise support to those projects that meet ROWIP aims and objectives.

Statement of Action CT4

We will work with DEFRA and the Rural Payments Agency to ensure that farmers and landowners meet their responsibilities regarding cross compliance for public rights of way.

Statements of Action 46 & CT3

Gaps, Gates And Stiles



Gates and stiles are the responsibility of the landowner, and a proportion of their upkeep can be reclaimed from the highway authority. When it comes to the replacement and repair of stiles and gates on rights of way, the County Council follows the principle of the “least restrictive option”.

The hierarchy used is a gap, followed by a gate or kissing gate, with stiles seen as a last resort, and only used where a gap or gate is not practical or the landowner insists on authorised stiles being replaced.

We cannot force landowners to accept kissing gates over authorised stiles, but we do work with land managers to reduce the number of stiles on the network, thus increasing accessibility for those with restricted mobility, the elderly, dog walkers and families with young children.

Under the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000 and the Disability Discrimination Act 1995, the County Council has a duty to have regard for those with mobility problems and to make “reasonable” adjustments where practicable.

We will develop an **accessibility policy** for public rights of way, in consultation with disability groups. We will seek opportunities to reduce the number of unnecessary stiles on the rights of way network to increase accessibility for a wider range of abilities.

Statement of Action 44

Bridges On The Network

The majority of bridges on the public rights of way network are the responsibility of the County Council. The total number of bridges on the network is currently unknown.

Following the introduction of an electronic management system for the rights of way network during 2006, a full survey will be undertaken over the next three years to establish the quantity and condition of bridge crossings.



We will undertake a complete network condition survey by 2010.

Statement of Action CT5

Signposting, Waymarking And Advisory Signage



The County Council has a legal duty to provide a signpost where a path leaves a metalled road. Surveys carried out for the

Best Value Performance Indicator 178 during 2006 showed that 73% of rights of way were easy to use. This indicator includes a requirement that the path is signed from a road, except where a route is within a wholly built-up area.

The majority of signs are of metal construction. Timber posts are used to replace metal signs within the Wolds AONB, and on request to parishes within the Parish Paths Partnership Scheme (P3).

Signs are used to indicate the status of the route (footpath, bridleway etc). Few signs presently include destination or distance information.

Waymarking is used to indicate the line of the path, and make following the route easier for users. The County Council updated its waymarks during 2005 following consultation and advice received from the Local Access Forums. The new waymarks now include route status in text and the authority name. Advisory signs are supplied at the request of farmers and landowners where land management issues are a concern.

We will continue to fulfill our duty to signpost public rights of way to meet the requirements of national legislation and carry out improved signing and waymarking in response to public need.

Statements of Action 28, 36 & CT7

Surfaces Of Public Rights Of Way And Vegetation Clearance

The County Council is responsible for maintaining the surface of public rights of way in a reasonable condition for their intended

public use. Cutting of surface vegetation is the responsibility of the highway authority. Each year the County Council carries out a programme of mowing and strimming on public rights of way.

Currently three cuts are carried out using the Council's standard contract, with further vegetation clearance carried out by countryside teams. A number of paths are cut more frequently and more paths are being added to the mowing list each year in response to public demand. The County Council also undertakes surfacing of some public rights of way, particularly on well-used paths running through urban areas. This work can benefit a wide range of users, including those with restricted mobility. However, surfacing routes with tarmac or crushed stone material is an expensive option and is not necessarily an appropriate solution for a rural setting.

We will undertake an annual programme of surface vegetation clearance from public rights of way and work in conjunction with farmers and landowners.

We will review the current mowing arrangements and contract specification.

Statements of Action 32 & CT8

Access Land

The County Council is the Access Authority under the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000 (CROW). The CROW Act created a new right of access on foot to areas of countryside mapped as mountain, moor, heath, down, and registered common land. The County Council has powers under the Act to create access points, provide on-site



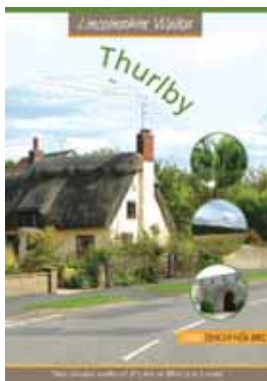
information and signage for visitors, and can appoint wardens. As the access authority, the County Council is working with the affected landowners and those with an interest in land management and nature conservation issues to make sites accessible to the public with appropriate on-site information.

We will ensure that the public continues to enjoy their right of access on foot to land designated under CROW and we will work with affected landowners to promote responsible access.

Statements of Action 17 & CT9

Promotion Of The Network

The County Council produces a range of information leaflets and trail guides for walkers, cyclists and horse riders in Lincolnshire. The authority works with a number of organisations to produce walking and cycling guides. We also check the proposed routes to be included in the guides and trail leaflets of external organisations for accuracy, and to highlight anomalies before the information goes into print. Those who are developing walks leaflets are encouraged to contact the rights of way staff prior to publishing walks literature.



In 2005 we launched our Countryside Access website which has information on what to do and where to go in Lincolnshire as well as help and advice for farmers and landowners. In response to the consultations carried out for the ROWIP, we recently added a Countryside Access Map, and interactive web walks with funding from the Countryside Agency.

We will promote use of the rights of way network through a variety of formats and media and look for innovative ways of encouraging participation to a wider range of users and non-users.

Statements of Action 27, 31, 47, 49 & CT10

Development of Longer Distance Routes And Trails

The **Viking Way** is a long-distance footpath between the Humber Bridge in North Lincolnshire and Oakham in Rutland. The route was originally opened in 1976 and later became a regional route, reflecting its significance as a high quality long distance walk linking other major routes. During the mid 1990s a three-year project was undertaken to upgrade the route to reflect its new status and many improvements were made, including

the installation of new bridges, gates and stiles. The route was comprehensively re-signed and a new guidebook produced.

The Viking Way is Lincolnshire's premier long-distance walking route, running for a distance of 147 miles from the Humber estuary to Rutland Water.

The development of a **Lincolnshire Coastal Access Trail** has long been talked about in the county. The Lincolnshire coast stretches from the Humber estuary in the north to the Wash estuary in the south. The coastal strip around Skegness and Mablethorpe attracts many thousands of holidaymakers each year. The Lincolnshire Coast includes Gibraltar Point National Nature Reserve and The Wash Estuary National Nature Reserve. There is a concentration of coastal access points around the holiday resorts along the East Lindsey coast, with access provision being relatively good. However there is scope for improving the number of circular routes, especially for horse riding and cycling. Access provision along the coast is fragmented and could be improved by creating linkages.

DEFRA is currently looking at how to improve access both to and along the English coast. Several approaches are being investigated and they include; mapping coastal land under the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000, using existing ROW legislation to improve the existing network of paths or using permissive agreements with landowners. DEFRA is due to undertake public consultation on improving coastal access in 2007, which follows more in-depth research, testing and costing of different options.

Sustrans, the cycling charity, has been working in Lincolnshire for a number of years to develop the National Cycle Network (NCN),

which now provides over 150 miles of signed routes within the County. There are 32 miles of traffic free cycle route on the National Cycle Network.

Route 1 of the National Cycle Network runs for a distance of 260 miles from Hull to Fakenham and on to Harwich, passing through Lincolnshire. Other routes have been, or are in the process of being developed around Lincoln, Boston and Gainsborough. The Environment Agency, British Waterways and Lincolnshire County Council formed the Lincolnshire Waterways Partnership. The Water Rail Way between Lincoln and Bardney has been developed as part of NCN route 1 and is proving popular with walkers and cyclists.

We will undertake a review of the route, infrastructure and promotion of the Viking Way.

Statements of Action 20 & CT11

We will establish a coastal trail for Lincolnshire, having due regard to the introduction of any legislative changes which impact on coastal access.

Statements of Action 23 & CT11

We will work in partnership with adjoining local authorities and external organisations and support the development and implementation of linear longer distance trails.

Statements of Action 22 & CT11

Scope and Context

The Scope of this Plan

In preparing the ROWIP, we are required to look at the relevance of the access network in today's society and identify where changes should be made to meet current and possible future needs. In doing so, we have followed the statutory guidance issued by DEFRA. The guidance states that ROWIPs should be strategic and aspirational documents, setting out how an authority intends to deliver improvements to the management and development of its rights of way network.

The statutory guidance also states that proposals contained in ROWIPs should be made in broad terms, setting out how the proposals should be realised. The ROWIP actions are drawn from conclusions reached from the assessments in broad, generic terms, and so the plan does not contain site or path-specific assessments or actions.

Context

There are a range of plans and strategies at a local, regional and national level that have an impact on the delivery and management of the rights of way network and countryside access in Lincolnshire. These have been considered during the development of the ROWIP and include:

- Lincolnshire County Council Corporate Plan
- Community Strategies
- Lincolnshire County Council Structure Plan

- 2nd Local Transport Plan
- Local Development Frameworks (which are replacing Local Plans)
- Lincolnshire Wolds AONB Management Plan
- Lincolnshire Tourism Strategy
- Regional Sports Strategy
- Regional Health Strategy

An overview of the policy context for the ROWIP is shown in Figure 4.

Lincolnshire County Council Corporate Plan

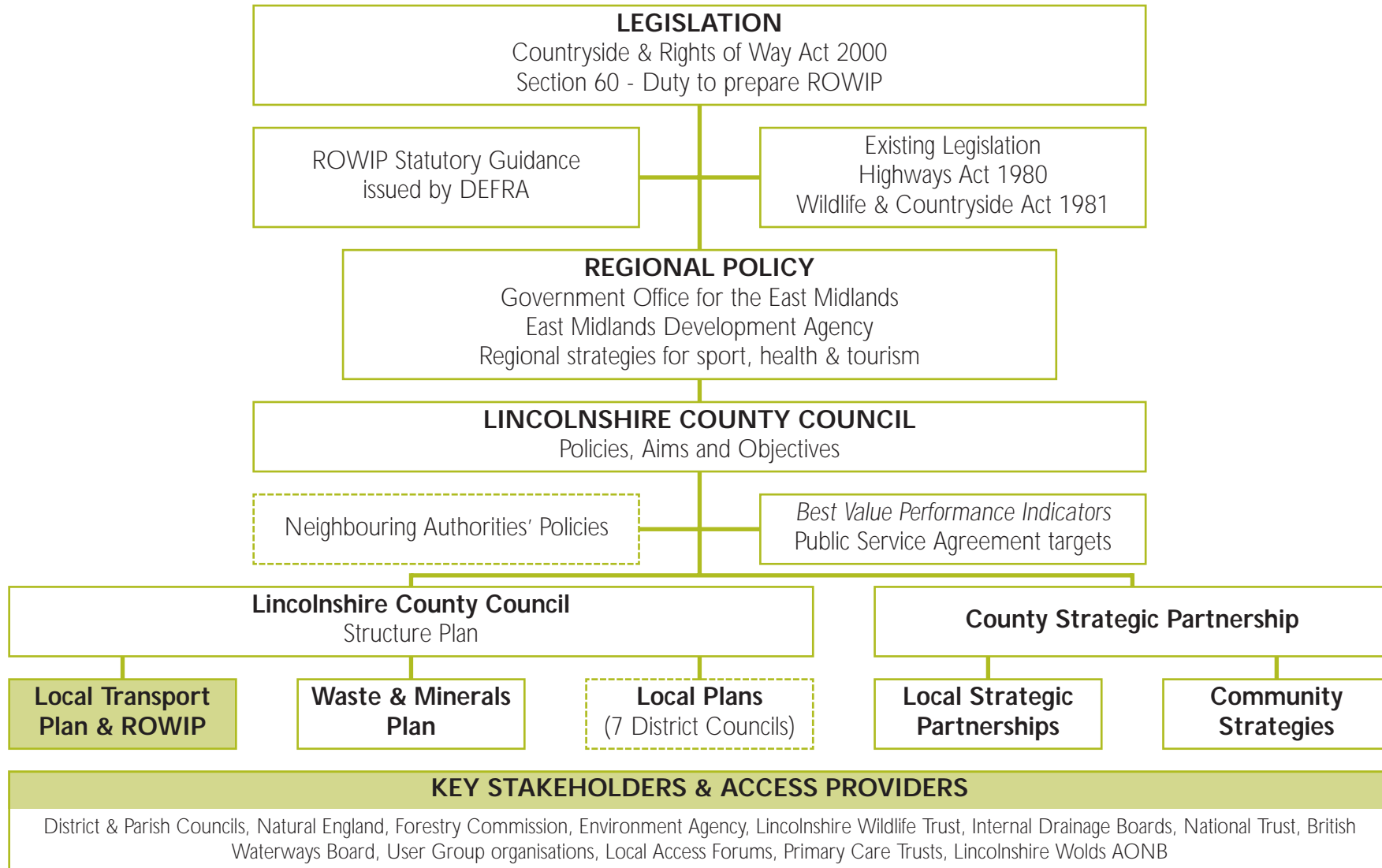
In 2005, the County Council undertook a fundamental review of its strategic aims and objectives to provide a sound basis for setting policies and priorities across the county. This included extensive consultation with the public, key stakeholder groups, staff and elected members. Key themes and priorities identified from the consultation process were developed into a new vision for Lincolnshire under the banner of "Lincolnshire LEADS."

Lincolnshire LEADS: healthy, prosperous, safe

The Council's vision is supported by five corporate objectives:

Enrich	L ifestyle
Achieve	E xcellence
Improve	A ccess
Promote	D iversity
Increase	S ecurity

Figure 4
Overview of policy context for the ROWIP



The delivery of the ROWIP will support all of these corporate objectives, with countryside access being highly relevant to the following corporate objectives:

Lifestyle – Enrich the lifestyle for the people of Lincolnshire through environmental improvement, and improving health

Access – Improve access to services, transport and information for and about Lincolnshire through partnership working

Diversity – Promoting Lincolnshire as a great place to live, work and invest

Community Strategies

The Lincolnshire Assembly has developed the Community Strategy to improve the economic, social and environmental well-being of the county. The vision of the strategy is:

“To improve the quality of life of everyone in Lincolnshire by making it a more sustainable place in which to live, work, invest and visit.”

To achieve this, four priority areas are identified:

Priority 1: Safer, stronger communities

Priority 2: Children and Young People

Priority 3: Health and Social Well-being

Priority 4: Economic development

In recent years each of the Local Strategic Partnerships have developed their own Community Strategies, based on each of the seven district councils' areas in Lincolnshire. Again these have the aims of improving quality

of life. The common themes within the strategies that have direct links to the ROWIP are:

- Encouraging greater walking, cycling and use of public transport
- Improving safety
- Improving access to key services
- Supporting the local economy

A Local Area Agreement (LAA) is a three year agreement between central and local government (and their partner organisations) based on national and local priorities. The LAA blocks were developed from the Community Strategies and have shaped the priorities identified for Lincolnshire:

- Children and young people
- Safe and stronger communities
- Healthier communities and older people
- Economic development and enterprise

The LAA will be the principle action plan for the delivery of the Community Strategy and will focus on areas where partnership working can add value and improve services in Lincolnshire.

There are opportunities for partnership working with the delivery of the ROWIP in terms reducing health inequalities, enabling more people to be physically active and improving access to services.

The Lincolnshire County Council Structure Plan and Local Plans

These plans detail planning policy at a local level within Lincolnshire. The overall aim of the Lincolnshire Structure Plan is:

“To improve the quality of life for those who live, work, visit and invest in Lincolnshire through the promotion of sustainable development.”

The Structure Plan provides the long term planning framework for the county and land use development, whilst protecting and enhancing the environment. Local Plans are published by each of the seven district councils in Lincolnshire and are currently being replaced by Local Development Frameworks.

Planning Policy Guidance 17 – *Planning for open space, sport and recreation* states that local authorities should seek opportunities to provide better facilities for walkers, cyclists and horse-riders, for example by adding links to existing rights of way networks.

Lincolnshire’s 2nd Local Transport Plan

The 2nd Local Transport Plan sets out the context for transport planning within Lincolnshire from 2006 to 2011. The shared priority for transport covers four key areas:

- Delivering accessibility – providing enhanced access to places of work, shops and services, schools, health care and other opportunities to improve people’s quality of life and reduce social exclusion
- Safer roads – supporting the aim of reducing casualties on the country’s roads

as outlined in the national road safety strategy “Tomorrow’s Roads – Safer for Everyone.”

- Tackling congestion – recognising that in the larger towns and cities across the county, congestion is having (or will have if allowed to grow unchecked) a detrimental effect on the local economy and quality of life
- Better air quality and quality of life – improving air quality by lowering levels of pollution generated by road traffic, thereby reducing the effects on human health and improving quality of life

An integral part of the 2nd Local Transport Plan for Lincolnshire was the publication in 2006 of the County Council’s Walking and Cycling Strategy. The objectives of the strategy are:

- W&C1 To ensure that the highway infrastructure is safe, attractive and suitable for walking and cycling.
- W&C2 To reduce the number of accidents involving pedestrians and cyclists.
- W&C3 To increase the number of journeys made by walking and cycling.
- W&C4 To ensure that walking and cycling is a priority in land use, transport planning, engineering design and development control decision-making.
- W&C5 To consult and work with all interested parties and to actively promote walking and cycling as an alternative to motor transport.

- W&C7 To work with partner organisations to reduce the risk of cycle theft and its deterrent effect on cycle use.
- W&C8 The development and improvement of both new and existing cycling / walking routes.
- W&C9 To assist and support the delivery of the Rights of way Improvement Plan

The rights of way network can assist in the delivery of key themes within the Local Transport Plan, namely accessibility, tackling congestion and safer roads. The intention from government is that Rights of Way

Improvement Plans will begin to be integrated into Local Transport Plans from 2005, with full integration by 2010.

Other plans and strategies

Regional health and sports strategies include policies to address growing concern about increased levels of disease and illness including: coronary heart disease, high blood pressure, diabetes, strokes and obesity. Policies to increase levels of physical activity have strong links to the ROWIP to encourage people to have more active lifestyles.

Making the Assessments

Section 60 of the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000 requires the County Council to make an assessment of:

- The extent to which local rights of way meet the present and likely future needs of the public
- The opportunities provided by local rights of way for exercise and other forms of open-air recreation and the enjoyment of the authority's area
- The accessibility of local rights of way to blind or partially sighted persons and others with mobility problems, and
- Such other matters relating to local rights of way as the Secretary of State may direct

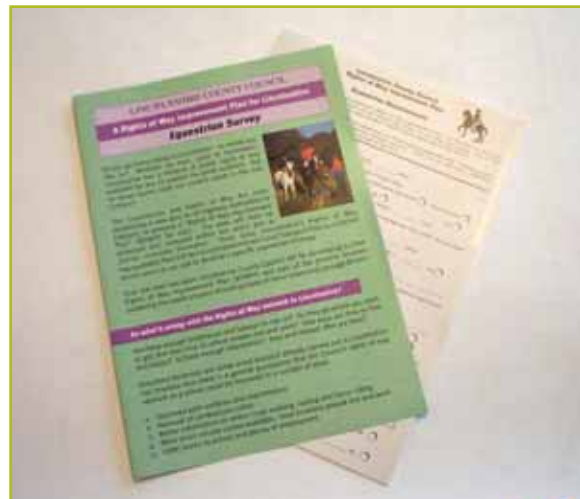
We have undertaken these assessments, using a variety of means, to determine the supply of and demand for using local rights of way in Lincolnshire. To consider only rights of way in the assessments would not give a true picture of the ways in which the access resource is used by the public (or not used in some cases!) For example, someone going for a circular walk may use a variety of access available to the public, and could include a combination of roads, pavements, definitive rights of way, permissive paths, farm trails, access to woodlands, riverbanks and coast.

What have we done and how have we done it?

A **network assessment** looked at the provision of rights of way and wider access opportunities within the county. We focused on the rights of way network and examined

how effectively the current network is integrated with wider access.

A **use and demand assessment** was undertaken to look at how and why people use the access resource in Lincolnshire. A questionnaire was sent to members of the County Council's Citizens' Viewpoint Panel as well as to members of walking, cycling and riding organisations. A survey of all parish and town councils was also undertaken.



A number of **focus groups** were held around the county to explore the attitudes and needs of different stakeholders and users. Focus group meetings were held for:

- Casual walkers
- Walking enthusiasts
- Cyclists
- Horseriders
- Off-road motorised users
- People with disabilities
- Landowners

Countryside Access and Rights of Way Improvement Plan

Two **consultation workshops** were held during 2005: the first, a workshop for key stakeholders and access providers, and the second for our two Local Access Forums to consider the initial findings from the research.

The research findings, focus groups, and the ideas and priorities explored at consultation workshops have all assisted in the development of the Statement of Action contained in this ROWIP.

Reports for all the assessments carried out can be found on Lincolnshire County Council's web site at: www.lincolnshire.gov.uk/rowip



Local Access Forum members at ROWIP seminar

Analysis and Summary of Assessments

Different Users, Their Needs and Issues

The previous chapter outlined the research undertaken to prepare the Rights of Way Improvement Plan. This chapter now sets out the key findings for different users of the countryside, and the access resource in Lincolnshire. We did this by asking people how they used the network for a variety of activities through surveys and focus groups, and looked at the reasons why some people don't use rights of way.

We looked at the access resource – what we've got in Lincolnshire for gaining access to the places we want to get to. Whether it's to walk or cycle to the local shop, to visit tourist attractions, the coast, country parks or woodlands.

The gaps and areas of deficiency in the network, along with what you told us about how the network is used will help to target improvements, which are set out in the Statement of Action.

Walkers

Walking was identified in the research as the most popular form of activity undertaken on the rights of way network.

Walkers tend to take short (2-5 mile), recreational or dog walking trips directly from home, as well as more functional journeys on foot to local shops and services.



Walking and cycling to school is less common in Lincolnshire than nationally, probably reflecting the rural nature of the county and the relatively lengthy journeys to school by bus or car. The off-road network of rights of way is seen primarily as a recreational resource with a higher proportion of walking taking place at weekends. Walkers are entitled to use all types of rights of way, roads, access land and other areas of public open space.

Two main sub groups of walkers were identified during our consultations with the public and key stakeholders:

- **Casual walkers** - which can include family groups, and dog walkers, who typically walk between 2 and 5 miles. They will often use routes close to where they live but may travel further afield for longer walks. Dog walkers are regular users of rights of way, often using the network twice a day to exercise their pets.
- **Serious walkers** – more experienced users of rights of way, looking for a more challenging experience. Walks can be close

to home but they are much more prepared to travel further. Once there, walk lengths tend to be longer than those undertaken by casual walkers.

There is a certain amount of cross-over between the groups identified. In particular, people participating in health walks do not readily fit into either grouping. The research identified that, in Lincolnshire, a higher proportion of people are likely to start their walk from home than in comparative national studies.

The Access Resource In Lincolnshire for Walking

The access available to the public on foot is wide ranging and includes:

- Public rights of way
- Permissive paths
- DEFRA farm trail schemes
- Country parks
- Nature reserves (some sites are open to the public)
- Coastal access
- Rivers and waterways
- Access Land
- Woodlands (some sites are open to the public)

"Following paths when you are on them is sometimes difficult"

Casual walkers focus group member, Lincoln

What People Told Us:

- Walking is the most popular activity
- Walking is undertaken mainly for recreational purposes

- There is a strong preference for short, circular routes close to where people live
- People don't tend to use rights of way to travel to school / work / shops
- Most recreational activity is undertaken at weekends
- Walking is most likely to start from home, but a significant proportion travel by car to reach places to walk
- Walkers make extensive use of the access network especially on pavements, footpaths, bridleways, country parks and other open spaces
- General relaxation, enjoyment of the countryside and personal fitness were cited as the most important motivating factors

Constraints To Access Were Identified As:

- Dog fouling
- Litter
- Route finding can be difficult
- Lack of waymarking
- Poor or non-reinstatement of paths by landowners after ploughing
- Difficulty finding start points for walks / lack of information
- Perceived user conflict
- Traffic / busy road crossings

"Do we want lots of paths, or fewer paths that are well maintained?"

Casual walkers focus group member, Lincoln

Cyclists

Cycling was the second most popular activity after walking, identified in the research carried out for the ROWIP. Cycling can be a convenient form of transport, certainly for journeys of less than 5 miles to reach places of employment, schools, shops, and local services. The national picture is that cycling has been in decline over recent years in favour of the car, although there are signs that this is changing.

“The problems of getting out into the countryside from where I live are great.....it is a nightmare of busy roads”

Cyclists focus group member, Lincoln

In recent years initiatives to address congestion in urban areas and to encourage greater cycling within and between urban areas have been implemented in order to attempt to reduce congestion within towns and cities, with some success. In the first Local Transport Plan, improved facilities for cyclists have been provided through the Community Travel Zones (CTZ) in the larger urban areas and the Rural Priorities Initiative (in the remainder of the county). As a result, cycling has increased in some urban locations across Lincolnshire by 9% between 2001 and 2004.

The overall picture is that in recent years cycling on busy roads to work, shops and services has declined in favour of the car, with recreational cycling growing in popularity. Most cycling is undertaken to travel to and from work, using the road network. There have been some successes such as the creation of off-road Sustrans routes, or carriageway improvements for cyclists, which have been developed as commuter routes



around Lincoln and levels of cycling on these routes has been maintained or increased.

Commuter cycling takes place on parts of the rights of way network, mostly where surface improvements have been carried out through development of housing estates.

With the recent increase in the sales of mountain bikes, the off-road network has now become more accessible to cyclists, particularly where surfacing improvements have been made. However for the majority of the off-road network in Lincolnshire, which is a predominantly arable county, cycling can be difficult due to poor surfaces and vegetation.

The Lincoln Greenways Strategy 2001 identified the need to develop a network of Greenways and Quiet Roads within an 8 mile radius of the city for leisure and commuter use. Work to improve and develop the routes identified in the strategy is being implemented through the Local Transport Plan.

As with walkers, most cycling starts directly from home. Cyclists are entitled to use the same routes as horse riders on the rights of

way network and so are constrained by not being entitled to use the public footpaths. Over a third of all cycling takes place on roads and cycle tracks.

In 2005 the County Council adopted a Cycling and Walking Strategy, which outlines a range of aims and objectives to encourage increased participation

However, the research revealed that cyclists do, in practice, use all kinds of access, including footpaths, which are used by 10% of the population in Lincolnshire.

"I would like to see more off-road routes where I can enjoy the countryside without the hassle of traffic"

Cyclists focus group member, Lincoln

The research also found that a significant proportion of cyclists may not be aware of the routes that they are entitled to use such as BOATs, although these routes

were found to be better used by members of cycle user group organisations.

Recreational cyclists also tend to favour circular routes close to home, but they are also prepared to drive to points from which they can access the network. Once there, they tend to travel further than walkers, typically covering distances of between 2 and 10 miles.

The Access Resource In Lincolnshire For Cycling

- Cycle tracks (including the National Cycle Network)
- Bridleways
- Byways Open To All Traffic

The North Sea Cycle Route is a 6000km route incorporating the National Cycle Network through Lincolnshire

- Restricted Byways
- Unclassified County Roads

What People Told Us:

- Cycling tends to start from home but some will also drive out to access the network
- Cyclists use all types of access
- The off-road network is disjointed with few wholly off-road routes
- Routes out of town for cyclists could be increased / improved
- The off-road network is not readily used for commuter cycling

Constraints To Access Were Identified As:

- Fragmented network
- Dangerous road crossings
- Litter and dog fouling
- Lack of information on circular routes
- Difficulty in following routes
- Surfacing and vegetation on off-road routes

Horse Riders

The lack of data on equestrian use across Lincolnshire was identified at an early stage of the research process for the ROWIP. A survey of users was undertaken in 2004, in the form of a postal questionnaire with the data input and analysis being undertaken by the County Council's Research Observatory. It has proved difficult to obtain precise figures on the extent of horse ownership in Lincolnshire, although the British Horse



Society estimate that 4% of households take part in equestrian activities, and our own research reported similar levels of participation.

Participation in horse related activities was found to be generally for leisure purposes, although almost a third of respondents also had a professional interest.

Respondents who own more than one horse are most likely to keep their horses at home, whilst those owning a single horse are likely to keep them at local livery yards or stables. The greatest use of the rights of way network and wider countryside tends therefore to be mainly local routes, which are used regularly in order for owners to exercise their horses.

The issues facing equestrians are somewhat different to those of walkers. Horse riders are not entitled to use the footpath network and so are excluded from using 75% of the access network. They do however often have access to private land through agreements.

Around 80% of equestrians reported that they transport their horses to take part in riding

elsewhere, suggesting that current levels of local access provision do not meet their needs.

“I’d be happy to pay a licence to enable me to ride on farmers’ land”

Equestrians focus group, Market Rasen

The network of bridleways and byways is fragmented and poorly connected. A number of busy road crossings have been identified, which effectively cause route severance and deter users. The off-road situation facing carriage drivers is even worse, as they are not entitled to use bridleways or footpaths and so are restricted to using byways open to all traffic and restricted byways.

Equestrians often told us that they are forced onto the road network in order to gain access to routes, or complete circular rides. Riders also admitted that they ride on public footpaths or pavements to avoid traffic. Many riders (75%) stated that they had had at least one near miss with traffic, with over a quarter stating that they had had more than ten near misses.

“In order to access ‘off-road’ riding we have to ride on busy roads with fast moving traffic and agricultural vehicles”

Equestrian Survey respondent

It can be difficult for equestrian users to find circular rides, and they can be restricted to linear “there and back” routes. A “lack of routes” response was the main reason given from users when asked why they do not participate in horseriding as much as they would like to. There were some geographical differences in responses, with respondents forming a central band across the county, particularly south of Lincoln and Horncastle to

Countryside Access and Rights of Way Improvement Plan

Skegness, stating that the lack of routes was the main constraint to participation. Similarly to walkers, equestrians have a preference for the provision of circular routes, close to where their horses are kept.

The Access Resource In Lincolnshire For Riding

- Bridleways (but not for carriages)
- Byways
- Restricted Byways (formerly RUPPs)
- Unclassified County Roads

"I use footpaths illegally because one bridle path doesn't connect with another"

Equestrians focus group, Market Rasen

What People Told Us:

- Participation in riding is generally for leisure purposes
- Routes used most frequently are those close to where horses are kept
- Horses have to be transported to gain access to other bridleways
- Roads are often used to connect bridleways
- Traffic and driver attitude is an issue
- There is a preference for circular routes
- Equestrians are prepared to pay for access through toll-ride schemes

Constraints To Access Were Identified As:

- Fragmented network
- Driver attitude towards equestrians using roads

- Poor maintenance of some routes
- Dangerous road crossings
- Lack of information on routes / rides
- Lack of horsebox parking

"Many bridleways and green lanes just end in the middle of nowhere"

Equestrian Survey

Carriage Drivers

The proportion of respondents to the equestrian survey taking part in carriage driving was low (2%) and so we needed to ensure that we engaged with carriage drivers during the consultation process for the draft ROWIP. Carriage drivers have similar needs to those of horseriders, although there are some differences.



The Access Resource In Lincolnshire For Carriage Driving:

- Byways Open to All Traffic (BOAT)
- Restricted Byways
- Unclassified County Roads (UCRs)

Constraints To Access Were Identified As:

- Fragmented network
- Width of routes and gates is important for ease of access
- Condition of routes – overhanging vegetation and surface condition
- Road crossings and traffic

Motorised Users

Motorised users are able to use the vast majority of surfaced highways in the County and also the off-road routes defined as Byways Open to All Traffic (BOATs) as shown on the Definitive Map of Public Rights of Way. As well as the 26km of BOATs in the county, the public are entitled to use Lincolnshire’s wide network of unclassified county roads (UCRs) or minor roads. Some of these routes may be unsurfaced and are commonly referred to as “green lanes”. These routes can form a useful addition to the access network and can be used to link public rights of way.

“The whole thing would be solved if the routes were clearly marked. Education and information should be issued by the County Council then everyone would know what’s what. Our members are responsible and would respond to this”

Motorised users focus group, Lincoln



On the 2nd May 2006, new legislation came into force which has affected the public’s rights to use routes with a “mechanically propelled vehicle”. The Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act 2006 has extinguished motorised rights on routes not already recorded on the Definitive Map and Statement and also on those routes which have been “dual-classified” (i.e. recorded on the Definitive Map as a footpath, bridleway or restricted byway **and** on the County Council’s List of Streets).

These, usually unsurfaced routes, will revert to the status shown on the Definitive Map. There are exceptions to these extinguishments, in particular existing claims for BOATs applied for before 20th January 2005 may still be added upon confirmation as vehicular routes, and those routes predominantly used by motor vehicles (usually surfaced routes) in a period five years prior to the commencement of the Act will also be exempt.

The legal status of vehicular rights of access on Roads Used as Public Paths (RUPPs) has also been clarified with the commencement of section 47 of the Countryside and Rights of

Way Act 2000. From 2nd May 2006 all routes shown as RUPPs on the Definitive Map and Statement became **Restricted Byways**. All forms of traffic except mechanically propelled vehicles may use these routes.

Routes with legal motorised access can be a useful way for visitors, and in particular disabled users, to gain access to the countryside. Routes are often used by four-wheel drive enthusiasts and trail riders' groups, with certain routes being well used. Due to the unsealed nature of many of these routes the ensuing maintenance issues can be challenging!

"There are motorbike signs on roads in the Lake District and Cambridgeshire so we know where we can go, but here there is nothing and it's not clear"

Motorised users focus group, Lincoln

This can cause conflict with walkers, cyclists and horseriders who can find a route difficult to use as a result of vehicular usage.

DEFRA recently concluded that nationally, byways on average see four vehicle movements per day, most of the use being for utilitarian purposes rather than for recreational use. In 2005 DEFRA updated "Making the best of byways", which is a practical guide for local authorities who manage and maintain byways which can carry motor vehicles.

Many public rights of way are also subject to legitimate **private** vehicular use, e.g. farm vehicles often use public footpaths or bridleways to gain access to fields.

The Access Resource In Lincolnshire For Motorised Users:

- Byways Open To All Traffic

- Unclassified County Roads, both surfaced and in some instances unsurfaced

What People Told Us:

- Motorised users have to travel to find routes
- Use rights of way linked by tarmaced routes
- Prefer circular routes although can be difficult to achieve
- Better management of the unsurfaced Unclassified County Roads is needed
- Illegal motorcycling annoys legitimate users
- Clearer signing could help to reduce conflict

"It would help if the police were more active in controlling illegal use, which gives us all a bad name. We are all tarred by the same brush"

Motorised users focus group, Lincoln

Mobility and Visually Impaired Users

The Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000 requires us to make an assessment of "the accessibility of local rights of way to blind or partially sighted persons and others with mobility problems."



It is well known that disabled people encounter a range of barriers and constraints, and the Disability Discrimination Act 1995 (DDA) makes it unlawful to discriminate against anyone on the grounds of his or her disability in connection with employment, public transport, education and the provision of goods and services.

The DDA places a duty on service providers (which includes highway authorities) to make "reasonable adjustments" to the way in which services are delivered to those with a disability. The Act was extended in 2004 to include the removal of barriers, although exact standards were not set down.

National research has shown that there are approximately 12 million disabled people in the UK, which represents 20% of the total UK population. If other groups such as elderly people, parents with small children and people recovering from illness or injury are included, this could represent around half the population who would benefit from easier access to the rights of way network.

What People Told Us

The Lincolnshire Countryside Access Survey found that a quarter of households in the county had one or more people with a long-term illness or disability, which affected their ability to access activities. Almost two thirds of respondents thought that the paths and tracks in their area were not suitable for people with mobility problems. The main reasons were identified as:

- Poor surface conditions often make routes unsuitable for people with restricted mobility

- Unsuitable terrain
- Difficulty in reaching suitable access (getting there!)
- Stiles and other barriers restricting access

Other reasons included:

- Not knowing how long a route was, whether there were stopping points, or more difficult sections
- Lack of toilets and other visitor facilities
- Concern about encountering cycles and motorcycles
- Parked vehicles exposing people to traffic danger

Barriers to using the rights of way network and enjoyment of the countryside can be grouped as:

Physical Barriers

- Stiles
- Steps
- Gates
- Bridges
- Path surfaces

"Bourne Wood is fantastic and there are picnic tables and so you can lose civilisation for a little time – go for a walk without the town"

Disabilities focus group, Lincoln

Information

- Lack of information and difficulty finding it
- Different format needed to meet the needs of disabled people
- Higher level of information needed on routes

Transport

- Getting there
- Lack of suitable transport
- Lack of parking near to paths

Conclusions

- People with disabilities and mobility problems are very diverse and should not be considered as a single entity.

“I can’t find enough information – I don’t know if I am looking for the wrong things but I can’t find any”

Disabilities focus group, Lincoln

- The range of abilities and needs is enormous
- People with mobility difficulties need to plan ahead and often arrange for a helper to accompany them
- Tend to visit countryside sites with facilities and easy parking e.g. Gibraltar Point, Bourne Woods
- Trips to the wider access network are limited and infrequent

Young People

Young people under 25 years old were underrepresented in the surveys carried out for the ROWIP research. The research also revealed that amongst the user group organisations, over 80% of respondents were aged over 55. The Countryside Agency’s Diversity Review found that young people don’t necessarily regard the countryside as a place to visit and enjoy.



Concerns that young people don’t make use of the access network were raised during the focus group research:

- Young people don’t consider the countryside as a place to go
- There are other competing leisure interests such as cinema, sports, shopping, computer games
- Children have greater disposable income and want to spend it
- Parents don’t take their children into the countryside as much as they used to

“There is an issue with children and adults needing to exercise more. If they could use paths such as these it would be safer than using the main roads and would encourage families to walk more rather than use cars”

Parish Council survey

Landowners and Parish Councils

The majority of the rights of way network in Lincolnshire crosses land in active agricultural production. Farmers and landowners have a key role to play in working with the County Council to keep the rights of way network in good shape.



Most rights of way are maintainable at public expense and so the responsibility to maintain those routes rests with the County Council, as highway authority. Farmers and landowners also have a responsibility towards rights of way crossing their land which includes:

- Keeping rights of way open and free from obstruction
- Reinstating cross field paths after ploughing within timescales
- Not ploughing field edge paths
- Keeping stiles and gates in good repair
- The clearance of overhanging vegetation (e.g. hedges and tree limbs)

Over the years, the County Council's rights of way teams have built up good working relationships with farmers and landowners. Highways officers work within each of the four highway divisions, providing help and advice about rights of way and carrying out maintenance work, which includes:

- Signposting and waymarking
- Replacement of stiles and gates

- Mowing of headland paths
- Installation and repair of bridges
- Provision of marker posts to indicate the line of cross field paths and width of field edge paths

“Our Parish has recently improved its public access because 4 miles of permissive bridleways have been created”

Parish Council survey

We always seek to resolve issues through goodwill and co-operation, although on occasion it is necessary to resort to enforcement action where co-operation fails.

The County Council works closely with a number of parish councils across Lincolnshire to improve the path networks in their area. The “Parish Paths Partnership” (P3) has been operating since 1995, and participating parishes undertake various tasks including:

- Network surveys
- Mowing and strimming
- Repair or replacement of stiles and gates
- Installation of small bridges
- Step building
- Path surfacing
- Publicity and promotion (e.g. leaflets)

“We need more promotion of walks through parish booklets. LCC to provide more information on the Internet – maps, guides and links to parishes”

Parish Council survey

Grants are available to parishes to undertake the work, which is achieved through volunteer “task days” or by employing small-scale contractors directly. Larger projects, such as

installation of bridges or enforcement issues, are referred to the County Council. There are currently 88 parishes participating in the scheme.

Through both the Council's work and partnership work, a significant improvement in the rights of way network has been achieved which is reflected in our improved Best Value Performance Indicator (BVPI) surveys. There is still a lot of work to do to improve the condition of routes generally, and to keep paths in good order.

What Landowners And Parish Councils Told Us

- Landowners are concerned about the perception that there is a "right to roam" and that the responsibilities that come with increased access have not been promoted sufficiently
- Some landowners are against the idea of increased access although there is recognition that since the taxpayer is paying towards the management of the land, the taxpayer has rights to visit and enjoy it
- Concern about irresponsible access and behaviour – security, dogs off leads and litter
- Most parish councils thought the network is well signposted, but maintenance and enforcement could be improved

"Although footpaths are well signposted there is hardly any or no waymarkers on the paths. Some local farmers do not keep paths clear and they are very difficult to walk on"

Parish Council survey

- Parish councils would like to see more circular routes created
- There is a need for more information about the access network in a variety of formats

Network Assessment – The Access Resource

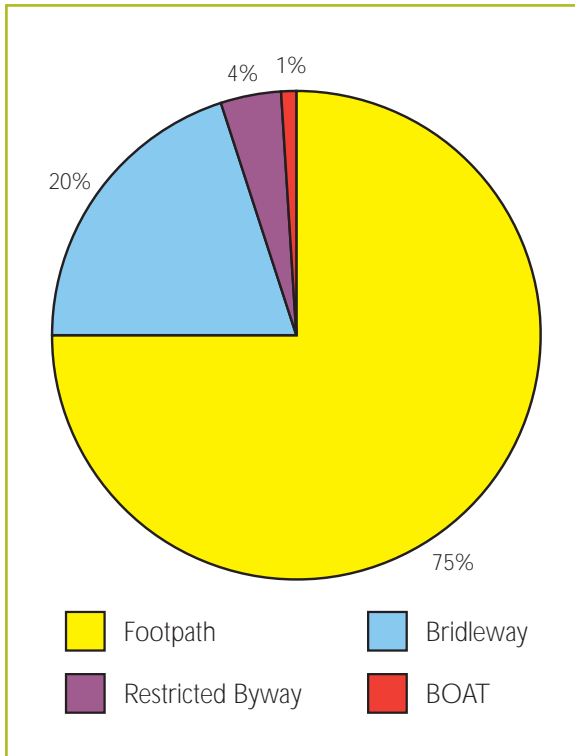
Lincolnshire is a predominantly rural county, and in comparison with other counties in the East Midlands region, has a relatively low and widely dispersed population across many small communities. The 4000km network of public rights of way is the prime means to gain access to the countryside in the county and is used mainly for recreational trips. The urban network of public rights of way can provide links to the wider countryside, and is more likely to be used for local trips to reach shops and services.

There are four types of public rights of way:

- Footpath
- Bridleway
- Restricted Byway (formerly known as RUPPS)
- Byway Open to All Traffic (BOAT)

Figure 5 shows that there are many more footpaths across the county for walking (75%), than other routes. Cyclists and horse riders are restricted to using 25% of the network, with carriage drivers able to use restricted byways and BOATS (5%). Motorised users are only entitled to use BOATS, which only make up 1% of the network.

Figure 5
Proportion of PROW by category



Public rights of way form a network across the county, however, as can be seen from Figure 6, their distribution is not evenly spread across communities. The following figures show the distribution of all rights of way across the county for different categories of users and give an indication of gaps and deficiencies in the network.

However, assessing the relative distribution of the network alone is unlikely to give a true picture of countryside access within a given area. For example, an area with a high network density could be poorly connected with other routes and so may be of limited value to users.

Figure 6
Length of PROW by district

	Footpath	Bridleway	BOAT	Restricted Byway	Total (km)
Boston	187.5	24.0	1.2	0.0	212.7
East Lindsey	914.2	219.4	0.9	6.0	1140.5
Lincoln City	36.9	4.9	0.0	0.3	42.1
North Kesteven	592.8	94.3	0.8	67.8	755.7
South Holland	194.9	122.8	9.6	0.0	327.3
South Kesteven	671.4	117.7	1.2	68.8	859.1
West Lindsey	426.0	209.5	12.3	0.0	647.8
Lincolnshire	3023.7	792.6	26.0	142.9	3985.2

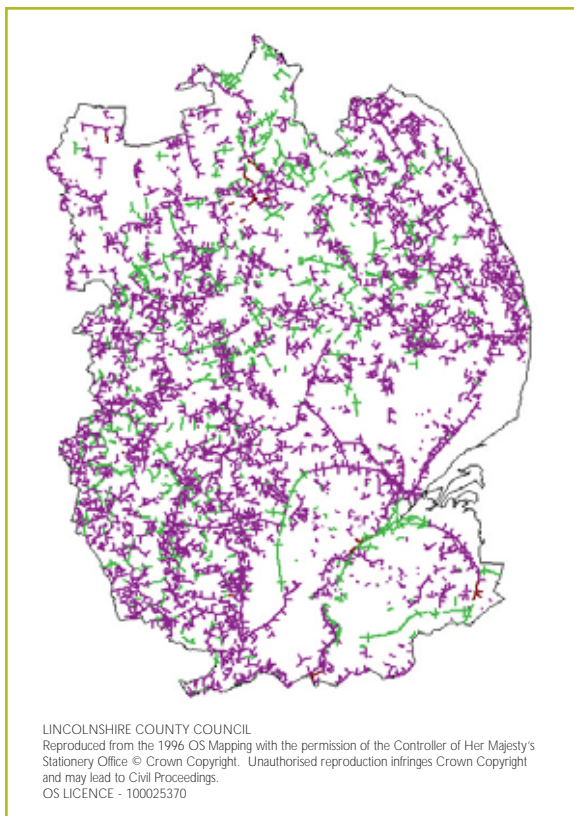
Walking

(Footpaths, Bridleways, Byways and Restricted Byways)

- Walkers can use the entire rights of way network
- Walkers are generally well catered for
- There is a relatively even distribution of rights of way across the county
- However there is localised fragmentation of the network

Map 1

Network distribution of walking routes



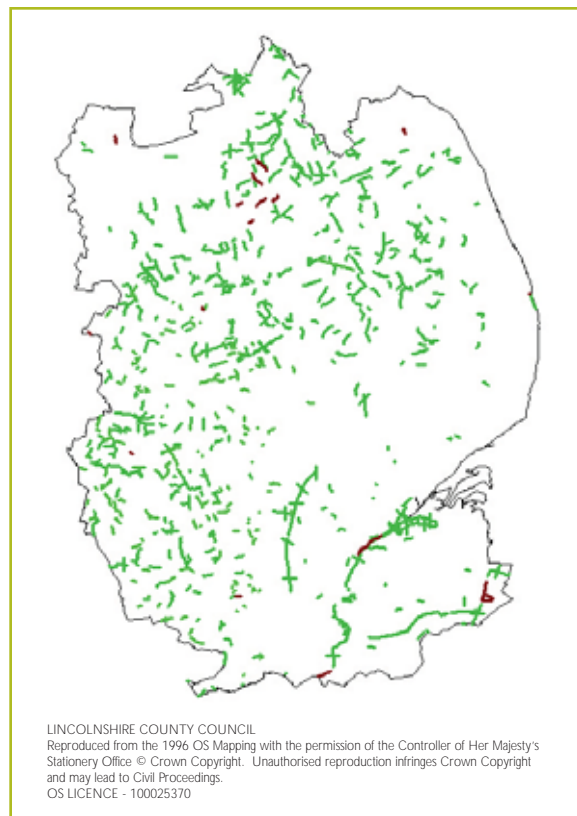
Cycling and Riding Routes

(Bridleways, Byways and Restricted Byways)

- Cyclists and horse riders can use 25% of the network
- Carriage drivers can use restricted byways
- The network for equestrians and cyclists is much more fragmented
- Some areas have little or no off-road provision
- The potential for riding entire off-road circular routes is limited

Map 2

Network distribution of cycling and riding routes



Motorised Users and Carriage Drivers

(Byways)

- Motorised Users can only use 1% of the rights of way network
- The off-road network available to motorised users is highly fragmented
- There is a cluster of routes around Market Rasen and Boston

Map 3

Network distribution of motorised user routes

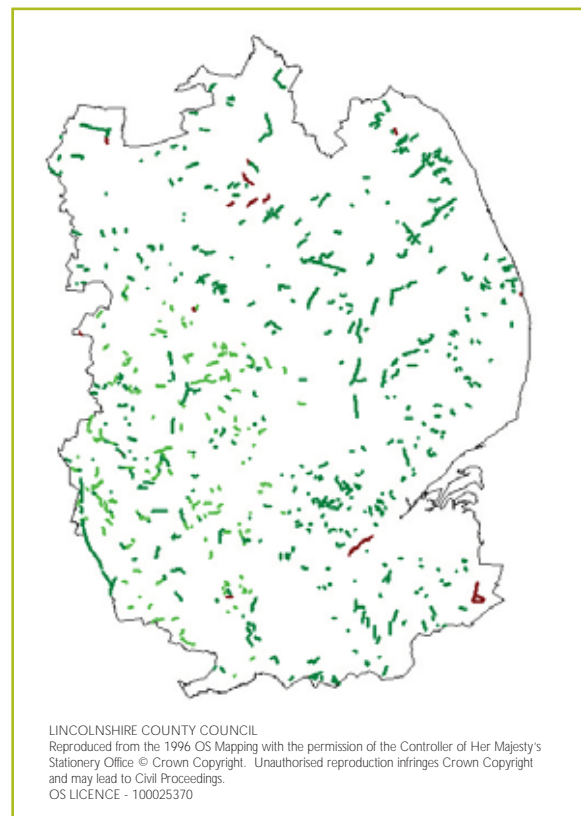


Unclassified County Roads (UCRs)

- Carriage drivers and motorised users can use the unsurfaced county roads in Lincolnshire
- There is uncertainty over the legal status of some UCRs where the right to use a vehicle is unclear

Map 4

Network distribution of unclassified county roads



Other Types of Access

Additional types of access available for the public to use include:

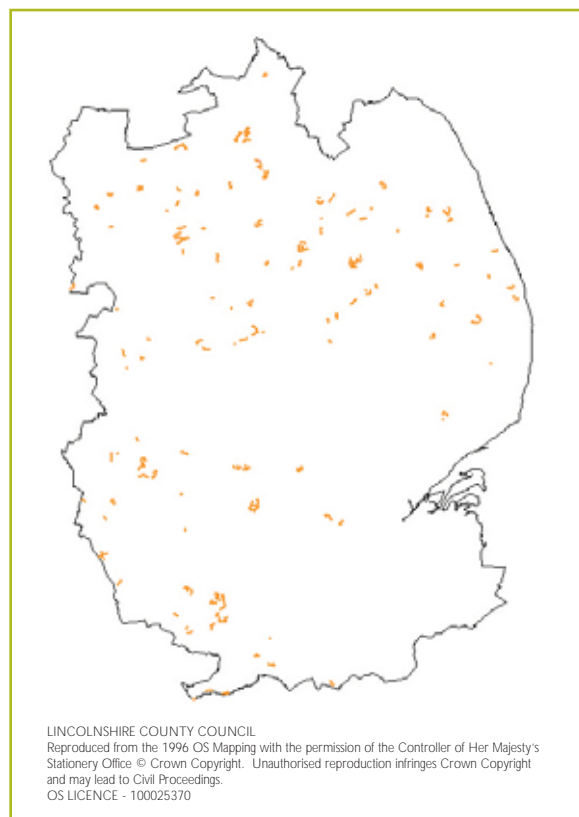
- Permissive access
- Access Land
- Country Parks and Countryside Sites
- Some nature reserves
- Woodlands
- Coast
- Waterways, river banks and canal towpaths

Permissive Access

Landowners can provide additional access to that afforded by the rights of way network, which provides opportunities for the public to explore parts of the countryside they would not normally gain access to. The County Council has established a number of permissive path agreements with landowners across Lincolnshire, primarily to enable gaps in the network to be closed for a promoted route.

DEFRA can also grant payments to landowners to provide permissive access through agri-environment schemes.

*Map 5
Known permissive access*



Access Land

The Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000 granted a new right of access on foot to areas defined as Open Country (mountain, moor, heath, and down), and to Registered Common Land. Lincolnshire does not have much Access Land: 9 sites were mapped as Open Country and 90 sites were recorded as Common Land.

The Access Land provision in Lincolnshire can be characterised as follows:

- The majority of the sites are small pieces of Registered Common Land
- Very few are significant in size or proximity to people

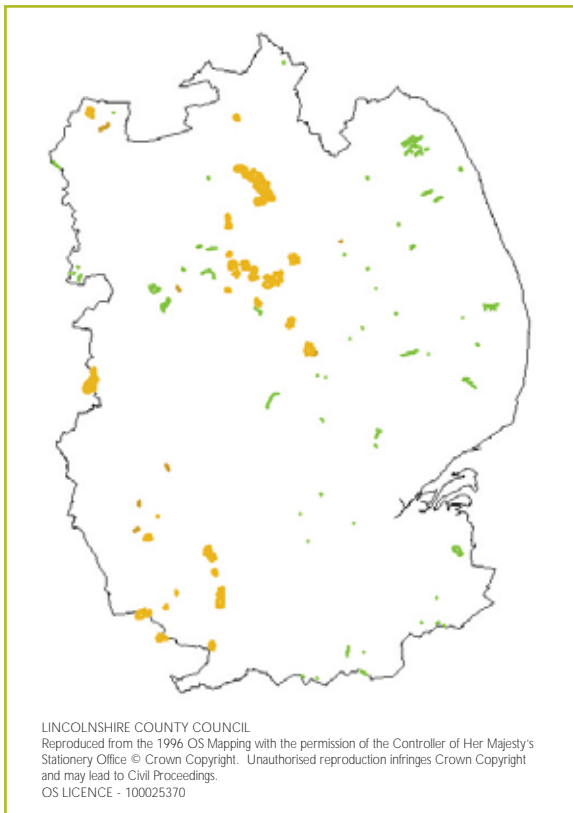
- Most sites have existing de facto access
- Most Open Country sites are designated Sites of Special Scientific Interest
- The significant sites of Registered Common Land are located near to the city of Lincoln

In addition, the Forestry Commission have designated most of their woodlands and forests as Access Land under CROW.

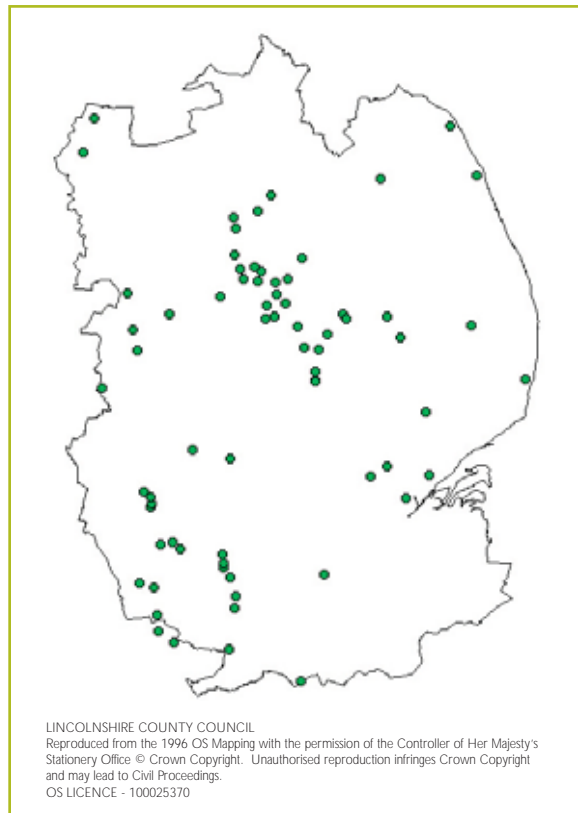
Country Parks and Countryside Sites

There is a range of countryside sites across Lincolnshire including country parks, nature reserves with public access and picnic sites. Having said that, for the size of the county, Lincolnshire has very few country parks with

Map 6
Location of CROW access land



Map 7
Location of country parks and picnic sites



Countryside Access and Rights of Way Improvement Plan

their associated opportunities for off-road cycling and riding. This creates a greater reliance on the rights of way network being in good order for gaining access to the countryside.

Government is considering ways to improve access to the coast. In Lincolnshire access to and along the coast is variable and could be improved by linking existing routes.

Map 8
Coastal Access Points

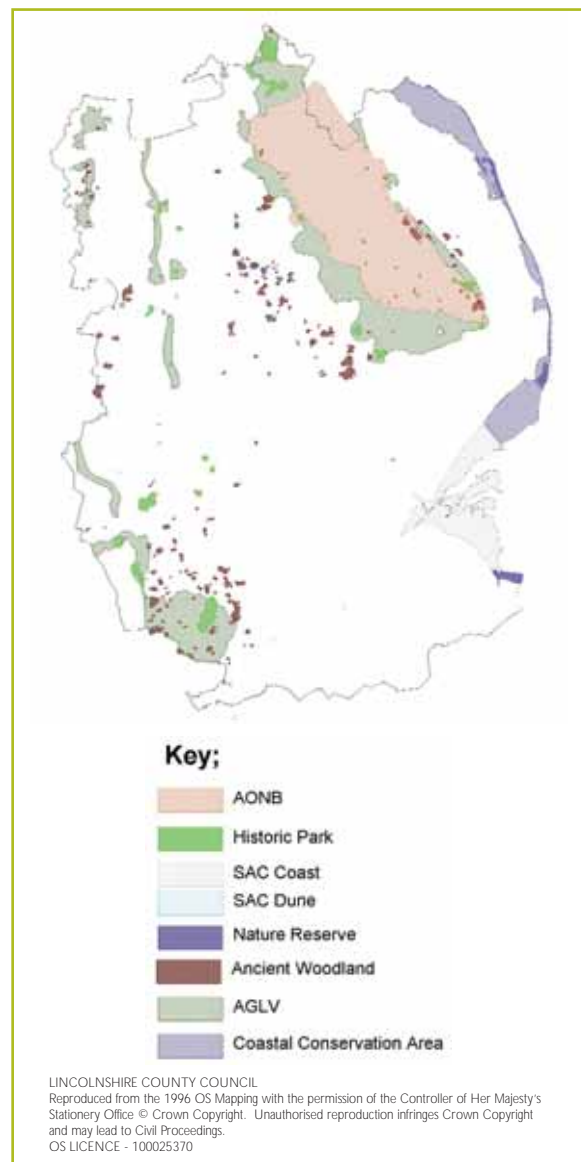


Attractive Countryside

Lincolnshire contains the only Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) within the East Midlands region. The Lincolnshire Wolds AONB was designated in 1973 and covers an area of 558 square km (216 square miles).

Access to rivers, waterways and woodland is variable across the county. The Lincolnshire Waterways Partnership brings together the County Council, Environment Agency and British Waterways. The partnership works to improve the infrastructure of the main river systems for recreation and tourism. Much work has been done to improve access along the main waterways, and routes the River Witham have been provided as part of the National Cycle Network.

Map 9
Areas of high landscape and conservation value



Lincolnshire has relatively low woodland cover. The Woodland Trust and the Forestry Commission have completed a project to record publicly accessible woodland. The main woodland sites are:

- Willingham Woods
- The Bardney Limewoods
- Bourne Woods

The Bardney Limewoods consist of a group of woods between Bardney and Wragby. They are mostly owned by the Forestry Commission, with a visitor centre and woodland trail at Chamber's Farm Wood.

The County Council is a partner in the £1 million Lincolnshire Limewoods Project, funded by local partnerships and the Heritage Lottery Fund. The project aims to protect, enhance and promote some of Lincolnshire's oldest woodlands.

Willingham Woods near Market Rasen are owned by the Forestry Commission and have car-parking and woodland trails.

Accessibility Issues

A number of routes have been developed as "easier access" trails for those with mobility problems, with the removal of stiles and barriers. Notably these are mainly at countryside sites such as Theddlethorpe Dunes SSSI, Bourne Woods and Chamber's Farm Wood. The County Council follows the "least restrictive option" principle regarding the authorisation of structures on rights of way. The countryside teams actively work with farmers and landowners to remove stiles where they are no longer needed, or to replace them with kissing gates.

Stiles are only installed when other options have been discounted.

A number of routes on the network are stile free, and key recreational routes have had many stiles replaced with kissing gates over recent years. However there is no accurate data on the lengths of rights of way which are accessible to those with restricted mobility. It is intended that this information will be captured as paths are surveyed.

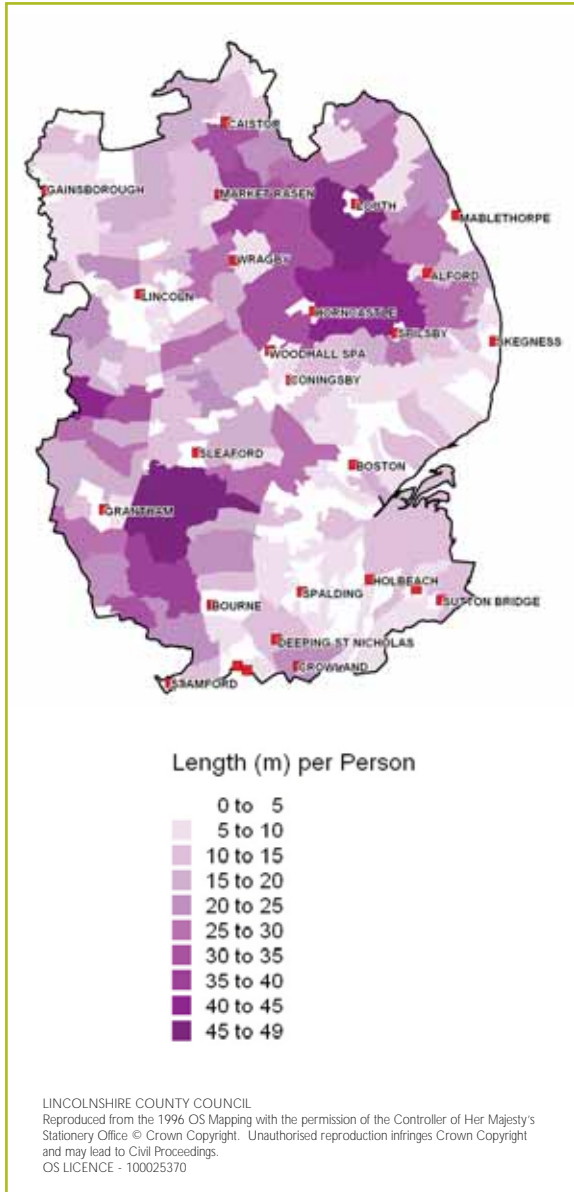
Network Provision and Population Density

We have looked at the provision of public rights of way within each Super Output Area (SOA) in Lincolnshire. Super Output Areas are constructed using Census population data. They form the geographical basis for small area statistics and are composed of output areas providing detailed information from the 2001 Census. SOAs are a nationally recognised unit, used for monitoring population trends and they generally contain between 1000 and 2000 residents.

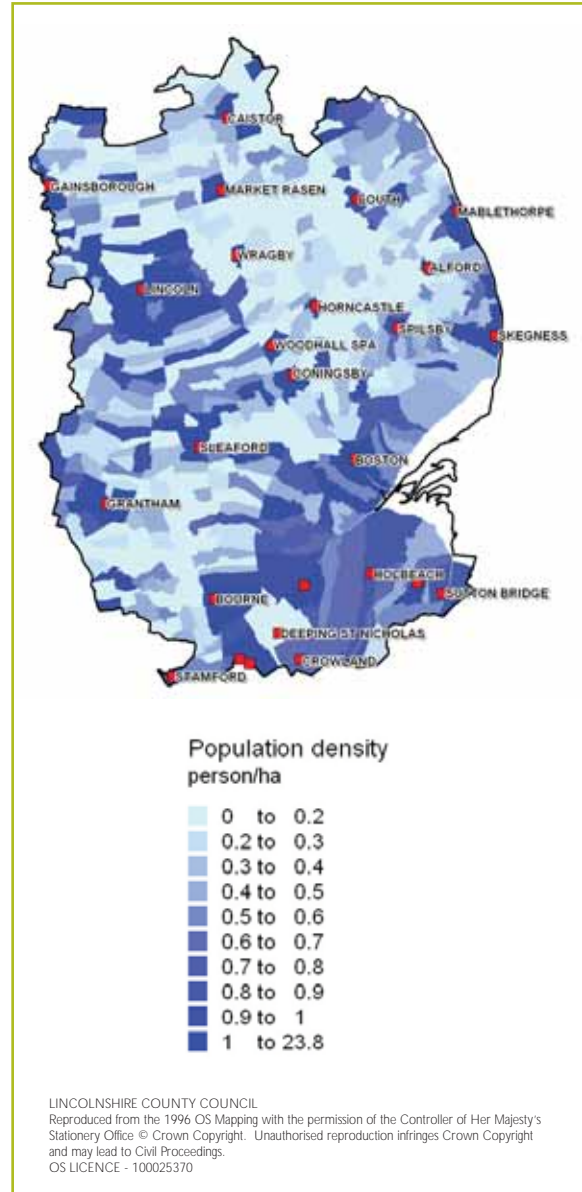
The assessment was based on the length of rights of way per person within each SOA. The darker areas of the map show those areas with most rights of way by length per person, with the lighter areas showing the least.

An immediate conclusion that can be drawn from the map is that those areas with higher population have least rights of way provision. These are the areas surrounding the principal towns in Lincolnshire: Lincoln, Grantham, Gainsborough and Boston are the areas with least provision.

Map 10
Length of PROW per person



Map 11
Population density in Lincolnshire



Road Crossings and Connectivity

A total of 643 locations have also been identified where the rights of way network is interrupted by busy "A" roads.

Further work to prioritise possible improvements at these existing sites will be necessary.

We will seek the best solution for new

crossings when new road schemes and development are proposed.

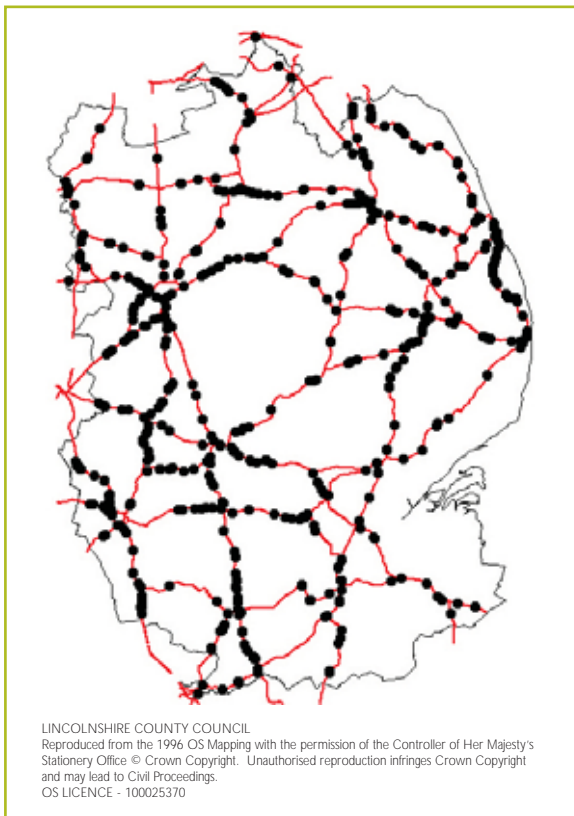
We looked at how the network connects with each other – to form circular routes with other roads and tracks. A total of 993 issues have been found on the network including:

- Paths that do not legally connect to a road
- Gaps and breaks in the network

- Paths that change status along their route
- Permanent obstructions such as ponds, buildings or other development over paths

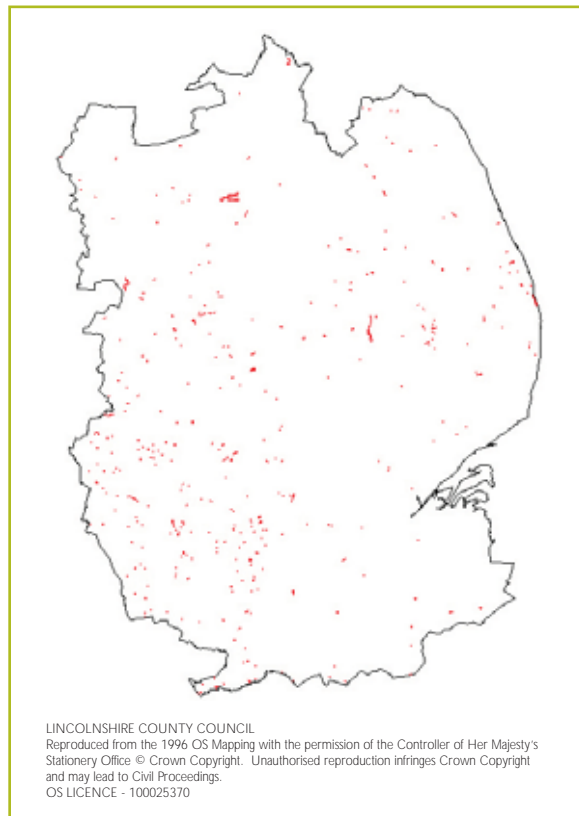
Map 12

Location of PROW intersections with main roads



Map 13

Distribution of network anomalies



Countryside Access and Rights of Way Improvement Plan

Network Conclusions by District

These are some general characteristics of each area, drawn from all of the above, which are now broken down by district:

<p>Lincoln City</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Access out of the city to the west and east is good for walking and cycling – esp. River Witham • Limited access out of city to the south • Limited links out of north Lincoln to gain access to wider countryside • Limited provision for equestrians • A46 bypass causes route severance • Lincoln Greenways
<p>West Lindsey</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There is a good network of routes to the north of Lincoln City • Limited access opportunities from Gainsborough • Good network of bridleways to the east of Market Rasen and links could be improved into the Wolds AONB. • The provision of routes from Caistor is limited • Limited and fragmented network in west of district • Busy road crossings / route severance caused by A15, A46, A158 and A157 / River Trent
<p>East Lindsey</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Good network of routes available, although there is potential for increasing circular routes especially for riding and cycling • Few bridleways along coastal strip • Good network of paths to north of Skegness, but limited opportunity for circular routes to the south of the town • Villages & towns including Louth, Spilsby, Alford & Chapel St Leonards have good networks of routes radiating from centres of population • There are a number of coastal access point locations distributed along the East Lindsey coastal strip • Route severance caused by A158 and the A1028 roads

<p>North Kesteven</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Good network of routes radiating from Sleaford • Bridleway network is fragmented, so opportunities for circular rides reduced • Route severance caused by A15 and A17 roads • Links could be improved into Lincoln
<p>South Kesteven</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Access limited from Grantham, Bourne and The Deepings • A52 and A1 roads cause route severance • Network of RUPPS fragmented and does not connect well with bridleway network
<p>Boston and South Holland</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Good east / west footpath provision and opportunities for circular walks based around river channels • Limited network available for riding • Good links to the coast – opportunity for longer rides e.g. from Spalding to the coast • Access is poor to the south of Boston • Links from Bourne and Spalding could be improved to link better with South 40ft Drain • Limited access from Holbeach and Spalding • Route severance caused by A16 and A17

Network Condition & the Best Value Performance Indicator (BVPI) 178

All highway authorities are required to undertake a random sample survey of their rights of way network during May and November each year. Authorities carry out the survey using a nationally agreed methodology to determine the percentage of

paths which are easy to use. Paths are required to meet strict criteria in order to pass as “easy to use”.

The BVPI 178 figure of the percentage of rights of way defined as easy to use in Lincolnshire in 2006 was 73%. The results for previous years are shown in Figure 7.

*Figure 7
Best Value Performance Indicator 178 – percentage of paths easy to use*

Year	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006
% of ROW easy to use by length	59.06	57.80	64.50	59.82	75.02	73.01

However, the BVPI figure can be somewhat misleading as the random survey does not take into account the local demand or popularity of an individual route, or how useful it is to the public.

It is hoped that this plan will enable resources to be matched to areas of local demand for use of rights of way.

Conclusions

Different kinds of users use the network in different ways. The key differences are:

- Walkers take short recreational trips directly from home
- Walkers also drive to places further afield for longer walks
- Runners and joggers tend to take short trips from home
- Cyclists make trips from home, but will also drive to points from which they can access the network
- Horseriders access the network regularly to exercise their horses. Most rides start from the place horses are stabled
- People with mobility problems use the network infrequently and have to plan ahead. Helpers often make a “dummy run” of the visit.

Use Of The Network

- There is a significant demand for short to medium distance circular routes which can be accessed from home, without having to use the car

- Walking and cycling to school is less common in Lincolnshire than nationally, probably due to the predominantly rural nature of the county
- Most walking and cycling to school, local shops and services takes place on pavements and roads
- The off-road network of rights of way is primarily seen as a recreational resource
- The off-road network is disjointed and fragmented for horseriders, cyclists and motorised users
- Litter and dog fouling detracts from people’s enjoyment
- More information is needed in a variety of formats on routes and who can use them

Network Provision and Connectivity

- The distribution of access provision is uneven across the county
- Areas with higher levels of population do not necessarily have access to rights of way
- There are not many routes for cycling and riding, compared with those for walking
- The off-road network of public rights of way is fragmented, particularly for riders and cyclists
- The provision of rights of way from towns and villages is variable
- There are localised gaps in the network which make it difficult to make circular routes
- Routes are often severed by busy roads and development

Implications For Rights Of Way Improvement Planning

Local routes are very important to people, with routes directly accessible from home proving particularly popular. This suggests that route improvements for walking and cycling should be concentrated close to where people live whilst recognising the importance of the wider recreational network.

Horseriders keep their horses close to where they live and so improvements to the bridleway network should also be prioritised close to where people live.

People prefer relatively short circular routes of between 1 and 5 miles. Typically people travel 2 to 5 miles for most trips. Access improvements should focus on the provision of circular routes of varying length, close to where people live.

Improving the network should concentrate on:

- Creating a better connected network of paths and trails – especially for cyclists and horse riders
- Better signing, waymarking and maintenance to encourage greater use of the network
- Providing more promotion and information in formats that people want
- Making the path network safer and improving crossing points on main roads for vulnerable users
- Better engagement with local communities through information and assisting those who want to take a more active role in helping to maintain the network

The following thematic chapters show how an improved and well-connected access network can contribute to wider social issues.

Countryside Access and Rights of Way Improvement Plan



Part 2

ROWIP Thematic Chapters

Sustainable Transport
Health And Well-being
Rural Economy And Tourism
Social Issues

Sustainable Transport



National Context

The public rights of way network has been used for walking and cycling for many years. This use has, in the main, been for recreational purposes, as opposed to commuter trips to reach local services. In recent years the contribution that the rights of way network can make to non-motorised travel has been recognised.

Local rights of way can be a convenient means for travelling short distances in both urban and rural areas to take children to school, travel to work or to reach shops and services.

One of the key aims of government transport strategy is to reduce congestion in urban areas. This is in recognition of its detrimental effect on the environment, local economy and quality of life.

Lincolnshire Context and What People Told Us

Lincolnshire's 1st Local Transport Plan (LTP), published in 2000, sought to encourage

walking and cycling in urban areas through Community Travel Zones (aimed at larger market towns) and the Rural Priorities Initiative (in the smaller towns and villages). These initiatives aimed to provide alternatives to car travel for short distances to improve access to key services and safety, and did much to improve and develop routes for utilitarian use. The 2nd LTP was published in March 2006 and sets the agenda for transport planning for the next five years. It has four shared priorities:

- Accessibility
- Reducing Congestion
- Safety
- Air Quality and other quality of life issues

"I cycle from home, but also take my bike in the car to access points"
Focus group participant

It is proposed to continue to build on the work achieved by the 1st LTP, to improve conditions for cyclists and walkers.

Improvements to the public rights of way network will assist in delivering the shared priorities by increasing accessibility to key services, either for outlying villages to nearby towns, or between villages where services are limited.

Encouraging more people to walk and cycle for short journeys through better provision of routes provides transport choice. Improving the network and encouraging use for utility journeys will assist with tackling congestion and help reduce carbon emissions.

"The problems of getting out into the countryside from where I live are great.....it is a nightmare of busy roads"
Lincoln cyclist

The County Council is developing a Carbon Management Plan to reduce carbon emissions and help tackle climate change



In Lincolnshire around 80% of households own a car (2001 Census). This compares with 75% for the East Midlands and 73% nationally. This higher than average level of ownership is likely to be due to the lack of an alternative form of transport, particularly in rural areas of the county, rather than affluence, as wages in Lincolnshire are below the national average.

“Traffic growth in Lincolnshire now exceeds regional and national levels”

Source: Lincolnshire's 2nd Local Transport Plan

The average travel to work distance is also higher in Lincolnshire than the national average, due to the rural nature of the county, with workers traveling further to centres of employment.

Over the last 20 years, the number of children travelling to school in cars has almost doubled nationally. This is a result of several factors, including: a more affluent society, the needs of working parents, delivering children

to the school gate and then driving on to their place of work, and increasing parental choice of schools, i.e. children may travel further to attend school, not necessarily the closest to home. A survey of Lincolnshire schools during 2005 revealed that almost half of all primary school children travel by car to school each day, with 20% of secondary school children travelling by car.

To address this trend and reduce the congestion caused by the school run, the County Council has employed School Travel Advisors, who work with schools to develop travel plans. Currently around 300 schools have developed travel plans and the County Council has set a target to have travel plans in place for all 401 schools by April 2010 (LTP2).

On the positive side, levels of cycling to work in Lincolnshire are higher than national and regional figures (LTP2). Further investment in and improvement of the public rights of way network is likely to increase levels of participation further.

The off-road access network is seen primarily as a recreational resource, rather than as a network to be used for utility journeys. Most public rights of way are “natural” field paths and are generally unsurfaced. They may have



a loose surface of stone, particularly if they are tracks to farms or property, and some may be tarmaced. In general they are prone to becoming muddy after wet weather, which can discourage use for journeys to local shops and services. In addition, public rights of way, even in urban areas, are generally without street lighting, which raises concerns about user safety too.

The public rights of way network has a role to play in reducing congestion, particularly for short journeys, and there may also be opportunities to link the access network to bus and rail interchanges. Our research revealed that people would like to be able to use the rights of way network more often for utility journeys, but the rights of way network would need to be improved in several ways to meet this demand.



Careful targeting of appropriate improvements to key routes on the rights of way network will be required.

Summary of Key Issues and Conclusions

Key issues and solutions identified to improve the path network were identified as:

- Provide clear signposting and waymarking of paths and trails

- Link paths to improve connectivity of routes
- Improve surfacing of paths and trails
- Provide better information and promotion on local routes

“Public transport is either unavailable at the times I have free, or does not provide the routes I need to access the network”
Focus group participant

Improvements to urban links could include:

- Better surfacing
- Tackling drainage issues for low-lying paths
- Removal of barriers
- Street lighting

Conclusions:

- Improving path infrastructure from rural to urban areas is likely to increase levels of use
- Improvements need to address issues of safety, connectivity and path surface and levels of maintenance raised in the consultation process
- There is potential to link public transport to the access network for both utility and recreational purposes
- Improvements to the network will require effective publicity and promotion in the locality to maximise their potential for increased utility use

Current Work

- The County Council recently adopted a walking and cycling strategy, which forms

an integral part of the 2nd Local Transport Plan.

- The Authority is delivering a programme of school and business travel plans across the county. The approach is to work in partnership with schools and businesses. Currently some 300 schools (75%) have School Travel Plans. It is intended that 90% of all schools in Lincolnshire will have a Travel Plan in place by 2008, with all schools covered by 2010.
- Initiatives such as The Golden Boot Challenge (through which pupils earn points for walking and cycling to school) and from Park and Stride schemes are having positive results.
- The Lincoln Greenways Strategy was developed in 2001 and identified routes that could be used for commuting and leisure use. The strategy is being delivered through the Local Transport Plan.
- The County Council's strategy for improving access to bus services has included initiatives such as the InterConnect and CallConnect services. These services channel demand from wider rural areas onto the primary bus route network into "hubs" where passengers can connect through to urban services running between the larger market towns.
- CallConnect is a flexible feeder bus service provided by the County Council, which connects the most isolated rural communities in Lincolnshire with local bus

Sir Francis Hill Primary School reported an 11% increase in cycling to school between 2004 and 2006

Source: Lincolnshire's 2nd Local Transport Plan

services serving urban areas. The service is pre-booked over the telephone and the County Council has received much recognition at both a regional and national level for the quality of the service it provides.



- A number of walks have been developed, starting and finishing from InterConnect bus routes. Bus Walk packs have been published for two InterConnect routes with over twenty walks starting and finishing at bus stops.

Areas of Improvement Identified for the Statement of Action

Strategic Aim – To increase the use of the network for sustainable transport and utility trips

- **A more accessible network** – through improving infrastructure and maintenance of the access network, providing clearer signing and fewer barriers
- **A better connected network of access for a wider range of users and abilities** – linking existing routes, utilising highway verges, developing & protecting the network through planning process, improving links with public transport

- **A safer network for all users** – improving road crossings, increasing driver awareness of vulnerable users & safer routes to schools initiatives

We looked at a variety of information sources to find out how the access network is used for sustainable transport in Lincolnshire.

The documents we looked at included:

- Lincolnshire's 2nd Local Transport Plan 2006-2011
- Citizens' Viewpoint Panel Survey 2003
- Community Strategies, Local Plans and County Structure Plan
- Lincolnshire Access Survey and Focus Groups 2005

Statement of Action is on page 78

Health and Well-being

National and Regional Context

The benefits of regular exercise are well documented and the issue of health is receiving a high profile at the moment. There is a wealth of research that shows the benefits to both the physical and mental health of people who are active in the outdoors.

The Chief Medical Officer's report in 2004 **"At Least Five a Week: Evidence on the impact of physical activity and its relationship to health"** highlighted the importance of taking regular exercise. In the CMO's words "the scientific evidence is compelling." The report must be "a wake up call that changes attitudes to active lifestyles in every household. Being active is no longer simply an option – it is essential if we are to live healthy and fulfilling lives into old age".



The national recommendations for physical activity are:

- Adults should achieve a total of at least 30 minutes of at least moderate intensity physical activity a day, on 5 or more days a week
- Children and young people should achieve a total of at least 60 minutes of at least moderate intensity physical activity each day. At least twice a week this should include activities to improve bone health, muscle strength and flexibility.

The 1998 **Health Survey** for England concluded that only **37% of men** and **25% of women** met the **recommendations** for **physical activity**.

In the East Midlands, physical activity has already been identified as one of five public health priorities in the regional public health strategy "Investment for Health" and includes objectives to increase the physical activity levels of East Midlands residents.

Physical inactivity is an increasing problem and is directly linked to the continuing rise in obesity. It is recognised that a sedentary lifestyle can lead to a greater risk of disease and disability including coronary heart disease, stroke, obesity, diabetes, raised blood pressure levels, anxiety and stress.

Levels of obesity in children are rising as children take less exercise. Recent government estimates suggest that over 40% of school age children are overweight or obese. At current trends, this figure may rise to 50% by 2010.



Over 70% of people in the UK don't exercise enough to improve their health.

Almost **1 in 4** people are totally sedentary and participate in less than one 30 minute session of moderate physical activity a week.

37% of coronary heart disease deaths are attributed to physical inactivity.

61% of girls and **45%** of boys aged 2-15 years do not meet the Government's minimum physical activity guideline of one hour per day.

Stress and mental ill health are becoming more common and the World Health Organisation estimates that by 2020, depression and depression-related illness will become the greatest source of ill health. Depression and mental ill health is one of the fastest growing conditions in England with one in six people suffering from a neurotic disorder.

Potential health benefits of using public rights of way

It is well documented that increasing activity levels can improve physical and mental health, and that even small increases in physical activity can reduce the risk of disease and

disability. More recent research has shown that the effect of nature and green space has a positive effect on people's

sense of well-being and mood. In short there is a positive benefit to be gained from being in a natural environment, whether engaging in a passive activity, such as enjoying the view or having a picnic, to more active participation such as walking or cycling.

In 2002, the government estimated that the cost of **physical inactivity** in England was over **£18 billion per annum**



The rights of way network provides opportunities for walking, cycling and horse riding to access the countryside and enjoy outdoor recreation. In urban areas, using rights of way can be a viable alternative to using the car for short journeys to shops and local services, which can be a means of getting people into the habit of taking regular exercise for more purposeful trips as well as recreational visits to the wider countryside.

Natural England has an objective to provide accessible natural space within 300 metres of every home in England for exercise, relaxation and well-being.

The main health benefits of using the rights of way network are seen as:

- Opportunity to take part in physical exercise

- Contribution to maintaining good health and recovery from illness
- Reducing stress through experience of fresh air, peace and quiet, relaxation, and countryside views
- Social activity – reducing loneliness and opportunities to take part in group activities e.g. guided walks, health walks
- Dog walking and community engagement

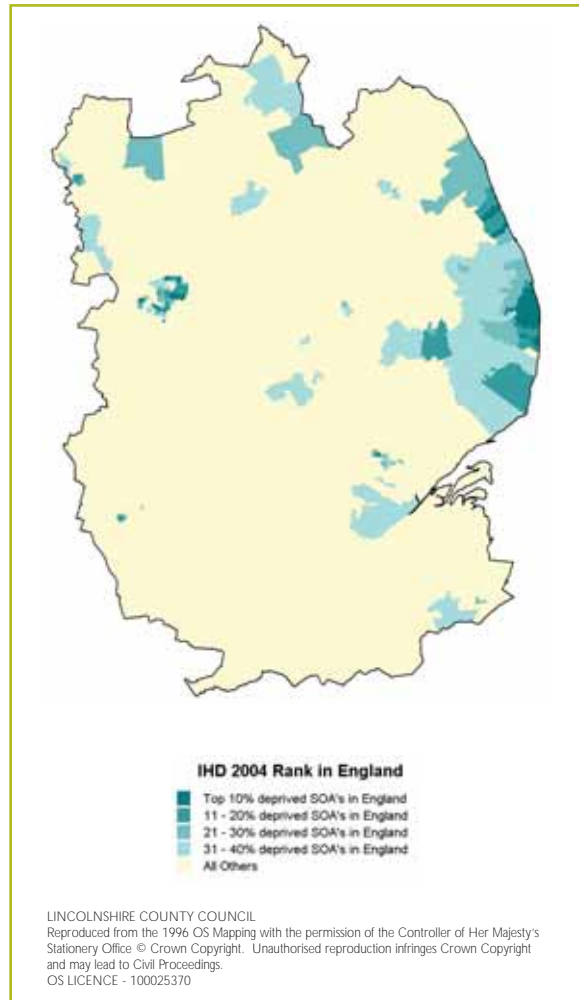
Lincolnshire Context and What People Told Us

Lincolnshire is a large, sparsely populated rural county and the proportion of elderly people is increasing. But the population is growing at four times the national rate. Lincolnshire has a higher proportion of elderly residents with 17% of people being of retirement age or above, compared with 14% nationally. In East Lindsey and South Holland, residents over the age of 50 represent 40% of the population.

The urban wards generally report higher levels of health deprivation in the county than rural wards. Increasing levels of participation in physical activity can make a huge contribution to the prevention and treatment of disease, and reduce health inequalities. There is growing concern about falling physical activity levels in children and the associated increase in the number of children classified as overweight, or obese. For children and young adults in particular, regular exercise is seen as an important activity to maintain health and prevent obesity.

The Indices of Health Deprivation 2004 reveal higher levels of health deprivation in the county around Lincoln, Gainsborough,

Map 14
Indices of Health Deprivation 2004



Boston, Grantham and the East Lindsey coastal areas.

From the public consultation and work with user groups, it is evident that people value their local routes linking urban areas to the wider countryside. People said improvements in the network would encourage them to make greater use of rights of way for health, leisure and recreation. There is demand to use rights of way for short journeys e.g. to shops and local services too, but people tend to use the access network for leisure rather than for functional trips. The most frequent

trips taken using rights of way are short circular walks of between 2 and 5 miles close to home.

Respondents to surveys of people currently using rights of way on a regular basis stated that “general relaxation” and “to enjoy the countryside” were their main reasons for using paths.

More will need to be done to raise awareness of the health benefits of using rights of way and increase levels of use. This will involve working in partnership with health professionals within Primary Care Trusts (PCTs), using a variety of means to promote walking and cycling. This could be done initially by targeting those wards reporting the higher levels of health deprivation in Lincolnshire, combined with measures to improve routes on the ground to encourage participation. Working in partnership with other organisations, will help to target resources effectively and avoid duplication of effort.

The Walking the Way to Health Initiative (WHI) has helped to create over 350 health walk schemes across the UK and has trained more than 18,000 volunteer walk leaders. Since 2000 it is estimated that through the WHI schemes, over a million people have been encouraged to walk more.

Summary of Key Issues and Conclusions

- The potential health benefits of using rights of way for walking and cycling are not recognised by everyone
- Path improvements made at a local level

and publicised will encourage greater use for regular short journeys

Specific Barriers to participation identified from the research were:

- Lack of information on paths and trails
- Difficulty of finding routes and following them
- Perceived user conflict
- Lack of confidence of non users
- Mobility problems climbing over stiles

Current work

- A Lincolnshire walks initiative is currently being developed with existing health walk co-ordinators and the PCT to expand the provision of health walk schemes based on GP surgery clusters in areas of highest health deprivation
- Work has begun to raise awareness of health walk schemes and opportunities for enjoying the Lincolnshire countryside through GP surgeries and health centres
- District councils are involved in health walks initiatives in some areas of the county
- Stepping Out walks promote some local walking routes
- Lincolnshire County Council works with schools and businesses to develop travel plans
- Information provision is being increased through circular walks leaflets and internet site

- Removal of unnecessary stiles is undertaken on certain routes
- Active Woods initiatives (Forestry Commission)
- Green Gyms (British Trust for Conservation Volunteers)
- Work with the Healthy Schools Initiative to promote walking and cycling as the healthy transport option

Areas of Improvement Identified for Statement of Action

Strategic Aim – To make it easier for people to incorporate exercise into their daily lives and lead healthier lifestyles

The key areas of improvement for the rights of way and access network which will support healthy lifestyle initiatives are:

- **To raise awareness of health benefits of rights of way** - through a variety of targeted information for users and potential users e.g. information placed in doctors' surgeries, link to healthy schools initiatives.
- **To make it easier for people to incorporate exercise into their daily lives** - through path improvements to encourage local use (e.g. to shops, school) and by encouraging participation through guided walks and events, taster days & linking existing health walk programmes
- **To make the network more accessible** - through infrastructure improvements, and removal of barriers in areas with highest incidences of health problems. Higher levels of maintenance required on promoted walks routes

We looked at various sources of information to find out how the rights of way network is used in Lincolnshire for physical exercise and mental well-being and the contribution an improved access network could make to public health.

The documents we looked at include:

Choosing Activity: A Physical Activity Action Plan – Department for Health 2005

Lincolnshire 2nd Local Transport Plan

Lincolnshire Research Observatory – Health Indices

Lincolnshire Access Survey and Focus Groups 2005

Countryside Recreation Network - A Countryside for Health and Well Being

Investment for Health – a public health strategy for the East Midlands

Rights of way research into the health benefits of rights of way for Cheshire County Council (Faber Maunsell 2003)

Census 2001

Lincolnshire Community Strategies

Statement of Action is on page 79

Rural Economy and Tourism

National Context

An attractive and well-managed countryside attracts visitors. The countryside provides opportunities to take part in active outdoor recreational activities, as well as quieter forms of recreation such as enjoying nature and watching wildlife.



The Great Britain Leisure Day Visits Survey 2004 (Countryside Agency) found that annually there were 5.2 billion leisure day visits from home. The survey estimates that there were 706 million countryside walking trips undertaken during 2002-3 and that 62% of adults had visited the countryside in the last twelve months for a leisure day visit. The value of expenditure in the UK countryside during 2002-3 is estimated at £10.9 billion.

The fact that visitors to path networks spend money and contribute to the local economy was highlighted by the Foot and Mouth Disease (FMD) outbreak during 2001. In response to the crisis, rural footpaths were closed, as a precaution to reduce the risk of spread of the disease. The result was a dramatic fall in visitors to the countryside, and people spent their money elsewhere in other sectors of the economy.

The overall UK losses to the tourist sector during 2001 as a result of the FMD outbreak is estimated to be in the region of £3 billion (DEFRA 2002). The impact of the FMD crisis highlighted the relationship of agriculture with a far more economically significant tourist industry, and demonstrated how both industries are dependent on each other for survival.

Agriculture employs about 2% of the total UK workforce and accounts for less than 1% of Gross Domestic Product (GDP). In contrast tourism employs over 7% and contributes 4.7% to the GDP
DEFRA

Lincolnshire Context and What People Told Us

Lincolnshire has long enjoyed a thriving tourism industry. The tourism “product” includes several key features. Skegness and the Lincolnshire coast are well established as a holiday area, and the coastal resorts have provided traditional holiday enjoyment for generations of seaside visitors. The county is also marketed for its heritage, attractive countryside and the rural feel and quietness of the area including the Wolds Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty.

Whilst local rights of way can bring benefits to residents in improving health, the wider network of paths and their associated recreational use can benefit tourism and the rural economy through increased visitor spend.

Lincolnshire currently has some 113 significant visitor attractions. The majority are historic properties or museums. The county has a range of other attractions including gardens, farm parks, wildlife attractions, craft centres,

In 2005 it was estimated that:

- **Lincolnshire hosted over 25 million tourist day visits**
- **Visitor spending in the county amounted to £849 million**
- **Tourism directly supported 16,000 jobs**

Source: Lincolnshire Tourism

country parks, nature reserves and visitor centres. In addition, the county has a large number of smaller attractions, including many churches open to visitors, and a number of small local museums and heritage centres. East Lindsey accounts for the largest proportion of visitors to the county, due to its traditional coastal tourism industry, followed by Lincoln and South Kesteven.

The Viking Way is Lincolnshire's premier long distance walking route, running for a distance of 147 miles from the Humber estuary to Rutland Water. The traditional approach has been to market long distance trails such as this and other high profile walks for the tourist market.

However the important contribution that local path networks can make, complementing existing leisure attractions has more recently been recognised. The short break and day visitor market is a significant feature of Lincolnshire's tourist industry, and improvements to path networks could bring benefits to the local economy through increased use and associated visitor spend.

Tourism is significantly more important to the local economy in East Lindsey than

Over half of day visits in the county are to Lincoln and the county's towns. Countryside visits account for a third of day visits. Coastal trips account for 10% of all day trips

Source: Lincolnshire Tourism

across the other districts in Lincolnshire. In 2005, East Lindsey accounted for around half of all tourism expenditure in the county, which reflects the long association with seaside holidays to the area.

Summary of Key Issues and Conclusions

Current users of public rights of way do so for a variety of reasons:

- General relaxation
- Personal fitness
- Enjoyment of the countryside.

The most popular activities are walking and cycling, with clear preferences for circular routes close to where people live. Serious walkers are more experienced at using the wider network of rights of way and want longer routes of varying length. Equestrians and cyclists find the fragmented nature of the bridleway network inhibits their potential for off-road circular rides.

Improvement priorities identified from the consultations were:

- Clearer signposting and waymarking
- New paths and trails to link existing routes
- Improved surfacing of certain routes
- Better / more leaflets and information for walking, cycling and riding
- Better promotion of walks and rides in local publications

Conclusions

- Improved access to the countryside can benefit tourism and the rural economy
- The potential benefits to tourism from a good accessible rights of way network have not yet been fully realised
- More needs to be done to improve flagship longer distance routes such as the Viking Way
- Local routes to and from existing tourist attractions should be improved
- Development plans for new tourist attractions should include walking and cycling provision
- Marketing and promotion of Lincolnshire's countryside access needs to be improved
- Coastal tourism would benefit from a better-connected rights of way and access network
- Equestrian tourism is constrained by lack of route provision

Current Work

- We are developing a GIS database of promoted routes across Lincolnshire, which we will share with other access providers and district councils to avoid duplication of effort.

- We have developed an online countryside access map and a series of interactive walks.
- We are working with local communities to develop promoted walking routes and information.
- We are working to reduce the number of stiles encountered along the Viking Way, and increase accessibility for a wider range of users
- We support the work of the Lincolnshire Wolds Countryside Service & Walking Festival
- The Lincolnshire Waterways Partnership - British Waterways, Lincolnshire County Council and the Environment Agency work together to regenerate Lincolnshire's river and canal corridors and deliver a quality experience to all users. Recent work has included the development of the "Water Rail Way", a shared footpath cycle link from Lincoln to Bardney along the banks of the River Witham.
- The County Council is a partner in a range of initiatives including the Fens Tourism Group, Lincolnshire Limewoods Project and The Wash Estuary Project.
- The railway from Grantham to Skegness has been designated as a Community Rail Line. There is potential to work with local communities to develop walking and cycling trails from stations along the route.

Areas of Improvement Identified for the Statement of Action

Strategic Aim – Supporting local businesses and tourism

- **A network that caters for a wider range of users than at present** - through infrastructure improvements, and developing routes near tourist attractions.
- **A better quality of experience that will attract increased use by both residents and visitors** - through improved route maintenance and information.
- **An access network that contributes to the local economy through increased use and visitor spend** - by improving our “product” and so contributing to the promotion of Lincolnshire as a holiday destination.

We looked at various sources of information to find out how the network is used by visitors to the countryside and the contribution an improved access network can make to tourism and the rural economy.

The documents we looked at included:

Great Britain Leisure Day Visits Survey 2002–3

State of the Countryside 2005 (Countryside Agency)

State of the Countryside 2002 (Countryside Agency)

Lincolnshire Tourism Strategy 2001–2006

North Lincolnshire Coast Ecotourism Study 2005 (Bowles Green Ltd)

Statement of Action is on page 82

Social Issues



National Context

The current profile of visitors to the countryside does not reflect the diversity of the population found in Britain today. The Countryside Agency's State of the Countryside 2005 reported that visitors to the countryside tend to be mostly white, usually aged 35-54 with a relatively high income and travel by car. The Countryside Agency completed its Diversity Review in 2005, which followed a commitment from DEFRA set out in the *Rural White Paper 2000: "Our countryside: the future. A fair deal for England."*

The Diversity Review sought to explore the reasons for the current under-representation of three main groups:

- People from black and ethnic minorities
- People with disabilities
- Young people

The research into the needs and perceptions of underrepresented groups found that:

- Lack of information and confidence are significant barriers
- All groups are keen to access outdoor recreation once "tasted"

"About 25% of the population rarely or never take a trip into the countryside, these tend to be people on low incomes, unemployed, elderly, people with disabilities and those from ethnic communities. It also includes those who live in urban areas and who are dependent on public transport"
Greenways Handbook

- Key barriers confirmed as lack of transport and information
- Lack of a sense of welcome for young people and black and minority ethnic community
- Lack of continuity or provision is a barrier for disabled people

Several benefits of accessing the countryside and green spaces were identified in the Diversity Review across all excluded groups, including:

- **Physical health benefits** – being in the outdoors, fresh air, taking exercise through informal recreation or from more active sports
- **Psychological benefits** – the countryside as somewhere to relax, gain peace and quiet, clear your mind, and get away from it all
- **Personal Identity** – sense of place and belonging

- **Social Inclusion**

– community involvement leading to a more inclusive society, feeling welcomed in the countryside, a sense of purpose and achievement, promoting a greater understanding of rural communities

Diversity Facts:

20% of the population in England has a disability

Department for Work & Pensions 2004

9.6% are from black and ethnic minority groups in England

2001 Census

20% of the population is aged 8–24

2001 Census

Social exclusion exists in both rural and urban communities, including prosperous and less well off areas. Measures of social exclusion and deprivation based on income, employment, health, education, barriers to housing, crime and living environment tend to show that rural areas are more prosperous than urban areas. Deprivation in urban areas tends to be concentrated in particular neighbourhoods, whereas rural social exclusion tends to be more dispersed and therefore harder to identify. Research by the Commission for Rural Communities in 2005 showed that the least densely populated wards tend to be more deprived than urban wards with higher densities of population. In other words, it is not the case that as wards become more rural, they become less deprived.

National research has shown that there are approximately 12 million disabled people in the UK, representing 20% of the population. The Disability Discrimination Act 1995 was extended in 2005 and the definition of disability widened to include people with a progressive medical condition including people

with HIV infection, cancer or multiple sclerosis.

However as only 4% of people who are registered as disabled are wheelchair users, relatively minor improvements to public rights of way such as the replacement of stiles with gates, coupled with better maintenance and promotion could potentially open up much of the network to a wider range of people.

The Countryside & Rights of Way Act 2000 places a legal duty on highway authorities to consider people with mobility problems and visual impairment when authorising structures on public footpaths and bridleways. The Act also allows authorities to enter into agreements with landowners to improve stiles, gates or other structures on the public rights of way network that will benefit disabled people.

Lincolnshire Context and What People Told Us



Many parts of Lincolnshire suffer some degree of deprivation. The urban areas of Lincolnshire generally report higher levels of deprivation than the rural areas, particularly amongst some of the urban wards within

Countryside Access and Rights of Way Improvement Plan

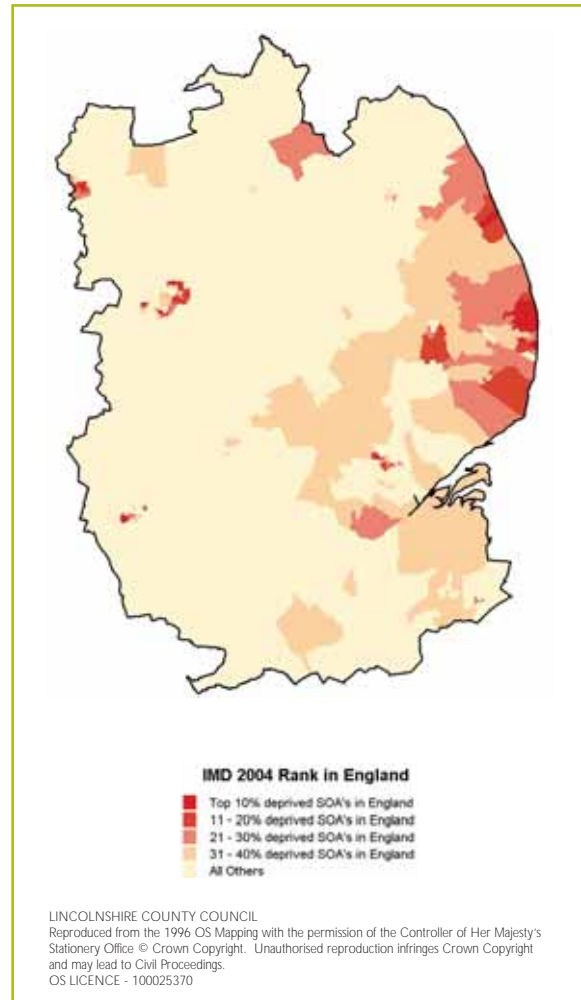
Lincoln, Grantham, Boston and Gainsborough.

Social exclusion and deprivation also affect communities in rural areas, although it may not be as apparent. The situation is most acute in East Lindsey, which reports higher levels of multiple deprivation. Households on low incomes, and without access to their own transport can find it difficult to gain access to services and take a full part in society. Increasing the accessibility of the public rights of way network can assist in achieving improved accessibility to jobs and services and will promote social inclusion, contribute to the local economy, quality of life and help reduce health inequalities.

The 2001 Census revealed that the population of Lincolnshire has increased rapidly in recent years. Between 1991 and 2001 the population of Lincolnshire increased by 10%, the fastest growing rate of any county in England. This growth was due to people moving to the County to live and work. But the increasing population is also an ageing one. There have been significant increases in people aged 40 –59 and over 75 moving into the county, with a notable fall in the proportion of 25 –39 year olds. However, this trend may be starting to level out as Lincolnshire continues to attract more people of middle-aged groups and families with children.

Lincolnshire has seen large increases in its population of ethnic minorities, from 0.7% of the population in 1991 to 1.3% in 2001. However the proportion of ethnic minorities within the population of Lincolnshire is low compared to regional and national averages of 6.5% and 9.1% respectively. The highest

Map 15
Indicies of Multiple Deprivation 2004



proportions of people from ethnic minorities in the county are in Lincoln, South Kesteven and Boston, although compared to elsewhere in England and Wales the proportions are still relatively low.

The Lincolnshire Countryside Access Survey found that 25% of households surveyed had one or more members with a long-standing illness or disability, which affected their ability to access rights of way. Almost two thirds thought that the paths and tracks in their area were not suitable for their needs as someone who is disabled or as a carer.



The reasons for the non-participation in countryside recreation activities and the associated use of rights of way by people with disabilities are very similar to the needs and perceptions found from the Diversity Review research undertaken by the Countryside Agency. The main reasons identified from the Lincolnshire research were:

- The unsuitable physical nature of paths and trails, including terrain, surface condition and barriers
- The lack of information in formats that would suit the needs of disabled people & not knowing where to find it
- The lack of provision of suitable transport to places they want to go

Focus group participants expressed concerns that young people don't make use of the access network as much as they could. Views expressed were that young people don't necessarily consider the countryside as somewhere to go, and hold the perception that there is nothing for them to do.

There are other competing interests for their leisure time and money, such as organised sports, cinema, shopping and computer games. They have greater disposable income these days and parents are worried about the

safety of children going out on their own. Parents do not take their children out into the countryside as much as they used to and so the habit of using the outdoors for recreation is lost.

Summary of Key Issues and Conclusions

- We need to take account of the Lincolnshire County Council Diversity Strategy
- We need to embed disability and diversity training into staff development to ensure our services are fully inclusive
- We need to find better ways to engage with "hard to reach" groups and consult with them on a regular basis
- We need to continue to make the path network more accessible by removing unnecessary barriers, improving key routes and publicising them
- Information needs to be provided in a variety of formats which allows people to make informed decisions

Current Work

- Lincolnshire County Council is currently developing a corporate Diversity Strategy
- The County Council ran disability awareness training courses for Local Access Forum members in 2004 and for Countryside staff in 2005
- The County Council works on the principle of "Least Restrictive Access". This means that all work carried out on the

network aims to meet the highest accessibility standard possible

- We have developed a series of interactive “web walks” on our website which provide a higher level of information about each route
- In 2006, the Library Service won an award for their work with the guest worker community in Lincolnshire. There is potential to integrate information provision for countryside access to a wider audience than at present.

Areas of Improvement Identified for Statement of Action

Strategic Aim – To enable more people to enjoy walking and riding

- **To develop access and recreational opportunities for people and groups who are currently underrepresented in the countryside** – by improving the infrastructure, signage and information provision.
- **Improving the quality of experience for users** – through targeted maintenance improvements.
- **Increasing opportunities for all** – through the development of key routes which are fully accessible.

We looked at various sources of information to find out how the network is used by underrepresented groups and the contribution an improved access network can make to reduce social exclusion.

The documents we looked at included:

Diversity Review 2005 (Countryside Agency)

By all reasonable means (Countryside Agency)

Census 2001

Reasonable Access? (Countryside Recreation Network)

Lincolnshire Access Survey 2005

Lincolnshire 2nd Local Transport Plan

Lincolnshire Community Strategies

State of the Countryside 2005 (Countryside Agency / Commission for Rural Communities)

Great Britain Leisure Day Visits Survey 2004

Statement of Action is on page 84

Part 3

Statement of Action

*Statement of Action
Implementation, Monitoring and Review*

Statement of Action

During 2004 and 2005, we undertook our largest ever consultation exercise, which resulted in over 3000 responses from the public alone through questionnaires. We also consulted parish councils, key stakeholder organisations and our two Local Access Forums. This work resulted in many suggestions for improvements to the countryside access network.

Core Tasks

The core tasks listed on page 74 are supported by the Statement of Action and underpin the authority's ongoing work to improve the access network in Lincolnshire.

The Statement of Action identifies tasks that will be undertaken to address the issues raised through the consultation process and developed through the four themed chapters. The actions are drawn from conclusions reached from the assessments in broad generic terms and so the plan does not contain site or path-specific assessments or actions. More detail will be set out in our annual work programmes.

Notes on Statement of Action Tables

Actions are grouped together under each strategic aim. Actions within a theme are also grouped by type as follows:

Maintenance = 

Route development = 

Information & promotion = 

Targets and Timescales

The targets and timescales provide an indication of the relative priority placed on each action, which will be translated into work programme tasks. The anticipated outcome of each task is stated. Where an action can be implemented quickly and at relatively low cost, this has been identified as a "quick win" and is shown as "Q" in the tables. Targets and timescales will be reviewed each year and progress made reported in annual reports and work programmes.

It will of course be appropriate to take opportunities as they arise where they fulfill ROWIP objectives in order to maximise public benefit.

Resources

Staff Time – The symbols used indicate the estimated staff time resource required to complete the action:

 Existing staff

 Partnership with others

 Additional staff resource required

Cost – An estimated cost required to implement each action is shown:

£ Less than £5000

££ Between £5000 and £50,000

£££ More than £50,000

Links to Local Transport Plan

Actions that support the County Council's Walking and Cycling Strategy are highlighted.

Partners and Funding

Key partners are listed and potential sources of funding include:

- Local Authorities
- Local Transport Plan
- East Midlands Development Agency
- Local Strategic Partnerships
- Natural England
- Sport England
- Primary Care Trust
- Sustrans
- National Lottery funding








List of Core Tasks

Ref	Description	Implementation	Key Stakeholders
CT1	Review the DMMO policy and establish a new priority system for PPO applications in light of the ROWIP, to give a potentially higher priority to key routes that will improve or increase access.	Existing policies to prioritise applications to be reviewed 2008.	Local Access Forums Farmers & landowners District & parish councils Discovering Lost Ways Project
CT2	Review the current path priority system for maintenance and enforcement of PROW.	Path priority system reviewed 2008.	Local Access Forums Farmers & landowners District & parish councils
CT3	Review the maintenance and enforcement policies for PROW and publicise to farmers, landowners and the public.	Maintenance and enforcement policies and procedures reviewed 2007. New procedures and policies introduced 2008/9. We will work with DEFRA and RPA to ensure that farmers meet their responsibilities regarding PROW.	Local Access Forums Rural Payments Agency Farmers and Landowners organisations
CT4	Review current Parish Paths Partnership scheme and explore ways to increase community involvement.	Review 2008. Improvement schemes and other works should meet ROWIP objectives and priorities.	Local Access Forums Natural England
CT5	Undertake whole network condition survey.	Survey completed by 2010.	Local Access Forums
CT6	Seek opportunities to reduce the number of unnecessary stiles and barriers on the PROW network.	Ongoing task, but prioritise promoted routes endorsed by LCC. Removal of other barriers when opportunities arise.	Local Access Forums Farmers & landowners
CT7	Continue to fully sign and waymark the PROW network.	Linked to improvement schemes and development of promoted routes.	Local Access Forums Farmers & landowners
CT8	Continue annual programme of vegetation clearance on PROW.	Linked to path priority system review (Core Task 2), improvement schemes and development of promoted routes.	Local Access Forums District & parish councils Farmers & landowners
CT9	Continue to ensure that the public has access to designated areas of Open Country and Registered Common Land under CROW.	Review of Access Management Plans and development of on-site and off-site information to promote responsible access.	Local Access Forums Countryside Agency Natural England Farmers & landowners

CT10	Continue to provide information and promote wider use of the PROW network.	Promotion of the network through a variety of formats and media. We will seek innovative ways to encourage wider participation for existing users and current non-users of PROW. Develop and improve reporting of network defects and problems.	Local Access Forums Farmers & landowners District & parish councils
CT11	Develop longer distance routes and trails	Review of Viking Way, development of Coastal Access Trails. Working in partnership with external organisations to develop longer routes (e.g. Sustrans).	District & parish councils Farmers & Landowners User groups





SUSTAINABLE TRANSPORT







STRATEGIC AIM – To increase the use of the network for sustainable transport and utility trips




Ref	Action	Conclusion from Research	Targets & Timescale	Yr 1 & 2	Yr 3 & 4	Yr 5+	Resources (cost & staff time)	Benefits	LTP Walking & Cycling	Partners
				✓	✓	✓				
SOA1	Identify and improve off- road routes linking communities with schools, employment centres and local services	Improving path infrastructure in urban areas is likely to increase levels of use	Routes identified in conjunction with LTP priority areas	✓	✓	✓	££ 	Walkers and cyclists	✓	LTP staff / Local Access Forums / User groups / LCC Economic Development & Childrens' Services Directorates
SOA2	Improve enforcement and management of urban public rights of way to combat litter, fly-tipping and dog-fouling	Poor condition of routes, dog fouling and litter are a deterrent to users	Work with district councils to resolve problem areas. Reporting arrangements in place	✓	✓		££ 	Walkers, cyclists, equestrians	✓	District and parish councils / Local Access Forums
SOA3	Seek improvements for non-motorised travel in proposals for new developments. Schemes funded through developer contributions	There is a lack of understanding of the requirements of path users	Work with planning authorities to ensure maximum public benefits are realised	✓	✓	✓	££ 	Walkers, cyclists, equestrians	✓	LTP staff / Local Access Forums / User groups / District councils
SOA4	Develop walking and cycling from public transport interchanges	The transport and access network could be better integrated	Routes are developed from transport hubs		✓		££  	Walkers and cyclists	✓	LTP staff / Wolds AONB Countryside Service / Lincolnshire Tourism / Communities Directorate
SOA5	Promote use of public transport on leaflets and website	The transport and access network could be better integrated	Publications and website provide details of public transport options Q	✓	✓	✓	£ 	Walkers and cyclists	✓	LTP staff / District councils / Lincolnshire Tourism / LCC Sustainable Communities
SOA6	Publish rights of way guidance for planning authorities and developers	Development can blight rights of way	Guidance produced Q	✓			£ 	Walkers, cyclists, equestrians	✓	Local Access Forums / District councils

HEALTH AND WELL-BEING

STRATEGIC AIM – To make it easier for people to incorporate exercise into their daily lives and lead healthier lifestyles





Ref	Action	Conclusion from Research	Targets & Timescale	Yr 1 & 2	Yr 3 & 4	Yr 5+	Resources (cost & staff time)	Benefits	LTP Walking & Cycling	Partners
				✓	✓	✓				
SOA7	Improve infrastructure on paths used for health walk initiatives	Poor path condition and infrastructure deters users	Health walk routes are mapped and programme of works implemented	✓	✓	✓	££ 	Walkers	✓	Primary Care Trust / Health Walk Leaders / Local Access Forums / Farmers and Landowners / Countryside site managers and project managers
SOA8	Reduce number of unnecessary barriers - remove stiles where practical and replace with gates or kissing gates to increase accessibility	There are too many physical barriers on the access network, which deters use	Number of stiles on network is reduced	✓	✓	✓	££ 	Walkers	✓	Landowners / District & Parish councils
SOA9	Ensure cross-field paths are reinstated after ploughing	Ploughed paths deters use	Reduction in number of paths reported as not reinstated	✓	✓	✓	£ 	Walkers, cyclists, equestrians	✓	Farmers & Landowners / District and Parish councils / User groups / Rural Payments Agency / NFU / CLA
SOA10	Improve routes in areas of highest health deprivation in Lincolnshire	Improving path infrastructure in urban areas is likely to increase levels of walking and cycling	Areas and routes identified. Programme of works implemented		✓	✓	££ 	All users and non users in areas of health deprivation	✓	District & Parish councils / Local Access Forums / Natural England / Primary Care Trust / LCC Communities Directorate

Ref	Action	Conclusion from Research	Targets & Timescale	Yr 1 & 2	Yr 3 & 4	Yr 5+	Resources (cost & staff time)	Benefits	LTP Walking & Cycling	Partners
				✓	✓	✓				
SOA11	Undertake accessibility audit of whole network	Need to make path network more accessible by removing unnecessary barriers and improving key routes	Accessibility audit complete	✓	✓		£ 	Disability groups, people with limited mobility and families with young children		Local Access Forums / Disability groups / Parish councils / User groups
SOA12	Develop a range of key routes in conjunction with disability groups	People with limited mobility require a range of routes of varying length and terrain	5 routes developed and promoted		✓	✓	££  	Disability groups, people with limited mobility and families with young children		Local Access Forums / Disability groups / Farmers and Landowners / Countryside site managers and project managers
SOA13	Promote and support health walking schemes and assist partners with development of new schemes	Potential users lack confidence using rights of way	Promotional links established and support mechanisms in place	✓	✓	✓	£ 	Non users	✓	Primary Care Trust / District Councils / Local Access Forums
SOA14	Promote benefits of using rights of way to wider range of potential users including young people	There is an underrepresentation of certain social groups using the access network	Targeted information produced	✓	✓	✓	£  	All users and non users	✓	LCC - Childrens services e.g. Health Schools Initiative / Natural England / Local Access Forums / Primary Care Trust / Disability Partnership Board / U3A

SOA15	Produce targeted information for doctors surgeries, health centres in areas reporting highest health deprivation	There is a lack of awareness of the potential health benefits of using rights of way	Targeted information produced	✓	✓		£		Non users		Primary Care Trust / Natural England / Health walk groups
SOA16	Publicise barrier free routes	Fewer barriers on rights of way will increase use	Routes are promoted to disability groups and through appropriate media	✓	✓	✓	£		All users, especially Disability groups, people with limited mobility and families with young children	✓	Disability groups
SOA17	Take opportunities to promote responsible countryside access including the Countryside Code through website and other media	Farmers and landowners feel that the responsibilities that come with greater access have not been promoted sufficiently	Responsible countryside access is promoted through a variety of media and organisations	✓	✓	✓	£		All users and Land managers		Farmers and Landowners / Local Access Forums / District & parish councils / Natural England

RURAL ECONOMY AND TOURISM








STRATEGIC AIM – Supporting local businesses and tourism

Ref	Action	Conclusion from Research	Targets & Timescale	Yr 1 & 2	Yr 3 & 4	Yr 5+	Resources (cost & staff time)	Benefits	LTP Walking & Cycling	Partners
SOA18	Identify and develop circular and linear recreational routes to and from countryside / tourism sites	Improved access to the countryside will benefit tourism and the rural economy	Potential routes identified and implemented		✓		££ 	Walkers, cyclists, equestrians/ Countryside and tourism sites	✓	Local Access Forums / District & Parish councils / Natural England / Farmers and Landowners / Countryside site managers and project managers / Lincolnshire Wolds Countryside Service
SOA19	Improve the maintenance and management of routes close to popular areas of the county and key tourist attractions	A good accessible network of rights of way will benefit tourism and local businesses	Potential routes identified and implemented		✓		££ 	Walkers, cyclists, equestrians/ Tourism sites	✓	Local Access Forums / Lincolnshire Tourism / Wolds AONB Countryside Service / User groups / Tourism sites / Lincolnshire Wolds Countryside Service
SOA20	Improve maintenance and promotion of promoted routes and county trails	A good accessible network of rights of way will benefit tourism and local businesses	Unnecessary barriers removed and improved programme of waymarking and vegetation cutting in place		✓		££ 	All users and local businesses		Local Access Forums / Lincolnshire Tourism / District councils / Lincolnshire Wolds Countryside Service
SOA21	Support and encourage new tourist attractions to include walking and cycling through planning consultation process	Development plans for new tourist attractions should include walking and cycling provision	New tourist attractions contain walking and cycling provision	✓	✓	✓	£ 	Walkers and cyclists	✓	LTP staff / District councils / Local Access Forums / Lincolnshire Wolds Countryside Service







SOA22	Support partners with development of new trails	Improved access to the countryside will benefit tourism and the rural economy	New trails developed	✓	✓	✓	££		All users and local businesses		District and parish councils / Local Access Forums / User groups / Countryside managers & project managers
SOA23	Develop a Lincolnshire Coastal Trail	Coastal tourism will benefit from a better connected access network	Coastal Trail developed		✓	✓	££		Walkers, cyclists and equestrians/ local businesses and tourism sites	✓	Local Access Forums / District and parish councils / user groups / Farmers and Landowners / Lincolnshire Tourism / Natural England / Environment Agency / Wash Estuary Strategy Group
SOA24	Provide public transport information at key sites and promoted routes	The transport and access network should be integrated better	Transport information is available at key sites	✓	✓	✓	£		Walkers and cyclists	✓	LTP staff / District councils / Local Access Forums / Lincolnshire Wolds Countryside Service
SOA25	Produce walking, cycling and riding information in a variety of formats and for holiday accommodation providers	Marketing and promotion of the countryside access resource should be improved	Information packs produced	✓	✓	✓	££		Walkers, cyclists, equestrians	✓	Lincolnshire Tourism / District Councils / Lincolnshire Wolds Countryside Service
SOA26	Develop website to include interactive web walks with links to local services and tourist attractions	Marketing and promotion needs to be improved	Website includes a variety of walks for a range of users and abilities. There are links to local businesses and tourist attractions	✓			£		All users / local businesses		Lincolnshire Tourism / District Councils
SOA27	Develop a range of information panels at gateway sites / villages to promote access opportunities and local services available	Marketing and promotion of the countryside access resource should be improved	Potential sites identified. Information panels produced		✓	✓	££	 	All users and local businesses	✓	Natural England / Lincolnshire Tourism / District and parish councils / countryside site managers







SOCIAL ISSUES

STRATEGIC AIM – To enable more people to enjoy walking and riding

Ref	Action	Conclusion from Research	Targets & Timescale	Yr 1 & 2	Yr 3 & 4	Yr 5+	Resources (cost & staff time)	Benefits	LTP Walking & Cycling	Partners
				✓	✓	✓				
SOA28	Improve quality of waymarking to increase user confidence and assist land managers	Well waymarked routes increases confidence of users and assists land managers	All promoted routes are fully waymarked	✓	✓	✓	£ 	All users and land managers		Local Access Forums / User groups / District & parish councils / Landowners
SOA29	Identify all missing bridges on key network routes, develop and implement a work programme	Improvements are needed to improve connectivity of routes	All missing bridges identified. Prioritised programme of replacement implemented	✓	✓		£££ 	All users		Environment Agency / British Waterways Board / Internal Drainage Boards
SOA30	Implement programme of signing the unsurfaced unclassified county roads	The network of unclassified county roads is an underused access resource	Programme to sign UCR's implemented	✓	✓		££ 	Motorised users and carriage drivers		Local Access Forums / User groups
SOA31	Clarify who can use which route through better signage	The different designations for different categories of user of rights of way are confusing	Programme of signage implemented to routes identified as appropriate. All restricted byways are signed by user type	✓			££ 	All users and land managers		Local Access Forums / User groups / District & parish councils
SOA32	Develop a programme of improved vegetation cutting on key routes close to settlements with parish councils	Overgrown paths are difficult to use	Programme of improved vegetation cutting in place on key routes	✓			££  	Walkers, cyclists, equestrians		District & parish councils / Farmers and landowners / Local Access Forums
SOA33	Complete audit of busy road crossings and implement prioritised programme of improvements	Path users find crossing busy roads difficult which deters use	Audit of crossings completed. Programme of improvements to tackle worst crossings in place		✓		£££ 	Walkers, cyclists, equestrians	✓	LCC Highway Divisions / LTP staff / Lincolnshire Road Safety Partnership / Highways Agency / Local Access Forums / District & parish councils

SOA34	Improve management of existing routes available for motorised users and carriage drivers	The network for off-road users is limited for these users, but increasing provision for motorised users is unpopular with other users seeking quiet recreation	Audit of unsurfaced UCRs and management plan produced	✓		££		Motorised users and carriage drivers		Local Access Forums / User groups	
SOA35	Identify all cross-boundary links with neighbouring authorities to ensure consistency of maintenance and promotion	Improvements are needed to improve connectivity and maintenance standards of cross boundary routes	Cross boundary links and issues identified. Programme of improvements established	✓		££		All users		Local Access Forums / Natural England / Neighbouring Highway Authorities	
SOA36	Pilot a project to provide signage incorporating distance and destination information to key routes	Paths can be difficult to find and follow	Pilot areas defined and signage in place	✓	✓	££		All users	✓	Local Access Forums / User groups / District & parish councils	
SOA37	Support Highway Divisions with the implementation of Quiet Lanes	The access network is fragmented, particularly for cyclists and equestrians	Potential routes identified and audited	✓	✓	££		Walkers, cyclists, equestrians	✓	LCC Highway Divisions / Lincolnshire Road Safety Partnership / Local Access Forums / District & parish councils / Lincolnshire Wolds Countryside Service	
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	The riding and cycling network is fragmented. Riders want a range of circular routes of varying lengths	Circular riding routes of varying lengths and for a range of abilities are established. Improved management regime to highway verges where appropriate to link routes	✓	✓	✓	£££		Cyclists and equestrians	✓	Local Access Forums / User groups / DEFRA / District & parish councils / Natural England / Landowners / Environment Agency / Neighbouring highway authorities / Wildlife Trust / Lincolnshire Wolds Countryside Service

Ref	Action	Conclusion from Research	Targets & Timescale	Yr 1 & 2	Yr 3 & 4	Yr 5+	Resources (cost & staff time)	Benefits	LTP Walking & Cycling	Partners
				✓	✓	✓				
SOA39	Identify areas deficient in access where access proposals would benefit the rights of way network	The access network is fragmented, particularly for cyclists and equestrians	Areas identified Q	✓			£ 	All users	✓	Local Access Forums / User groups / DEFRA / Landowners and farmers / District and parish councils
SOA40	Review current Definitive Map Modification Order priority system to give higher priority to key cases that will improve connectivity of the existing network for users	The access network is fragmented, particularly for cyclists and equestrians	Priority system in place	✓			£ 	All users		Local Access Forums
SOA41	Establish a priority system for Public Path Orders giving higher priority to cases that will improve connectivity of the existing network for users	The access network is fragmented, particularly for cyclists and equestrians	Priority system in place Q	✓			£ 	All users		Local Access Forums
SOA42	Implement a programme of staff training to increase awareness of diversity issues relating to highway and countryside access	Need to embed diversity and equality training into staff development to ensure our services are inclusive	Staff training programme in place	✓	✓	✓	££  	All users and non users	✓	In house / Fieldfare Trust / Natural England / Disability groups
SOA43	Identify existing routes that meet needs of restricted mobility users and publicise	The access network is underused by people with mobility problems	Routes are promoted to disability groups and through appropriate media	✓	✓		£ 	All users, especially Disability groups, people with limited mobility and families with young children		Disability groups

SOA44	Develop and implement an accessibility policy in conjunction with disability groups	Need to embed diversity and equality training into staff development to ensure our services are inclusive	Accessibility policy published	✓			£		All users and non users	✓	Local Access Forums / Disability groups / LCC Communities Directorate
SOA45	Develop links with organisations to implement a programme of themed guided walks, rides and events	Potential users lack confidence using rights of way	Links and support in place to develop guided walks programmes, events and walking festivals	✓	✓	✓	££		All users		District councils / User groups / Lincolnshire Tourism / Countryside managers and activity providers
SOA46	Develop policies and guidance which explain how the authority will manage the rights of way network and publicise	Clear information is required setting out areas of responsibility which will assist both path users and land managers	Policies are written and implemented	✓	✓		£		All users and land managers		Local Access Forums / user groups / Disability organisations
SOA47	Promote leaflets and access information to increase confidence and take up by non users	There is a lack of awareness of opportunities available for countryside recreation	Explore Lincolnshire publication produced	✓			££		Non users and those with little confidence		Local Access Forums / District Councils / Lincolnshire Tourism / Natural England
SOA48	Improve driver awareness of equestrians	Driver attitude and awareness of equestrians could be improved	Awareness campaign in place with variety of media		✓		£		Equestrians		Lincolnshire Road safety Partnership / Local Access Forums / User groups / Natural England
SOA49	Produce Countryside Access newsletter	There is a lack of awareness of opportunities available for countryside recreation and rights of way management	Newsletter published twice per year		✓		£		All users		Local Access Forums / User groups / District councils / Lincolnshire Tourism

Implementation, Monitoring & Review of this Plan



Implementation

Clearly, we will not be able to implement all of the actions identified in this plan immediately. For the ROWIP to be implemented successfully, it will be necessary for the County Council to work in **partnership** with other organisations. Many of the actions will be reliant on obtaining both **internal and external funding**, in order to maximise benefits to the public. The implementation of other activities will require

us to make adjustments to the way in which we currently deliver our services and require the effective targeting of resources.

An allocation of funding has been made to assist with the implementation of the ROWIP from the Local Transport Plan. It is intended that this funding can be used to help attract grants and partnership funding to implement some of the actions contained within the Statement of Action.

Monitoring and Review

We will produce an **annual report** to show the progress made against the objectives and timescales published in the final plan. Our **Local Access Forums** have a role to play in assisting us with the prioritisation and implementation of the ROWIP.

We will make progress reports widely available through our Local Access Forums, newsletters and website to interested parties and organisations.

It is intended to undertake a review of the ROWIP during 2011/ 12 in line with the preparation of the 3rd Local Transport Plan.

Appendices

Appendix 1 *Glossary of Terms Used*

Appendix 2 *List of Figures and Maps*

Appendix 3 *Acknowledgements*

Appendix 1

Glossary of Terms Used

Access Land A specific area of land where a new right of access on foot applies (often referred to as right to roam). These areas were designated under the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000.

AGLV (Area of Great Landscape Value) Area recognised for its locally important scenic landscape and character

AONB (Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty) An area of countryside designated and protected for its attractive landscape.

Bridleway A route used on foot, by cyclists and horseriders.

BVPI 178 (Best Value Performance Indicator) A national performance indicator used to measure the condition of public rights of way.

BOAT (Byway Open to All Traffic) A route used mainly in the same way as bridleways, but also used by motorised vehicles.

CLA (Country Land and Business Association) Represents interests of those responsible for land, property and business throughout rural England and Wales.

Community Strategy A strategy produced by each district and county council through their Local Strategic Partnership.

CTZ (Community Travel Zone) An urban area defined under the Local Transport plan process.

Countryside Access Map A map on the County Council's web site showing public rights of way and other access opportunities www.lincolnshire.gov.uk/countryside

CROW (Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000) Act of parliament, which included new duties for highway authorities in England and Wales to publish rights of way improvement plans (ROWIPs), introduced a new right of access on foot to areas of Access Land, and established Local Access Forums.

DDA (Disability Discrimination Act 2005)

Definitive Map and Statement The legal record of public rights of way showing their position and legal status.

DEFRA (Department for the Environment and Rural Affairs)

DMMO (Definitive Map Modification Order) Legal process used to record a public right of way on the definitive map.

Diversity Review Research project carried out by the Countryside Agency.

DLW (Discovering Lost Ways) A Countryside Agency project to research unrecorded rights of way before the definitive map is closed to historic claims in 2026.

Footpath Route for use on foot only.

GIS (Geographical Information System) Computerised mapping system used by the County Council.

Highway Division Administrative area used by the County Council for management of the highway network.

Highways Officer A member of staff employed by the County Council for the management of the highway network.

LAF (Local Access Forum) A statutory body established under the CROW Act 2000 to provide strategic advice on the improvement of access to the countryside.

LEADS The five corporate objectives adopted by the County Council (Lifestyle, Excellence, Accessibility, Diversity and Safety).

LRO (Lincolnshire Research Observatory) Part of Lincolnshire Economic Development who undertake socio-economic research for the County Council.

LSP (Local Strategic Partnership) Group established by each district council to develop a community strategy for their area.

LTP2 (Lincolnshire 2nd Local Transport Plan) A strategic document setting out proposals for transport planning in the county for the next five years.

Milestones Statement A management plan for rights of way networks, now superseded by ROWIP.

Natural England The government agency concerned with nature conservation, recreation and management of natural resources.

NERC (Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act 2006)

NFU (National Farmers Union) Represents farmers and growers in England and Wales.

Open Country Land defined and mapped as mountain, moor, heath and down under the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000.

Countryside Access and Rights of Way Improvement Plan

P3 (Parish Paths Partnership) A partnership scheme between parish councils and the County Council to look after paths in their area.

PCT (Primary Care Trust) Body responsible for delivering health care and health improvements to their local area. Lincolnshire has a single PCT covering the county.

Permissive Path A path where the landowner has given permission for the public to use the route.

PPO (Public Path Order) The legal process to change the existing path network e.g. by diverting or extinguishing routes.

Promoted Route A route which has been endorsed by the County Council and has accompanying information (leaflet or guided walks book) or is promoted in some other way.

PROW (Public right of way) Footpath, bridleway, restricted byway or byway open to all traffic.

Quiet Lanes Routes carrying light levels of vehicular traffic in rural areas that can be used to link off-road routes.

RCL (Registered Common Land) An area of land shown on the Commons Register. These sites are subject to the new right of access on foot under CROW.

Restricted Byway A new classification of public right of way, replacing RUPPs. Used by walkers, cyclists, horseriders and carriage drivers. Mechanically propelled vehicles are not entitled to use these routes.

ROWIP (Rights of Way Improvement Plan) A plan produced by each highway authority in England and Wales setting out how the Council will deliver improved management of the PROW network.

Road Used as a Public Path (RUPP) A route used in a similar way to bridleways. The Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000 reclassified these routes as Restricted Byways.

RPA (Rural Payments Agency) An executive agency of DEFRA responsible for administering the Single Payment Scheme to farmers.

SOA (Super Output Areas) Area derived from Census data and are small geographical units generally containing between 1000 and 2000 residents.

SUSTRANS Is a charity which works on practical projects to help reduce motor traffic, including the National Cycle Network and Safe Routes to Schools.

UCR (Unclassified County Road) A minor public highway. Some are unsurfaced and commonly referred to as "green lanes".

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Appendix 3

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- Asken Ltd
- Mid Lincolnshire Local Access Forum
- South Lincolnshire & Rutland Local Access Forum
- Countryside Access Liaison Group
- Lincolnshire Research Observatory
- Colleagues from Highway Divisions, Transport Planning and Tourism
- User group organisations
- East Midlands Regional ROWIP officers group
- Natural England
- The Access Company
- ROWIP Key stakeholders workshop participants

Notes

Notes

**The Draft Lincolnshire
Rights of Way
Improvement Plan
2014- 2019**

LAST AMENDED 27/11/14

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Draft Foreword

Welcome to the second Lincolnshire Rights of Way Improvement Plan (RoWIP). This RoWIP is an important strategic document which sets out the County Council's future management and development of the public rights of way network over the course of the next five years.

The County Council recognises the importance of Lincolnshire's extensive public rights of way network and the opportunities it provides to access the countryside. In addition to enabling people to enjoy the countryside, the urbanised network provides sustainable options for travelling to school, to work and to local services. It also enables people to lead a healthy lifestyle and provides an important contribution to the county's rural economy.

It is clear that a great deal has changed since the publication of the first RoWIP and there is no doubt that the Council will continue to face a challenging economic climate in the coming years: finding new sources of funding will be one of the biggest tests we will face in the future.

Implementation of the second RoWIP will be dependent on the identification of suitable funding and will be achieved by maximising the opportunities for partnership working with a variety of organisations and enhancing opportunities for further volunteer involvement.

This plan shows Lincolnshire County Council's commitment to the protection and improvement of access to our countryside and we look forward to the continuing close working relationships that the Authority has with our partners, user groups, landowners, volunteers, and local access forum members to help us deliver the aims for the plan.

Councillor Colin Davie

Executive Councillor for Economic Development,
Tourism, Environment & Planning

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Executive Summary



The Statutory Duty

Every highway authority in England has a statutory duty under the Countryside and Rights of Way (CRoW) Act 2000 to prepare a Rights of Way Improvement Plan (RoWIP). The plan is required to contain an assessment of the extent to which local public rights of way (PRoW) meet the present and likely future needs of the public, the opportunities provided by local rights of way for exercise and other forms of outdoor recreation and enjoyment of the area, and the accessibility of local rights of way to blind or partially sighted persons and those with mobility problems.

The First Lincolnshire RoWIP

The first Lincolnshire RoWIP, published in April 2007, established a strategic framework for the management of the PRoW network from 2007 to 2012. Since the publication of the first RoWIP the County Council has implemented a diverse range of improvements by utilising both existing budgets and, where possible, partnership funding to translate the RoWIP into actions on the ground.

Stakeholder groups were asked to comment on the success of the first Lincolnshire RoWIP. The majority of respondents considered that the plan has been generally well delivered and that improvements in maintenance, enforcement and promotion have brought about significant improvements to the PRoW network.

However, it is widely accepted that the final year of RoWIP implementation was set against a backdrop of limited resources and this has ultimately affected the delivery of the plan. The reduction of funding in 2010/11 has had a significant impact on the PRow service and in particular the County Council's ability to implement some of the aspirations within the first improvement plan.

The Second Lincolnshire RoWIP

A great deal has changed since the publication of the first RoWIP and the second RoWIP will have to take account of significant changes in national policy and the current economic climate and the resultant reduction in the level of funding available for PRow management.

Unfortunately, limited resources required the County Council to consider the benefits of undertaking a full round of public consultation or a detailed network assessment, however, the principles regarding public need which underpinned the first RoWIP, and the network assessment made at that time, are all still considered to be relevant.

The process of developing the plan has been influenced by a number of factors including national policy, County Council priorities and the potential for a further reduction in funding in the coming years. Three broad themes have emerged for the future development of the Lincolnshire PRow network.

Theme 1 – Network Improvements

Theme 2 – Improved Customer Service

Theme 3 – Social Inclusion

The Assessment largely draws on the information gathered during the preparation of the first RoWIP and considers the current strengths and weaknesses of the access resource for walking, horse riding, cycling, horse drawn carriage driving and vehicular use, the accessibility of the network to people with visibility and mobility impairment, and the opportunities to develop and improve the access network to meet people's needs today and in the future. The Implementation Plan lists the actions and works required to develop an improved access network.

Implementation

Whilst the County Council has a statutory duty to prepare and publish a Rights of Way Improvement Plan, there is no duty to implement the plan. However, developing and publishing the second RoWIP will provide a strategic framework for undertaking PRow improvements and provide opportunities to attract external funding.

Implementation of the second RoWIP will be dependent on identification of suitable funding and will be achieved in a variety of ways, for example, in partnership with stakeholder organisations or through actions identified in other relevant plans, and will rely on securing both internal and external funding. It is considered that funds will continue to be stretched during the implementation of the second RoWIP and that the plan will continue to be, to some degree, aspirational.

PART 1

- **Background**
- **Scope and Context**
- **Network Analysis and Assessment**
- **Overall Vision for RoWIP 2**

Background



Lincolnshire is the fourth largest administrative area in England, covering an area of 5291 square km (2286 square miles), and is also the fourth most sparsely populated. Despite the county's rural nature, the city of Lincoln and towns of Grantham and Gainsborough have been identified as areas for population and housing growth. Over the 10 years from 2001 to 2011, the districts of Boston, North Kesteven and South Holland have all had an average annual population growth rate of at least double that of the national rate.

Geographically, Lincolnshire is on the periphery of the East Midlands region and has a long history of traditional industries based around agriculture, tourism, manufacturing and engineering. This situation is now beginning to change as the county recognises the need to diversify and make connections to regional, national and international networks.

The population is nearly 714,000, but the population density of just 1.1 people per hectare reflects the rural nature of the county. One third of the county's population lives in settlements of less than 3000 residents and this highly dispersed population creates fundamental difficulties in the provision and delivery of services.

Lincolnshire has also seen an increase in ethnic minority groups in recent years. The population of migrant workers is notable in the south east of the county, where employment in agriculture and food processing industries is strong.

Population Data

Population: 713653

Population by age:	0-15	17.08%
	16-64	62.20%
	65 and over	20.72%

- Lincolnshire's population has increased by 10% between 2001 and 2011 and it is projected to rise by a further 11% by 2021.
- 27% of households in the county have at least one person in the household with long term health problems or a disability.
- 20% of the population have their day-to-day activities limited as a result of poor health.
- The county has an ageing population and it is projected that 24% of the population will be over 65 by 2021.
- 2.7% of the population does not speak English as a first language.
- 4.7% of the population was born in other EU countries.

Source: Census 2011

The county generally has low biodiversity and this is particularly evident in areas of intensive agriculture. There are also areas of high wildlife and landscape value though, from the saltmarshes and sand dunes of the coast to calcareous grassland and fenland. In particular, the Lincolnshire Wolds is a landscape of national importance and the only Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) in the East Midlands region.

Lincolnshire also has five National Nature Reserves:

- The Wash Estuary
- Gibraltar Point
- Donna Nook
- Saltfleetby and Theddlethorpe Dunes
- Bardney Limewoods

Lincolnshire has 97 miles of coastline extending from Tetney in the north to the Wash in the south. The coast attracts large numbers of visitors each year and it is estimated that in 2012 over 8 million day trips were made to the East Lindsey area generating nearly £58 million.

Visiting Lincolnshire – the key facts

Activities undertaken in the countryside

walking without a dog	22%	walking with a dog	53%
off-road cycling	1%	road cycling	3%
running	4%	horse riding	1%

Average number of visits in a 12 month period

every day	10%	several times a week	17%
once a week	19%	once or twice a month	23%
once every 2 or 3 months	12%	once or twice	9 %
Never	10%		

84% of people travel upto 5 miles to undertake outdoor activities.






The average spend per person is £5.69

*Source: Monitor of Engagement with the Natural Environment
– March 2009 to February 2013 Natural England*

What are Public Rights of Way?

All PRow are highways which the public are entitled to use at any time. There are four categories of PRow, classified according to the nature of their use (See Fig 1).

Figure 1
Public rights of way and who can use them

Path	Used by	Total length in km in Lincs	% of PRow Network	Waymark used to indicate route
Public Footpath	Walkers	3033.08	75.7%	
Public Bridleway	Walkers, cyclists and horse riders	798.99	19.9%	
Restricted Byway	Walkers, cyclists, horse riders and carriage drivers	143.88	3.57%	
Byway Open To All Traffic (BOAT)	Walkers, cyclists, horse riders, carriage drivers and drivers of motor vehicles	32.98	0.83%	
Total		4,008.93	100%	
Unsurfaced Unclassified County Roads (UCR)	Walkers, cyclists, horse riders, carriage drivers and drivers of motor vehicles	355.45		

Who Looks after Public Rights of Way and Access Land in Lincolnshire?

Lincolnshire County Council has responsibility for public rights of way and access as:

The highway authority – to protect and maintain public highways, including public rights of way.

The surveying authority – to maintain the legal record of public rights of way (known as the definitive map and statement).

The access authority – powers to create access points to land mapped as open country and registered common land under the CRow Act 2000.

The Definitive Map and Statement

The Definitive Map and Statement is the legal record of PRow and is held by each surveying authority in England and Wales. The map and statement provides conclusive evidence of the existence of a PRow. Other private rights may also exist, for example to property, but the County Council does not hold this type of information.

The County Council is required to keep the definitive map and statement up to date and ensure that it is accurate. The map can be changed by way of a Definitive Map Modification Order (DMMO). Applications supported by evidence to change the map can be made by the public, or can be initiated by the County Council. These are investigated and researched by the Definitive Map Team, based in Lincoln.

The public can also apply to permanently alter the path network. Applications are normally made by landowners who seek to change the legal line of a PRow running over their land. Changes can be made to divert, extinguish or create public rights of way, and are known as Public Path Orders (PPOs). The County Council also responds to consultations from other local authorities that may also make PPOs affecting routes in Lincolnshire, particularly where paths need to be diverted to enable development to take place.

Maintenance and Enforcement

The maintenance and enforcement of PRow is also the responsibility of the County Council. The four highway divisions have rights of way teams to undertake inspections, implement maintenance work and carry out enforcement action.

The County Council is responsible for maintaining the surface of PRow in a reasonable condition for their intended public access. Each year the Council carries out a programme of vegetation clearance on the network and also undertakes surfacing on some PRow, particularly on well-used paths running through urban areas and in popular areas of the countryside.

Lincolnshire has a wide network of unclassified county roads (UCRs) and minor roads. Some of these routes are unsurfaced and are commonly referred to as "green lanes". The maintenance of these routes is the responsibility of the County Council's highway divisions, although the level of maintenance varies depending on the level of available resources.

Network Infrastructure

In the main, gates and stiles are the responsibility of the landowner, and a proportion of their upkeep can be reclaimed from the highway authority. When it comes to the replacement and repair of stiles and gates on the network, the County Council

promotes the principle of "least restrictive access". The hierarchy used is a gap, followed by a gate or kissing gate, and stiles only erected on footpaths as a last resort, and only where a gap or gate is not practical or the landowner requires legitimate *authorised* stiles to be replaced.

We cannot force landowners to accept gates instead of legitimate authorised stiles, but we do work with land managers to reduce the number of stiles on the network and make "reasonable adjustments" where practicable, thus increasing accessibility for those with mobility problems.

The PRoW network also comprises over 950 bridges of varying sizes from small ditch bridges to bridges over main watercourses and rivers which can vary in size from 10m to 40m. The responsibility for the provision, repair and maintenance of bridges and culverts usually rests with the County Council although in some instances it may lie with a landowner.

PRoW signs are used to indicate the direction and status of a route and some signs also include destination information e.g. routes in the Limewoods project area. The majority of signs are of metal construction whilst timber posts are used to replace metal signs within the Wolds AONB, and on request to parishes within the Parish Paths Partnership Scheme (P3). Waymarking is used to indicate the line of a path and make following the route easier for users. Advisory signs are supplied at the request of farmers and landowners where land management issues are a concern.

Access Land

The Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000 (CRoW) created a new right of access on foot to areas of countryside mapped as mountain, moor, heath, down and registered common land and any other land dedicated specifically for this form of access by a landowner. The County Council has powers under the Act to create access points, provide on-site information for visitors and appoint wardens. The CRoW Act also enables landowners to dedicate land in their ownership as access land.

The Marine and Coastal Act 2009

Local authorities will be important partners in the coastal access project and will be extensively involved in the implementation and establishment of the coastal path on the ground. The County Council and Natural England will be jointly responsible for the maintenance of the route.

Scope and Context



The Scope of the Plan

In preparing the RoWIP, the County Council is required to look at the relevance of the access network and identify where changes should be made to meet current and likely future needs. In doing so, we have followed the statutory guidance issued by the Department of the Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (DEFRA). The guidance states that the RoWIP should be a strategic document setting out how the County Council intends to deliver improvements to the management and development of the PRow network. The guidance also states that proposals contained in RoWIPs should be made in broad terms and not contain site or path specific assessments or actions.

Legislative Framework

Section 60 of the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000 requires local authorities to publish a RoWIP. In drawing up the plan, authorities are required to make an assessment of:

- the extent to which the PRow network meets the present and likely future needs of the public;

- the opportunities provided by local PRow for exercise and other forms of open-air recreation and the enjoyment of the local authority's area; and,
- the accessibility of local PRow for blind or partially sighted persons and those with mobility problems.

RoWIP should also include a statement of actions which local highway authorities propose to take in the management of local PRow and for securing an improved network, with particular regard to the matters dealt with in these assessments.

Regional and National policy

There are a number of national documents which relate to the PRow and the recreational highway network. These include:

- Rights of Way Improvement Plans - Statutory Guidance to Local Highway Authorities in England (DEFRA Nov 2002)
- Local Transport Plan (LTP) and RoWIP Integration (Natural England 2009)
- Guidance on LTP (DfT 2009)
- Guidance on LTP and the Natural Environment (Natural England 2009)
- National Planning Policy Framework (Department for Communities and Local Government 2012)

Lincolnshire County Council Organisational Strategy 2012-15

The Organisational Strategy provides the framework for the County Council's operations and organisational development.

In 2008 the County Council adopted a vision for the county of Lincolnshire that had been agreed by a wide range of partner organisations. Whilst this plan is still relevant as a long-term statement, the Council has decided to set out a shorter organisational vision together with a statement of purpose. The new vision and purpose were formally adopted by the County Council in December 2011.

The Organisational Strategy 2012-15 provides details of how the Council will need to change in order to respond to the economic, political, social and technological influences which will have an impact upon the Council's development.

The County Council's vision and purpose is:

Lincolnshire County Council: *working better for you*

- Building on our strengths
- Protecting your lifestyle
- Ambitious for the future

The County Council's purpose is:

- Making the best use of all of our resources

- Investing in infrastructure and the provision of services
- Commissioning for outcomes based on our communities' needs
- Promoting community wellbeing and resilience
- Influencing, coordinating and supporting other organisations that contribute to the life of Lincolnshire

Lincolnshire's 4th Local Transport Plan

The 4th Lincolnshire Local Transport Plan (LTP4) covers the 10-year period 2013/14 to 2022/23. It builds on the strategies and policies adopted during the first three LTPs. A key objective of Local Transport Plan 4 is to support economic growth within the county. The role that transport has in supporting the local economy has been highlighted in the previous LTPs, but in the current economic climate this has assumed even greater importance.

A set of specific transport objectives has been formulated to help deliver the longer-term vision. They are set out below:

- to assist in the sustainable economic growth of Lincolnshire, and the wider region, through improvements to the transport network
- to improve access to employment and key services by widening travel choices, especially for those without access to a car
- to make travel for all modes safer and, in particular, reduce the number and severity of road casualties
- to maintain the transport system to standards which allow safe and efficient movement of people and goods
- to improve the quality of public spaces for residents, workers and visitors by creating a safe, attractive and accessible environment
- to improve the quality of life and health of residents and visitors by encouraging active travel and tackling air quality and noise problems
- to minimise carbon emissions from transport across the county

Walking and cycling have a key role to play in helping to tackle congestion in the larger urban areas, particularly for shorter trips. During the previous LTP period, schemes to improve facilities for cyclists and pedestrians were rolled out through the Community Travel Zone initiative. Where possible, advantage has also been taken of funding sources through other partners such as the charity Sustrans' Links2School and Connect2 funding.

In addition, the PRoW network has a role to play where routes link outlying villages to larger urban areas, and opportunities to strengthen this role are being explored.

During the LTP4 period, improvements to encourage walking and cycling in the larger urban areas will continue to be pursued as resources allow. The County Council will particularly look to work with other partners in securing funding opportunities for such schemes.

Lincolnshire Destination Management Plan

A large area such as Lincolnshire contains many separate destinations within it, such as the city, coast, resorts, market towns and defined rural areas. The Lincolnshire Destination Management Plan provides guidance to a range of partners and partnerships to ensure that an impact is achieved which is greater than the sum of the parts.

Countryside access forms an important part of Lincolnshire's tourism offer and the management plan recognises the important contribution that walking, cycling, horse riding and carriage driving make to the rural economy. The Second RoWIP will aim to meet the objectives of the Lincolnshire Destination Management Plan.

Green Infrastructure Plans and Strategies

There are a range of green infrastructure plans and strategies which are having an increasing influence on the delivery and management of PRow and countryside access in Lincolnshire. These have been considered during the development of RoWIP 2 and many of them have been included in Figure 2.



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Figure 2 Links between Green Infrastructure Strategies and the RoWIP

Green Infrastructure Area	Geographical Coverage	Links to RoWIP
Lincolnshire Wolds AONB Management Plan 2012- 17	Lincolnshire Wolds AONB and associated landscape character area.	To develop and promote a wide range of sustainable access, recreation and tourism initiatives appropriate to the Wolds AONB.
Witham Valley Country Park	Witham Valley extending in a south westerly direction from Lincoln to the A17	To improve and increase the connections between green spaces to give more opportunities to enjoy walking, cycling, and horse riding.
Lincolnshire Coastal Country Park	The coastal strip between Sandilands and Chapel Point and extending inland as far as Mumby.	The Coastal Country Park aims to facilitate: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • a more sustainable, varied and attractive coastal landscape, rich in wildlife and attractive to visitors and residents in every season. • a new green tourism destination with high quality accessible natural green space and opportunities to experience the area's cultural and natural heritage.
Coastal Grazing Marshes Project	The project focuses on three target areas in East Lindsey around Burgh-le-Marsh, Saltfleetby and Anderby/Huttoft.	To improve the local environment for the benefit of all through enhanced access and recreational opportunities.
The Wash and Fens Green Infrastructure Plan	The Wash coastline from Chapel St Leonards to North Norfolk and extending inland to incorporate Market Deeping, Bourne and Billingham.	To develop or create accessible green infrastructure features in one of three categories: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Linear public access • Site-specific public access

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		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Restricted public access.
South Lincolnshire Fenlands Project	An area centred on Baston and Thurlby Fens and extending towards Bourne, Spalding and Market Deeping.	To create a new, large fenland landscape for people and wildlife in southern Lincolnshire.
Central Lincolnshire Core Strategy	City of Lincoln, North Kesteven and West Lindsey within a planning context.	The overall objective is to improve and provide new green infrastructure in Central Lincolnshire by enhancing, developing and providing a multi-functional network of greenspaces, parks, rivers and other corridors within and around settlements that connect them to each other and the wider countryside, improving access, environmental quality and biodiversity.



Different Users and their Needs

A detailed public consultation was carried out during the preparation of the first RoWIP in order to establish the needs of different users. This information can be viewed in Part 1 – Analysis and Summary of Assessments of the [Lincolnshire Countryside Access and Rights of Way Improvement Plan 2007 – 2012](#). It is considered that this information is still relevant extending into the period 2014-19 for RoWIP2.

This section contains a summary of the assessment contained in the first RoWIP.

Walkers

Walking is the most popular activity undertaken on the PRoW network. Walkers tend to undertake short recreational or dog walking trips directly from home, as well as more functional journeys on foot to local shops and services.

Walking and cycling to school is less common in Lincolnshire than nationally, probably reflecting the rural nature of the county and the relatively lengthy journeys to school. The off-road network of PRoW is seen primarily as a recreational resource, with a higher proportion of walking taking place at the weekend. Walkers are entitled to use all types of PRoW, roads, access land and some other areas of public open space.

There are two main sub-groups of walkers:

Casual Walkers – which can include family groups and dog walkers, who typically walk between 2 and 5 miles. They often walk routes close to their home but may travel further afield for longer walks.

Serious Walkers – more experienced users looking for a more challenging experience. Walks can be close to home but they are much more prepared to travel further. Walk lengths tend to be longer than those undertaken by casual walkers.

There is a certain amount of cross-over between the groups identified.

Cyclists

Cycling is the second most popular activity after walking. Cycling can be a convenient form of transport, certainly for journeys less than 5 miles to reach places of employment, schools, shops and local services. Cyclists are entitled to use public bridleways, restricted byways, byways open to all traffic (BOATs), cycleways and Unclassified County Roads.

The overall picture is that in recent years utility cycling on busy roads to work, shops and services has declined in favour of the car, with recreational cycling growing in popularity. Most cycling is undertaken to travel to and from work, using the road network. There have been successes such as the creation of off-road Sustrans routes and carriageway improvements for cyclists which have been developed on commuter routes. Commuter cycling takes place on parts of the PRow network, mostly where surface improvements have been carried out.

The increase in sales of mountain bikes has enabled the countryside network to become more accessible to cyclists. However, cycling on the off road network can often be difficult due to unsuitable surfaces and vegetation. Over a third of all cycling takes place on roads and cycle tracks.

Recreational cyclists tend to favour circular routes close to home, but they are prepared to travel to points from which they can access the network. Once there, they tend to travel further than walkers typically covering distances of between 2 and 10 miles.

Constraints to cyclists accessing the network include fragmented networks, dangerous road crossings, lack of information regarding circular routes and the surface condition of off-road routes.

Horse Riders

Participation in horse riding is generally for leisure purposes, although almost a third of riders also have a professional interest. Horse riders are entitled to use public bridleways, restricted byways, BOATs and UCRs. They also access private land through agreements with landowners.

The majority of horse riders regularly use local routes in order to exercise their horses. Around 80% of equestrians transport their horses to other areas where the countryside access network presents a greater range of opportunities.

The network of bridleways and byways is fragmented and poorly connected, with a number of busy road crossings effectively causing severance and deterring users. Horse riders are often forced onto the road network in order to gain access to routes, or complete circular rides. Many riders use public footpaths or pavements in order to avoid traffic.

It is often difficult for riders to find suitable circular routes and they are often restricted to using linear "there and back" routes. Similarly to walkers, equestrians have a preference for the provision of circular routes, close to where their horses are kept.

Carriage Drivers

Carriage drivers are able to use approximately 5% of the PRow network in addition to unclassified county roads. Efforts have been made to improve the provision for carriage drivers with the development of the Lindsey Carriage Trail, which was opened in 2012.

Carriage drivers face many of the constraints which are experienced by horse riders, including a fragmented network, busy road crossings and inappropriately surfaced routes. Other issues which limit access to carriage drivers include inaccessible gates and overhanging vegetation.

Motor Vehicle Users

Motor Vehicle users are able to use BOATs and also the majority of the county's wide network of UCRs. Many of these routes are unsurfaced and commonly referred to as "green lanes". UCRs and minor roads can form a useful addition to the access network and can be used to link other PRow.

The Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act 2006 (NERC) is an important piece of legislation which has had an impact on the public's right to use routes with MPVs. The Act effectively extinguished motorised rights on routes that remained unrecorded on the Definitive Map and Statement unless the routes were depicted on the current List of Streets

There are exceptions to these extinguishments, in particular where existing Definitive Map Modification Order (DMMO) applications to record BOATs were submitted before 20 January 2005. These may still be added, on confirmation a legal order, as vehicular routes. Rights may also be saved if a route has been lawfully used more by motor vehicles than by other users in the five years preceding commencement of the Act on 2 May 2006.

Motor vehicle users will tend to travel to find circular routes which can be difficult in localised areas. Users also believe that better management of the unsurfaced UCRs is required to enable a better network to be used.

Mobility and Visually Impaired

The Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000 requires the authority to make an assessment of the "accessibility of the local rights of way network to blind and partially sighted persons and others with mobility problems".

The Equality Act 2010, formerly the Disability Discrimination Act 1995, requires public authorities to make reasonable adjustments to ensure that it is not unreasonably difficult for people with disabilities to benefit from their functions as others would do, or to show that there are good reasons for not doing so.

There is no specific reference in the Equalities Act to any aspect of PRow management and, as yet, there is no case law that can be referred to in the application of either Act to public rights of way. Nonetheless, it is clear that authorities are required to have regard to their obligations under the Acts wherever changes or additions to the PRow network are proposed, and are encouraged to make improvements to structures wherever appropriate opportunities arise.

The main difficulties encountered by people with mobility problems are:

- Poor surface conditions
- Unsuitable terrain
- Difficulty in reaching suitable access
- Stiles and other barriers restricting access
- Lack of toilets and other visitor facilities
- Lack of information
- Lack of benches and rest areas

The Countryside Access Survey undertaken for the first RoWIP concluded that the range of disabilities is considerable and that people with mobility problems should not be considered as a single entity. The survey also concluded that people with mobility problems will plan ahead and often arrange for a helper to accompany them.

Network Analysis

Lincolnshire is predominantly a rural county, and in comparison with other counties in the East Midlands region, has a relatively low and widely dispersed population across many small communities. The 4000km network of PRow is the prime means to gain access to the countryside in the county and is used mainly for recreational trips. The urban network can provide links to the wider countryside, and is more likely to be used for local trips to reach shops and services.

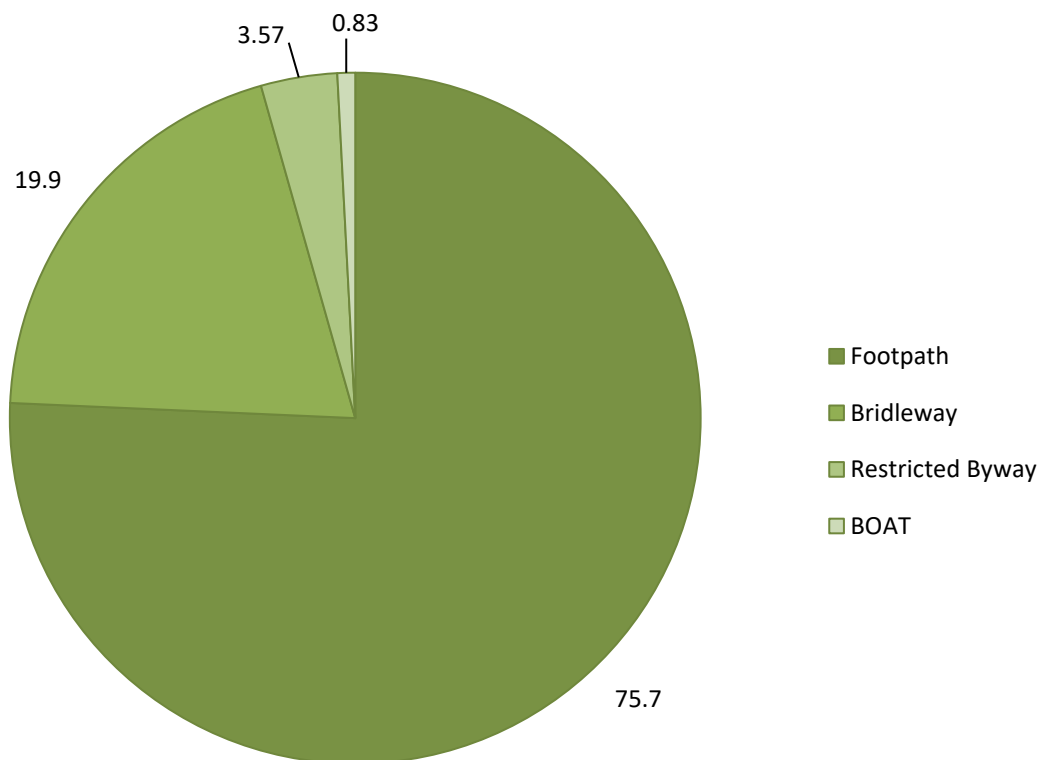
The PRow network is not evenly spread across the County. However, assessing the relative distribution of the network alone is unlikely to give a true picture of

countryside access within a given area. For example, an area with a high network density may still be poorly connected with other routes and may therefore be of limited value to users.

There are 4 categories of PRow:

- Public Footpath
- Public Bridleway
- Restricted Byway
- Byway Open to All Traffic (BOAT)

Figure 3 - Proportion of PRow by category



The Public Highway Network in Lincolnshire

Rights of Way Improvement Plan 2014 -19

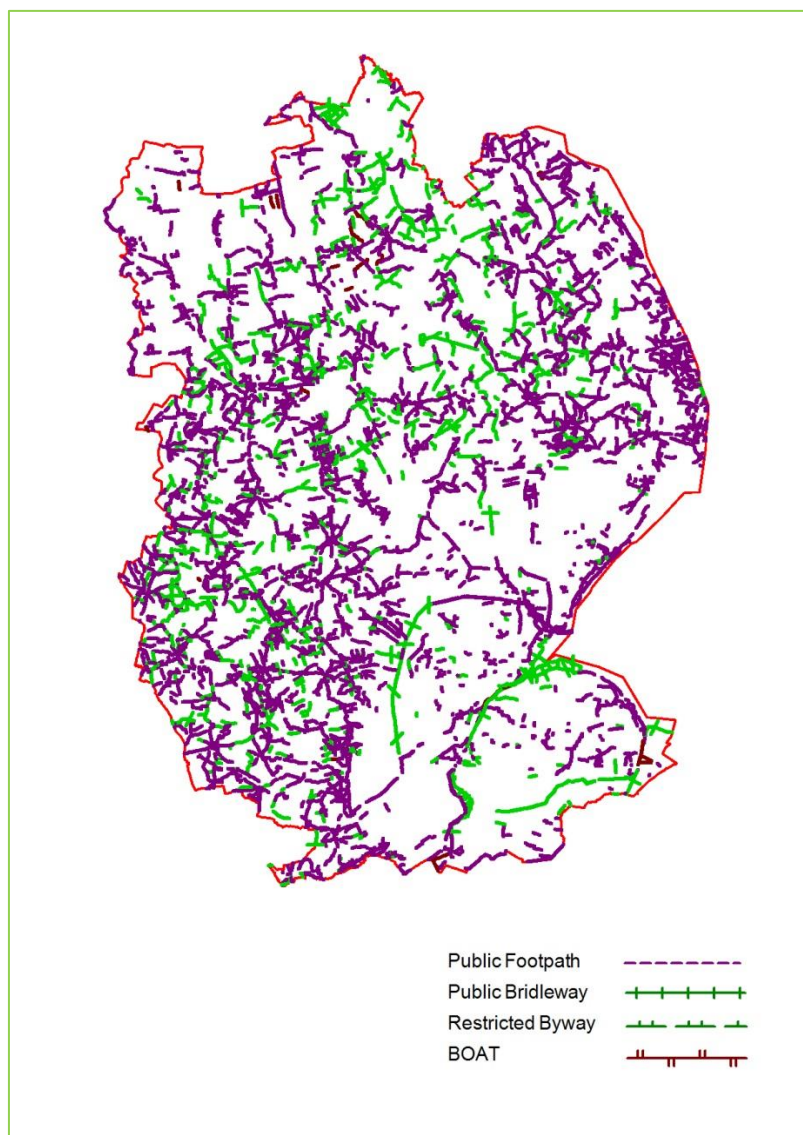
Walking Routes

(Footpaths, Bridleways, Restricted Byways, and BOATs)

- Walkers are able to use the entire PRoW network
- Walkers are generally well catered for
- There is a localised fragmentation of the network

Map 1

Network distribution of walking routes



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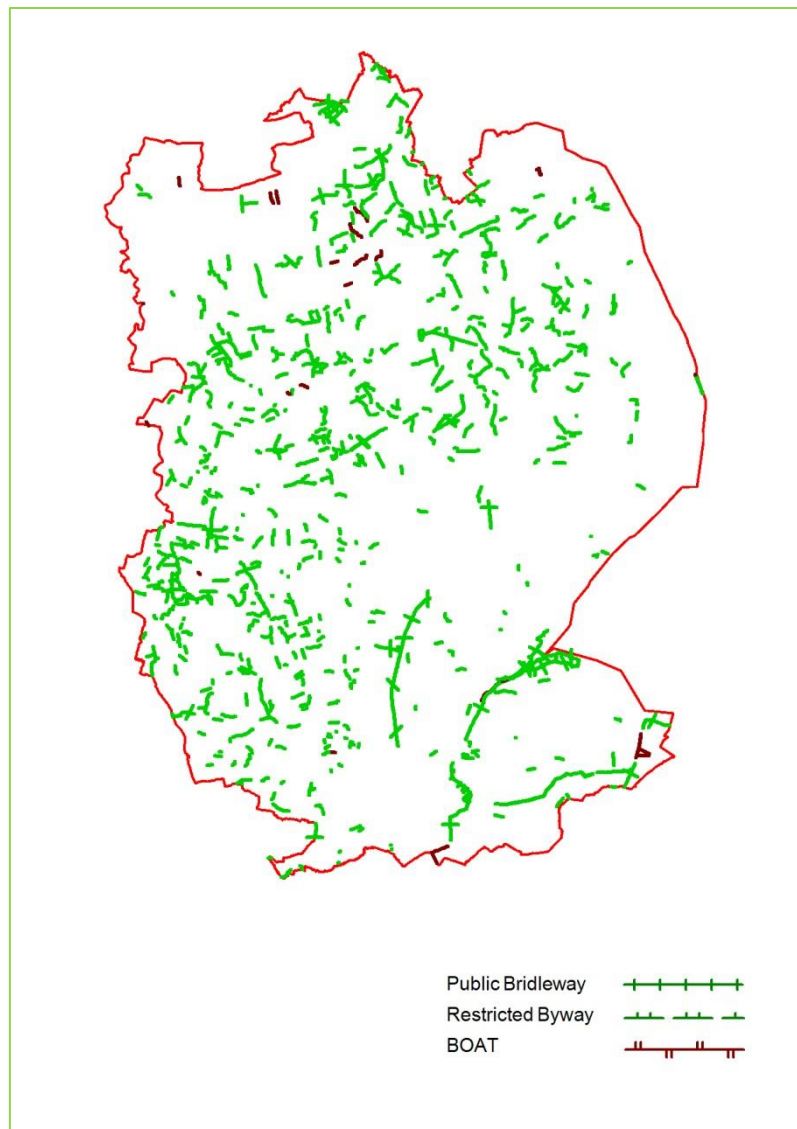
Cycling and Horse Riding Routes

Bridleways, Restricted Byways and BOATs

- Cyclists and horse riders can use 24% of the network
- The network for equestrians and cyclists is much more fragmented
- Some areas have little or no off-road provision
- The potential for riding off-road circular routes is limited

Map 2

Network distribution of cycling and riding routes



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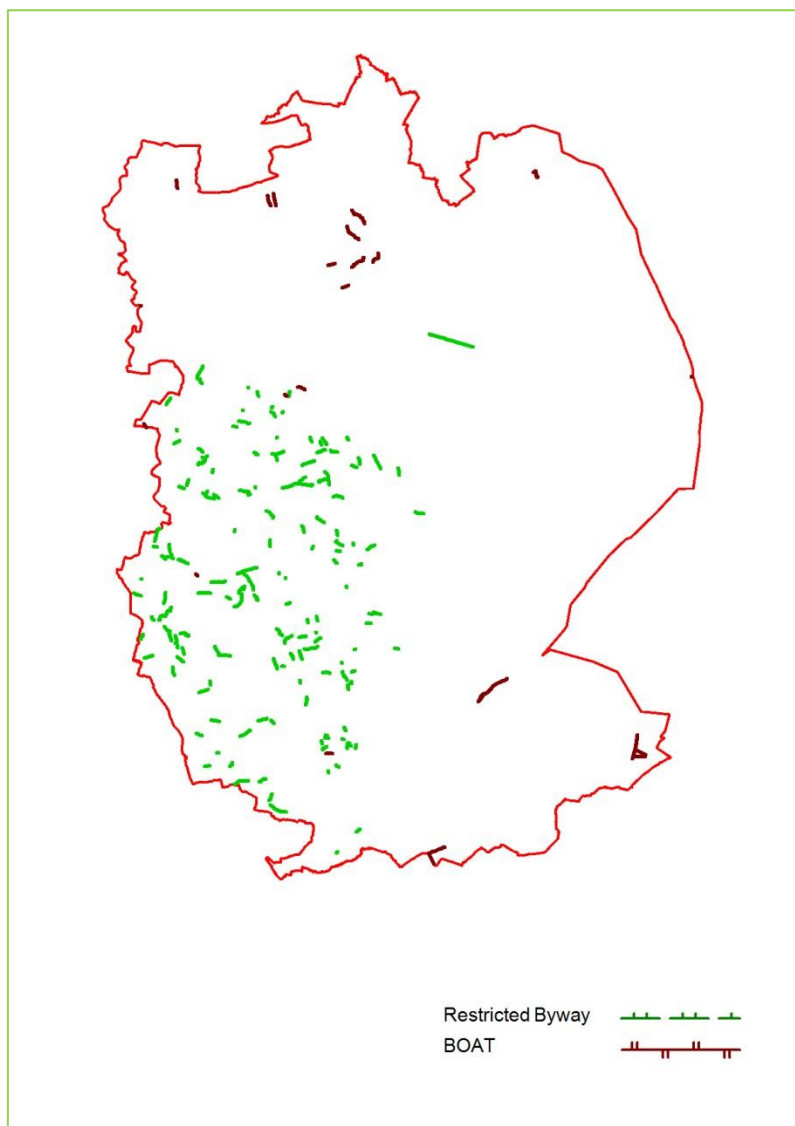
Carriage Drivers

Restricted Byways and BOATs

- Carriage drivers can use nearly 4.5% of the PRow network
- The off-road network available to carriage drivers is highly fragmented

Map 3

Network distribution of carriage driving routes



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Mechanically Propelled Vehicle (MPV) Users

BOATs

- MPV users can use less than 1% of the PRow network
- The off-road network available to motorised users is highly fragmented

Map 4

Network distribution of MPV user routes



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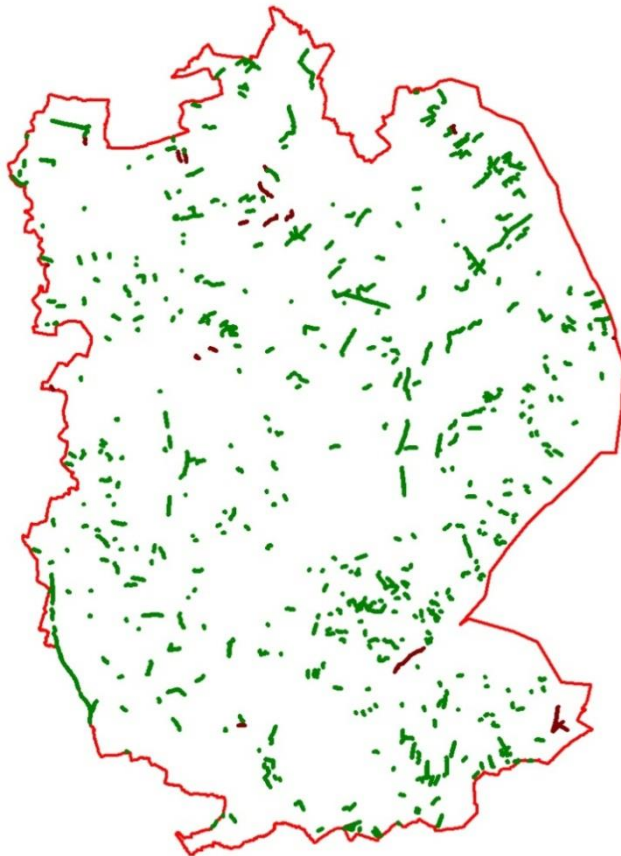
Rights of Way Improvement Plan 2014 -19

Unclassified County Roads (UCRs)

- All users including carriage drivers and MPV users can use the UCR network
- There is some uncertainty over the legal status of some UCRs where the right to use a vehicle can be unclear

Map 5

Network distribution of unclassified county roads



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Other Types of Access in Lincolnshire

Permissive Access

Landowners may allow access over their land without dedicating a PRow. These routes are called permissive paths. Permissive paths make an vital contribution to public access, often making important connections in the network where gaps would otherwise exist.

Access Land

The Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000 (CroW) grants a right of access to defined areas of open country (mountain, moor, heath and down) and registered common land. Lincolnshire has 9 areas of mapped open country and 90 sites recorded as registered common land.

Woodland and Forest Access

The Forestry Commission has designated most of their woodlands and forests as access land under CroW. This provides an opportunity for the public to explore 45 areas of woodland in Lincolnshire on foot.

Country Parks and Countryside Sites

There is a range of countryside sites across Lincolnshire including country parks, picnic sites and nature reserves with public access. However, for the size of the county, Lincolnshire has very few country parks and this creates a greater reliance on the PRow network to gain access to the countryside.

National Nature Reserves (NNR)

There are 5 NNRs in Lincolnshire and Natural England is embarking on a project to dedicate all of its National Nature Reserves (NNRs) for permanent public access unless there are compelling reasons on particular sites not to do so. Theddlethorpe and Saltfleetby Dunes NNR will be dedicated for public access in 2014.

Coastal Access

The Marine and Coastal Access Act 2009 places a duty on Natural England to create a long-distance coastal path around England and an associated margin for recreation. The legislation will be implemented by Natural England over the coming years: the section from North Norfolk to Skegness has been provisionally programmed to be created between 2017 and 2018.

Summary of existing access to the Lincolnshire coast:

- Length of coast - 156 kilometres (97 miles)
- 61% of the coast has an existing satisfactory, legally secure path

Breakdown of the current satisfactory legally secure path:

- 17% of the coastal trail follows existing coastal promoted routes
- 22% of the satisfactory, legally secure path is on existing public road or promenade, often through urban areas
- 54% of the coastal trail follows existing coastal footpaths and 21% follows existing coastal bridleways

- The remaining 39% of the coast has no satisfactory, legally secure path, although some of this will be an existing unofficial or permissive route.

Access to Waterways, River Banks and Canal Towpaths

Access to Lincolnshire's rivers and waterways is variable across the county. The Lincolnshire Waterways Partnership was formed by Lincolnshire County Council, the Environment Agency and the Canal and Rivers Trust to improve infrastructure for tourism and recreation. A variety of projects have been delivered since 2003 including the Water Rail Way, a multi-user trail extending from Lincoln to Boston.

The Water Rail Way is a 33-mile route developed in conjunction with Sustrans, linking Lincoln and Boston. The route, which is suitable for walking, cycling and horse riding, runs for much of its length on a disused railway.



Long-Distance Routes

There are a number of actively promoted long distance recreational routes in Lincolnshire and most notably includes the Viking Way which extends between Barton-upon-Humber and Oakham. Others include:

- The Spires and Steeples Trail
- Macmillan Way
- Lindsey Carriage Trail
- The Water Rail Way
- The Spa Trail
- Lindsey Loop

Review of the first RoWIP

Since the publication of the first RoWIP in 2007, it is considered that the County Council has implemented as much of the action plan as resources allowed. Improvement works have been implemented by utilising existing internal budgets and, where possible, other partnership funding has been used to translate the RoWIP into actions on the ground.

The diverse range of Statements of Action has allowed the Council some flexibility in the improvements it has been able to deliver as it was not prescriptive, or reliant on funding for a few specific projects; instead it covered a wide range of actions which have been prioritised and acted on when funding became available.

One of the main themes of the first RoWIP was the development and review of policies and this has enabled a more planned and strategic approach to be adopted in the day to day management of the PRow network. Four policies have been published or revised during the implementation of the first RoWIP.

Policies published or revised during the implementation of the first Lincolnshire RoWIP

- Definitive Map Modification Order Priority Policy
- Enforcement Policy and Guidance Manual
- Countryside Accessibility Policy
- Path Prioritisation and Estimated Work Timescales Policy

A wide variety of improvements has been undertaken throughout the life of the plan, focussing on the existing network. In particular, considerable progress has been made in the improvement of path furniture, which has allowed for greater access to the network.



An extensive programme of surface improvement works has focussed on routes linking communities with schools, employment centres and local services and routes in the region of countryside heritage sites. A total of 5.4km of paths has been improved during the implementation period.

The Lincolnshire Primary Care Trust also provided funding to develop the Walking for Health network. A programme of improvement works has been implemented

which has improved the accessibility of the health walking network, including upgrading furniture, surface improvements and the creation of additional routes.

Promotion and publicity featured heavily in the first RoWIP and is considered to be the most successful area of implementation. During the life of the plan over 60 walking and cycling leaflets have been published and assistance has been provided to partner organisations to develop three new long-distance trails.

The first RoWIP assessment recognised the potential benefits of linking tourism and countryside access. Work has been undertaken with Lincolnshire Tourism to promote Lincolnshire as a short break destination for walking and cycling and 15 Walks Discovery Packs have been published covering all areas of the county.

A disability access audit has been undertaken on all the routes included in the Lincolnshire walks series of leaflets to identify accessibility improvements. In addition, path furniture is now shown on the Countryside Access Map, enabling path users to make informed decisions about the suitability of a route whilst planning a journey.

Other publicity and promotional improvements include:

- Redesigning the Countryside section of the County Council website
- Publishing a Countryside For All pack
- The provision of an online searchable walks database
- The publication of a countryside education pack for schools
- Providing assistance to Market Rasen, Caistor and Horncastle to gain membership to the 'Walkers are Welcome' scheme.

The decrease in funding in 2010/11 led to a significant reduction in the PRow service and in particular the County Council's ability to implement parts of the first RoWIP. A number of planned tasks have been scaled back and in some cases stopped altogether. In particular, limited resources have delayed progress on the review of the Viking Way, the implementation of the Quiet Lanes project and the full implementation of the capital bridges programme.

RoWIP 2 Stakeholder Consultation

Stakeholders have been contacted to establish their views on the success of the first RoWIP and invite suggestions for inclusion in the second plan.

It is clear from the responses received that the PRow network is valued and has a multitude of uses. The majority of respondents consider that the scope of the first RoWIP was sufficient and that the plan has been well delivered. In particular, most respondents believe that better maintenance, enforcement and promotion have brought about significant improvements to some parts of the network.

It is widely understood that the final year of RoWIP implementation was set against a backdrop of limited resources and this has ultimately affected the delivery of the plan. Some respondents also considered that the first RoWIP may have been too ambitious and care should be taken to ensure that the second plan is realistic and deliverable.

Whilst the majority of consultation responses acknowledged that significant improvements have been made in the delivery of maintenance and enforcement during the initial stages of RoWIP implementation, it was recognised that the reduction in resources led to a deterioration in the standard of maintenance and enforcement in some areas.



There are many actions where costs have become an issue, particularly following budget cuts. Understandably, because it is probably the biggest expense, path maintenance, particularly mowing has fallen below standard.

Ramblers

The Rural Economy and Tourism section of the first RoWIP aimed to identify and develop circular and linear routes to and from the countryside. Whilst improved access has been achieved in some areas, a number of respondents considered that the level of implementation had not been as extensive as anticipated.

The consultees provided a wide variety of suggestions for inclusion in the second RoWIP. Again, there is a general acceptance that RoWIP2 should provide a realistic reflection of what can be delivered within the available resources and place a strong emphasis on community involvement in order to make the most of the voluntary sector.

There is a need to utilise different volunteer skills for different activities in order to make the most of the volunteer effort.

Ramblers

The South Lincolnshire and Rutland Local Access Forum was keen to "continue the present course of action in RoWIP 2". Whilst the forum considers it essential that the standard of maintenance on long-distance trails is of a high quality, they are keen to ensure that the budget for the rest of the network should not suffer as a consequence.

The consultation also highlighted a continued high demand for developments in horse riding and cycling facilities. In particular, horse riders and cyclists are looking for more off-road routes, road safety enhancements and surface improvements.

A number of respondents also commented that the PRow network should not be considered in isolation and is interlinked with other green infrastructure plans and the LTP4.

Overall Vision for RoWIP 2



The second Lincolnshire Rights of Way Improvement Plan has been developed around 3 broad themes.

Theme 1 – Network Improvements

Theme 2 – Improved Customer Service

Theme 3 – Social Inclusion

It is acknowledged that some Statements of Action (SOAs) may cover more than one theme.

Theme 1 – Network Improvements

Infrastructure Improvements

Path improvements in carefully chosen locations can make a significant difference to people who use, or who would like to use, their local PRow. Partnership work between the County Council and community groups has many benefits. Local communities and user groups are often best placed to identify improvements which benefit a large proportion of the local population and bring together some of the elements necessary for an improvement to be achieved. In addition, the County Council has access to a broad range of expertise regarding path infrastructure and surfacing materials, public path orders and obtaining funding.

Efforts will be made to prioritise small-scale improvements which have been identified at a community level and which may be capable of being implemented at a relatively low cost. Small-scale improvements might include the removal of stiles and gates, improved destination wording on fingerposts and creating short sections of path to link with others to form more useful routes. Larger scale projects may involve surfacing paths and making legal orders to create, divert or upgrade public paths.



NI 1 The County Council will work with parish councils and community groups to deliver community-led schemes which can meet local demand and lead to greater use.

In improving infrastructure on the public rights of way network the County Council will adopt the principle of 'least restrictive access'. Least restrictive access means that:

- A gap is the preferred option.
- **Where a gap is not practicable for stock control, then a field gate, hand gate or kissing gate will be used.**
- Stiles will only be considered in exceptional circumstances.

NI 2 Reduce the number of unnecessary barriers – remove stiles where practical and replace with gaps, gates or kissing gates to increase accessibility.

A number of organisations have made direct use of the RoWIP when developing local community plans and green infrastructure plans. Community plans often contain proposals for improved local access and this enables proposals with a proven evidence base to be prioritised. The County Council will aim to prioritise improvement works which are identified in community plans and green infrastructure plans.

NI 3

The County Council will aim to prioritise and implement improvement suggestions included in community and village plans.

Enforcement

As the highway authority, Lincolnshire County Council has a duty under the Highways Act 1980 to assert and protect the rights of the public to the use and enjoyment of any highway. The highway authority is also placed under a statutory duty to prevent, as far as possible, the stopping up or obstruction of a public highway.

Enforcement of the PRow network can be undertaken in a variety of different ways and the County Council selects the most appropriate method depending on the nature of the offence.

The County Council has a published enforcement policy to assist officers in undertaking effective and efficient enforcement action on the PRow network. The enforcement policy is available to view on the Council's [website](#).

The main objectives of the enforcement policy are:

- To provide a high level of service to the public to ensure that PRow remain open and available for public usage.
- To ensure that complaints from the public are dealt with promptly and effectively and in line with the existing prioritisation guidelines.
- To promote proactive compliance with the relevant legislation whilst retaining the ability to undertake appropriate enforcement action where necessary.



The County Council has formally adopted the Enforcement Concordat, which provides an overarching policy document regarding powers of enforcement which applies to all Council services.

Increasingly the County Council has to balance its duty to protect and assert the rights of the public with the limited level of resources available for PRow enforcement. Whilst proactive inspection regimes and landowner education have led to significant advances during the initial stages of RoWIP implementation, the reduction in resources in 2010 resulted in the loss of the divisional enforcement officers, which has limited our ability to maintain a pro-active approach.

The County Council will continue to investigate reports received in respect of alleged offences on PRow. The revised path priority service standard will be used as a guide to prioritise enforcement issues. The path priority timescales can be viewed in the Reporting section on [Page 46 and 47](#).

NI 4

The County Council will provide effective enforcement on the public rights of way network by prioritising customer reports.

Safety

Road Safety-

The PRow network is affected by increasingly busy roads. Path users are often forced to negotiate hazardous carriageway crossings or walk along the carriageway

itself in order to make use of the PRoW network. Perceived road safety issues can be a significant barrier to countryside access and have the effect of deterring some users from undertaking journeys.



The grass verges beside many rural roads can provide safe and convenient places for walking and riding and are recognised as being an essential element of the countryside access network. Despite this fact and the increasing demand for a traffic free environment highway margins are very rarely maintained with countryside access in mind.

The first RoWIP hoped to achieve a safer network for all users by improving road crossings and increasing driver awareness of vulnerable users. The County Council has conducted a survey at over 140 locations where public rights of way

meet and cross A roads, trunk roads and railways.

Whilst it is acknowledged that any road crossing is potentially hazardous, the audit identified a number of locations requiring further consideration. The Lincolnshire Road Safety Partnership undertook a secondary audit at 27 locations on Lincolnshire’s A road network. In addition, the Highways Agency has been asked to examine 33 crossing locations on the Lincolnshire section of the A1. Unfortunately the reduction in resources has prevented the implementation of any safety improvement schemes and as a result there is still a great deal of scope to improve safety at the identified locations for all users.

The County Council will consider appropriate solutions to improve the safety of non-motorised users, including the use of the roadside verge, behind the hedge routes, highway signage and public path diversions. Solutions for routes which form part of a recognised promoted route will take priority.

Where diversions are proposed as part of a new road scheme, efforts will be made to ensure that enhanced safety is built into all road layouts.

NI 5

Examine opportunities to improve road safety on the public rights of way network and implement appropriate schemes depending on the availability of resources.

NI 6

The County Council will work with the Highways Agency to identify and implement safety improvements at locations where the public rights of way network intersects with the A1.

Some drivers show little awareness of and consideration to non-motorised users and fail to slow down or leave sufficient space when passing walkers and riders. The first RoWiP identified that driver attitude and awareness could be improved and Lincolnshire Road Safety Partnership has distributed information as part of its Driver Improvement Programme. The PRow team will continue to work with stakeholder groups to encourage courteous road use by motorists and all users to ensure they are acting responsibly on the road network.

NI 7

Continue to seek opportunities to encourage responsible, safe and courteous road use by drivers and all users.

Rail Safety –

Network Rail manages approximately 9000 level crossings across the country. Approximately 1500 level crossings are on public vehicular roads and the rest are in locations where public footpaths, bridleways and private roads and tracks cross the railway. The RoWiP rail crossing audit identified over 93 locations in Lincolnshire where PRow cross the rail network. Some of these are provided for by grade separated crossings such as a bridge or underpass, however a significant majority are at level crossings with no control measures other than a stile/gate at the line side and infill boarding between rails to avoid trip hazards.

A level crossing may take many forms depending on whether it is on a public or private road and whether it is for vehicles, pedestrians, cyclists or equestrian use. The layout, configuration and use of level crossings vary from location to location, so each location is essentially unique.

Level crossings, whether used mainly by motorists in built-up areas or by pedestrians in the countryside, are designed to look similar to the user. This is to help users understand what they need to do at a given crossing and to prevent conflicting messages. Users are always warned whenever they are approaching a level crossing.

In 2011 the Office of Rail Regulation (ORR) published *Managing Level Crossings: A Guide for Users, Designers and Operators*. The document provides guidance for both users and railway infrastructure managers on the safe management, operation, modification and use of Britain's crossings



The ORR policy on level crossings is to seek to reduce risk through a variety of means and, where practicable, reduce risk as far as possible through the elimination of level crossings in favour of bridges, underpasses or diversions. Where elimination is not possible, the ORR aims to ensure that Network Rail and other duty holders introduce measures to reduce risk so far as is reasonably practicable. Network Rail is continuing to identify ways of improving safety on Lincolnshire's PRow way crossings and has commenced negotiations regarding the diversion of a number of public paths.

NI 8

The County Council will continue to work with Network Rail to improve public safety at level crossings on Lincolnshire's public rights of way network.

Green Infrastructure

Green Infrastructure is defined as "a strategically planned and delivered network of high quality greenspaces and other environmental features which are designed and managed as a multi-functional resource capable of delivering a wide range of environmental and quality of life benefits for local communities". Green infrastructure includes open spaces, playing fields, woodlands, public rights of way, access links and other areas of accessible green spaces. The PRow network represents a major component of the green infrastructure network.

Green infrastructure is especially relevant to housing and economic growth. It is considered vital that as the population grows green infrastructure provision should increase accordingly. Further work is required to ensure that non-motorised users are fully considered during the planning and highway design process.

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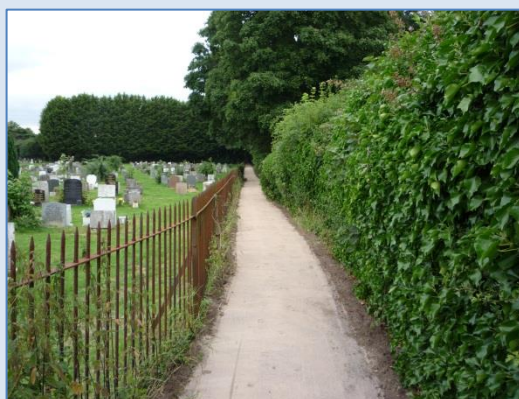
Improving Local Connections - Case Study

Local PRow can be a convenient means for travelling in both urban and rural areas to take children to school, travel to work or to reach shops and services.

Throughout the life of the first RoWIP, the county council has undertaken an extensive programme of surfacing works to improve routes linking communities with schools, employment centres and other local facilities. Over 5km of paths have been surfaced and additional small scale works have also been undertaken to improve path furniture and signage on identified routes.



Before



After

The pictures above show Surface improvements on Grantham Public Footpath No. 12: A well-used urban footpath connecting Harrowby Road, Grantham Cemetery and linking into the surrounding countryside.

NI 9	Identify and Improve of-road routes linking communities with schools, employment centres and local services.
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NI 10	Seek improvements for non-motorised travel in proposals for new developments. Schemes funded through developer contribution.
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Spa Trail

Green infrastructure also relates to the rural environment. In the wider countryside, green infrastructure is often viewed on a larger scale, encompassing accessible countryside sites, villages and major landscape features such as river corridors. Green infrastructure at this scale can provide the wider framework for planning at a more local level. It is clear from the stakeholder consultation that a significant increase in countryside access will not be achieved without the development of additional suitable routes.

NI 11

identify and develop circular and linear recreational routes to and from the countryside and tourism sites with appropriate green infrastructure partners

There is a range of green infrastructure plans and strategies in Lincolnshire which are having an increasing influence on the delivery and management of the PRoW network. Whilst the RoWIP will consider improvement across the whole PRoW and countryside access network, the County Council will prioritise areas which are covered by other green infrastructure plans and strategies e.g. the Coastal Country Park, the Wash Green Infrastructure Plan and the Witham Valley Country Park.

The creation of the green infrastructure project areas represents a significant opportunity to improve countryside access for residents and visitors. Concentrating efforts in defined areas will enable the countryside access network to be developed and improved within a strategic framework and improvements which have a proven evidence base to be prioritised. This approach will also enable a more efficient use of resources and increase the opportunities for gaining funding.

The PRoW team will work in conjunction with the green infrastructure project teams to maintain and improve the connectivity of the network and accessibility for all users, including those with a disability.

Improvements will range from smaller-scale projects such as the replacement of stiles with gates, improved signage and surface improvements to the amendment of the existing countryside access network. In undertaking improvements priority will be given to those schemes that can demonstrate local demand and lead to greater use.

NI 12 Improve access to, and within, green infrastructure areas for all members of society, including disabled users.

The development of the Lincolnshire section of the coastal trail will provide the public with numerous opportunities to access the county's coast and it will also make an important contribution to the tourism economy. The coastal trail will link a number of green infrastructure areas and tourist destinations along Lincolnshire's coast, improving existing coastal access and creating additional access where it does not currently exist.

Natural England is initially planning to develop the North Norfolk to Skegness section of the coastal trail between 2017 and 2018. In the longer term the coastal trail will extend northwards and connect up with the trail in North East Lincolnshire. Whilst the Marine and Coastal Access Act 2009 places Natural England under a duty to implement the coastal trail, the County Council will make an important contribution in the development and subsequent management of the route.

NI 13 Assist in the development of the Lincolnshire section of the National Coastal Trail.

Theddlethorpe and Saltfleetby Dunes National Nature Reserve (NNR) lies at the heart of the Coastal Grazing Marshes area and is a popular destination for visitors. There is a long history of de facto access on the NNR; in addition, horse riders may access the open beach by permit and there is an access for all route at Rimac to the south of Saltfleetby. The dedication of the site for public access towards the end of 2014 will provide significant opportunities to formalise existing access and offer additional access opportunities.

NI 14 To work with Natural England and the Coastal Grazing Marshes Project to maximise the access opportunities on Theddlethorpe and Saltfleetby Dunes NNR.

Unclassified County Roads (UCR)

There is an extensive network of UCRs, or minor roads, in Lincolnshire. The UCR network is a mixture of metalled and unsurfaced lanes which often display the physical characteristics of green lanes. These routes are included on the County Council's "list of streets" as highways which are publicly maintainable.

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Unclassified county roads can form useful links in the countryside access network and are particularly important to horse riders and cyclists, who rely on them to help create circular routes which minimise the use of busy or potentially hazardous stretches of roads. The network is also useful to disabled users as it often provides easy access to the countryside.

The UCR network is the main resource available to recreational motorists, with certain routes being very well-used. Many UCRs are also subject to legitimate private vehicular use by agricultural vehicles and to gain access to rural properties. Due to the unsealed nature of many green lanes the use by motor vehicles can lead to maintenance challenges.



The Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act 2006 introduced legislation which has significantly affected the public's right to use some UCRs with a mechanically propelled vehicle.

The research undertaken during the preparation of the first RoWIP concluded that better management of the UCR network is required. The majority of routes are still not regularly inspected or benefit from regular vegetation clearance or maintenance and it remains important to assess the condition of the UCR network when determining appropriate maintenance and repair options. Surveys provide current information on condition and are important to assess changes over time.

An extensive condition survey has been undertaken on over 400 UCRs throughout the County. The survey was used to record details such as surface condition, drainage, signage and enforcement issues and the gathered data has been used to produce a UCR management plan. It is now important to establish an inspection regime to monitor the condition of the UCR network and identify maintenance and enforcement issues.

NI 15

Utilising the volunteer network, establish an inspection regime of the recreational UCR network.

The initial network assessment has identified that there is a lack of integration with the PRow network which prevents users from taking full advantage of the unsurfaced road network. In order to address this situation the County Council has undertaken an extensive programme of signage on all UCRs in the county which are considered to have the highest network value.

NI 16	Complete the programme of UCR signage on UCRs with recreational value.
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The County Council does not currently possess a single record of all recreational UCRs in the County and has to rely on information which is compiled using a number of sources. Attempts to include UCR mapping information on the Countryside Access Map have so far been unsuccessful and caused confusion amongst some users. The provision of clear mapping information is essential in order to provide users with certainty over the routes which they can use, reducing conflict with landowners and enabling the County Council to manage the network more efficiently.

NI 17	Produce a digital layer of UCRs considered to be important recreational highways.
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Planning Context

The National Planning Policy Framework sets out the Government's planning policies for England and how these are expected to be applied. The framework outlines the role that the planning system ought to play in both the plan-making and decision-taking, process including actively managing patterns of growth to make the fullest possible use of walking and cycling. Planning policies should protect and enhance PRoW and access and local authorities should seek opportunities to provide better facilities for users by adding links to existing PRoW networks improving access to and enjoyment of the coast.

The planning policy also outlines how local plans should protect and exploit opportunities for the use of sustainable transport. In particular, developments should be located and designed where practical to give priority to pedestrian and cycle movements, create safe and secure layouts which minimise conflicts between traffic and cyclists or pedestrians, and consider the needs of people with disabilities by all modes of transport.

The Green Infrastructure Study for Central Lincolnshire aims to provide a strategic framework for guiding the planning and delivery of green infrastructure across Central Lincolnshire. It provides a broad assessment of the quantity, quality and accessibility of green infrastructure in 2011, and identifies opportunities for addressing deficiencies. The study sets out recommendations on priorities for green infrastructure delivery to support growth and development in the next 15-20 years. It is not intended to be a statement of Council policy.

Central Lincolnshire's green infrastructure comprises both greenspaces within urban areas, such as Hartsholme Country Park and the historic commons in Lincoln, and larger greenspaces in the countryside such as Laughton Wood. Major green corridors, such as the Witham Valley and Trent Valley, are particularly significant assets within Central Lincolnshire.

The overall objective is to improve and provide new green infrastructure in Central Lincolnshire by enhancing, developing and providing a multi-functional network of greenspaces, parks, rivers and other corridors within and around settlements that connect them to each other and the wider countryside, improving access, environmental quality and biodiversity.

The proposed green infrastructure network identifies broadly defined landscape scale corridors where targeting investment in green infrastructure is most likely to deliver multiple benefits across a range of key environmental, social and economic policy areas. The identified corridors provide key strategic linkages with green infrastructure networks in adjoining areas at the district and sub-regional level. The following strategic green corridors are proposed:

- Trent Green Corridor.
- Ancholme Green Corridor.
- Lincolnshire Wolds Green Corridor.
- Upper Witham Green Corridor.
- Lower Witham & Fens Green Corridor.
- Sleaford Green Corridor.
- Fossdyke Green Corridor.

Further information on the provision and enhancement of green infrastructure through the development process can be found in the Green Infrastructure section on [Page 39-42](#).

NI 18

To work with planning authorities and developers to identify and promote opportunities for sustainable access, recreation and movement to encourage healthy lifestyles and wellbeing for communities in Lincolnshire.

NI 19

To work with planning authorities and developers to enhance rights of way and cycling networks across Lincolnshire to encourage a modal shift to walking and cycling.

Theme 2 – Improved Customer Service

Reporting

The public's help in reporting issues is invaluable in managing the PRow network as it enables problems to be identified and dealt with outside the inspection regime. The information provided assists in the preparation and prioritisation of works, targeting enforcement, and in the management of the Countryside Access Volunteers.



Members of the public are able to report issues on Lincolnshire's public rights of way network using a variety of methods including-

- letter
- using the online reporting form
- telephoning the County Council's Customer Service Centre
- email
- through the corporate complaint procedure

All issues are logged as service requests and managed on Confirm, the County Council's highways asset management system.

In order to manage the service requests efficiently, works are also prioritised using the County Council's path priority system (revised 2013).

Figure 4 Path Priority System

Priority 1	Routes actively promoted by Lincolnshire County Council (e.g. Viking Way, bridle trails, recreational walk routes).
Priority 2	Routes that are known to be well used, predominantly close to settlements or routes promoted by other bodies and specifically endorsed by Lincolnshire County Council.
Priority 3	All other available routes.
Priority 4	Routes that can only be made available by the significant investment of capital resources or require extensive legal work to resolve alignments and obstructions.

Figure 5 Path Priority Service Standards

Priority	Ploughing and Cropping Infringements	Grass Cutting & Vegetation Clearance (Subject to cyclic programme)	Path Furniture out of repair and minor obstructions	New or replacement bridges	Surfacing Works
1	3 months	2 months	3 months	Subject to size, location and resource availability	Works subject to finance and availability of workforce
2	4 months	2 months	6 months		
3	Works subject to finance and availability of workforce.				
4	Works only to be undertaken when major issues are resolved.				

The timescales provided by the path priority system are for guidance only and there may be times when it is not possible to meet the service standards. In such cases the County Council will inform respondents of the reasons why and what action is being taken. Any report with health and safety considerations will be dealt with in a timescale dependent on an appropriate risk analysis.

Issues requiring enforcement action will be dealt with in accordance with the County Council’s PRow enforcement policy. This will enable effective and efficient enforcement action against those who interfere with the PRow network in a consistent, fair and balanced manner across the county.

Formal complaints are also processed within the timescales set out in the County Council’s Customer Service Charter. Complaints are acknowledged within 5 working days and the complainant is also notified after the issue has been resolved.

Whilst the path priority system and Confirm are used to manage the complaints system, complainants do not often receive a standard level of service across all 4 highways divisions and some complainants say they would have liked more feedback from the County Council.

The standardisation of the public rights of way complaints procedure would provide greater clarity to the public and other stakeholder groups on what they can expect and in what timescale. It is therefore proposed to publish a PRow Customer Service Charter in order to improve the customer experience.

CS 1

Publish a Public Rights of Way Customer Service Charter

Mapping of Public Rights of Way

The definitive map and statement is the legal record of all known PRow and provides conclusive evidence of the existence of a public path.

As surveying authority the County Council has a statutory duty to keep Lincolnshire's Definitive Map and Statement under continuous review and to make orders to take account of events requiring the map to be modified. This is carried out by the processing of Definitive Map Modification Orders (DMMOs) which are either applied for by the public or initiated by the authority on the discovery of evidence.

The County Council also has the power to make public path orders to create, divert or extinguish public footpaths, bridleways and restricted byways. Applications are normally made by landowners who seek to change the legal line of a path running over their land, although the County Council may initiate diversion and extinguishment orders itself.

In addition, public path orders may also be made to divert or extinguish a path to enable development to take place following planning consent. These orders are generally processed by the District / Borough Council which granted planning permission.



The existence of an accurate legal record of PRow is fundamental to the public's use of the network. As the definitive map is used by the Ordnance Survey to obtain PRow information for its Landranger and Explorer maps, it is important that the record is kept as accurate and up to date as possible.

In January 2014, there were 150 outstanding definitive map modification orders requiring determination. Continued work is needed to ensure that PRow are properly recorded and legally available to use. In addition, the County Council will continue to prioritise its work to ensure that the current backlog of claims is processed whilst making best use of the authority's resources.

The number of applications for modification orders may increase over the next few years due to the introduction of a statutory "cut-off" date for 2026, after which no applications based solely on historical evidence from before 1949 can be made. It will still be possible to submit user evidence based claims for routes dedicated after 1949.

At the time of writing this plan, the Deregulation Bill, which contains certain provisions relating to PRow, has not received Royal Assent and it is not possible to judge its impact.

CS 2 Continue to prioritise and address the current backlog of applications for Definitive Map Modification Orders.

In order to assist in the effective management of the backlog of applications, each application for a DMMO is processed on a “date received” basis unless it is considered that the case should be given a higher priority i.e. the issue is causing disruption to the life of the community or there is a significant threat to the route itself. Highways & Traffic Guidance Note HAT33/3/11 sets out the full policy and "exception criteria" for the processing of DMMO applications.

CS 3 Ensure new applications for Definitive Map Modification Orders are given higher priority where they result in the enhancement of the existing rights of way network.

In addition to the various mapping anomalies within the county, there is also a range of definitive map issues affecting cross-boundary routes, such as changes in path status and dead-end routes. Discussions are required with neighbouring counties to seek resolution of these issues.

CS 4 Seek resolution of cross-boundary issues and anomalies concerning the recorded status of public rights of way.

Technology

The Internet has transformed the means by which data can be provided and shared, and a growing number of people use it to access information. This not only allows the public to access information whilst at home but also enables information to be accessed using mobile devices in the countryside. The use of social media and mobile devices also provides opportunities to engage with a broader range of society to promote countryside access.

CS 5 Maximise the potential of the Internet and other media to provide information about the public rights of way network and countryside access.

The Lincolnshire County Council website is often the first point of contact for members of the public hoping to obtain information on access to the county’s countryside. Between October 2012 and October 2013 there were on average over 8000 individual page hits per month on the Countryside microsite. The website contains a comprehensive range of material including general information, policies,

downloadable forms, promoted route information and an online problem reporting form.

The Countryside microsite was extensively revised during the implementation of the first PRoWIP and a number of new features have been incorporated in the website. It is considered that there is still scope to develop the Countryside microsite to meet the changing needs of the public in using PRoW and countryside sites.

The Lincolnshire County Council Countryside microsite can be viewed at:

www.lincolnshire.gov.uk/countryside

All PRoW in the county have been digitised and are recorded on the Countryside Access Map, the County Council's Geographical Information System (GIS), and this information is available to members of the public on the Countryside microsite. This has provided opportunities to deliver detailed information to a broad range of people and enables users to discover new routes. The Countryside Access Map also enables potential path users to access path infrastructure information and photographs illustrating the conditions on individual paths. In this way, users with particular requirements could, for example, identify routes that are stile free. Further work is required to develop the functionality and reliability of the Countryside Access Map.

CS 6 Develop the Countryside Access Map to incorporate greater functionality and reliability.

The accurate recording of highways data in GIS systems allows a variety of linked data to be recorded. These include customer reports, assets along the network and legal changes. Other agencies and stakeholder groups also use and, in some cases, display the County Council's public rights of way data set including developers, user groups and adjacent authorities.

CS 7 The authority will co-ordinate with other agencies to provide access data, including the exchange of information.

Customer-Focussed Policies and Working Practices

The stakeholder consultation highlighted a desire to develop a more customer focused approach in the management of the PRoW network and emphasised the need to develop suitable policies to help deliver improvements.

Policies are an increasingly important management tool which not only provide clarity to the public on the level of service which they are likely to receive, but are also important at a time when limited resources must be carefully targeted.

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'It is more important than ever to have policies as this enables limited resources to be more carefully targeted and enables budgetary and service provision decisions to be justified.'

South Lincolnshire and Rutland Local Access Forum

It is a basic requirement that any local authority service should be easily accessible to the public. Policies and procedures should be clear, accurate and contain easily understandable information about the PRow function. This will also enable the public to understand what they can and cannot expect of the County Council. Whilst policies may provide a framework for the management of the PRow network, it is important to ensure that they are effectively implemented.

One of the main themes of the first RoWIP has been the development and review of policies and this has enabled a more planned and strategic approach to be adopted in the management of the PRow network. Four policies have been published or revised during the implementation of the first RoWIP to reflect changes in legislation and reduced funding.

These policies are:

- Definitive Map Modification Order Priority Policy
- Enforcement Policy and Guidance Manual
- Countryside Accessibility Policy
- Path Prioritisation and Estimated Work Timescales Policy

The Countryside Access Policy outlines the legal framework in relation to disabled countryside access and provides a desired standard for the provision and maintenance of path furniture and surface improvement works.

It will be necessary to develop additional customer and service-focused policies in the coming years in order to reflect changes in legislation, funding regimes and County Council priorities.

'Further issues which are identified in the future concerning PRow should also be documented as a policy. All PRow policy documents should have input from the Forum and other user bodies to ensure all concerned understand the relevant policy.'

South Lincolnshire and Rutland Local Access Forum

CS 8

Produce relevant policies which are clear and contain understandable information about the public rights of way function.

The draft Deregulation Bill, published in July 2013, aims to reduce the burden of excessive regulation on businesses, individuals and civil society. It contains a number of proposals that are important for local authorities, some of which have implications for the management of the PRow network.

Proposals in the Bill include:

- Changes to the processes involved in modifying the Definitive Map and Statement and the extinguishment of all unrecorded rights after 2026.
- Rights of access to land which were reliant on previously unrecorded public rights will be converted to private rights.
- Proposals regarding the right to apply for public path orders.
- Authorisation of gates on restricted byways and byways for stock control purposes on agricultural land.
- New powers to modify the definitive map on discovery of obvious errors.

Information Provision

The County Council recognises that the effective provision of information is essential in the management of a successful PRow network. Information is provided in a variety of formats in order to access the widest possible audience. As previously outlined in the Technology section, the County Council website is often the first place visited to obtain public rights of way information.

Other sources of information include:

- walking and cycling leaflets
- letters and reports
- signage and on-site interpretation
- information leaflets
- attendance at shows

People also obtain information about recreational opportunities in the countryside from external sources such as published guides and Ordnance Survey maps. This material helps to promote the work of the County Council and develop public support.

Promotional material increases the public's enjoyment of the countryside by helping people to understand the natural and historic environment, and helps to ensure that the public is aware of the need to protect this environment. Information also ensures that both users and landowners are aware of their rights and responsibilities, so that conflict can be minimised and the Council's resources used more effectively.

CS 9

The County Council will help people to understand the public rights of way network and the use of the countryside.

The provision of information enables users to make their own decisions on whether routes are suitable for them. Knowing what to expect from a route can offer a degree of confidence which users may not otherwise experience. The provision of information is also an important link that enables a person deciding whether to visit a route to successfully complete a visit.

The value of the public rights of way network and countryside access to the visitor economy has already been recognised in the first Lincolnshire RoWIP. Local businesses such as tea shops, public houses and bike hire companies rely on visitors to the countryside for valuable custom. A wider range of businesses also benefit from the custom of visitors and residents when purchasing equipment and supplies.

The Lincolnshire Wolds Walking Festival was launched in 2005 and has now established itself as one of the largest festivals in the Country. The walking festival is a partnership between voluntary walk leaders from a range of organisations and the local authorities situated within the Lincolnshire Wolds Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty. The 2013 event was the biggest festival to date, with walkers taking part in other 100 walks from gentle strolls on flat terrain to energetic day-long treks of up to 20 miles in length.

The County Council will continue to work in partnership with a range of organisations to develop promoted walks and rides in green infrastructure project areas such as the Coastal Grazing Marshes Project and Coastal Country Park.

CS 10 The County Council will work with partner organisations to create promoted walks and rides in green infrastructure areas.

The Viking Way is a long-distance footpath which starts on the banks of the River Humber at Barton-upon-Humber and winds its way through Lincolnshire, finishing on the shores of Rutland Water at Oakham. The reduction in available resources has prevented a review of the Viking Way during the life of the first RoWIP. It is now proposed to undertake a full review of the trail to coincide with the 40th anniversary of the trail in 2016.

CS 11 Undertake a full review of the Viking Way.

The public requires comprehensive web-based information concerning the full range of opportunities. In addition to general countryside access information, users also require links to tourism web sites which provide accommodation and transport information.

Despite the diverse range of communication with our customers, the stakeholder consultation revealed that there is still scope to provide more effective communication.

'We need better engagement with local communities through improved information about what the County Council do and assisting those who want to take a more active role in helping to maintain and develop the access network'.

Colsterworth and District Parish Council

In providing greater information about the location of routes, how to get to them and what to expect whilst enjoying them, we will encourage more people to access and enjoy the countryside for a variety of purposes. To make sure that resources are used efficiently it is important to monitor the effectiveness of the information we produce and its distribution. This ensures that the right information is reaching the right people in the right locations.



There is also an opportunity to examine ways of producing material in a wider range of formats so that it appeals to a broader range of interests and needs. Such information would assist in meeting the needs of various groups, for example young people, families, the elderly and disabled people.

CS 12 Examine ways of producing material in a wider range of formats so that it appeals to a broader range of interests and needs.

Equality and Diversity

The RoWIP must have particular regard to the accessibility of PRow to blind or partially sighted persons and others with mobility impairment. RoWIP guidance defines “mobility impairment” in its broadest sense and includes people with either temporary or permanent mobility impairment which includes older people, younger people, pregnant women, people experiencing ill health, carers of people with visibility and mobility impairment, people who use wheelchairs and people who use pushchairs to carry young children.



The Equality Act 2010 states that there is a need to take “reasonable” measures to avoid discrimination. Circumstances such as costs, potential benefits to other customers, resources available and practicalities will need to be taken into consideration. The implementation of actual accessibility improvements will depend on various issues, and vary from location to location and result in different levels of accessibility and types of improvements.

The Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000 places a legal duty on highway authorities to consider people with mobility problems and visual impairment when authorising structures on public footpaths and bridleways. The Act also allows authorities to enter into agreements with landowners to improve stiles, gates or other structures that will benefit disabled users on the PRow network.

The 2011 Census showed that 27% of households in the county have at least one person with long-term health problems or a disability. However, only 4% of people registered as disabled are wheelchair users and relatively minor improvement to public rights of way such as the replacement of stiles with gates, better maintenance and promotion could potentially open up much of the countryside access network to a wider range of people.

SI 1

Develop a range of key routes that meet the needs of restricted mobility users and publicise these with disability groups.

Lincolnshire has a small and diverse ethnic population. The 2011 Census showed that 2.7% of the population does not speak English as a first language and 4.7% of

the population was born in other EU countries. Research suggests that people from ethnic minority groups can lack confidence using the countryside for recreation and have different cultural and language needs. The lack of appropriate publicity and information can act as a barrier to some sections of the population enjoying the countryside.

Social exclusion exists in both rural and urban communities, including prosperous and less well-off areas. Measures of social exclusion and deprivation based on income, employment, health, education, housing, crime and living environment tend to show that rural areas are generally more prosperous than urban areas.

Deprivation in urban areas tends to be concentrated in particular neighbourhoods, whereas rural social exclusion tends to be more dispersed and therefore harder to identify. The situation is most acute in East Lindsey, which reports higher levels of multiple deprivation. Households on low incomes, and without access to their own transport, can find it difficult to gain access to services. The accessibility of PRoW way in urban areas can assist in achieving improved accessibility to jobs and services.

Over the 10 years from 2001 to 2011, the population of Lincolnshire has had an average annual percentage increase exceeding that of the East Midlands and the national average. Over this period the districts of Boston, North Kesteven and South Holland have all had an average annual population growth rate of at least double the national average. By 2021 Lincolnshire's population is projected to increase by 11% compared to 9% nationally. This growth is largely due to people moving to the county to live and work. The increasing population is also an ageing one, with over 20% of the county's and 26% of East Lindsey's population over 65.

Research for the first RoWIP highlighted that people under the age of 25 do not regard the countryside as a place to visit and enjoy. This, coupled with the increasing popularity and availability of technology, can contribute to a lack of physical exercise in younger people, leading to obesity and associated health problems.

SI 2 Continue to work towards promoting the countryside and rights of way access to the widest possible audience.

Community Involvement

The reduction of resources, and changes to national and county council policy, have led to an increase in the number of volunteers involved in the delivery of the PRoW function. The stakeholder consultation highlighted that the network is highly valued and that there is a clear desire by many people to become involved in the management of the network.

The work of the PRoW team is greatly enhanced by the help and support of numerous volunteers. In addition to their assistance in the management of the

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network, using volunteers presents a valuable opportunity to engage with the community. Volunteers are involved in a diverse range of activities on the county's network, from surveys to involvement in the countryside access volunteer scheme and path users who report issues on the network.

In addition to physically assisting in the management of public rights of way, volunteer effort presents other benefits. Increased involvement provides volunteers with a valuable insight into the issues which the County Council faces in the management of PRow and provides the public with greater ownership of their local paths.

The County Council's vision is to "engage with the community, to promote the opportunities for volunteering, to improve our services and to develop capacity within the third sector by providing opportunities for volunteers to work within services throughout LCC." [Source: Lincolnshire County Council Use of Volunteers Policy and Guidance, July 2010].

Lincolnshire has a significant population of older, retired people, which is projected to increase. By involving volunteers the County Council is able to benefit from a wealth of local knowledge and information associated with issues at specific locations. Volunteering experience can also potentially provide training and experience for younger people in preparation for employment.

'Different volunteer skills will be required for different activities. Those who walk as a pastime will probably be better for survey work than local dog walkers. For maintenance work the problem may be finding volunteers willing to commit their time on a regular basis.'

The Ramblers

Local Access Forums (LAFs) - The Lincolnshire Local Access Forums are statutory bodies set up to advise on the improvement of public access for the purpose of outdoor recreation and enjoyment of the area. Two LAFs were established in 2003, covering Lincolnshire, North East Lincolnshire and Rutland. The Mid Lincolnshire LAF is a joint forum between Lincolnshire County Council and North East Lincolnshire Council. The South Lincolnshire and Rutland LAF (South Lincs Forum) is a joint forum between Lincolnshire County Council and Rutland County Council.

Each LAF consists of up to 18 members representing a wide range of interests, including PRow users, land managers and farmers, rural businesses, health, heritage, nature conservation, tourism, transport, disability groups and minority groups. Both forums have provided advice and assistance on a number of issues during the implementation of the first Lincolnshire RoWIP.

The County Council has developed a number of initiatives aimed at increasing opportunities for volunteers to become involved in PRow work. These include the Ease of Use Survey and Countryside Access Wardens.

Rights of Way Improvement Plan 2014 -19

Ease of Use Survey: The County Council now undertakes the twice-yearly ‘Ease of Use Survey’ using volunteers from the Ramblers Association. The survey is used to establish the overall accessibility, or ease of use, of the definitive PRoW network in the county. 10% of the entire network is surveyed each year: 5% in May and 5% in November. Completing the survey in two parts takes account of seasonal variations in the network e.g. vegetation clearance in May and surface condition in November.

SI 3 Continue to utilise volunteer effort for the undertaking of public rights of way condition surveys.

Countryside Access Volunteers: The County Council has developed this scheme to assist in the management of the PRoW network. Volunteers are expected to regularly walk a network of PRoW, cut back localised overgrowth and report problems. The scheme, which started in 2012, has led to volunteers taking responsibility for PRoW throughout Lincolnshire. There are now over 100 volunteers.

SI 4 Continue to support and develop the Countryside Access Volunteer scheme.

Work is also underway to develop partnerships with a variety of community groups to undertake regular tasks such as the installation of gates and vegetation clearance.

SI 5 Explore additional opportunities to utilise volunteer work groups to undertake practical public rights of way maintenance and improvement tasks.

SI 6 Seek further opportunities to expand the contribution which volunteers make to the management of the public rights of way network e.g. undertaking historical route research.

Parish Councils

Local people value the role countryside access plays in improving their quality of life and have a wealth of local knowledge and ideas concerning how their path network should be managed and developed. A number of parish councils have highlighted the need to work more closely with the County Council in the management of the network. Whilst parish councils have no specific statutory duties for PRoW they can make a significant contribution to public path management. Parish Councils have powers to undertake a broad range of tasks which can greatly improve the public’s enjoyment

of the countryside network, including undertaking surface repairs and cutting back surface vegetation.

The Parish Paths Partnership Scheme (P3) was introduced in Lincolnshire in 1994. The Countryside Agency (now Natural England) originally provided financial support in partnership with Lincolnshire County Council to enable local communities to improve and promote their own PRow network. However, since April 2000 the scheme has been wholly supported and funded by the County Council. The County Council has local agreements with over 90 Parish Councils.

A review of the P3 scheme indicated that 82% of the groups consider the scheme to be a success. Some of the parish councils remarked that the scheme has allowed them to have greater control of their local rights of way network and prioritise vegetation clearance and other improvements to meet the needs of the local community.

The review also revealed that only 40% of the participating parishes were active over a 3-year period and the vast majority of the implemented schemes had involved vegetation clearance works. Whilst the demand for undertaking vegetation clearance works through the P3 scheme is likely to be linked to the reduction in the County Council's cyclic mowing schedule, there is a need to encourage parish councils to implement a broader range of projects, including PRow improvement schemes.

SI 7 Seek opportunities to develop the Parish Paths Partnership scheme to enhance its community benefit.

Health Agenda

The PRow network provides opportunities for daily exercise in natural green spaces, which can enhance quality of life and improve health. A network of improved PRow and countryside sites can positively contribute towards healthier lifestyles.

There is a wealth of evidence to show the benefits of activity in the outdoors to both physical and mental health. Physical inactivity is an increasing problem and is directly linked to the continuing rise in obesity. It is recognised that a sedentary lifestyle can lead to a greater risk of disease including coronary heart disease, stroke, obesity, diabetes, raised blood pressure levels, anxiety and stress.

Stress and mental ill health are becoming more common and the World Health Organisation estimates that by 2020, depression and depression-related illness will become the greatest source of ill health. Depression and mental ill health is one of the fastest growing conditions in England.

The PRoW network provides opportunities for walking, cycling and horse riding to access the countryside and enjoy outdoor recreation. In urban areas, using PRoW can be a viable alternative to using a car for short journeys to shops and local services, and can get people into the routine of taking regular exercise for utility trips as well as recreational visits to the wider countryside.

The main health benefits of using the PRoW network are:

- Opportunity to take part in physical exercise,
- Contribution to maintaining good health and recovery from illness,
- Reducing stress,
- Social activity: reducing loneliness through social interaction.

Lincolnshire is a large, sparsely populated rural county and the proportion of elderly people is increasing, with over 20% of the population of retirement age. The urban wards generally report higher levels of health deprivation than rural wards. Increasing levels of participation in physical activity can make a notable contribution to the prevention and treatment of disease, and reduce health inequalities. There is growing concern about falling levels of physical activity in children, and regular exercise is seen as an important activity to maintain health and prevent obesity. It is recommended that adults are physically active for at least 30 minutes a day and young people for approximately one hour a day.

The provision of accessible path networks within and between settlements and into the surrounding countryside provides an incentive for people to walk and cycle. These networks also enable people to take up a more regular exercise routine.

Walking is the most cost-effective way of getting people to become, and stay, active. The Walking for Health scheme was established in 2000 and now has over 600 local schemes and 75000 regular walkers nationwide. The Walking for Health network supports the largest network of health walk schemes across England, offering regular short walks over easy terrain with trained walk leaders. Walking for Health has been particularly successful in Lincolnshire and the number of participants has significantly grown since its introduction. In Lincolnshire the Health Walks programme is delivered by the district councils and coordinated by the Lincolnshire Sports Partnership using funding from the County Council's Department for Public Health. The network relies heavily on volunteer effort and this has enabled the established groups to continue growing and become sustainable.

Health Walking in Lincolnshire

Key Facts:

- Walker numbers have increased from 517 in March 09 to 1694 in March 12.
- There were 2555 individual active walkers in 2011/12.
- An average of 14 people attend each walk.
- 72% of walkers are female.
- Many of the participants are older people.



- The scheme has proved an effective method of reaching people in deprived wards

Improving Lincolnshire's Walking for Health Network – Case Study

The County Council worked with the Lincolnshire Primary Care Trust during the implementation of the first RoWIP to develop the county's walking for health network. During 2008/09 nearly 500 miles of routes were surveyed throughout the county to identify areas for improvement. This enabled the implementation of a targeted programme of works designed at improving the accessibility of the network.

The network improvements included;

- 52 stiles replaced with kissing gates,
- 1km of surface improvement works undertaken,
- 4 bridges replaced,
- 3 bridges upgraded,
- 2 boardwalks installed,
- Funding provided to the Boston Woods Trust to enable improved access to the Westgate Wood extension,



SI 8 Encourage the use of the public rights of way network to enhance health and well-being.

SI 9 Work with partners to support and expand the Walking for Health scheme and develop other initiatives in Lincolnshire.

SI 10 Work with walking for health groups to identify improvements to the health walking network and implement appropriate schemes depending on the availability of resources.

PART 2

- **Implementation Plan**
- **Reporting and Monitoring**

Implementation Plan



The County Council is required to prepare a statement of the actions it proposes to take in securing an improved network of local PRoW.

The improvements in the Implementation Plan are grouped into 3 themes;

Theme 1 – Network Improvements

Theme 2 – Improved Customer Service

Theme 3 – Social Inclusion

The 3 themes are designed to reflect recent changes in the management of PRow and the need to find more customer-focussed and efficient methods of delivering the service.

Partners: RoWIP2 has an increased focus on achieving goals and objectives through working in partnership with key stakeholders. This approach will provide best value and improved efficiency in the delivery of the RoWIP. The delivery partners for each action are indicated in the Implementation Plan.

Key partners will be:

Town and Parish Councils – **PC**
Parish Paths Partnerships groups – **P3**
User Groups – **User**
Green Infrastructure Projects – **GIP**
Voluntary Groups – **Vol**
Local Access Forums – **LAF**
District and Borough Councils - **DC**
Natural England - **NE**
Farmers and Landowners - **Land**
Disability Groups – **Dis**
Highways Agency – **HA**
Lincolnshire Road Safety Partnership - **LRSP**
Network Rail – **NR**
Neighbouring Local Authorities – **NLA**
Developers - **Dev**
Walking for Health Groups – **WHG**
Lincolnshire County Council Public Health - **PH**

Timescales: The timescales indicated are indicative only and it is acknowledged that the legal processes involved are often subject to lengthy timescales and the overall delivery of the plan is dependent on the identification of suitable resources.

Cost: It is difficult to include precise figures for all of the identified action points. The following symbols have been used to indicate potential costs.

0 A project that does not cost anything other than existing resources

£ A small project probably costing less than £5,000

££ A project probably costing between £5,000 and £50,000

£££ A project probably costing more than £50,000

£ denotes projects funded by Lincolnshire County Council

£ denotes partnership funding by Lincolnshire County Council and external bodies

£ denotes projects funded wholly by external bodies.

THEME 1: Network Improvements					
Area for Improvement	Actions		Partners	Timescales	Cost
Infrastructure Improvements	NI 1	The County Council will work with parish councils and community groups to deliver community-led schemes which can meet local demand and lead to greater use.	PC, P3, User, GIP, LAF, Land,	Ongoing	£££
	NI 2	Reduce the number of unnecessary barriers – remove stiles where practical and replace with gaps, gates or kissing gates to increase accessibility.	PC, Land, Vol, P3, WHG	Ongoing	££
	NI 3	The County Council will aim to prioritise and implement improvement suggestions included in community and village plans.	PC, P3, Land	Ongoing	£££
Enforcement	NI 4	The County Council will provide effective enforcement on the public rights of way network by prioritising customer reports.	PC, User, Land	Ongoing	0
Safety	NI 5	Examine opportunities to improve road safety on the public rights of way network and implement appropriate schemes depending on the availability of resources.	User, LRSP	Ongoing	£££
	NI 6	The County Council will work with the Highways Agency to identify and implement safety improvements at	User, HA	2017	£££

		locations where the public rights of way network intersects with the A1.			
	NI 7	Continue to seek opportunities to encourage responsible, safe and courteous road use by drivers and all users.	User, LRSP	2017	£
	NI 8	The County Council will continue to work with Network Rail to improve public safety at level crossings on Lincolnshire's public rights of way network.	User, NR	Ongoing	£££
Green Infrastructure	NI 9	Identify and Improve off-road routes linking communities with schools, employment centres and local services.	PC, User, GIP, Land	Ongoing	£££
	NI 10	Seek improvements for non-motorised travel in proposals for new developments. Schemes funded through developer contribution.	LAF, Dev, DC	Ongoing	£££
	NI 11	Identify and develop circular and linear recreational routes to and from the countryside and tourism sites with appropriate green infrastructure partners.	LAF, PC, P3, User, Land, GIP, Vol	Ongoing	£££
	NI 12	Improve access to, and within, green infrastructure areas for all members of society, including disabled users.	PC, User, GIP, LAF, Land, Dis	Ongoing	£££
	NI 13	Assist in the development of the Lincolnshire section of the National Coastal Trail.	User, GIP, LAF, NE, Land	Ongoing	£££

	NI 14	To work with Natural England and the Coastal Grazing Marshes Project to maximise the access opportunities on Theddlethorpe and Saltfleetby Dunes NNR.	GIP, NE	2015	£
Unclassified County Roads	NI 15	Utilising the volunteer network, establish an inspection regime of the recreational Unclassified County Road network.	User, Vol,	2014	£
	NI 16	Complete the programme of UCR signage on UCRs with recreational value.	User, Land	2014	£
	NI 17	Produce a digital layer of UCRs considered to be important recreational highways.	User	2014	0
Policy Context	NI 18	To work with planning authorities and developers to identify and promote opportunities for sustainable access, recreation and movement to encourage healthy lifestyles and wellbeing for communities in Lincolnshire.	Dev, GIP, DC	Ongoing	£££
	NI 19	To work with planning authorities and developers to enhance rights of way and cycling networks across Lincolnshire to encourage a modal shift to walking and cycling.	DC, GIP, Dev	Ongoing	£££

THEME 2: Improved Customer Service					
Area for Improvement	Actions		Partners	Timescales	Cost
Reporting	CS 1	Publish a Public Rights of Way Customer Service Charter.	User, LAF	2015	0
Mapping Accuracy	CS 2	Continue to prioritise and address the current backlog of applications for Definitive Map Modification Orders.	User, LAF	Ongoing	0
	CS 3	Ensure new applications for Definitive Map Modification Orders are given higher priority where they result in the enhancement of the existing public rights of way network.	User, GIP, LAF, Land	Ongoing	0
	CS 4	Seek resolution of cross-boundary issues and anomalies concerning the recorded status of rights of way.	PC, User, LAF, NLA	2016	££
Technology	CS 5	Maximise the potential of the Internet and other media to provide information about the public rights of way network and countryside access.	User, GIP	Ongoing	£
	CS 6	Develop the Countryside Access Map to incorporate greater functionality and reliability.	User, LAF	2016	££
	CS 7	The authority will co-ordinate with other agencies to provide access data, including the exchange of information.	User, GIP, NE, NLA,	Ongoing	0

Customer Focussed Policies and Working Practices	CS 8	Produce relevant policies which are clear and contain accessible information about the public rights of way function.	User, LAF	Ongoing	0
Information Provision	CS 9	The County Council will help people to understand the public rights of way network and use of the countryside.	PC, P3, User, LAF, NE	Ongoing	0
	CS 10	The County Council will work with partner organisations to create promoted walks and rides in green infrastructure areas.	GIP	Ongoing	££
	CS 11	Undertake a full review of the Viking Way.	User, GIP, Vol, Land, NLA	2016	££
	CS 12	Examine ways of producing material in a wider range of formats so that it appeals to a broader range of interests and needs.	GIP, Dis, User, Vol	Ongoing	£

THEME 3: Social Inclusion					
Area for Improvement	Actions		Partners	Timescales	Cost
Equality and Diversity	SI 1	Develop a range of key routes that meet the needs of restricted mobility users and publicise these with disability groups.	User, GIP, Dis	2015	££
	SI 2	Continue to work towards promoting the countryside and rights of way access to the widest possible audience.	GIP, LAF	Ongoing	££
Community Involvement	SI 3	Continue to utilise volunteer effort for the undertaking of public rights of way conditions surveys.	User, Vol	Ongoing	£
	SI 4	Continue to support and develop the Countryside Access Volunteer scheme.	Vol	Ongoing	£
	SI 5	Explore additional opportunities to utilise volunteer work groups to undertake practical public rights of way maintenance and improvement tasks.	P3, Vol, Users	Ongoing	£
	SI 6	Seek further opportunities to expand the contribution which volunteers make to the management of the public rights of way network.	PC, P3, User, GIP Vol	Ongoing	£
Parish Councils	SI 7	Seek opportunities to develop the Parish Paths Partnership scheme to enhance its community benefit.	PC, P3	Ongoing	££

Health Agenda	SI 8	Encourage the use of the public rights of way network to enhance health and well-being.	WHG, PH	Ongoing	££
	SI 9	Work with partners to support and expand the Walking for Health scheme and develop other initiatives in Lincolnshire.	WHG, PH, Vol	Ongoing	££
	SI 10	Work with walking for health groups to identify improvements to the health walking network and implement appropriate schemes depending on the availability of resources.	User, WHG, PH, Vol	Ongoing	££

Reporting & Monitoring



The County Council will undertake regular monitoring in order to maintain an overview of the actions being taken in the implementation of the RoWIP. Annual delivery plans will be published outlining the progress made in the delivery of the improvement plan, which will be published on the Lincolnshire County Council website. Quarterly updates will also be delivered to the Mid Lincolnshire LAF and the South Lincolnshire and Rutland LAF.

The delivery plans will provide detailed information concerning the work undertaken by the County Council and stakeholder groups, including the improvements made during the day-to-day management of the PRow network. In addition to reporting on the successes of RoWIP implementation, annual delivery plans will also identify areas where difficulties have been encountered and look forward to the work required in coming years.

APPENDICES

- Appendix 1 Bibliography**
- Appendix 2 Glossary of Terms**
- Appendix 3 List of Figures and Maps**

Appendix 1 Bibliography

Rights of Way Improvement Plans Statutory Guidance to Local Highway Authorities in England - DEFRA

Guidance on Local Access Forums in England – DEFRA

Local Transport Plan and Rights of Way Improvement Plan Integration - Natural England

Guidance on Local Transport Plans – DfT

Guidance on Local Transport Plans and the Natural Environment – Natural England

National Policy Framework – Department for Communities and Local Government

Lincolnshire Rights of Way Improvement Plan 2007-12

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Lincolnshire Local Transport Plan 4

Lincolnshire County Council Engagement Policy – 2013

Lincolnshire County Council Use of Volunteers Policy and Guidance – 2010

Lincolnshire County Council Organisational Strategy 2012-15

East Lindsey District Council Steam Report 2012 -Global Tourism Solutions (UK) Ltd

2011 Census for England and Wales

Green Infrastructure Study for Central Lincolnshire – Chris Blandford Associates

Lincolnshire County Council Natural Environment Strategy 2012-2018

Lincolnshire Health Walks Annual Report 2011/12 Lincolnshire Sports Partnership

The Draft Deregulation Bill 2013

Green Infrastructure Guidance – Natural England 2009

Managing Level Crossings: A Guide for Users, Designers and Operators - Office of Rail Regulation

Rights of Way Improvement Plan 2014 -19

Appendix 2 Glossary of Terms

Access Land or Open Country A specific area of land where a right of access on foot applies. The Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000 defines open country as mapped areas of mountain, moor, heath and down and registered common land.

AONB (Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty) An area of countryside designated and protected for its attractive landscape.

BOAT (Byway Open to All Traffic) A route which may be used by walkers, cyclists, horse riders, carriage drivers and motor vehicles.

Coastal Access The Marine & Coastal Access Act 2009 places a duty on Natural England and the Secretary of State to secure a route around the whole of the English coast: the England Coast Path. The Act also requires that areas of associated spreading room are created wherever possible.

Countryside Access Map A map on the County Council's website showing public rights of way and other access opportunities www.lincolnshire.gov.uk/countryside

CRoW (Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000) An Act of parliament, which included new duties for highway authorities in England and Wales to publish Rights of Way Improvement Plans (ROWIPS), introduced a new right of access on foot to areas of Access Land, and established Local Access Forums.

DDA Disability Discrimination Act 1995

DEFRA Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs

Definitive Map and Statement The legal record of all known public rights of way, showing their position and legal status.

DfT Department for Transport

DMMO (Definitive Map Modification Order) Legal process used to record a public right of way in the definitive map and statement.

GIS (Geographical Information System) Computerised mapping system used by the County Council.

EA Equality Act 2010

Highway Division Administrative area used by the County Council for the management of the public highway network.

LAF (Local Access Forum) A statutory body established under the CRoW Act 2000 to provide strategic advice on the improvement of access to the countryside.

LTP Local Transport Plan

MCAA Marine and Coastal Act 2009

MPV Mechanically Propelled Vehicle Users

NERC Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act 2006

ORR Office of Rail Regulation

P3 (Parish Paths Partnership) A partnership scheme between parish councils and the County Council to look after paths in their area.

Permissive Path A path where the landowner has given permission for the public to use the route.

PPO (Public Path Order) The legal process to change the existing path network e.g. by diverting or extinguishing routes.

Public Bridleway A route used on foot, by cyclists and horseriders.

Public Footpath A public right of way which can be used on foot.

PROW (Public Right of Way) A way over which the public have a right to pass and repass. Footpath, bridleway, restricted byway or byway open to all traffic.

Registered Common Land An area of land shown on the Commons Register. These sites are subject to the new right of access on foot under CRoW.

Restricted Byway A public right of way for use by walkers, cyclists, horse riders and carriage drivers. Mechanically propelled vehicles users are not entitled to use these routes.

RoWIP Rights of Way Improvement Plan

STEAM Report Scarborough Tourism Economic Activity Monitor to calculate the economic impact of tourism

SUSTRANS A charity which works with Local Authorities and transport bodies to develop strategy and vision for the delivery of cycling, walking and sustainable travel change.

UCR (Unclassified County Road) A minor public highway, commonly referred to as "green lane". Some are unsurfaced.

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Agenda Item 7



A statutory advisory body to Lincolnshire County Council, North East Lincolnshire Council and other providers of outdoor recreational access

Report to:	Lincolnshire Joint Local Access Forum
Date:	23 April 2024
Subject:	Countryside For All

Summary:

This report provides an update on the work of Countryside For All.

Actions Required:

1. To request an update from Lincolnshire County Council on the progress of towpath surface improvements to Grantham Canal.
2. To request that Lincolnshire County Council and North East Lincolnshire Council provide an update at the next meeting of the Local Access Forum on the data held on Publish Rights of Way Furniture on the network.
3. That anyone interested in helping make the countryside more accessible for those with limited mobility email John Law.

1. Background

1.1 Countryside For All and LCC Route leaflets

We are now aiming for the first orders for the Countryside For All leaflets to go out in late May. We will also be asking our distributors to place orders for an October delivery. LCC Public Health and Active Lincolnshire will also be promoting these leaflets from this year forward. There were over 12,000 Countryside For All leaflets distributed last year and 5495 LCC walks leaflets distributed by us.

The Lincolnshire County Council South, Thoresby Warren route surface, has now been brought back into a suitable standard for us to include it in the Countryside For All portfolio of leaflets.

We will be resurveying South Thoresby Warren and Chapel Six Marshes before these leaflets go to the designers for amending and printing.

1.2 Funding for leaflets in 2024

Unfortunately we are now not allowed to apply for Lincolnshire County Council grants.

We are fortunate in that Lincolnshire County Council Public Health have funded the route leaflets for the Lincolnshire County Council sites, at the Spa Trail, South Thoresby Warren and Chapel Six Marshes. City of Lincoln have funded Hartsholme Country Park leaflet. Hubbard's Hills Trust have funded the leaflets for Hubbard's Hills.

A big thank you goes to the Lincolnshire Coop and their customers, as on the 26th March, the Lincolnshire Coop informed us that they have raised £1256.75 through the Community Champions Fund for the Countryside For All leaflets

Just Giving has raised £450.

We are continuing to try and raise funds from businesses. As at 1st March 2024, we have 10 sites requiring 10,500 leaflets with no sponsors. If we do not receive further sponsorship from businesses by the end of April, we will be using some of the money we have available to fund these leaflets.

We still urgently need to fill the role of fund raiser.

1.3 New Countryside Fo All Sites in Lincolnshire

If funding is still available and the work required is completed for the Natural England Rimac site, a leaflet will be created later in the year.

We also aim to have leaflets available for Owlet Wood near Blyton and the Sustrans route from Skellingthorpe.

1.4 Grantham Canal

We have arranged another date for a meeting with the Canal and River Trust and the Grantham Canal Trust, with the aim of getting the towpath surface improved. Lincolnshire County Council is working on getting the link from the road to the towpath on the definitive map.

ACTION: Can Lincolnshire County Council update us on the progress?

1.5 Across the Lincolnshire Borders

As mentioned previously the only complaint we have from people in Lincolnshire, is that they would like to visit other areas of the countryside but do not have similar leaflets for neighbouring counties. So we are hoping to address this.

Rutland did have 3 different Countryside For All sites. Two of these were at Rutland Water. The leaflet for one of these sites needs updating. Following a number of emails with Anglian Water, it is clear that it is very improbable that they will update the leaflets and pay for printing. The Rutland Countryside Access Forum have won funding for the updating of the Exton leaflet and have applied for funding the Clipsham Yew Tree Avenue leaflet.

We are still looking for suitable sites In Leicestershire and Nottinghamshire close to the Lincolnshire border. We have decided that due to towpath maintenance issues, not to include any part of the Leicestershire section of the Grantham Canal. The North East Lincolnshire Countryside For All site will be at Cleethorpes.

1.6 Miles Without Barriers

It's been stated that Lincolnshire County Council does not have a full record of the location and type of PROW furniture on the network. It is clear that to make the network more accessible for those with limited mobility, knowing what legal barriers are on the network and there location will help them. It will enable them to make a judgement on finding a suitable route for those with limited mobility to enjoy the countryside.

ACTION: Can Lincolnshire County Council provide us with information at our next meeting in relation to what is held by them, how the data is held it and what they feel is missing? This information is required for the disability subgroup to see how we can assist those with limited mobility.

ACTION: Can North East Linc's also provide us with the information above.

1.7 Disability Sub Group membership

We are still desperate to recruit members from the LAF into the Disability Sub Group. We have a wide range of positions available.

ACTION: Can anyone interested in helping the countryside more accessible for those with limited mobility email john.law_32@yahoo.co.uk for further details.

2. Conclusion

The Forum is invited to consider the update and actions detailed within the report.

This report was written by John Law, Representative of 'other interests' for the Lincolnshire Joint Local Access Forum.

Agenda Item 8



A statutory advisory body to Lincolnshire County Council, North East Lincolnshire Council and other providers of outdoor recreational access

Report to:	Lincolnshire Joint Local Access Forum
Date:	23 April 2024
Subject:	Definitive Map Modification Orders

Summary:

This report invites the Forum to discuss the process for the reporting of Definitive Map Modification Orders (DMMO) to the Forum.

Actions Required:

That the Forum consider the report and agree on the best course of action for reporting the progress of DMMOs to future meetings

1. Background

The LAF used to get reports of the DMMOs at the Forum meetings. These have not been provided at the last few meetings. With Lincolnshire County Council having so many outstanding DMMOs, it would be useful to see an abbreviated report, so the Forum has an awareness of the issues. A suggestion of what the report should display can be seen below:

1. The five oldest DMMOs showing the date of application, progress to date and next action to be taken.
2. On a monthly basis providing a rolling 12 months figures of the number of new DMMOs, resolved DMMOs and outstanding DMMOs
3. The DMMOs being worked on prior to the next LAF meeting and their current status.
4. The DMMOs worked on since the last LAF meeting and their current status.
5. The status on the Grantham Canal from the towpath to the highway.

ACTION: The Forum and Lincolnshire County Council discuss and agree on the best course of action for DMMO reports for future meetings.

2. Conclusion

The Forum is asked to consider the report and agree on the best course of action for the future reporting of DMMOs.

This report was written by John Law, Representative of 'Other Interests' on the Lincolnshire Joint Local Access Forum.

Agenda Item 9



A statutory advisory body to Lincolnshire County Council, North East Lincolnshire Council and other providers of outdoor recreational access

Report to:	Lincolnshire Joint Local Access Forum
Date:	23 April 2024
Subject:	Lincolnshire Joint Local Access Forum Webpage

Summary:

This report invites the Forum to discuss opportunities for the promotion of the Forum through a webpage.

Actions Required:

1. To request that Lincolnshire County Council include additional information about the Forum on its webpage.
2. To consider whether North East Lincolnshire could have the link to the webpage through an appropriate place on their website.

1. Background

I am pleased to see the Forum now has a web page - <https://lincolnshire.moderngov.co.uk/mgCommitteeDetails.aspx?ID=654> .

It's also very good news to see we have so many members. However, the web page does not inform the public of our responsibilities or provide information on what we do.

We did have a continual problem with shortage of LAF members and do not promote the LAF in any format. We have the opportunity to promote the LAF on the Countryside For All leaflets by providing a link it to the web page. Last year over 12,000 of these leaflets were ordered. It is imperative that the web page includes what the LAF does, so the public are aware of its existence and how to apply to join. It would be helpful if the Lincolnshire County Council includes the Forum in discussions on what is required on the web page.

ACTION: LAF to inform Lincolnshire County Council of the additional information required on the web page.

ACTION: Can North East Lincolnshire have the link to this web page from an appropriate place on their web site?

2. Conclusion

The Forum is invited to consider the report and actions required.

This report was written by John Law, Representative of 'Other Interests' on the Lincolnshire Joint Local Access Forum.



A statutory advisory body to Lincolnshire County Council, North East Lincolnshire Council and other providers of outdoor recreational access

Report to:	Lincolnshire Joint Local Access Forum
Date:	23 April 2024
Subject:	Work Programme

Summary:

The current work programme for the Lincolnshire Joint Local Access Forum is set out at within this report. Members of the Forum are invited to consider whether it wishes to make any suggestions for items to be added to its work programme.

Actions Required:

That the Forum review the work programme and consider whether it wishes to make any suggestions for items to be added.

A. Items to be Programmed:

- (1) **The Viking Way**
- (2) **The King Charles III England Coast Path**
- (3) **Information about the network**
- (4) **DMMO case load**
- (5) **Policy reviews**

B. Items Programmed

23 April 2024

<i>Item</i>	<i>Contributor</i>
Consideration of the Terms of Reference for the Lincolnshire Joint Local Access Forum	Democratic Services Officer
Introduction to Public Rights of Way – Lincolnshire and North-East Lincolnshire	Matthew Chaplin/Andrew Fletcher

Lincolnshire County Council Rights of Way Improvement Plan 2025	Democratic Services Officer
Countryside for All update	John Law
Definitive Map Modification Orders	John Law
Lincolnshire Joint Local Access Forum Webpage	John Law
Training needs	
Future meeting dates	Democratic Services Officer

22 October 2024

<i>Item</i>	<i>Contributor</i>
Linking the North Highland Way with the Lincolnshire Coast	

This report was written by Emily Wilcox, Democratic Services Officer who can be contacted on emily.wilcox@lincolnshire.gov.uk