

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

**LAST AMENDED 27/11/14**

## Lincolnshire County Council 01522 782070

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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%	
<b>Total</b>		<b>4,008.93</b>	<b>100%</b>	
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 4<sup>th</sup> Local Transport Plan**

The 4<sup>th</sup> 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"> <li>• a more sustainable, varied and attractive coastal landscape, rich in wildlife and attractive to visitors and residents in every season.</li> <li>• a new green tourism destination with high quality accessible natural green space and opportunities to experience the area's cultural and natural heritage.</li> </ul>
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 Billinghay.	To develop or create accessible green infrastructure features in one of three categories: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Linear public access</li> <li>• Site-specific public access</li> </ul>

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		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Restricted public access.</li> </ul>
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.

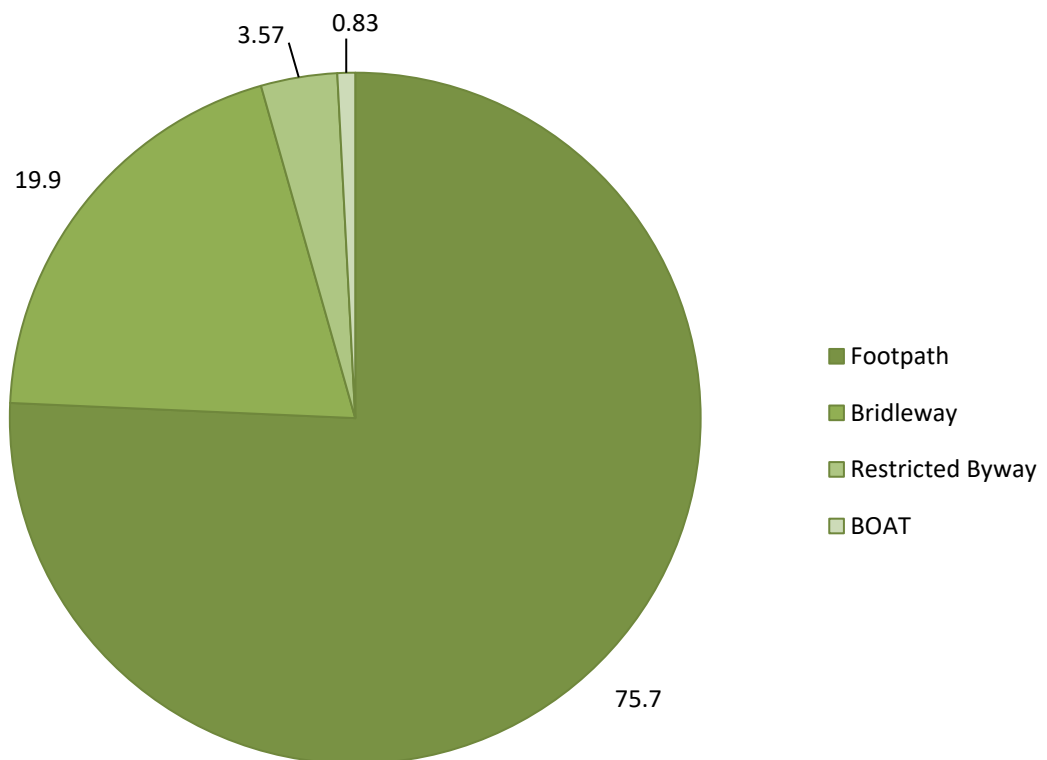
The PRow network is not evenly spread across the County. However, assessing the relative distribution of the network alone is unlikely to give a true picture of

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

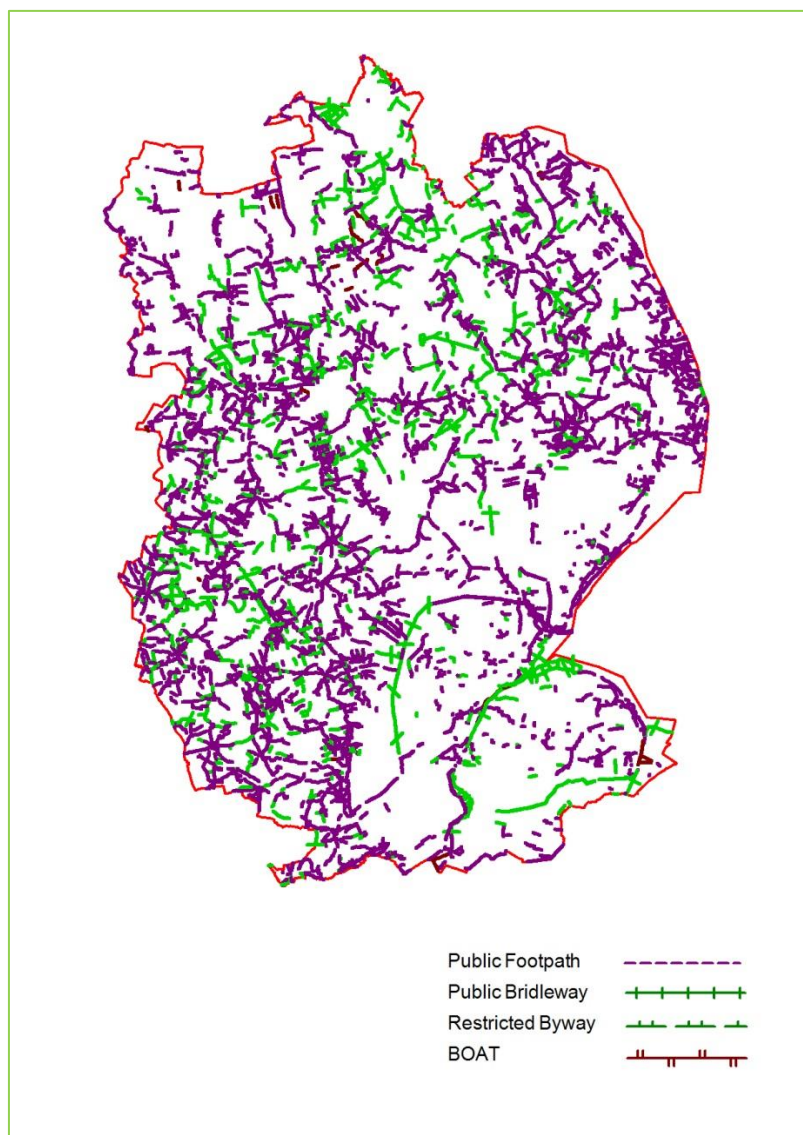
## Walking Routes

(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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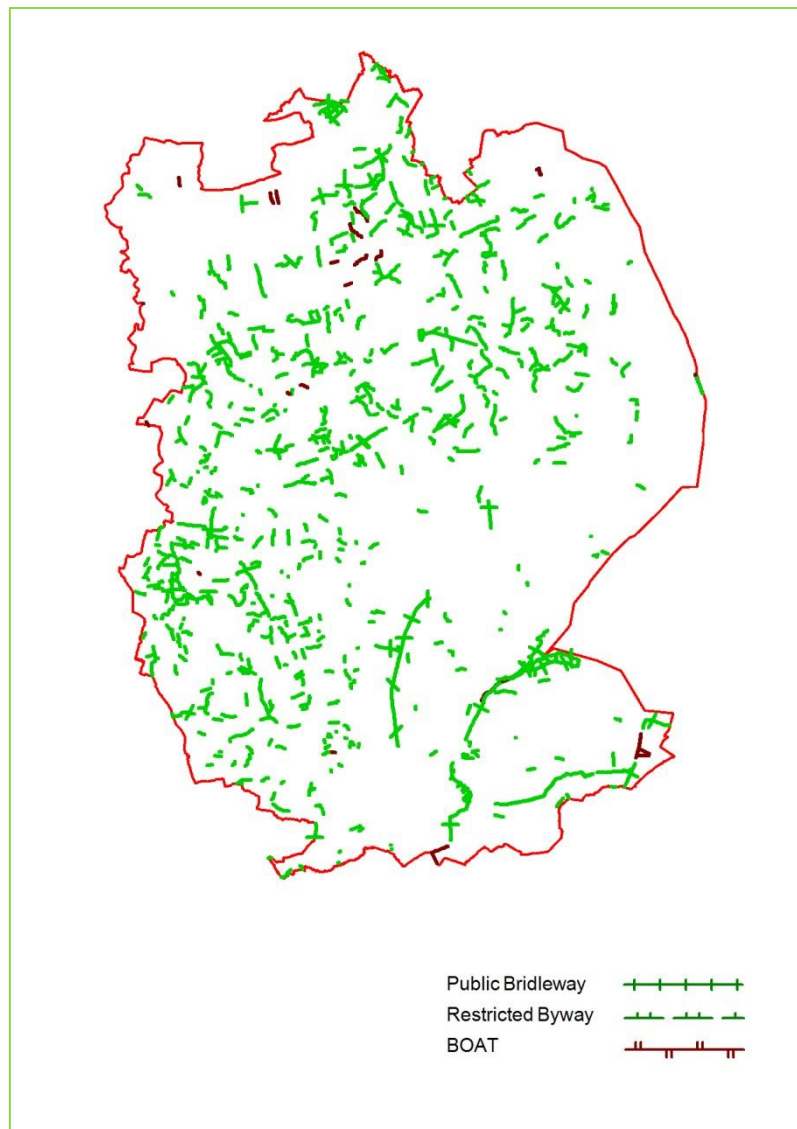
## Cycling and Horse Riding Routes

### 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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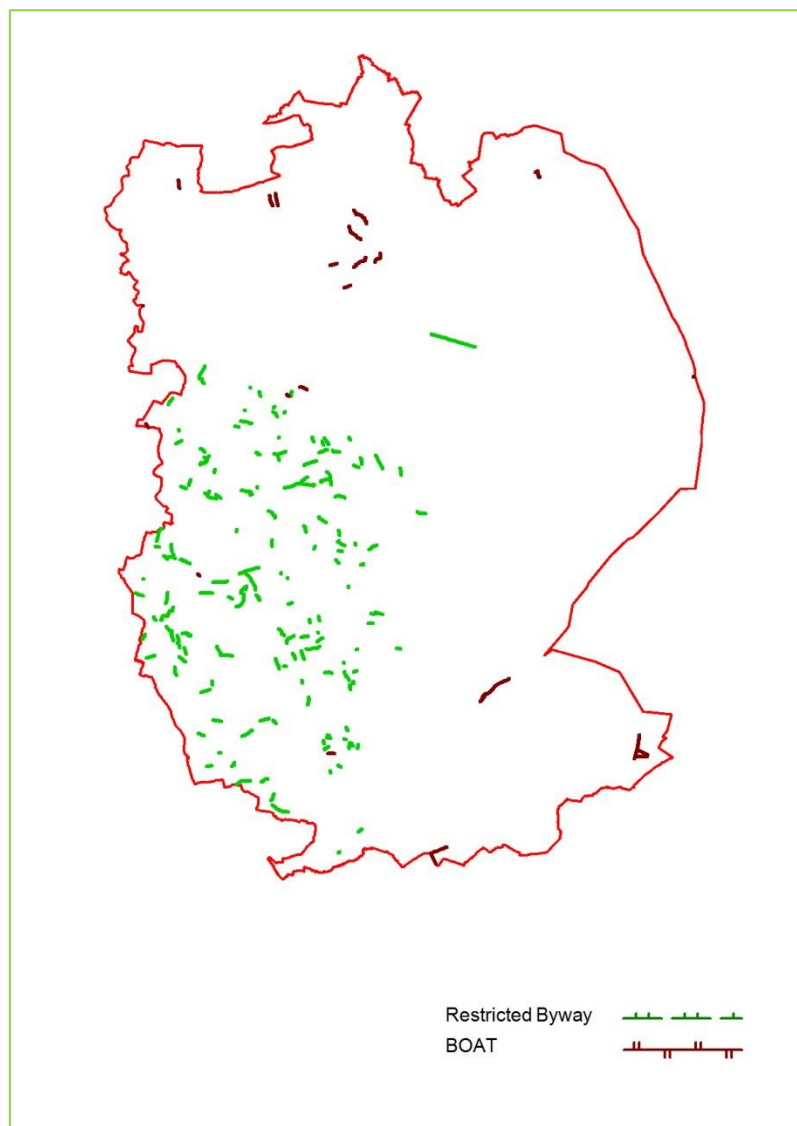
## Carriage Drivers

### 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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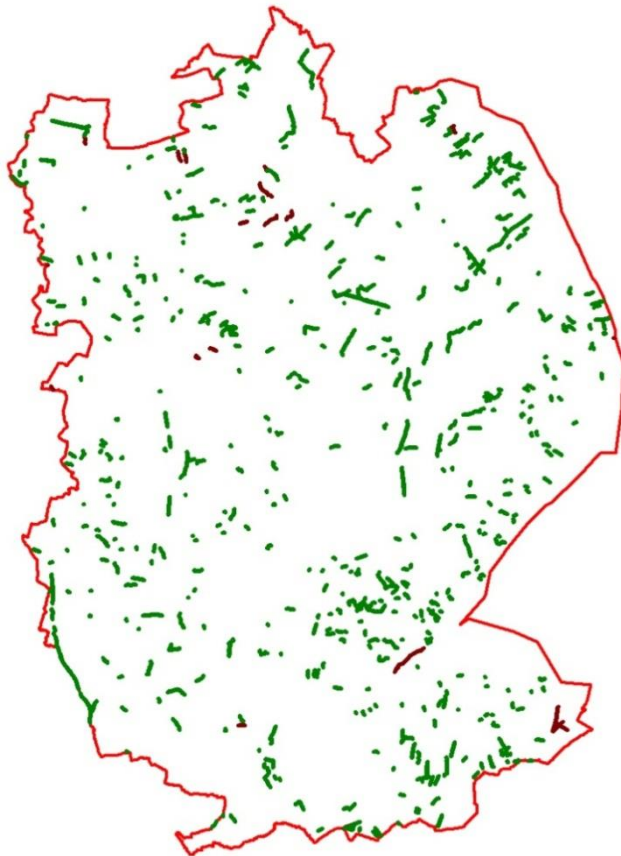


## Unclassified County Roads (UCRs)

- 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.

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## 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.

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## 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.

<b>NI 8</b>	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.
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## 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.

Rights of Way Improvement Plan 2014 -19

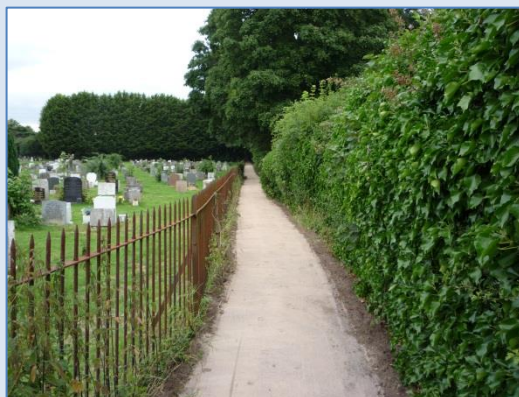
## Improving Local Connections - Case Study

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.

<b>NI 9</b>	Identify and Improve of-road routes linking communities with schools, employment centres and local services.
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<b>NI 10</b>	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.

<b>NI 12</b>	Improve access to, and within, green infrastructure areas for all members of society, including disabled users.
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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.

<b>NI 13</b>	Assist in the development of the Lincolnshire section of the National Coastal Trail.
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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.

<b>NI 14</b>	To work with Natural England and the Coastal Grazing Marshes Project to maximise the access opportunities on Theddlethorpe and Saltfleetby Dunes NNR.
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## 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.

Rights of Way Improvement Plan 2014 -19



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.

<b>NI 16</b>	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.

<b>NI 17</b>	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*

<b>Priority 1</b>	Routes actively promoted by Lincolnshire County Council (e.g. Viking Way, bridle trails, recreational walk routes).
<b>Priority 2</b>	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.
<b>Priority 3</b>	All other available routes.
<b>Priority 4</b>	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.

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## 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](http://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.

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## 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.

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## 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 40<sup>th</sup> 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.

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## 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.

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**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.

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## 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.

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## 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

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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](http://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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