

Open Report on behalf of Richard Wills - Executive Director - Development

Report to:	South Lincolnshire and Rutland Local Access Forum
Date:	13 January 2010
Subject:	Countryside Access and Rights of Way Improvement Plan 2007-2012 Update

Summary:

A report detailing the progress made towards the implementation of the Lincolnshire Countryside Access and Rights of Way Improvement Plan.

Recommendation(s):

- i) That the forum notes the contents of the report.

1. Background

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

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

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

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

The updated Countryside Access & Rights of Way Improvement Plan Year 3-4 Action Plan is appended as Appendix A and provides a breakdown of the progress made towards the individual Statements of Action across all four of the ROWIP themes and also the Core Tasks.

2. Summary

Year 3/4 Implementation Progress

Implementation works have continued to be targeted towards improving the management of the existing network and further developing countryside access promotion. In addition efforts have also been aimed at improving opportunities to access the countryside in the vicinity of tourist attractions and countryside sites and supporting improvements on the vehicular road network to benefit non motorised users.

Network improvements so far include;

- 428 stiles provided or repaired,
- 778 new road side signs,
- 911 routes waymarked,
- 210 gates provided or repaired,
- 200 new bridges,
- 131 stiles replaced with kissing gates,
- 101 stiles removed.

*Figures accurate at 1 Dec 2009

Progress made during the reporting period

Health walks –

The Access Development Team is currently working with the Divisional PRow officers in order to implement the improvements identified during the health walks audit. So far this has included

55	Stiles to be replaced by gates
1	Flights of steps installed
5	Bridges installed
2	Boardwalks installed
2,500m	Surfacing improvements to be undertaken

Discussions have also taken place with Boston Borough Council and the Boston Woods Partnership regarding the provision of additional countryside access in the Westgate Wood extension.

Walking for Health Promotion-

An advert and editorial article have now been submitted for inclusion in the next edition of the Lincolnshire Community Health Care Guide to encourage greater participation in Walking for Health.

The Lincolnshire Wolds Trail –

The proposed route of the trail has now been amended at Tetford and Legsby. Negotiations are also taking place to upgrade Gayton le Wold Public Bridleway No. 148 to a restricted byway. If these negotiations are successful it envisaged that

maintenance, road safety signage and promotional work will commence during the spring.

Surface improvement works have now been completed on one section of the proposed trail at Dog Kennel Wood (North Willingham Restricted Byway No. 523).

Road and Rail Crossing Audit-

A 'short list' of the crossing points requiring further consideration has now been compiled and suggestions for improvements are being discussed with the Lincolnshire Road Safety Partnership, Highways Agency and Network Rail.

A proposal for the realignment of a section of Caistor Public Footpath No. 33 at the junction with the A46 Caistor bypass is currently being considered.

Tattershall Footpath Improvement Works – A scheme to improve the section of the former Horncastle canal towpath between Sleaford Road and the River Bain to full accessibility standard. Improvement works have now been programmed to take place in February 2010 (pending National Trust approval).

Binbrook Public Footpath No. 132 Improvement Scheme– Improvements currently under preparation including resurfacing works and step reconstruction.

River Glen Access Improvement Scheme – LCC South Division are currently working in partnership with the Environment Agency to install a number of kissing gates on the public footpath running adjacent to the River Glen to the west of Spalding.

Woodnook Valley-

The access controls and interpretive panels have now been installed.

Countryside Access Mapping-

Work is continuing on the redevelopment of the countryside access mapping system. A revised completion date of January 2010 has been provided.

Accessibility Guidance-

The draft guidance has now been completed and will be presented at the January LAF meetings. Additional consultation will also take place with LCC Divisional PRoW officers and disabled user groups in January 2010.

Online Problem Reporting Form-

The form is currently under revision and amendments are programmed to be completed by the end of December 2009.

Disabled Audit Training-

The Fieldfare Trust provided a day of disabled access audit training for LCC PRoW staff in November. It is envisaged that the training will enable staff who are involved in day to day network management to have a greater awareness of accessibility issues.

Disabled Access Information Pack-

As previously reported funds have been secured from ALSF (Aggregate Levy Sustainability Fund) to enable the publication of a disabled access pack highlighting a range of accessible sites in the county. Survey work has now commenced and will be completed by the end of January 2010. The packs will be available by spring 2010.

Spa Trail-

Unfortunately the civil engineering contractor went into administration mid way through the contract. However, the Lincolnshire Waterways Partnership is now in negotiations with the receiver and it is hoped that works will recommence on 4 January 2010 and run for approximately 8 weeks.

Promotion-

Walk leaflets published: Legbourne and Marston

Cycle leaflets published: Bardney and Fiskerton – Lincolnshire Limewoods

Travelwise Display: ADT have taken part in an event in Lincoln to promote sustainable transport.

Get out there: ADT have also taken part in the 'Get Out There' event at Whisby Nature Reserve to encourage school teachers to take greater advantage of the countryside.

In near future...

The following areas of work are programmed to commence during the coming months;

- Undertaking an audit of unsurfaced Unclassified County Roads.
- The Saxilby Trail – A Lincolnshire Waterways project to create a cycle way between Saxilby and Lincoln

A full breakdown of tasks to be undertaken during the course of Years 3 and 4 can be found in Appendix A.

3. Consultation

Scrutiny Comments

n/a

Executive Councillor Comments

n/a

Local Member Comments

n/a

Policy Proofing Actions Required

n/a

4. Appendices

These are listed below and attached at the back of the report	
Appendix A	Countryside Access & Rights of Way Improvement Plan Year 3-4 Action Plan

5. Background papers

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

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

APPENDIX A
Implementation Progress of Core Tasks

Core Tasks

Ref	Action	Target date	Progress at July 2009
CT1	Review the Definitive Map Modification Order Priorities Policy and Public Path Order Policies in line with the RoWIP, to give a potentially higher priority to key routes that will improve or increase access.	2008	Completed.
CT2	Review the current Path Priority System for the maintenance and enforcement of PRow	2008	Maintained under review. Current system is considered adequate for existing workloads.
CT3	Review Maintenance and Enforcement Policies for PRow and publicise to farmers, landowners and the public	2008 – 2009	Draft Enforcement Manual due for completion by January 2010.
CT4	Review current Parish Paths Partnership scheme and explore new ways to increase community involvement	2008	Consultation report now completed. Further redevelopment work required.
CT5	Undertake whole network condition survey	Complete by 2010	Survey underway. Carried out through the proactive inspection regime which ensures all paths receive an inspection at least once in a three year period.
CT6	Seek opportunities to reduce the number of unnecessary stiles and barriers on the PRow network	Throughout Plan life 2007-2012	Continue to remove unnecessary stiles and barriers and replace stiles with kissing gates as appropriate. Survey all promoted routes to identify unnecessary stiles and barriers. 101 stiles were removed as unnecessary and 131 stiles were replaced with gates.
CT7	Continue to fully sign and waymark the PRow network	Throughout Plan life 2007-2012	Continue to sign and waymark the network. Survey all promoted routes to identify routes requiring signing or

			<p>waymarking.</p> <p>911 new roadside fingerposts installed either in new locations or to replace those in poor condition.</p>
CT8	Continue the annual programme of vegetation clearance on PRow	Throughout Plan life 2007-2012	Additional paths added to the schedule each year as necessary and in line with improvement schemes and the development of new promoted routes.
CT9	Continue to ensure that the public has access to designated areas of Open Country and Registered Common Land under CRoW Act 2000	2008	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Access Land Management Plan reviewed. -Access Land inspection regime introduced. -Interpretative panels installed at South and West Commons in Lincoln. -Woodnook Valley, Grantham – Access controls and signage installed. -Lincoln Commons leaflets to be produced for South and West Commons in Lincoln.
CT10	Continue to provide information and promote wider use of the PRow Network	Throughout Plan life 2007-2012	<p>Promotion of the network through various media including the LCC website, County News and local and national press.</p> <p>Searchable database of leaflets now available on the LCC Countryside website.</p> <p>27 Lincolnshire Walks Leaflets have been published (since Apr 07)</p> <p>7 Lincolnshire Cycling Leaflets have been published (since Apr07)</p> <p>Audio trails under preparation for South and West Commons, Lincoln.</p> <p>Outdoor Guide produced (Lincolnshire Tourism)</p> <p>Visitor Guide produced Lincolnshire Tourism)</p>

			Searchable Walks Database produced.
CT11	Develop longer distance routes and trails	Throughout Plan life 2007-2012	<p>Viking Way - All permissive sections reviewed for relevance and maintenance.</p> <p>Coastal Trail currently under development at a national level.</p> <p>Partnership Working</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Spires & Steeples Trail now launched. • Lincolnshire Wolds Trail –under preparation.

Sustainable Transport

Ref	Action	Target date	Progress at July 2009
SOA1	Identify and improve off road routes linking communities with schools, employment centres and local services	Throughout Plan life 2007-2012	<p>Routes identified in conjunction with LTP priority areas.</p> <p>Comments submitted regarding reviews of Community Travel Zones for Lincoln and Louth. Senior Countryside Access Officer included on a transport studies group. Links to SOA39 mapping.</p> <p>Improvements implemented on the following routes; Claxby BOAT 753 – Improvement works Lincoln Footpath No. 3 – Improvement works to increase accessibility to pushchairs. Louth Public Footpath No. 11 – Improvement works to improve access to school. Saxilby cycle way current under development.</p>
SOA2	Improve enforcement and management of urban rights of way to combat litter, fly tipping and dog fouling	2011	LCC Divisions and Borough Councils contacted regarding issues of flytipping on public rights of way to highlight areas

			<p>experiencing excessive flytipping.</p> <p>Borough Council contacted to clarify protocols for dealing with dog fouling on public rights of way</p>
SOA3	Seek improvements for non motorised travel in proposals for new developments. Schemes funded through developer contributions	Throughout Plan life 2007-2012	<p>Work with planning authorities to ensure that maximum public benefits are realised</p> <p>Comments are submitted on planning applications as they arise.</p> <p>Comments submitted to Stamford – Newstead Development Proposals consultation.</p>
SOA4	Develop walking and cycling from public transport interchanges	2011	<p>Develop routes from Transport hubs.</p> <p>Information included in Getting Around Lincolnshire (Lincs CC) and Getting around Lincolnshire (Getting around Lincolnshire)</p>
SOA5	Promote use public transport on leaflets and website	Throughout Plan life 2007-2012	<p>Information is added to promotional material (walks leaflets etc) and bus stop locations are now added to the CAMSWeb online facility for route planning by the public.</p> <p>Continue to promote public transport options on publications and web site.</p> <p>Bus stop information to be displayed on the revised CAMs Web system.</p>
SOA6	Public rights of way guidance for planning authorities and developers	2008	<p>Meetings held with planning authorities to standardise the format and promotion of orders. Specific guidance to developers and district councils is still outstanding.</p> <p>Public Rights of Way guidance to be produced for planning</p>

			authorities and developers.
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Health and Well Being

Ref	Action	Target date	Progress at July 2009
SOA7	Improve infrastructure on paths used for health walk initiatives	Throughout Plan life 2007-2012	Programme of improvement works on health walking currently underway.
SOA8	Reduce number of unnecessary barriers on PROW	Throughout Plan life 2007-2012	Continue to remove unnecessary stiles and barriers identified during routine maintenance works. 101 stiles were removed as unnecessary and 131 stiles were replaced with gates.
SOA9	Ensure cross field paths are reinstated after ploughing	Throughout Plan life 2007-2012	Enforcement Officers continuing to operate across the County with seasonal reminders issued at strategic times through the year. The Enforcement Policy Manual is currently under review. Target of reduced number of paths reported as not reinstated.
SOA10	Improve routes in areas of highest health deprivation in Lincolnshire.	2012	Areas of highest health deprivation identified and mapping information sent to LCC ighways divisions. Undertake improvement works in highlighted areas to increase network accessibility. Health centres in highlighted areas identified. Walking and cycling information to be distributed.
SOA11	Undertake accessibility audit of the network	2011	Network survey used to obtain accessibility information. Due for completion 2010.

			<p>Utilise full network condition survey to obtain accessibility information.</p> <p>Carry out access audit of promoted routes.</p>
SOA12	Develop a range of key routes in conjunction with disability groups.	2012	5 routes under development and programmed for completion by March 2010.
SOA13	Promote health walking schemes and help partners with development of new schemes.	Throughout Plan life 2007-2012	<p>Promotional links established and support mechanisms in place. Assistance with further development as required.</p> <p>Ongoing. PCT funding expansion of health walks schemes and GP referrals. Funding secured through "Choosing Health".</p> <p>Support given to Boston leisure and health walks to produce 6 walks.</p> <p>Attendance at the 'Getting out There' event.</p>
SOA14	Promote benefits of rights of way to wider range of potential users	Throughout Plan life 2007-2012	<p>Discussions now commenced to promote walks on the Council's Polish language website. Funding required.</p> <p>Assistance provided in the Wolds Walking Festival and Countryside Events Programme.</p> <p>Attendance at the 'Sustainable Schools Showcase'. to promote countryside access to young people.</p> <p>Attendance at 'Walk it, Bike it, Share it'</p> <p>Selected leaflets in appropriate areas to be translated into additional languages.</p>
SOA15	Produce targeted information for doctors surgeries, health	Throughout	Continue to produce targeted information for GP surgeries on

	centres in areas of highest health deprivation	Plan life 2007-2012	an annual basis. 4 Adverts and editorial articles featured in various editions of the 'Lincolnshire New GP Community Health Care Magazine'.
SOA16	Publicise barrier free routes	Throughout Plan life 2007-2012	Data Collation on going. East Division data now completed. Routes are promoted to disability groups and through appropriate media. Incorporate appropriate symbol on future walks leaflets to indicate level of accessibility.
SOA17	Promote responsible countryside access	Throughout Plan life 2007-2012	Promote responsible countryside access through a variety of media and organisations –countryside website.

Rural Economy and Tourism

Ref	Action	Target date	Progress at July 2009
SOA18	Identify and develop circular and linear recreational routes to and from countryside / tourism sites	2011	Identify routes in the influence of tourism sites and implement improvement works as required. Limewoods cycling leaflets currently under preparation. Missing link dedicated to create circular walking route at Bassingham.
SOA19	Improve the maintenance and management of routes close to popular areas of the county and key tourist attractions.	2011	Identify routes in the influence of tourism sites and designated areas and implement improvement works as required.
SOA20	Improve maintenance and promotion of promoted routes and county trails	2011	Undertake audit of Lincolnshire Walks and Cycle routes to identify infrastructure and waymarking/ signage improvements and improvements to vegetation cutting

			regime.
SOA21	Support and encourage new tourist attractions to include walking and cycling through the planning consultation process.	Throughout Plan life 2007-2012	Highways divisional staff comment on planning applications as they arise. Suggest recommendations for improved walking and cycling provision during the planning consultation process.
SOA22	Support partners with development of new trails	Throughout Plan life 2007-2012	<p>Support partners with the development of new trails as necessary.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Spires and Steeples Trail launched 3 May 2008. -Spa Trail feasibility study completed. Improvement works to commence autumn 2009. Feasibility study currently underway to extend the trail into Horncastle. -The Lincolnshire Wolds Trail carriage driving route is currently under development. -Support given to South Holland Borough Council to develop a series of walking and cycling routes. -Support given to Limewoods project to assess potential for linking woodland sites with off road routes. -Nottinghamshire Strategic Cycle Network – Support given to the provision of a strategic cycle network between Sherwood Forest and Lincoln city centre. -Support and advice provided to ASR- Leisure in the development of Cycle Touring Routes in the Northern Wolds
SOA23	Develop a Lincolnshire Coastal trail	2012	Marine and Coastal Access Act provided Royal Assent in November 2009.
SOA24	Provide public transport information at key sites and promoted routes	Ongoing	Continue to publish Travel Line information on walking and cycling leaflets.
SOA25	Produce walking cycling and riding information in a variety of formats and for holiday accommodation providers	Ongoing	Lincolnshire Tourism have produced 15 Walking Discovery Packs as part of the 2008 marketing campaign promoting

			Lincolnshire as a short break destination for walking, cycling and golf. Packs are being made available to accommodation providers.
SOA27	Develop a range of information panels at gateways sites/ villages to promote access opportunities and local services available	2012	Produce and Publicise interpretation panels to P3 parishes (pending review).

Social Issues

Ref	Action	Target date	Progress at July 2009
SOA28	Improve quality of waymarking to increase user confidence and assist land managers	Throughout Plan life 2007-2012	911 new roadside fingerposts installed either in new locations or to replace those in poor condition. Survey promoted routes and refresh waymarking as necessary.
SOA29	Identify all missing bridges on key network routes, develop and implement a work programme	2010	Network inspections ongoing and will feed into the capital bridges programme of bridge installations. Identify all missing bridges. Implement programme of replacements.
SOA30	Implement programme of signing the unsurfaced unclassified county roads	2011	Officer time spent to identify UCRs and gap analysis using GIS of PROW network and other access. Programme of signage based on demand and necessity currently being rolled out in Gtr Lincoln & Gainsborough Division. Continue programme of signing all UCRs.
SOA32	Develop a programme of improved vegetation cutting on key routes close to settlements with parish councils	2009	Programme of improved vegetation cutting in place on key routes.

			Re-examine during P3 review.
SOA33	Complete audit of busy road crossings and implement prioritised programme of improvements	2011	Audit complete. Improvements on short list being considered with stakeholder groups.
SOA34	Improve management of existing routes available for motorised users and carriage drivers.	2011	Conduct audit of all unsurfaced UCRs and produce management plan.
SOA35	Identify all cross boundary links with neighbouring authorities to ensure consistency of maintenance and promotion.	2011	Identify cross boundary links and issues. Prepare programme of improvements and clarify maintenance responsibilities as appropriate.
SOA36	Pilot a project to prepare signage incorporating distance and destination information to key routes.	2012	Identify pilot areas and install signage incorporating distance and destination.
SOA37	Support highway divisions with the implementation of Quiet Lanes.	2012	Assist LCC North Division in the implementation of a Quiet Lanes project.
SOA38	Develop a range of circular routes for cyclists and equestrians in areas of highest demand. Identify suitable roadside verges and “behind the hedge” links to create safer links between existing routes and improve management of those links identified. Support DEFRA schemes that increase access and link PRoW.	Throughout Plan life 2007-2012	Officer time spent on ROWIP area priorities mapping. LAF sub group consulted but detailed network analysis still needed involving user groups. 7 Lincolnshire cycling leaflets produced. Old County Bridle Trails to be reviewed with the British Horse Society. Undertake consultation with users to identify potential ‘behind the hedge’ routes.
SOA42	Implement programme of staff training to raise awareness of diversity issues relating to countryside access	Throughout Plan life 2007-2012	Disabled Access Auditing training event held for LCC PRoW staff in November 09. Organise other training events as necessary.

SOA43	Identify existing routes that meet needs of restricted mobility users and publicise	2011	Produce disabled access information pack (link with SOA12).
SOA44	Develop and implement an accessibility policy in conjunction with disability groups	2009	Draft Accessibility Guidance produced.
SOA45	Develop links with organisations to implement a programme of themed guided walks, rides and events	Throughout Plan life 2007-2012	Continuing to build on existing contacts and partnerships. Funding required to implement countryside access projects. Support and develop guided walks programmes, events and walking festivals as necessary.
SOA46	Develop policies and guidance which explain how the authority manages PROW and access	2011	Policy areas identified and included in officer work programmes.
SOA48	Improve driver awareness of equestrians	2011	Awareness campaign in place with variety of media – Web site, Inside Lincolnshire.
SOA49	Produce Countryside Access newsletter	2011	Produce 6 monthly ROWIP newsletter on the web site.