

## **APPENDIX A**

### **Lincolnshire**

### **Rights of Way Improvement Plan 2**

### **-Stakeholder Consultation Report**

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Appendix 1 – Full Consultation Responses

## **1. Background**

The duty to publish and review a Rights of Way Improvement Plan (RoWIP) is contained in the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000. In preparing a RoWIP the County Council must make an assessment of:

- The extent to which local rights of way meet the present and the likely future needs of the public.
- The opportunities presented by local rights of way for exercise and other forms of open-air recreation and the enjoyment of the authority's area with particular emphasis on footpaths, cycle tracks, bridleways and restricted byways.
- The accessibility of the local rights of way network to blind or partially sighted persons and others with mobility problems.

The first Lincolnshire RoWIP published in April 2007. The plan set out how the County Council intended to improve the management, provision and promotion of the County's public rights of way network. A great deal has changed since the publication of the first RoWIP and RoWIP 2 will have to take account of significant changes in National policy and the current economic climate.

Unfortunately limited resources prevent the County Council from 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.

## **2. The Consultation**

The consultation was sent to a range of organisations including Parish Councils (Parish Paths Partnership members), Government organisations, District Councils, landowner representatives, user groups, other key agencies. The consultation was also advertised on the Lincolnshire County Council website and members of the public invited to provide a response.

The consultation took place over a 12 week period between 20<sup>th</sup> July 2012 and the 12<sup>th</sup> October 2012. It was designed to obtain stakeholder views on the success of the first Lincolnshire Countryside Access and Rights of Way Improvement Plan (RoWIP) and invite suggestions for the direction of the second RoWIP.

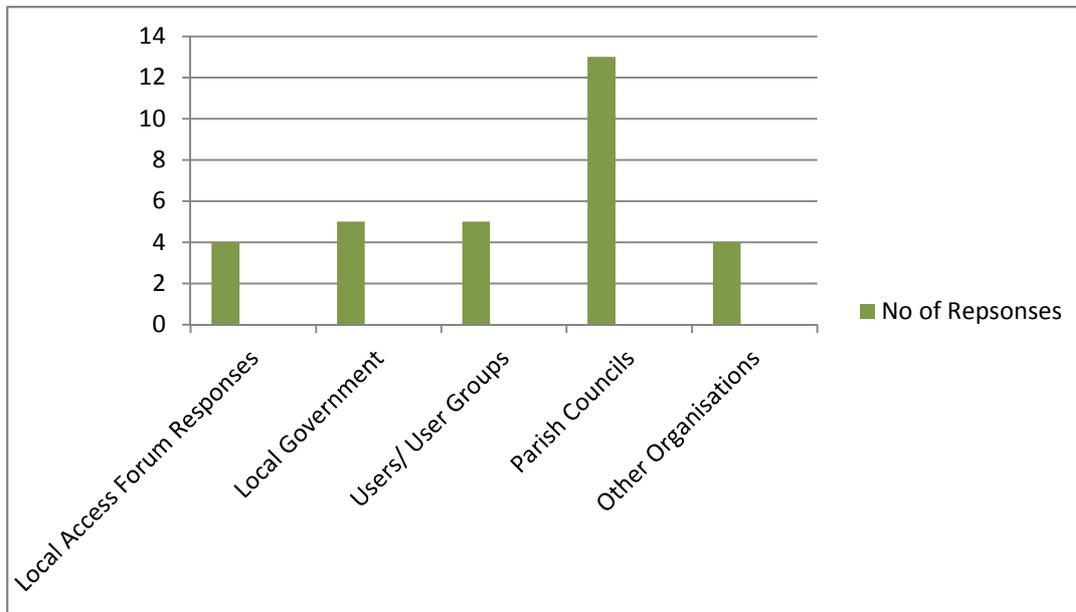
Consultees were asked the following questions;

- 1) Do you feel that the Statements of Action contained in the first RoWIP were sufficient?
- 2) What areas of the RoWIP do you feel the County Council has-
  - a. Delivered well
  - b. Failed to deliver or didn't completely deliver
- 3) What areas do you feel should be considered for the next RoWIP?

### 3. Consultation Responses

The RoWIP2 consultation was limited to stakeholder groups.

The County Council received 31 responses to the consultation from a range of organisations and individuals.



Appendix 1 contains a full list of all of the consultation responses. The table is split between the responses received for the three questions. Each table in the appendix contains the respondent details and a full transcript of the response.

The consultation responses were varied both in terms of their origin and level of detail. Nearly half of the responses received were from Parish Councils and many of these involved specific local issues.

#### 4. Analysis of Responses

This section summarises the comments received during the consultation.

##### **Question 1: Do you feel that the Statements of Action contained in the first ROWIP were sufficient?**

75% of Respondents considered that the Statements of Action were sufficient.

General Comments included;

- The first RoWIP was 'maybe too ambitious'
- 'Solving issues of safety as well as the creation of new paths seemed to be considered as aspirational rather than commitments'
- 'In general terms the Statements of Action revolved around creating policies and identifying 'issues' rather than taking action to improve the network on the ground'

##### **Question 2A: What are the areas of the RoWIP do you feel have been delivered well?**

The majority of respondents considered that the RoWIP had been generally well delivered and highlighted a number of areas which they considered had been particularly successful including;

- The reduction of barriers on the network
- Improved enforcement
- Signposting and Waymarking
- Improvements to the health walking network

Many of the respondents considered the promotional aspect of RoWIP implementation to be especially successful and in particular the Lincolnshire Walks series of leaflets, the educational information pack and the Countryside microsite.

Whilst some Parish Councils considered that the County Council had made substantial efforts to deliver the RoWIP, the level of implementation had sometimes fallen short of their expectations.

*'There is still a lot to be completed, which could be down to a matter of time and money.'*  
**Horncastle Town Council**

##### **Question 2B: What areas of the RoWIP do you feel have not been completely delivered?**

A number of respondents acknowledged that the final 2 years of RoWIP implementation have been undertaken against a backdrop of reduced resources available for public rights of way management.

*'These are mainly 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 Association**

Some consultees referred to a poor level of satisfaction with maintenance and enforcement activities and the consultation revealed a general dissatisfaction with vegetation clearance

activities on the network. The majority of parish councils highlighted localised maintenance and enforcement issues.

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

A number of Statements of Action in the 'Rural Economy and ' section of the RoWIP are aimed at developing an accessible network to and from the countryside and undertaking improvements to promoted routes. Some consultees considered that the level of implementation for this area of work had not been as extensive as anticipated. One respondent felt that the County Council *'didn't manage to join up as many routes as was intended'* and another felt that there are few circular routes *'without walking considerable distances'* or *'being happy to settle for shorter suburban routes'*.

The consultation attracted particular attention from the parishes affected by the Coastal Grazing Marshes project. The affected parishes considered that little had changed during the implementation of the first RoWIP. Particular concern was raised over the lack of improvement to the existing public rights of way network and the density of public bridleways.

Other areas which some respondents did not consider to be well delivered included;

SOA9 -The Reinstatement of cross-field paths

SOA27- Development of information panels at gateway sites.

SOA38- Provision of "behind the hedge links".

SOA49 – Production of a Countryside Access Newsletter

### **Question 3: What areas do you feel should be considered for the next RoWIP?**

The respondents submitted a wide variety of suggestions for inclusion in the second RoWIP. Again, many of the responding parish councils highlighted specific local improvements, particularly to the bridleway network. The remaining respondents provided a broader range of suggestions aimed at improving the wider network.

There is a general acceptance that RoWIP2 should provide a realistic reflection of what can be delivered within the available resources. It is considered that the next RoWIP will require a strong emphasis on the voluntary sector through involvement with Parish Paths Partnership groups, Parish Councils, User Groups and adopt-a-path members. The Ramblers Association recognised the need to *'utilise different volunteer skills for different activities in order to make the most of the volunteer effort.'*

The network assessment undertaken as a part of preparations for the first RoWIP concluded that cyclists and horse riders are only able to use 25% of Lincolnshire's countryside access network. Even then the available network is fragmented and some areas have little or no off-road provision. The recent consultation highlighted a continued high demand for developments in horse riding and cycling facilities.

Horse riders and cyclists would like to see;

- More safe places to ride off road
- The creation of circular or linked off-road routes for horse riders and cyclists especially in areas of higher horse population

- Safety improvements at locations where routes cross major roads
- Provision of suitable verges to enable a horse to be ridden or driven adjacent to the carriageway
- Provision of toll riding routes
- Surface improvements on some urban and suburban routes to enhance the network of available to cyclists
- Additional cycling facilities on heavily trafficked rural roads

Other areas which respondents believe should be included in the next RoWIP include;

- Walking for Health – continued support and further development of health walks
- Filling ‘missing links’ in the network
- Continued commitment to resolving ploughing and cropping enforcement issues
- Provision of ‘behind the hedge’ routes
- Placing greater emphasis on the pro network in ‘problem areas’
- Closer integration between the LTP and RoWIP
- Identification of ways that the RoWIP can contribute to improvements in existing and new high quality green infrastructure

**Coastal Grazing Marshes project** - A number of responses have been received regarding access improvements in the Coastal Grazing Marshes project area. As outlined above in question 2B, the affected parish councils believe that little changed during the implementation of the first RoWIP. As a result they consider that there is a great deal of scope to develop the public rights of way network using a number of methods including;

- Creating a range of circular routes which are suitable for horseriders and cyclists
- Provision of information to holiday caravan sites for the benefit of tourists
- Education of motorists on horse awareness
- Creation of bridleways
- Creation of permissive footpaths in association with landowners and DEFRA
- Provision of barrier free routes
- Effective vegetation clearance
- Development of a Lincolnshire Coastal trail to include bridleway users

**South Lincolnshire and Rutland Local Access Forum** – The forum provided a comprehensive response to the consultation. The consultation response indicates that there is generally a high level of satisfaction with the implementation of the first RoWIP and in many areas members are keen to ‘continue the present course of action in RoWIP 2’.

Whilst the forum considers it is essential that the standard of maintenance on long distance trails is a high quality, they are keen to ensure that the budget for the rest of the network should not suffer as a consequence.

The forum has provided opinion on the methods of implementing the RoWIP in the face of budgetary cuts. These involve expanding the range of community involvement initiatives, utilising alternative sources of funding i.e. grant funding and targeting resources to achieve the maximum benefit. The forum members also believe that efforts should be made to increase the level of community involvement in public rights of way management. In particular, they recommend that further investigation should be undertaken to establish whether volunteers could assist in vegetation clearance work in order to raise the current standard of maintenance.

Other South Lincolnshire and Rutland Local Access Forum suggestions for the next RoWIP include;

- Addressing hazardous road and rail crossings
- Completion of the UCR management plan
- Greater efforts to get young people involved in countryside access
- Expanding the health walks network
- Improving the accessibility of the countryside

Whilst the Forum understands the reasoning behind the reduced level of implementation, they feel that there is justification to include the outstanding actions from the first RoWIP in RoWIP2.

*'The Forum feels that Lincolnshire County Council has carried out the majority of the tasks set out in the RoWIP to a high standard. If the necessary austerity measures had not been put in place it is felt that the County Council staff would have delivered all the actions listed in the plan. The Forum also requests that they have further involvement in building RoWIP 2'.*

## 5. Summary of Main Points

It is clear from the responses received that the public rights of way network is valued and has a multitude of uses. The majority of respondents consider 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 the public rights of way network.

It is widely accepted that the RoWIP has been implemented 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 next RoWIP is realistic and deliverable.

Whilst the majority of consultation responses acknowledged that significant improvements had been made in the delivery of maintenance and enforcement during the initial stages of RoWIP implementation, it was recognised that the reduction in resources in 2010 led to a deterioration in the standard of maintenance and enforcement in some areas. A number of consultees expressed particular dissatisfaction with the recent standard of vegetation clearance on the network. Without regular vegetation clearance some paths quickly become inaccessible and this has an adverse effect on access particularly to disabled and blind and partially sighted users.

The Rural Economy and Tourism section of the RoWIP aimed to identify and develop circular and linear routes to and from the countryside. Whilst improved access has been provided in some areas, a number of respondents considered that the level of implementation had not been as extensive as anticipated. The parish council's affected by the Coastal Grazing Marshes Project also believe that little has changed during the implementation of the first RoWIP.

A wide variety of suggestions have been submitted 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. It is therefore considered that the next RoWIP will require a strong emphasis on community involvement in order to make the most of the voluntary sector.

The South Lincolnshire and Rutland Local Access Forum are keen to 'continue the present course of action in RoWIP 2'. Other suggestions for inclusion in RoWIP2 include developing the walking for health network, filling missing links, improving the accessibility and the provision of behind the hedge routes. 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 improvements and surface improvements.

A number of respondents also commented that the rights of way network should not be considered in isolation and that the management and improvement of the public rights of way network is interlinked with many other green infrastructure plans and the LTP4.

## Appendix 1 - Consultation Responses

<b>Q1 Do you feel that the Statements of Action contained in the first RoWIP were sufficient?</b>	
<i>Organisation/ Respondent</i>	<i>Response</i>
Lincolnshire Ramblers Association Countryside Officer and South Lincs & Rutland LAF member	The statements of action were sufficient and well presented.
Mid Lincs LAF member & health walk leader	In my opinion the statements of action in the first RoWIP were sufficient in general terms.
Senior Highways Officer (Countryside), East Division, Lincolnshire County Council	Yes, sufficient but maybe too ambitious. However, if one takes the stance of stretching the targets so that we were in an 'ideal world' it covers sufficiently for that too. Need to have goals.
Head of Highway Client Services, Lincolnshire County Council	I think that our last plan was comprehensive but probably a little too ambitious. The statements of action were therefore sufficient at the time and would suffice for the next plan with a bit of updating.
East Lindsey Heart Support Walking Group	Yes
Ramblers Association – Lincolnshire Area	The statements were very wide ranging and covered most issues relating to the PRow network as it now exists. However, I felt that solving issues of safety as well as the creation of new paths seemed to be considered as aspirational rather than commitments. I will comment on this further below.
Natural England	Yes
Lincolnshire Wildlife Trust	SOA38 states that suitable roadside verges should be identified to create safer links between existing routes. Over the last four years the Lincolnshire Wildlife Trust has been leading on the Life on the Verge partnership project ( <a href="http://www.lifeontheverge.org.uk">www.lifeontheverge.org.uk</a> ), of which Lincolnshire County Council is a partner. The project has focussed on road verges in the Lincolnshire and Rutland Limestone Natural Area and in the last two years also in the Lincolnshire Wolds National

	Character Area. Through wildflower identification training days and community engagement, members of the public have been encouraged to survey road verges in the project areas to identify those which merit designation as Local Wildlife Sites and those which do not yet qualify but would benefit from appropriate management. Based on the survey data received so far 61% of the limestone project area and 66% of the Wolds project area has now been surveyed. 319km (15%) of the 2,109km of road surveyed have been found to have LWS quality stretches.
Colsterworth & District Parish Council	In general terms the statements of action revolve around creating policies and identifying 'issues' rather than taking action to improve the network on the ground. Although staff need a policy to work to this is a background to actual action and the latter seems to be suffering in a surfeit of bureaucratic paper pushing. ROWIP implies improvement!
Horncastle Town Council	On the whole the statement of action was sufficient, as long as all these statements can be implemented
Washingborough Parish Council	The current RoWIP was considered comprehensive.
Welton Parish Council	Yes

<b>Q2A What are the areas of the RoWIP do you feel have been delivered well?</b>	
<i>Organisation/ Respondent</i>	<i>Response</i>
Lincolnshire Ramblers Association Countryside Officer and South Lincs & Rutland LAF member	The County Council should be proud of it's promotions. In particular I think the walk leaflet production and the information pack for schools were outstanding.
Mid Lincs LAF member & health walk leader	With some shortcomings I believe that the County Council has delivered well in the overall promotion of the rights of way for the residents and visitors to the County.
Senior Highways Officer (Countryside), East Division, Lincolnshire County Council	Reduction of barriers and number of gates increased so reducing stile numbers, cross-field path enforcement to reduce obstructions, Health walk improvements. Circular walk leaflets well received. Good waymarking in east. Public Path Orders seem to be improving at getting things

	done.
The Head of Client Services, Lincolnshire County Council	I think that we do a great job with promotion and information. Our website, leaflets etc are much better than some other Councils. Within the constraints of our budget we do a good job with the maintenance of our infrastructure i.e. bridges, signs etc.
East Lindsey Heart Support Walking Group	The removal and replacement of many stiles.
Ramblers Association – Lincolnshire Area	<p>The most successful activities were when the Council was working with or was part funded by a Partner. Examples were –</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Improvements to paths used in Walking for Health schemes, in conjunction with the Primary Care Trust.</li> <li>• Creation of the Spires and Steeples Trail, partnered by NK District Council.</li> <li>• Spa Trail in partnership with Waterways Partnership.</li> </ul> <p>Another highlight has been the creation of the set of leaflets for walks and cycling. These are of a high standard even compared to those of other local authorities. I think they have helped to create a network of useful paths and to promote walking as a pastime particularly for the people of Lincolnshire. They should continue to be a useful asset, even if no more leaflets are produced.</p>
Colsterworth & District Parish Council	<p>CT1 done but giving a priority system does nothing if the timescales are so long that very little actually happens as at present.</p> <p>CT2 as per CT1</p>
Horncastle Town Council	Delivered well – it has delivered fairly well on most areas, but not all. There is still a lot to be completed, which could be down to a matter of time and money
Washingborough Parish Council	The service has been mixed and it was considered that the County Council couldn't completely deliver.
Welton Parish Council	Signposting and waymarking
Wilsford Parish Council	SOA17 – Responsible access has been well promoted.

	SOA26 - Countryside microsite is very informative and user friendly.  The enforcement officer keeps local landowners well informed of their responsibilities.
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<b>Q2B What are the areas of the RoWIP do you feel have not been delivered/ not completely delivered?</b>	
<i>Organisation/ Respondent</i>	<i>Response</i>
Lincolnshire Ramblers Association Countryside Officer and South Lincs & Rutland LAF member	The County Council, as long as I can remember, failed to keep up with legal work on rights of way and continues to fail. Footpath clearance has also been disappointing at times of lush growth, but is understood that there are now financial restrictions on both of these activities.
Mid Lincs LAF member & health walk leader	The maintenance and care of the footpaths and rights of way structure has been less successful. Across the County I have experienced or been made aware of poor maintenance, signage and care of rights of way.
Senior Highways Officer (Countryside), East Division, Lincolnshire County Council	Promotion (other than the leaflets that have been revised), poor efforts on motorised user and ought to have done more for cyclists? Failure to establish coastal trail.
Head of Client Services, Lincolnshire County Council	I don't get the impression that we managed to join up as many of our routes as we could have done but this was always going to be difficult.
East Lindsey Heart Support Walking Group	Didn't find anything.
Ramblers Association – Lincolnshire Area	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• These are mainly 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.</li> <li>• The on-line Rights of Way map does contain a lot of useful information, particularly for those who want to plan their own walks on undisputed Rights of Way. However, some of the features still do not work well.</li> <li>• CT3 - Review of maintenance and enforcement policies to publicise to farmers,</li> </ul>

	<p>landowners and the public was due to be completed in 2009 but is not yet done. It could be argued that if it had been done the maintenance problems we now have would have been less.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• SOA38 - Deals with developing a range of circular routes for cyclists and equestrians with some emphasis on providing safe routes (quite rightly). However, I can see no mention of provision of safe routes for walkers. Provision of “behind the hedge links” is as important to walkers as to equestrians and cyclists.</li> </ul>
Colsterworth & District Parish Council	<p>One of the key findings was ‘We need better engagement with local communities through improved information about what we do and assisting those who want to take a more active role in helping to maintain and develop the access network’. I do not feel that the PRow department listens sufficiently to local opinion, even when put forward by bodies such as parish councils.</p> <p>CT3 – The policies may have been reviewed but there seems to be a lack of enforcement.</p> <p>CT6 and SOA8 – Not done, infact more seem to be erected without authorisation. Impossible to say what should not be there if there is not benchmark (i.e. correct definitive map and statement in place).</p> <p>SOA9 – Not being done when reported. Paths given lower priorities have cropping issued ignored all summer!</p> <p>SOA27 – No sign in Colsterworth/ Woolsthorpe.</p> <p>SOA40 and 41 - These priority systems are proving more of a barrier to a complete useable system than a help as the allocation of a lower priority is usually given as a reason/ excuse for nil action. Also note that the policies linking the 2 priorities (DMMO and maintenance) mean that if there are problems on a route no enforcement action will be undertaken, but by giving these RoW low priorities the DMMO action needed is put into limbo. This is a perfect circular excuse for doing nothing!</p>
Chapel St. Leonards Parish Council	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Footpaths/Bridleways in the area are NOT well-maintained in general, with many specific issues that need urgent attention.</li> <li>• Signage is particularly poor in certain places.</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Insufficiently-regular trimming of adjoining hedges etc on some footpaths, resulting in difficulty/potential injury when attempting passage.</li> <li>• Very poor surface and side encroachment on some routes, particularly at the access point at the S. end of Chap/33/1.</li> <li>• Caravan site owners (or one in particular) have a rather cavalier attitude to access rights, with one footpath totally blocked off by a locked high steel gate during last winter (opened up later in the Spring, but needs observation coming into the Winter).</li> <li>• Most footpaths/bridleways are linear in nature, with little in the way of circular routes unless one is capable/willing to walk considerable distances or are happy to settle for shorter 'suburban' routes - which are obviously not what people wish to use for recreation purposes.</li> <li>• Some of the footpaths/bridleways in the rural areas of the Parish are subject to disruption by farming, with little consideration to reinstatement of the right-of-way following ploughing/planting etc. Chap33/1 is a particular problem here.</li> <li>• There seems to be a lack of consideration for walkers in regard to the placement of livestock within fields which pedestrians have right-of-way through (Chap34/1).</li> <li>• There is little access for cyclists, and provision for cycling needs to be looked at more closely as a priority (suitably surfaced and maintained circular routes as a preference).</li> <li>• Very poor access to most paths for disabled users/mobility vehicle users.</li> <li>• There is little or no access for motorized traffic in the area (e.g. Byways Open to All Traffic routes).</li> <li>• Access to the Promenade could be better for disabled users, with only one northern access point at Chap/37/1, one at the Pullover and two further ones at the south end which are both prone to disruption by blown sand.</li> </ul>
Helpringham Parish Council	All signage should be correct.
Horncastle Town Council	Failed to deliver – completion of the Spa Trail – still needs signage and a new footpath into Horncastle along the riverside to Jubilee Way. This would complete a very good walk and cycle way which, now that it is open, is well used.
North Somercotes Parish Council	Improvement needs to be made to how claims are prioritised and dealt with because as it stands, those who may wish to give evidence of a footpath's historic usage may well no longer be with us by the time the case reaches the hearing stage. Taking evidence in support /against a claim once it is lodged should be considered, where this may be an issue.

Saltfleetby Parish Council	<p>The Parish Council is responding due to concerns that, despite this rural/coastal area being one of three identified areas for the Lincolnshire Coastal Grazing Marshes Project there is little evidence of improvements being carried out in the area to match the Vision of the ROWIP.</p> <p>This area which includes parts of Theddlethorpe, Saltfleetby, Saltfleet/Skidbrooke and the Carltons has a number of well-maintained footpaths, many of which historically link villages, but circular routes are not currently identified or publicised. To make this possible a number of ROW need improvements to bring them up to a standard to be used in comfort by walkers and riders, and most importantly, wheelchair users.</p> <p>There are substantially fewer routes for horse riders and many of the existing ones also need some improvement, particularly as they could also be used by walkers, as additions to existing walking routes which could then become circular routes.</p> <p>The East Lindsey District Council Landscape Character Assessment identifies the area as being in the Coastal Outmarsh, which is being strongly promoted at both County and District level as a target area for green and year round tourism.</p> <p>A number of strategic partners including ELDC commissioned Bowles Green consultants to carry out a study into the feasibility of developing ecotourism on the North Lincolnshire coast, including the beaches and dunes. One of their recommendations was that there are certainly opportunities for holidays to be taken with horses if this was promoted and indeed a number of the holiday cottages in the area advertise this, particularly in relation to riding on the beaches. The Parish Council finds it extraordinary that these findings have not been acted upon in the ROW IP.</p> <p>The villages referred to have many buildings of historic interest to attract tourism and the coastline is an NNR/SSSI. There are thousands of visitors annually to the Reserve, but little focus on advertising the other tourism opportunities in the adjacent areas.</p>
Sutterton Parish Council	<p>At a time when we are being encouraged to leave our cars at home and get out and walk, the lack of safe places to walk is of concern. There are very few public PRoW served far worse than the north.</p>

Welton Parish Council	Maintenance and enforcement.
Wilsford Parish Council	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• SOA28 – Improve quality of waymarking.</li> <li>• SOA32 – Problems with vegetation cutting.</li> <li>• SOA49 – Countryside Access newsletter not produced.</li> <li>• Some cross-field paths are not reinstated.</li> </ul>

<b>Q3 What areas do you feel should be delivered for the next RoWIP?</b>	
<i>Organisation Respondent</i>	<i>Response</i>
Lincolnshire Ramblers Association Countryside Officer and South Lincs & Rutland LAF member	I cannot envisage any expansion of workload under present circumstances.
Mid Lincs LAF member & health walk leader	I feel that there is an opportunity having being told that Lincolnshire has the greatest number of registered health walkers across the country for improved partnership working with the likes of the RA and the health walks co-ordinators. I see this as an opportunity for a greater awareness of and access to our rights of way system not only for walkers but cyclists, horse riders and particularly the disabled community.
Cambridgeshire LAF	In response to the three main areas being consulted upon, Cambridgeshire LAF feels that existing rights of way should be developed and extended wherever possible.
South Lincolnshire & Rutland Local Access Forum	<p><b>1. <u>INTRODUCTION</u></b></p> <p>The South Lincolnshire and Rutland Local Access Forum welcome the opportunity to provide feedback on the achievements of the work carried out on the 2007 – 2012 Right of Way Improvement Plan (RoWIP). The Forum is a statutory body set up to advise all levels of the local authority on access and rights of way issues. This response attempts to provide the views of all</p>

user categories, also the views of farmers and landowners where Rights of Way exist.

## **2. REVIEW OF STATEMENT OF ACTION**

### **2.1 POLICY FRAMEWORK**

The publishing of policies regarding Rights of Way help to provide clarity to the public and officers in the manner in which various issues should be addressed by the Council, this is welcomed by the Forum.

2.1.1 The statement of action was: a. Sufficient  
b. Delivered Well

2.1.2 Areas which should be considered for the next RoWIP:

The enforcement manual should be completed in RoWIP 2. 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.

### **2.2. NETWORK MANAGEMENT**

#### **2.2.1.Path Infrastructure**

This work has resulted in a significant improvement.

2.2.1.1. The statement of action was: a. Sufficient  
b. Delivered Well

2.2.1.2. Areas which should be considered for the next RoWIP:

Whilst the RoWIP states what has been achieved, it does not display what has not been carried out e.g. the number of roadside signs still required. The LAF ideally requires the path infrastructure to be of a high standard throughout the network but recognises budgets are not available to achieve this standard. The Forum would appreciate being involved with the decisions

on the priorities of path infrastructure improvements in future.

#### 2.2.2. Vegetation Clearance

2.2.2.1 The statement of action was: a. Sufficient  
b. Delivered Well

2.2.2.2. Areas which should be considered for the next RoWIP:

Further investigation should be undertaken to establish whether volunteers could assist in vegetation clearance, in order to raise the standard of maintenance to the previous level.

#### 2.2.3. Walking for Health Network

With walking being such an important form of exercise, assisting in improving health and general well being, it is essential to encourage more people to walk. In order to do this any walking for health initiative should be treated as a priority.

2.2.3.1 The statement of action was: a. Sufficient  
b. Delivered as well as possible under the circumstances of insufficient funding.

2.2.3.2. Areas which should be considered for the next RoWIP:

Of the 600 issues recorded, far fewer have been addressed due to financial constraints. For this important area of work the possibility of further funding streams should be investigated in order to deliver a good standard for the Walking for Health Network.

#### 2.2.4. Surface Improvements

The surface improvements linking communities with schools, employment centres, local services and routes in the region of countryside heritage sites is an important achievement.

2.2.4.1. The statement of action was: a. Sufficient  
b. Delivered Well

#### 2.2.4.2. Areas which should be considered for the next RoWIP:

The statement of action did not state what length of surface had been identified as requiring improvement. Separating cyclists from walkers on multiuser paths is important where there is heavy footfall in peak periods e.g. routes to school, start and end of the school day. These issues should be addressed in RoWIP 2, also an investigation should be undertaken to identify outside funding for these projects.

RoWIP 2 should also examine whether it would be feasible to utilise specific projects to aid and develop people/clients e.g. people with learning difficulties, long term unemployed, young unemployed, returning armed forces personnel due to go back into civilian life. This would not only provide the clients with new skills it may also provide them with a different approach to Rights of Way and the countryside for life.

#### 2.5. Road and Rail Crossing Audit

2.2.5.1. The statement of action was: a. The audit was carried out  
b. Delivered to the appropriate agencies

#### 2.2.5.2. Areas which should be considered for the next RoWIP:

The list of hazards should be made available to the Forum. The appropriate agencies should be chased for a response. The agencies should be invited to the Forum to discuss priorities of addressing the hazards.

#### 2.2.6. Unclassified County Roads (UCR)

The County Council working in conjunction with the Lincolnshire LAFs to produce UCR signage and restricted byway plaques to clarify the type of usage permitted on each type of route is an excellent achievement. It is also a "Best Practice" which other LAFs may wish to pursue with the appropriate Highway Authority.

2.2.6.1. The statement of action was: a. Sufficient  
b. Delivered Well

2.2.6.2. Areas which should be considered for the next RoWIP:

The UCR management plan should be presented to the Forum. The items identified in the management plan should be addressed. UCR plaques should be placed on all access points to the routes and maintained.

### **2.3. PUBLICITY AND PROMOTED ROUTES**

#### 2.3.1. Walking for Health

The promotion and publicity during the implementation of the Health and Well Being campaign promoting walking and cycling should have provided benefits in terms of improved health to members of the community.

2.3.1.1. The statement of action was: a. Sufficient  
b. Delivered Well

2.3.1.2. Areas which should be considered for the next RoWIP:

Press releases are free and only cost the time taken to compose and send electronically. These should be used to encourage people to walk and cycle the PRoW.

#### 2.3.2. Web based information

The Countryside Section of the Lincolnshire County Council website is both attractive and helpful.

2.3.2.1. The statement of action was: a. Sufficient  
b. Delivered Well

2.3.2.2. Areas which should be considered for the next RoWIP:

In order to attract more people to walking and cycling more publicity is required. Unfortunately this comes at a price and further reduction in other areas of the PRoW budget will not be appreciated. Therefore value for money priorities and cost benefit ratios are of the upmost

importance. Below are subjects the Council should explore:

- a. The home page of the County Council web site to feature pictures promoting walking and cycling, changed at regular intervals
- b. The home page to advertise download certificates available in the Countryside web page for walking certain routes could be trialled. In order for the routes to be downloaded a completed questionnaire may act as a trigger. The questionnaire should be aimed at collecting information about the walker, cyclist and the walk or ride. The success of this scheme attracting more walkers and cyclists into the countryside should be measured year on year.
- c. The "Web Sites" page should include more than 1 link. An additional web address to include is the Natural England address for HLS access sites: <http://cwr.defra.gov.uk>
- d. Explore with other Highway Authorities methods of electronic publicity, which is likely to increase the number of walkers and cyclists.

#### 2.3.4. Long Distance Trails

The development of three new long distance trails is a great achievement. The improvements and development of new long distance trails not only improve walking, cycling and riding, they improve tourism and assist in adding value to the local economy.

2.3.4.1. The statement of action was: a. Sufficient  
b. Delivered Well

2.3.4.2. Areas which should be considered for the next RoWIP:

It is essential the standard of maintenance on long distance trails are of a high quality. Once again costs come as serious factor. The budget for the rest of the network should not suffer as a consequence of spending on long distance trails. Other funding streams and the availability and use of volunteers should be explored.

#### 2.3.5. The English Coast Path

As this is not going to be carried out in the County in the foreseeable future, no comment can be made.

#### 2.3.6. Sustainable Transport

Whilst it is good to see that walks have been developed and promoted which link with bus services. It is disappointing that certain routes were not featured in the Local Sustainable Transport Fund winning bid to be upgraded to vehicle free multiuser routes. It is however recognised that this fund was not available when the RoWIP was published.

2.3.6.1. The statement of action was: a. Sufficient  
b. Delivered Well

2.3.6.2. Areas which should be considered for the next RoWIP:

As plans have been cut back due to austerity measures, it is necessary as part of the RoWIP to identify additional money which comes available in order to improve or further develop the PRow.

#### 2.3.7. Tourism

Tourism contributes to the local economy, the actions taken in SOA25 make people aware of the benefits of the Lincolnshire countryside.

2.3.7.1. The statement of action was: a. Sufficient  
b. Delivered Well

2.3.7.2. Areas which should be considered for the next RoWIP:

Whilst the actions carried out in the RoWIP appear to be beneficial and encouraging tourism, there may be other opportunities which are missed. It is recommended that one of the officers attend a suitable course/seminar to see if there are other actions the County Council can undertake to ensure the Rights of Way are promoted in a manner to attract tourists in significant numbers. Walking weeks and cycling weeks are used in some counties, maybe this needs to be investigated.

#### 2.3.8. Easy Access

The disability access audit and the results of improving barriers should help people with disabilities enjoy the countryside.

2.3.8.1. The statement of action was: a. Sufficient

b. Delivered Well

2.3.8.2. Areas which should be considered for the next RoWIP:

A survey should be undertaken involving the disability groups who assisted the County Council improve access to the countryside, to ensure the changes meet their needs and to ascertain what other improvements may be required.

2.3.9. Promoting benefits to a wider range of potential users

Identification of underrepresented categories of visitors to the countryside and providing information to attract them to use the countryside is a difficult task. The County Council has addressed this issue in a professional manner which should show some improvement.

The educational pack which the Council has produced is excellent and a publication that they should be very proud of.

2.3.9.1. The statement of action was: a. Sufficient  
b. Delivered Well

2.3.9.2. Areas which should be considered for the next RoWIP:

Whilst the actions carried out in the RoWIP appear to be doing the right thing, it is a difficult task to get young teenagers interested in using PRow. There are a number of actions that could be investigated: Mountain bike track leading to a bridleway preferably starting at an area of deprivation, identifying a person who uses Rights of Way who is held in high esteem by many youngsters and is prepared to help promote PRow to youngsters, build on the mountain bike/cycling legacy of the Olympics and Paralympics to get more young teenagers cycling bridlepaths and UCRs. There maybe other opportunities which are missed.

A survey should be undertaken with the schools and youth groups to identify how they are using the educational pack and whether it needs a further push to ensure it is used to the full effect. One manner of promotion to schools which may assist in promoting PRow is for a member of the Council PRow team to assist in the classroom or youth group when this pack is delivered. Maybe this should be trialled and evaluated to assess whether this approach works.

Discussions with the CTC and Sustrans may identify further beneficial actions which could be taken.

#### **2.4. Community Involvement**

2.4.1. The statement of action was: a. Sufficient  
b. Delivered Well

2.4.2. Areas which should be considered for the next RoWIP:

Continuing the present course of action in ROWIP 2 should provide the right level of involvement.

#### **2.5. Access Land**

2.5.1. The statement of action was: a. Sufficient  
b. Delivered Well

2.5.2. Areas which should be considered for the next RoWIP:

Continuing the present course of action in RoWIP 2 should provide the right level of management and public enjoyment of access land.

#### **2.6. Affect of Austerity Measures**

Reference: CT6, SOA8

Action: Seek opportunities to reduce the number of unnecessary barriers

Revised Outcome: Reduced level of implementation.

Forum Comments: Whilst the Forum understands the reasoning behind the reduced level of implementation, we feel that the outstanding actions should be rolled forward into RoWIP 2.

Reference: CT9

Action: Undertake an annual inspection of open access land.

Revised Outcome: Inspection frequency reduced to once every 2 years.

Forum Comments: Whilst the Forum understands the reasoning behind the reduced level of inspection, we feel that the frequency in RoWIP 2 should revert back to an annual inspection with volunteers inspecting the sites every second year.

Reference: CT11

Action: Review of Viking Way

Revised Outcome: No further action taken.

Forum Comments: The Forum believes this is an important PRow which could attract tourism and assist the local economies therefore the review and on the ground improvements should take place in RowIP 2.

Reference: CT11, SOA23

Action: Develop the Lincolnshire section of the English Coastal Trail.

Revised Outcome: Natural England unable to proceed at this time.

Forum Comments: Not applicable

Reference: SOA14

Action: Translate 1 Lincolnshire walk title into an additional language.

Revised Outcome: No further action taken.

Forum Comments: The Forum does not understand why there was deemed to be a need for this.

Reference: SOA16

Action: Publicise barrier free routes.

Revised Outcome: No further action taken.

Forum Comments: This should be included in RowIP 2.

Reference: SOA27

Action: Develop a range of information panels at gateway sites and villages.

Revised Outcome: No further action taken.

Forum Comments: This does encourage people to walk, maybe discussions should take place with parish councils, explaining the benefits of the information panels and requesting them to contribute towards the costs.

Reference: SOA29

Action: Identify all missing bridges. Implement programme of replacements.

Revised Outcome: Capital bridges programme cancelled.

Forum Comments: The Forum would appreciate a list of the missing bridges. Those of the highest priority providing the best cost benefit should be identified. The County Council should investigate this proposal and also identify if there are any other funding streams which may be

relevant.

Reference: SOA33

Action: Complete audit of busy road and rail crossings and implement prioritised programme of improvements.

Revised Outcome: Audit completed. Lack of funding prevents further action.

Forum Comments: An investigation in RoWIP 2 should be undertaken to identify other funding streams. If funding allows work to be undertaken, the highest priority schemes should be addressed.

Reference: SOA38

Action: Support DEFRA schemes that increase access and link PRoW.

Revised Outcome: Public Access element of DEFRA's Higher Level Stewardship scheme abandoned by the Government.

Forum Comments: Further work is being undertaken by a member of the Forum to identify new permissive paths since the 2010 announcement. If the outcome of the project is successful support for these schemes by the County Council in terms of additional publicity would be welcomed.

Reference: SOA37

Action: Support highways divisions with the implementation of Quiet Lanes.

Revised Outcome: No further action taken.

Forum Comments: The Forum would appreciate a list of the original proposed Quiet Lanes. It is also felt that further funding streams should be explored with a view of implementing the best cost benefit ratio Quiet Lanes.

Reference: SOA42

Action: Implement programme of staff training to raise awareness of diversity issues in the countryside.

Revised Outcome: No further action taken.

Forum Comments: The Forum feels that this is important and training should be provided in RoWIP 2.

### **3. SUMMARY**

The Forum feels that Lincolnshire County Council has carried out the majority of the tasks set out

	<p>in the RoWIP to a high standard. If the necessary austerity measures had not been put in place it is felt that the County Council staff would have delivered all the actions listed in the plan. The Forum also requests that they have further involvement in building RoWIP 2.</p> <p><b><u>4. ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS</u></b></p> <p>The Forum wishes to acknowledge the good work the Countryside Access Team have carried out, both in production of the RoWIP and delivering the actions documented on the plan.</p>
<p>Senior Highways Officer (Countryside), North Division, Lincolnshire County Council</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Improved public web mapping with photograph and furniture coverage of whole network</li> <li>• Opportunity for public to contribute photographs from / of paths</li> <li>• Better management of "white roads" and specifically those on hand-over records</li> <li>• Identification of key roadside verges that link prou &amp; enhanced grass cutting / outgrowth control here</li> <li>• Benches / rest areas for disabled / unfit</li> <li>• SOA measures of community / volunteer involvement</li> <li>• Work with campsites and hotels to develop locally promotable routes for visitors</li> <li>• Identify town walks and promote alongside existing booklets to promote trade in county's market towns</li> <li>• Explore sponsorship options for local firms to fund improvement or deploy their own volunteers / team building sessions</li> <li>• Countryside access newsletter</li> </ul>
<p>Senior Highways Officer (Countryside), East Division, Lincolnshire County Council</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Improve cycling provision both on and off road</li> <li>• Re-set targets to be realistic in the current climate</li> <li>• Maybe need to highlight that our work will be primarily focussed on the promoted network</li> <li>• Have a clear effort to establish coastal route and look at getting the Steeping River crossing bridged</li> <li>• Continue edge of urban area improvements</li> <li>• Encourage walking from transport nodes/ use of public transport to access countryside.</li> </ul>
<p>Head of Client Services, Lincolnshire County Council</p>	<p>For the next plan we will have to be realistic about what we can achieve with the resources available. That will require a renewed emphasis on the use of the voluntary sector, enhanced PPP and the Big Society. We will need to continue to advocate the many benefits to health, tourism etc that a decent ROW network bring. We will also need to improve the cyclic vegetation maintenance regime.</p>

East Lindsey Heart Support Walking Group	To make sure Parish Councils get involved more and are totally impartial when dealing with disputes between landowners and the general public.
Ramblers Association – Lincolnshire Area	<p>Obviously there should be a concentration on low cost activity which nevertheless improves the quality of the network.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The use of <b>more volunteer effort</b> certainly. But 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.</li> </ul> <p>For maintenance work the problem may be finding volunteers willing to commit their time on a regular basis. Involving parishes may be a good source of volunteers perhaps through the proposed revised Parish Path Partnership scheme. Also your idea of involving of recruiting small teams to monitor and report on the condition of leafleted paths should work well.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Filling in the RoW ‘missing links’.</b> This could be a good chance to improve the network. The current DEFRA RoWs consultation could lead to legislation which may make this easier</li> <li>• <b>‘Walking for Health.’</b> I think that support for this sort of activity should continue. There is a good chance that government will more than ever want to encourage such support although they may not provide much funding for it.</li> <li>• <b>Continue some of the unfulfilled objectives</b> from ROWIP 1. Some activities were stopped because of budget cuts, not because they were no longer considered worthwhile. I cite two activities known to me – <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The abandonment of the search for a safe 'behind the hedge' route at High Toynton.</li> <li>The abandonment of the commitment to provide an alternative to Apley FP116 footpath between B1202 and Hoop lane. This was considered necessary to provide a missing link path for leisure and tourism purposes.</li> </ul> </li> <li>• <b>Put greater emphasis on improving the poorer divisions</b> of the network.</li> </ul>

	<p>The paths in East Lindsey (particularly near the coast) and in North and South Kesteven seem to have a higher proportion of problem paths than in the other divisions.</p>
<p>British Horse Society – East Midlands Area</p>	<p>For the future, it is essential that equestrians are provided with safer places to ride (or drive their carriages) and that improvements to their available network are achieved much faster than has customarily been the case.</p> <p>Providing safer places to ride (or drive horses) would be dramatically helped by the following:-</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1) Equestrians need far more circular or linked off-road links especially in areas of higher horse population</li> <li>2) It would be useful if equestrians had access to the off-road cycle routes (just as cyclists have access to equestrian routes)</li> <li>3) Where equestrian routes cross busy/major/fast roads not only should there always be adequate signage but also some form of mechanism to ensure that the horse(s) stop before crossing the road</li> <li>4) Ensure that a verge is left at the side of all narrow roads so that a horse can be ridden (or driven) off the carriageway if the road is busy or there is a very wide vehicle approaching</li> </ol>
<p>Open Spaces Society</p>	<p>The Open Spaces Society makes the following submissions:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) speedy action to ensure that paths which are cropped, unlawfully ploughed or not reinstated after ploughing are put right while the problem is still there on the ground and not left until after the crop has been harvested, or the next stage in cultivation has been carried out,</li> <li>b) adding paths to the definitive map, in particular where they will serve a useful purpose,</li> <li>c) creating paths where they will enable people not to have to use roads which are unpleasant and dangerous,</li> <li>d) providing crossings over rivers and dykes,</li> <li>e) linking up dead-end routes,</li> <li>f) creating paths inside hedges parallel to roads where this will mean that people can get off the roads,</li> <li>g) putting greater emphasis on improving the network in areas which have a high proportion of problem paths.</li> </ol>

<p>Sustrans</p>	<p>More joint working and development of schemes to provide routes for walkers and cyclists for everyday routine journeys.</p> <p>As an example, my role has become more focussed on delivering relatively small facilities for cyclists and walkers, compared to previous larger projects such as the Water Rail Way. The new Pathway between Carlton le Moorland and Bassingham is a good example. Often these smaller projects could link to RoW or, as in the Carlton case, provide a link between existing RoWs. It may be appropriate for some urban sections of RoW to be better surfaced or maintained to form part of a cycle network as well as the ROW network.</p> <p>From time to time, Sustrans is in a position to offer grants for such links (to schools, communities, etc.) and as we've previously discussed, it would be helpful to be able to work up some projects so that they might benefit from funding.</p>
<p>Lincolnshire Wildlife Trust</p>	<p>The Lincolnshire Wildlife Trust would wish to see a greater recognition of the contribution that the ROW network can make to biodiversity/ green infrastructure. We would recommend that there should be consideration of management of routes to benefit biodiversity where this would not clash with other uses.</p>
<p>NFU</p>	<p>I think members' main concern is being faced by claims for rights of way based on historical evidence. Obviously, you cannot stop this process, much as we might like you to! However, anything you can do to manage the process so that it does not claim a disproportionate amount of resources would be much appreciated. For instance, is there a process by which only the most evidenced and beneficial claims are proceeded with?</p>
<p>Natural England</p>	<p>Natural England would like to see full integration of the LTP and the RoWIP and continued engagement and consultation with Local Access Forums.</p> <p>Green infrastructure: Identification of ways that the RoWIP can contribute to improvements in existing and new high quality green infrastructure.</p>
<p>Horserider comment</p>	<p>We need more off road riding for the safety of horse and rider. Better liaison with farmers and suggest a toll for the use of existing farm roads to encourage/ reward landowners for using their access tracks Local councils could do more to make grass verges safe to use including more</p>

	frequent mowing.
Chapel St. Leonards Parish Council	<p>I feel, from my limited experience with the local network since the implementation of ROWIP 1, that little or no improvement has been made, and in fact would go so far as to say that the situation has deteriorated somewhat. This is open to debate of course!</p> <p>I realise that there is little current usage of many of our rights-of-way, and this naturally contributes to some of the difficulties (overgrowth underfoot particularly), but I believe that more needs to be done to encourage more use (far better signage with distance information/footpath numbering/destination info for instance).</p> <p>Finally, my reaction to the question '<i>What areas do you feel should be considered for the next ROWIP?</i>' is that all areas of it need revisiting first to ensure some progress towards a point which will make sense of commencing with planning for ROWIP2 in Chapel and environs.</p>
Colsterworth & District Parish Council	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Benchmark structures (limitations) on RoWs and bring the statement accompanying the Definitive Map up to standard.</li> <li>• Have an action list that actually involves action on the ground.</li> <li>• Note that the majority of RoW users are local residents and the prioritisation of long distance figure head routes means that a limited budget is being spent on a few users.</li> <li>• Place actual financial values against each action and a target timescale. Without these this is not actually a plan!</li> <li>• Details of resourcing, financial and manpower, available over the lifetime of the plan.</li> </ul>
Horncastle Town Council	<p>- Continue with the good work that has been started. It will reap rewards in the end for all residents of Lincolnshire. Some of the more remote areas of the county will be easier to access for cyclists, pedestrians alike.</p> <p>- Open up byways that have long been forgotten.</p> <p>- Insist that farmers put back in place 'pathways' across their land after ploughing and crop sowing has taken place as many walkers can be confused as to where to cross fields.</p>
Maltby Le Marsh Parish Council	<p>Would like to see the provision of more cycle ways in rural locations which are subject to increases in volumes of traffic during the busy summer season near costal resorts. The road</p>

	<p>from Maltby to Mablethorpe is an example and with the increase in cycling activities after the successful Olympics the provision of cycle ways on dangerous busy roads would be of benefit with the increased safety, especially as there is only very limited public transport to this area.</p>
<p>East Lindsey District Councillor Sandra Harrison, Saltfleetby Parish Council, Skidbrooke with Saltfleet Haven Parish Council</p>	<p>Listed below are some of the suggested improvements and the potential outcomes in relation to the bullet points on page 2 of the consultation document which the Council has agreed in consultation with the District Councillor.</p> <p>1a) Not all of the Parishes are involved in the PPP, but in Saltfleetby this works well and the maintained paths in the scheme are well used. It is hoped that the scheme will continue.</p> <p>1b and c) In Saltfleetby “Fishmergate” is the key to many circular routes for both walkers and riders and is the most complained about by residents and visitors. It is a “C” class route which is a “link road” to various options, but is in a very poor condition. LCC Highways did add road planings to the surface approximately 2 years ago, but this has left a very sharp uneven and stony surface for the whole distance. If the surface was substantially improved it could be used in safety by cyclists, carriage drivers and, most importantly wheelchairs.</p> <p>The same applies in Theddlethorpe to the route from Kent Avenue, Mablethorpe North End to Crook Bank, Theddlethorpe, via the rear of the Conoco Phillips Gas Terminal.</p> <p>Promotion</p> <p>a) Residents and the Parish Council are keen to be involved in the identifying and producing leaflets including “pub” routes to increase visitor spend in the community. This, of course, would include a disabled access pack.</p> <p>Two of the Parish Councils already have their own websites which could be used for publicity.</p> <p>Improving Access</p> <p>It is agreed that there is a need for signage and surveys of routes and the Council hope that a joint process with LCGM could be implemented in the area.</p> <p>Some of the previous comments apply to this section. In addition, the Council is aware of the problem regarding access to the NNR by horse riders. The dune paths have been ridden for</p>

some 60 years by local people and, until the recent change of the Natural England warden, local riders have had no problems with access. It would appear this is no longer the case and that there will be a problem in the future. There are strong local objections about the possible loss of this local amenity. At the moment people who cannot walk far are currently able to enjoy the peace and tranquillity and wildlife and flora of the Reserve on horseback. To lose this facility would be discriminatory to a minority group of more senior local riders who wish to use these quieter tracks and this exclusion does not meet the requirements of equality and diversity.

The District Councillor who is also a Parish Council, Sandra Harrison holds a great deal of information and proof of use relating to this dating back to when the sand hills were owned by LCC prior to being handed over to what was then the Nature Conservancy Council.

There are holiday caravan sites at North Somercotes, Saltfleet and Mablethorpe, but there is little information and no signage at these sites to guide visitors to any of the places of interest or “off road” routes to access them. Obviously there are many opportunities for partnership working to achieve this.

#### Improvements to Vehicular Highway Network

The Council strongly supports the items in this suggestion. The roads in this area are very busy in the holiday season and visitors seem to have no awareness of horses on roads.

The comments to bullet point 1) are also relevant here. Additionally, there are many “Green Lanes” in these villages, which are also field access tracks. Unfortunately, these are not on the definitive map. They are currently used by many riders as part of circular routes to reduce road usage but, during the winter they are frequently impassable because of this dual use. The increase in the size and weight of farm machinery is having a high impact on the grass surfaces, but of course the landowners do have a right of access. Liaison work would have to be done to rectify the damage on an annual basis. I am sure that Parish Councils and local residents would assist with this, but there are high cost implications.

There are opportunities for improvements in conjunction with Natural England’s Paths for Communities Grant Scheme which Saltfleetby Parish Council is currently investigating.

There is a risk if the profile of the access routes is raised by signage that the off roaders will visit

the locality more frequently and this is a concern.

#### **Comments on Core Tasks**

CT1,2,3 have already been referred to earlier.

CT6 There is concern about the design of kissing gates in relation to disabled/wheelchair access.

CT7 Comment re off roaders should be considered, but, it is important to have green lanes way marked in order to identify and protect them.

#### **Comments on Statement of Actions**

SOA4 - strongly support this and to include “cycle exchange points” in relation to this area, for instance Mablethorpe or the use of Call Connect buses.

SOA7 - East Lindsey District Council already has a number of health initiatives including “walk and natter” and some of these take place in the countryside. This is clearly increasing the numbers of participants.

SOA16 - This should apply to riding routes as well as walks. Many older riders cannot re-mount if they have to dismount to open a gate.

SOA18 - The importance of routes for all types of user access has been referred to earlier.

SOA19 - Refer to the comments re the Lincolnshire Coastal Grazing Marsh.

SOA 20 and 32 – It is important to emphasise how important the control of vegetation is on routes. Perhaps consideration could be given to additional funding for Parish Councils to take this on in relation to bridleways which in many cases are currently too overgrown for walkers to use? As mentioned, particular concern re “Fishmergate” in Saltfleetby which is not user friendly at the moment and as the verges are cut infrequently, it is not possible to walk on them as an alternative to using the poor surface.

SOA22 - Refer again to the LCGM project and liaison with local residents and Parish Councils

	<p>who have local info.</p> <p>SOA23 - If this scheme goes ahead it is strongly believed that Bridleways should be included, particularly as there are many routes along the beaches and dunes along this coast which have been used by riders for many years, but unfortunately have not been recorded on the definitive map and this would fit with the P4C scheme of creating more bridleways.</p> <p>SOA38 - As indicated by earlier comments this action would be strongly supported. However, many of the circular routes for riders which could be identified in this area would include use of the beaches or dune paths and with the current difficulties this is unfortunately not possible.</p> <p>SOA48 – The Council agrees with this awareness campaign. However, it would add that work needs to be done to create awareness of the responsibility of dog owners to have close control of their dogs.</p>
Sutterton Parish Council	<p>Encouragement and assistance should be given by the County Council and DEFRA to landowners to enable more permissive rights over land. Health groups are trying to get the public walking more, but with a poor network of public footpaths and permissive walkways this is being hampered.</p>
Washingborough Parish Council	<p>For the future Parish Councillors felt that more information on the management, cost and delivery times should be noted which would provide benchmarks to enable measured judgements to be made. The public footpaths need rationalising. Producing maps of footpaths/ walks in booklet form should be considered.</p>
Welton Parish Council	<p>Further improvements of pushchair and wheelchair access and more bridleways.</p>