

Countryside Access and Rights of Way Improvement Plan 2007-2012



April 2007

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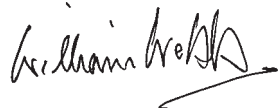
Foreword

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

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

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

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



Councillor William Webb
Executive Councillor for Highways

Executive Summary



Our Vision for the Rights of Way Improvement Plan in Lincolnshire

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

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

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

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

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

The County Council is required to make assessments of:

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

Lincolnshire's Rights of Way Improvement Plan (ROWIP)

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

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

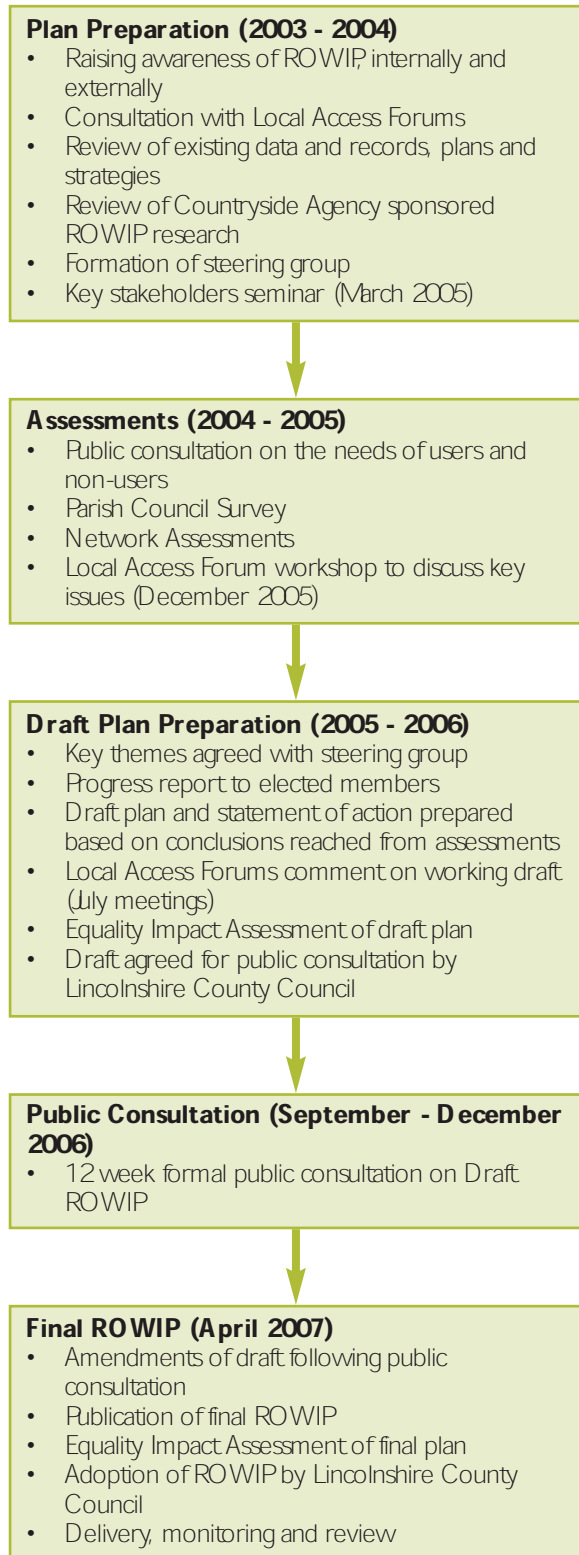
During 2004 and 2005, we undertook our largest ever consultation exercise looking at the issues surrounding the current use of the public rights of way network, which resulted in over 3000 responses from the public. We also sought views from key stakeholder organisations, parish councils and our two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

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



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

Figure 1
The stages of preparing the ROWIP for Lincolnshire



Key Findings And Focus For Improvements

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

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

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

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

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

How is this plan structured?

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

Sustainable Transport

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

Health & well-being

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

Rural Economy & Tourism

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

Social Issues

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

Statement of Action

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

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

Key partners and potential sources of funding include:

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

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

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

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

Countryside Access and Rights of Way Improvement Plan



Part 1

Background and Assessments

Background

Scope And Context

Making The Assessments

Analysis And Summary Of Assessments

Background

The 2001 Census revealed that in Lincolnshire:

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

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

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

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



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

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

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

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

What Are Public Rights of Way?

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

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



















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

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

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

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

Figure 2
Public rights of way and who can use them

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

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



Previous Strategies

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

- Legally defined
- Properly maintained
- and well publicised

The Definitive Map and Statement

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Statements of Action 40, 41 & CT1

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

www.lincolnshire.gov.uk/countryside

Maintenance And Enforcement

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

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

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

Figure 3
Highway Division Areas in Lincolnshire



Countryside Access and Rights of Way Improvement Plan

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

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

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

Statements of Action 46 & CT 2

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

Statements of Action 46 & CT 2

Working With The Community



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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Statement of Action CT 4

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

Statements of Action 46 & CT 3

Gaps, Gates And Stiles



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

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

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

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

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

Statement of Action 44

Bridges On The Network

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

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



We will undertake a complete network condition survey by 2010

Statement of Action CT5

Signposting, Waymarking And Advisory Signage



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

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

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

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

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

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

Statements of Action 28, 36 & CT7

Surfaces Of Public Rights Of Way And Vegetation Clearance

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

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

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

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

We will review the current mowing arrangements and contract specification.

Statements of Action 32 & CT8

Access Land

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



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

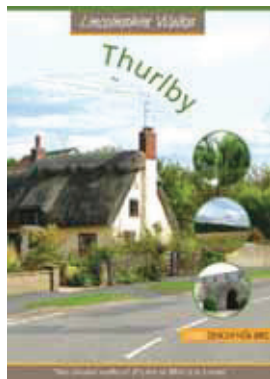
We will ensure that the public continues to enjoy their right of access on foot to land designated under CROW and we will work with affected landowners to promote responsible access.

Statements of Action 17 & CT9

Promotion Of The Network

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

Countryside Access and Rights of Way Improvement Plan



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

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

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

Development of Longer Distance Routes And Trails

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Statements of Action 20 & CT11

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

Statements of Action 23 & CT11

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

Statements of Action 22 & CT11

Scope and Context

The Scope of this Plan

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

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

Context

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

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

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

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

Lincolnshire County Council Corporate Plan

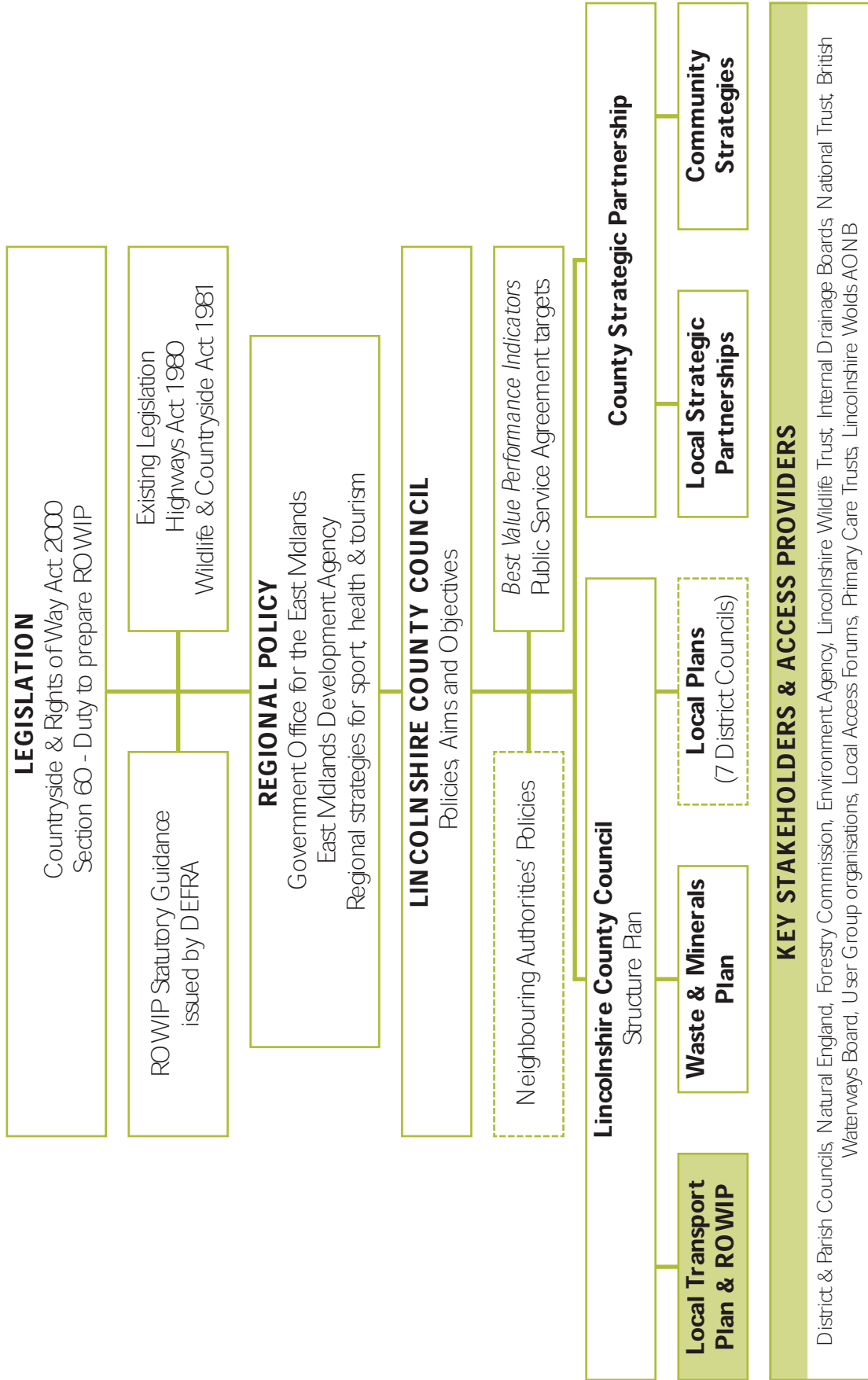
In 2005, the County Council undertook a fundamental review of its strategic aims and objectives to provide a sound basis for setting policies and priorities across the county. This included extensive consultation with the public, key stakeholder groups, staff and elected members. Key themes and priorities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

Lincolnshire LEADS: healthy, prosperous, safe

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

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

Figure 4
Overview of policy context for the ROWIP



Countryside Access and Rights of Way Improvement Plan

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

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

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

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

Community Strategies

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

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

To achieve this, four priority areas are identified:

Priority 1: Safer, stronger communities

Priority 2: Children and Young People

Priority 3: Health and Social Well-being

Priority 4: Economic development

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

The Lincolnshire County Council Structure Plan and Local Plans

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

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

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

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

Lincolnshire's 2nd Local Transport Plan

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

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

as outlined in the national road safety strategy "Tomorrow's Roads – Safer for Everyone."

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

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

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

W&C7 To work with partner organisations to reduce the risk of cycle theft and its deterrent effect on cycle use.

W&C8 The development and improvement of both new and existing cycling / walking routes

W&C9 To assist and support the delivery of the Rights of way Improvement Plan

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

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

Other plans and strategies

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

Making the Assessments

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

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

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

What have we done and how have we done it?

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

how effectively the current network is integrated with wider access.

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



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

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

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

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

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



Local Access Forum members at ROWIP seminar

Analysis and Summary of Assessments

Different Users, Their Needs and Issues

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

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

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

Walkers

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

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



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

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

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

Countryside Access and Rights of Way Improvement Plan

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

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

The Access Resource In Lincolnshire for Walking

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

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

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

Casual walkers focus group member, Lincoln

What People Told Us:

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

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

Constraints To Access Were Identified As:

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

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

Casual walkers focus group member, Lincoln

Cyclists

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

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

Cyclists focus group member, Lincoln

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

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



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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Cyclists focus group member, Lincoln

The research also found that a significant proportion of cyclists may not be aware of the routes that they are entitled to use such as BOATs, although these routes were found to be better used by members of cycle user group organisations.

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

The Access Resource In Lincolnshire For Cycling

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

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

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

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

- Restricted Byways
- Unclassified County Roads

What People Told Us:

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

Constraints To Access Were Identified As:

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

Horse Riders

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



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

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

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

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

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

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

"I'd be happy to pay a licence to enable me to ride on farmers' land"

Equestrians focus group, Market Rasen

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

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

"In order to access 'off-road' riding we have to ride on busy roads with fast moving traffic and agricultural vehicles"

Equestrian Survey respondent

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

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

The Access Resource In Lincolnshire For Riding

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

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

Equestrians focus group, Market Rasen

What People Told Us:

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

Constraints To Access Were Identified As:

- Fragmented network
- Driver attitude towards equestrians using roads

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

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

Equestrian Survey

Carriage Drivers

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



The Access Resource In Lincolnshire For Carriage Driving:

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

Constraints To Access Were Identified As:

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

Motorised Users

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

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

Motorised users focus group, Lincoln



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

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

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

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

Routes with legal motorised access can be a useful way for visitors, and in particular disabled users, to gain access to the countryside. Routes are often used by four-wheel drive

enthusiasts and trail riders' groups, with certain routes being well used. Due to the unsealed nature of many of these routes the ensuing maintenance issues can be challenging!

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

Motorised users focus group, Lincoln

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

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

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

The Access Resource In Lincolnshire For Motorised Users:

- Byways Open To All Traffic

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

What People Told Us:

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

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

Motorised users focus group, Lincoln

Mobility and Visually Impaired Users

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



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

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

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

What People Told Us

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

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

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

Other reasons included:

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

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

Physical Barriers

- Stiles
- Steps
- Gates
- Bridges
- Path surfaces

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

*Disabilities focus group,
Lincoln*

Information

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

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Transport

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

Conclusions

- People with disabilities and mobility problems are very diverse and should not be considered as a single entity.
- The range of abilities and needs is enormous
- People with mobility difficulties need to plan ahead and often arrange for a helper to accompany them
- Tend to visit countryside sites with facilities and easy parking e.g. Gibraltar Point, Bourne Woods
- Trips to the wider access network are limited and infrequent

"I can't find enough information - I don't know if I am looking for the wrong things but I can't find any"

Disabilities focus group, Lincoln

Young People

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



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

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

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

Parish Council survey

Landowners and Parish Councils

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



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

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

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

- Signposting and waymarking
- Replacement of stiles and gates

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

"Our Parish has recently improved its public access because 4 miles of permissive bridleways have been created"
Parish Council survey

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

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

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

"We need more promotion of walks through parish booklets. LCC to provide more information on the Internet - maps, guides and links to parishes"
Parish Council survey

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

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

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

What Landowners And Parish Councils Told Us

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

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

Parish Council survey

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

Network Assessment - The Access Resource

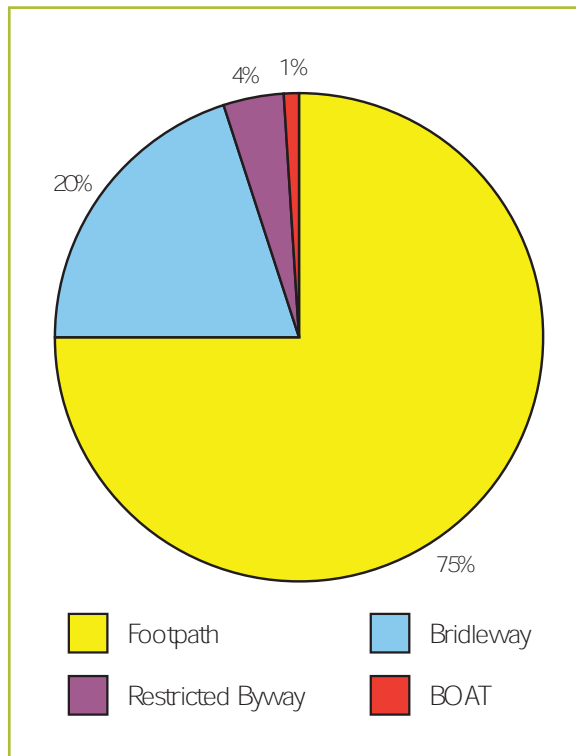
Lincolnshire is a predominantly rural county, and in comparison with other counties in the East Midlands region, has a relatively low and widely dispersed population across many small communities. The 4000km network of public rights of way is the prime means to gain access to the countryside in the county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

There are four types of public rights of way:

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

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

Figure 5
Proportion of PROW by category



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

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

Figure 6
Length of PROW by district

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

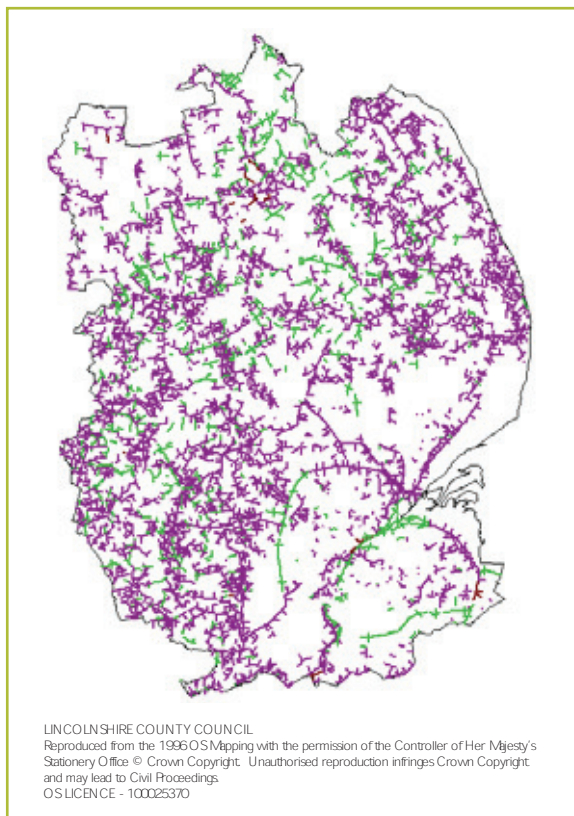
Walking

(Footpaths, Bridleways, Byways and Restricted Byways)

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

Map 1

Network distribution of walking routes



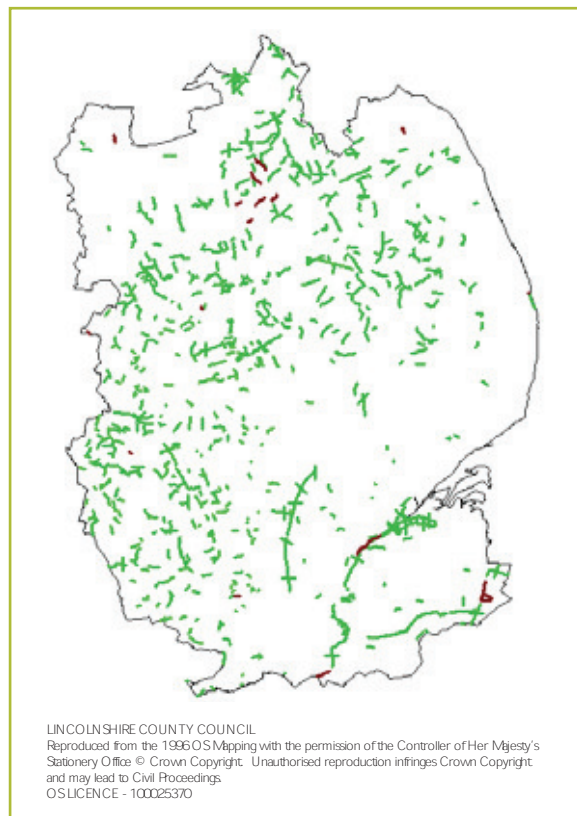
Cycling and Riding Routes

(Bridleways, Byways and Restricted Byways)

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

Map 2

Network distribution of cycling and riding routes



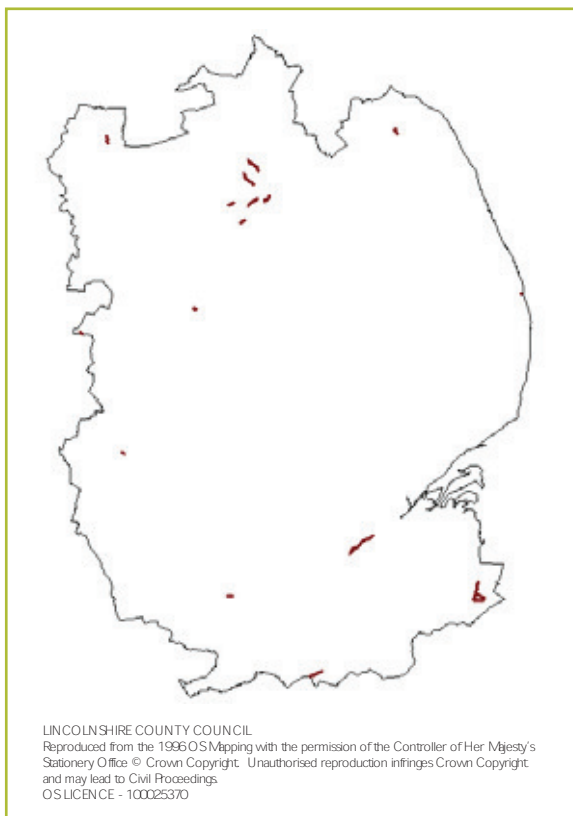
Motorised Users and Carriage Drivers

(Byways)

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

Map 3

Network distribution of motorised user routes

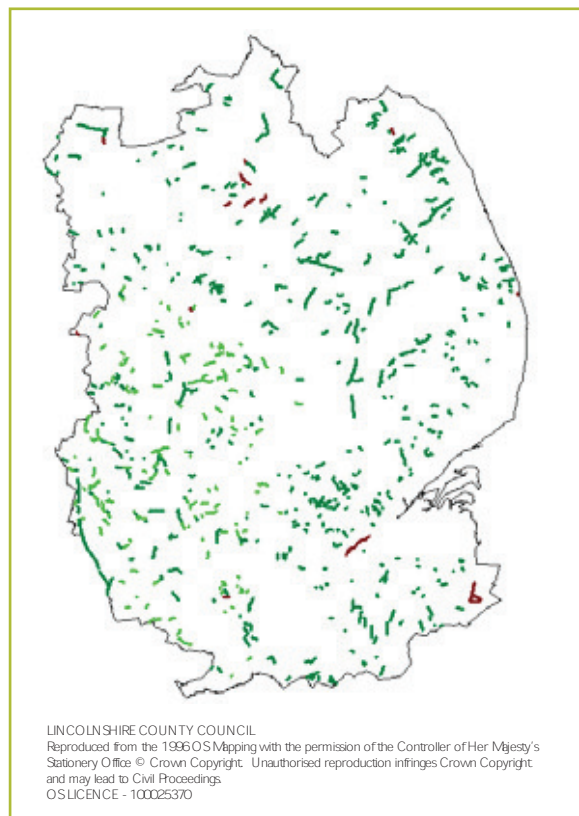


Unclassified County Roads (UCRs)

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

Map 4

Network distribution of unclassified county roads



Other Types of Access

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

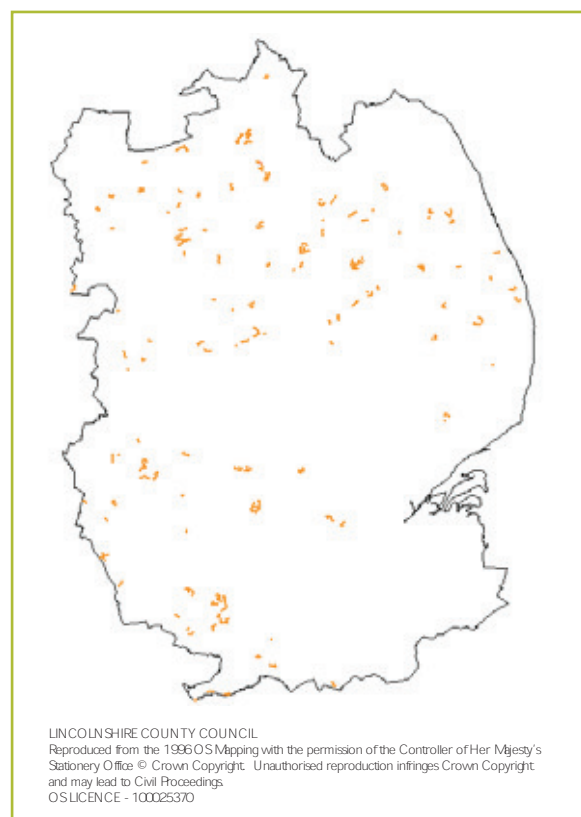
- Permissive access
- Access Land
- Country Parks and Countryside Sites
- Some nature reserves
- Woodlands
- Coast
- Waterways, river banks and canal towpaths

Permissive Access

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

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

*Map 5
Known permissive access*



Access Land

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

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

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

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

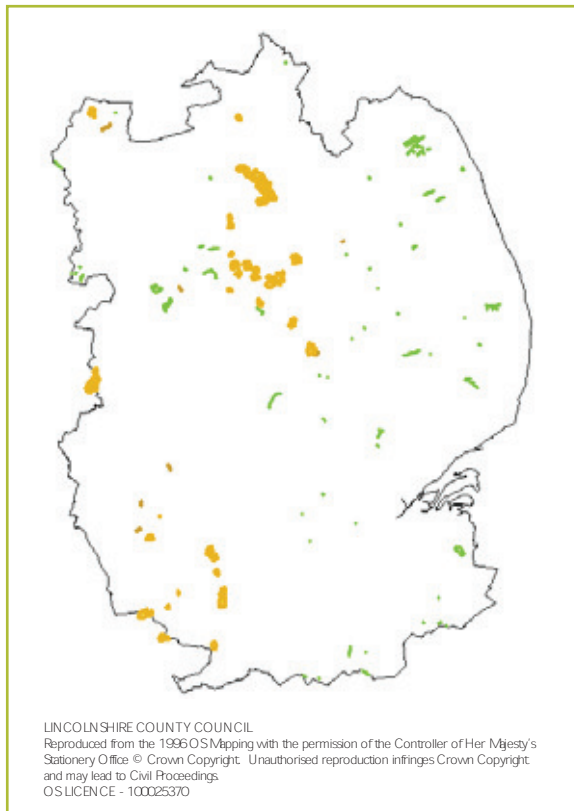
In addition, the Forestry Commission have designated most of their woodlands and forests as Access Land under CROW.

Country Parks and Countryside Sites

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

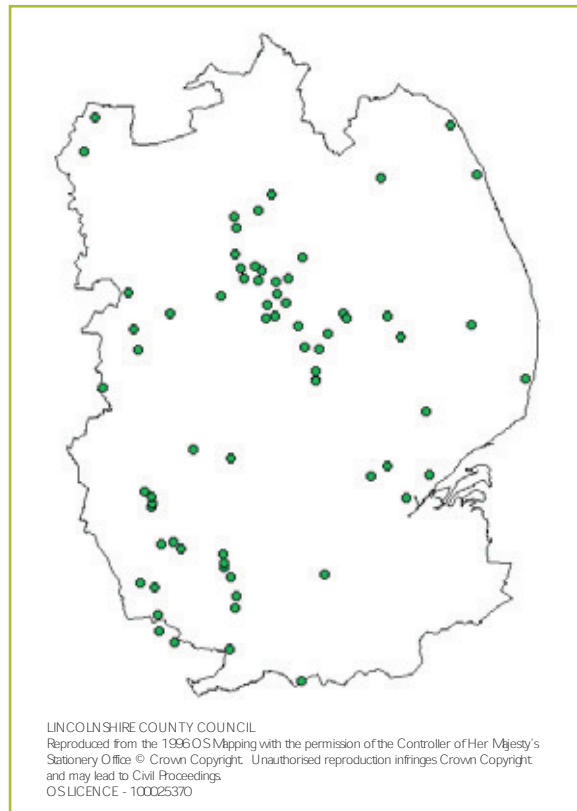
Map 6

Location of CROW access land



Map 7

Location of country parks and picnic sites



Countryside Access and Rights of Way Improvement Plan

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

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

Map 8
Coastal Access Points

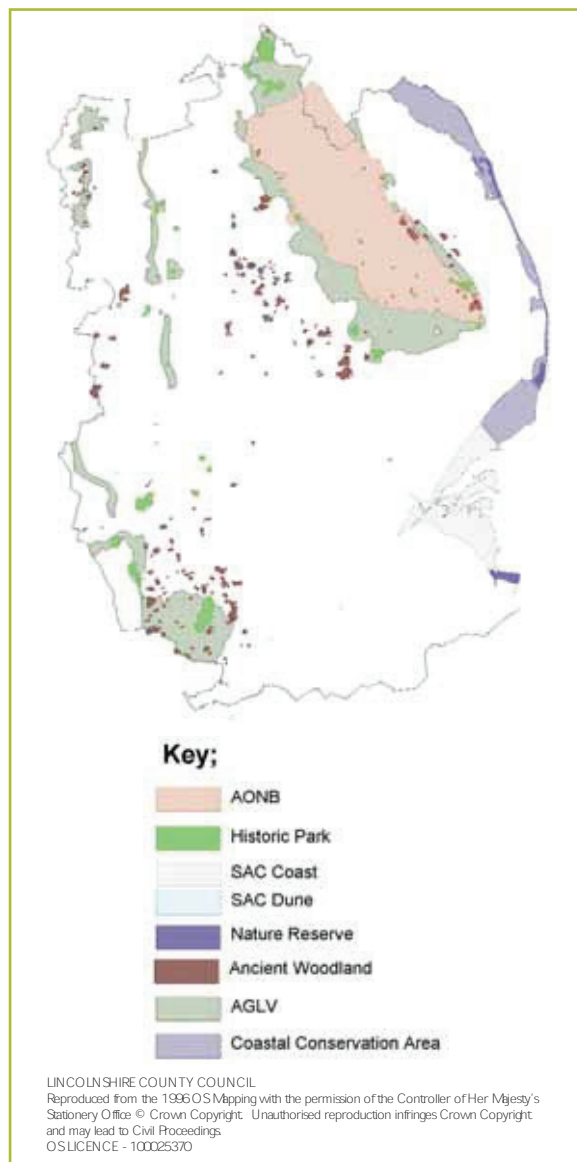


Attractive Countryside

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

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

Map 9
Areas of high landscape and conservation value



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

- Willingham Woods
- The Bardney Limewoods
- Bourne Woods

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

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

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

Accessibility Issues

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

Stiles are only installed when other options have been discounted.

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

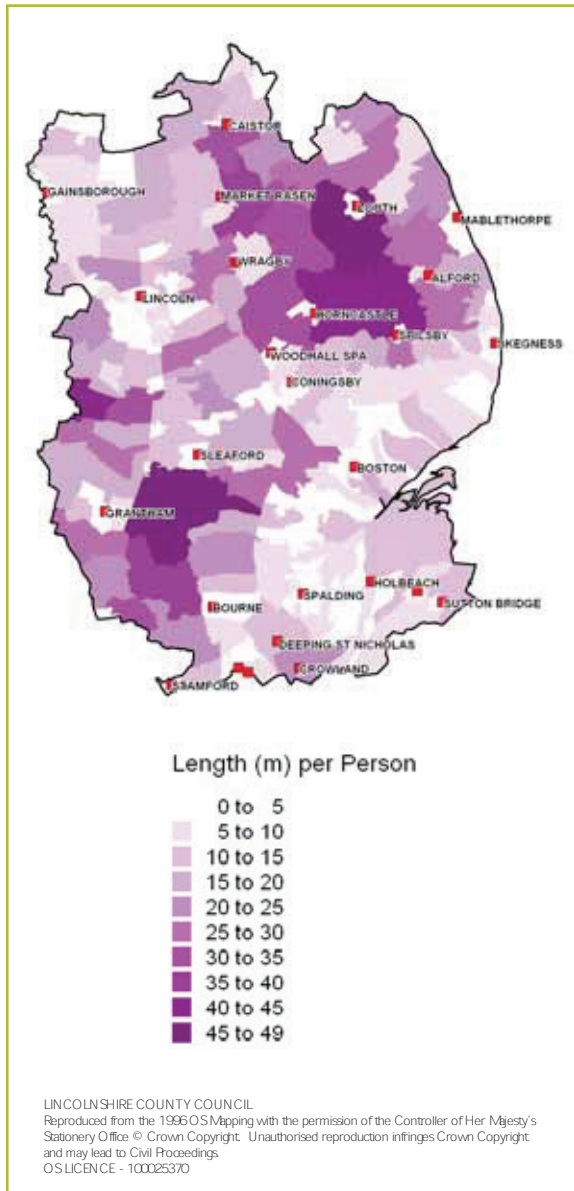
Network Provision and Population Density

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

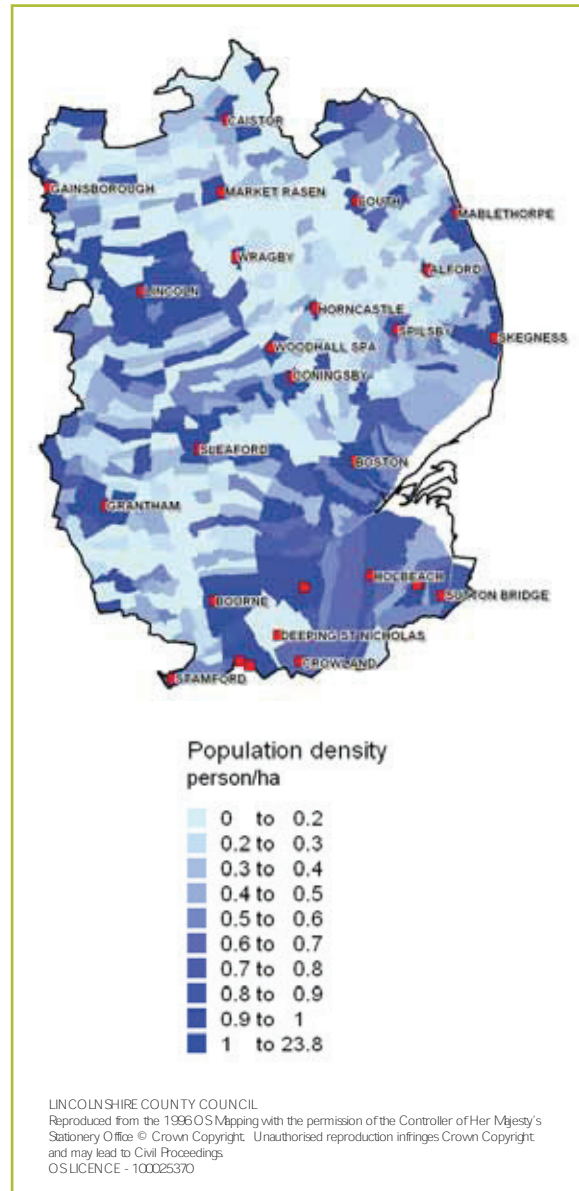
The assessment was based on the length of rights of way per person within each SOA. The darker areas of the map show those areas with most rights of way by length per person, with the lighter areas showing the least.

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

Map 10
Length of PROW per person



Map 11
Population density in Lincolnshire



Road Crossings and Connectivity

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

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

We will seek the best solution for new

crossings when new road schemes and development are proposed.

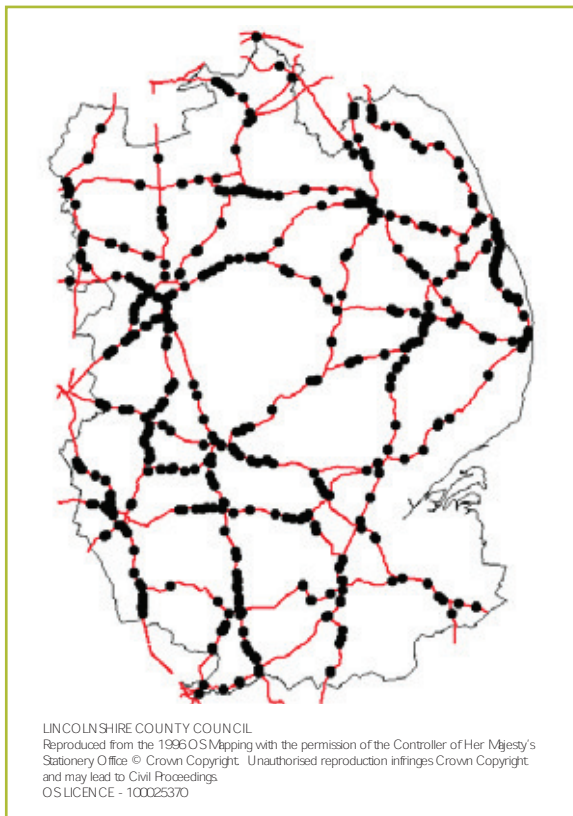
We looked at how the network connects with each other – to form circular routes with other roads and tracks. A total of 993 issues have been found on the network including

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

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

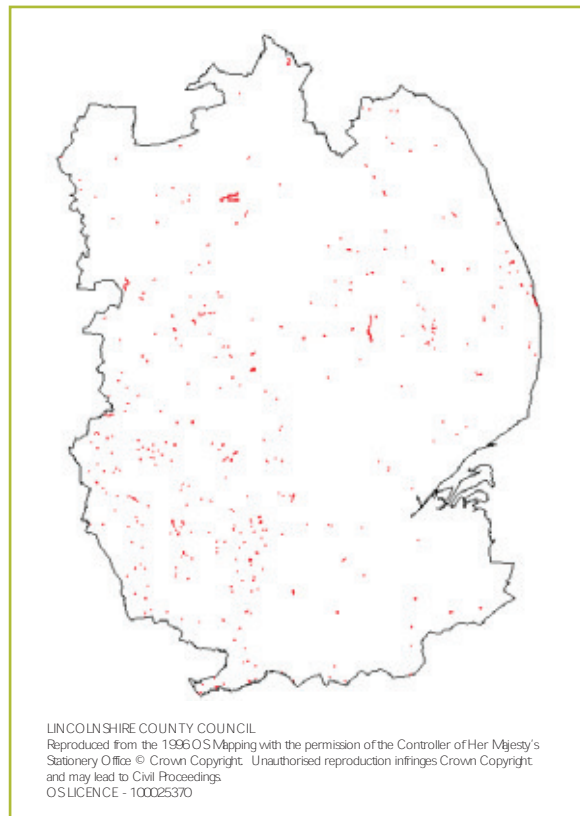
Map 12

Location of PROW intersections with main roads



Map 13

Distribution of network anomalies



Countryside Access and Rights of Way Improvement Plan

Network Conclusions by District

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Conclusions

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

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

Use Of The Network

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

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

Network Provision and Connectivity

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

Implications For Rights Of Way Improvement Planning

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

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

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

Improving the network should concentrate on:

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

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

Countryside Access and Rights of Way Improvement Plan



Part 2

ROWIP Thematic Chapters

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

Sustainable Transport



National Context

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

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

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

Lincolnshire Context and What People Told Us

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

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

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

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

It is proposed to continue to build on the work achieved by the 1st LTP, to improve conditions for cyclists and walkers. Improvements to the public rights of way network will assist in delivering the shared priorities by increasing accessibility to key services, either for outlying villages to nearby towns, or between villages where services are limited.

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

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

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



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

"Traffic growth in Lincolnshire now exceeds regional and national levels"

Source: Lincolnshire's 2nd Local Transport Plan

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

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

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

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

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

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



Countryside Access and Rights of Way Improvement Plan

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

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



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

Summary of Key Issues and Conclusions

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

- Provide clear signposting and waymarking of paths and trails

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

"Public transport is either unavailable at the times I have free, or does not provide the routes I need to access the network"

Focus group participant

Improvements to urban links could include:

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

Conclusions:

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

Current Work

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

an integral part of the 2nd Local Transport Plan.

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

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

Source: Lincolnshire's 2nd Local Transport Plan

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



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

Areas of Improvement Identified for the Statement of Action

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

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

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

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

The documents we looked at included:

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

Statement of Action is on page 78

Health and Well-being

National and Regional Context

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

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



The national recommendations for physical activity are:

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

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

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

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

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

Countryside Access and Rights of Way Improvement Plan



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

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

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

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

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

Potential health benefits of using public rights of way

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

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

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

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



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

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

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

- Opportunity to take part in physical exercise

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

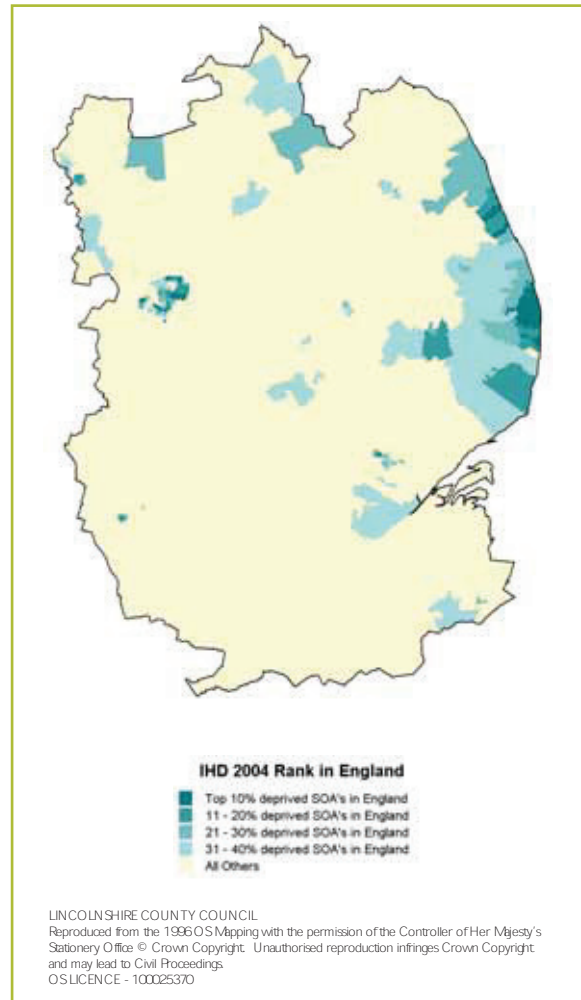
Lincolnshire Context and What People Told Us

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

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

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

Map 14
Indices of Health Deprivation 2004



Boston, Grantham and the East Lindsey coastal areas.

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

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

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

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

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

Summary of Key Issues and Conclusions

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

and publicised will encourage greater use for regular short journeys

Specific Barriers to participation identified from the research were:

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

Current work

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

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

Areas of Improvement Identified for Statement of Action

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

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

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

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

The documents we looked at include:

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

Lincolnshire 2nd Local Transport Plan

Lincolnshire Research Observatory – Health Indices

Lincolnshire Access Survey and Focus Groups 2005

Countryside Recreation Network - A Countryside for Health and Well Being

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

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

Census 2001

Lincolnshire Community Strategies

Statement of Action is on page 79

Rural Economy and Tourism

National Context

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



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

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

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

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

Lincolnshire Context and What People Told Us

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

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

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

In 2005 it was estimated that:

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

Source: Lincolnshire Tourism

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

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

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

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

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

Source: Lincolnshire Tourism

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

Summary of Key Issues and Conclusions

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

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

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

Improvement priorities identified from the consultations were:

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

Countryside Access and Rights of Way Improvement Plan

Conclusions

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

Current Work

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

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

Areas of Improvement Identified for the Statement of Action

Strategic Aim – Supporting local businesses and tourism

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

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

The documents we looked at included:

Great Britain Leisure Day Visits Survey 2002–3

State of the Countryside 2005 (Countryside Agency)

State of the Countryside 2002 (Countryside Agency)

Lincolnshire Tourism Strategy 2001–2006

North Lincolnshire Coast Ecotourism Study 2005 (Bowles Green Ltd)

Statement of Action is on page 82

Social Issues



National Context

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

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

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

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

- Lack of information and confidence are significant barriers
- All groups are keen to access outdoor recreation once "tasted"
- Key barriers confirmed as lack of transport and information
- Lack of a sense of welcome for young people and black and minority ethnic community
- Lack of continuity or provision is a barrier for disabled people

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

Greenways Handbook

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

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

- **Social Inclusion**

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

Diversity Facts:
20% of the population in England has a disability

Department for Work & Pensions 2004

9.6% are from black and ethnic minority groups in England

2001 Census

20% of the population is aged 8-24

2001 Census

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

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

with HIV infection, cancer or multiple sclerosis

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

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

Lincolnshire Context and What People Told Us



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

Countryside Access and Rights of Way Improvement Plan

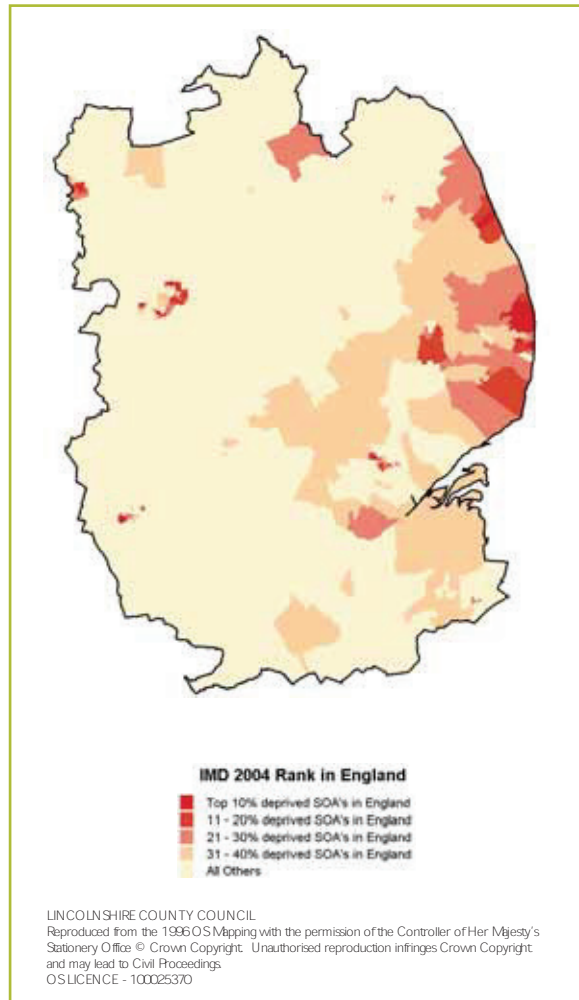
Lincoln, Grantham, Boston and Gainsborough.

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

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

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

Map 15
Indicies of Multiple Deprivation 2004



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

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



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

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

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

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

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

Summary of Key Issues and Conclusions

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

Current Work

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

network aims to meet the highest accessibility standard possible

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

Areas of Improvement Identified for Statement of Action

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

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

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

The documents we looked at included:

Diversity Review 2005 (Countryside Agency)

By all reasonable means (Countryside Agency)

Census 2001

Reasonable Access? (Countryside Recreation Network)

Lincolnshire Access Survey 2005

Lincolnshire 2nd Local Transport Plan

Lincolnshire Community Strategies

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

Great Britain Leisure Day Visits Survey 2004

Statement of Action is on page 84

Part 3

Statement of Action

*Statement of Action
Implementation, Monitoring and Review*

Statement of Action

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

Core Tasks

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

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

Notes on Statement of Action Tables

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

Maintenance = 

Route development = 

Information & promotion = 




Targets and Timescales

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

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

Resources

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

-  Existing staff
-  Partnership with others
-  Additional staff resource required

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

- £** Less than £5000
- ££** Between £5000 and £50,000
- £££** More than £50,000

Links to Local Transport Plan

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

Partners and Funding

Key partners are listed and potential sources of funding include:

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








List of Core Tasks

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

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





SUSTAINABLE TRANSPORT

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







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

HEALTH AND WELL-BEING

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





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







Countryside Access and Rights of Way Improvement Plan

Ref	Action	Conclusion from Research	Targets & Timescale	Y18 & 2	Y18 & 4	Y18 & 5	Resources (cost & staff time)	Benefits	LTP Walking & Cycling	Partners
SOA11	Undertake accessibility audit of whole network	Need to make path network more accessible by removing unnecessary barriers and improving key routes	Accessibility audit complete	✓	✓	✓	£ 	Disability groups people with limited mobility and families with young children		Local Access Forums / Disability groups / Parish councils / User groups
SOA12	Develop a range of key routes in conjunction with disability groups	People with limited mobility require a range of routes of varying length and terrain	5 routes developed and promoted	✓	✓	✓	££  + 	Disability groups people with limited mobility and families with young children		Local Access Forums / Disability groups / Farmers and Landowners / Countryside site managers and project managers
SOA13	Promote and support health walking schemes and assist partners with development of new schemes	Potential users lack confidence using rights of way	Promotional links established and support mechanisms in place	✓	✓	✓	£ 	Non users	✓	Primary Care Trust / District Councils / Local Access Forums
SOA14	Promote benefits of using rights of way to wider range of potential users including young people	There is an underrepresentation of certain social groups using the access network	Targeted information produced	✓	✓	✓	£  + 	All users and non users	✓	LCC - Childrens services e.g. Health Schools Initiative / Natural England / Local Access Forums / Primary Care Trust / Disability Partnership Board / U3A

RURAL ECONOMY AND TOURISM

STRATEGIC AIM – Supporting local businesses and tourism

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

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

Countryside Access and Rights of Way Improvement Plan







SOCIAL ISSUES







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

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

SOA34	Improve management of existing routes available for motorised users and carriage drivers	The network for off-road users is limited for these users, but increasing provision for motorised users is unpopular with other users seeking quiet recreation	Audit of unsurfaced UCRs and management plan produced	✓	✓	££		Motorised users and carriage drivers	Local Access Forums / User groups
SOA35	Identify all cross-boundary links with neighbouring authorities to ensure consistency of maintenance and promotion	Improvements are needed to improve connectivity and maintenance standards of cross boundary routes	Cross boundary links and issues identified. Programme of improvements established	✓	✓	££		All users	Local Access Forums / Natural England / Neighbouring Highway Authorities
SOA36	Plot a project to provide signage incorporating distance and destination information to key routes	Paths can be difficult to find and follow	Plot areas defined and signage in place	✓	✓	££		All users	Local Access Forums / User groups / District & parish councils
SOA37	Support Highway Divisions with the implementation of Quiet Lanes	The access network is fragmented, particularly for cyclists and equestrians	Potential routes identified and audited	✓	✓	££		Walkers cyclists, equestrians	LCC Highway Divisions / Lincolnshire Road Safety Partnership / Local Access Forums / District & parish councils / Lincolnshire Wolds Countryside Service
SOA38	Develop a range of circular routes for cyclists and equestrians in areas of highest demand. Identify suitable roadside verges and "behind the hedge" links to create safer links between existing routes and improve management of those links identified. Support DEFRA schemes that increase access and link PROW	The riding and cycling network is fragmented. Riders want a range of circular routes of varying lengths	Circular riding routes of varying lengths and for a range of abilities are established. Improved management regime to highway verges where appropriate to link routes	✓	✓	£££		Cyclists and equestrians	Local Access Forums / User groups / DEFRA / District & parish councils / Natural England / Landowners / Environment Agency / Neighbouring highway authorities / Wildlife Trust / Lincolnshire Wolds Countryside Service

Countryside Access and Rights of Way Improvement Plan

Ref	Action	Conclusion from Research	Targets & Timescale	Y18 & 19	Y19 & 20	Y20 & 21	Resources (cost & staff time)	Benefits	LTP Walking & Cycling	Partners
SOA39	Identify areas deficient in access where access proposals would benefit the rights of way network	The access network is fragmented, particularly for cyclists and equestrians	Areas identified Q	✓			£ 	All users	✓	Local Access Forums / User groups / DEFRA / Landowners and farmers / District and parish councils
SOA40	Review current Definitive Map Modification Order priority system to give higher priority to key cases that will improve connectivity of the existing network for users	The access network is fragmented, particularly for cyclists and equestrians	Priority system in place	✓			£ 	All users		Local Access Forums
SOA41	Establish a priority system for Public Path Orders giving higher priority to cases that will improve connectivity of the existing network for users	The access network is fragmented, particularly for cyclists and equestrians	Priority system in place Q	✓			£ 	All users		Local Access Forums
SOA42	Implement a programme of staff training to increase awareness of diversity issues relating to highway and countryside access	Need to embed diversity and equality training into staff development to ensure our services are inclusive	Staff training programme in place	✓	✓	✓	££  + 	All users and non users	✓	In house / Fieldfare Trust / Natural England / Disability groups
SOA43	Identify existing routes that meet needs of restricted mobility users and publicise	The access network is underused by people with mobility problems	Routes are promoted to disability groups and through appropriate media	✓	✓	✓	£ 	All users, especially Disability groups people with limited mobility and families with young children		Disability groups

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

Implementation, Monitoring & Review of this Plan



Implementation

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

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

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

Monitoring and Review

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

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

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

Appendices

Appendix 1 *Glossary of Terms Used*

Appendix 2 *List of Figures and Maps*

Appendix 3 *Acknowledgements*

Appendix 1

Glossary of Terms Used

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

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

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

Bridleway A route used on foot, by cyclists and horseriders

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

DDA (Disability Discrimination Act 2005)

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

DEFRA (Department for the Environment and Rural Affairs)

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

Diversity Review Research project carried out by the Countryside Agency.

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

Footpath Route for use on foot only.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

NERC (Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act 2006)

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

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

Countryside Access and Rights of Way Improvement Plan

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Appendix 2

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Appendix 3

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- ROWIP Steering Group
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- Countryside Access Liaison Group
- Lincolnshire Research Observatory
- Colleagues from Highway Divisions, Transport Planning and Tourism
- User group organisations
- East Midlands Regional ROWIP officers group
- Natural England
- The Access Company
- ROWIP Key stakeholders workshop participants

Notes

Notes

www.lincolnshire.gov.uk

