

Cheshire West & Chester Council



Rights of Way Improvement Plan

2011 - 2016

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Cheshire West
and Chester

Welcome to the Cheshire West and Chester Rights of Way Improvement Plan

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The Cheshire Local Access Forum(LAF) fully supports the objectives of the Right Way Improvement Plan.

We Believe it will significantly contribute towards the health and well-being of the residents of the borough by improving the access to the countryside.

The LAF will use its influence to ensure that the implementation plans are adequately and efficiently resourced and monitored despite the cost pressures on the council.

John White
Chair of the Cheshire Local Access Forum

1. Introduction

Background

A safe well-maintained and attractive public rights of way network should perform many functions which include but stretch beyond leisure and recreation alone. It provides communities with opportunities to participate in physical activity free of charge thereby improving the physical and mental wellbeing of residents and visitors.

It provides school children and employees with a means of getting to and from their schools and places of work without using a car, so helping to ease congestion on our roads.

It attracts visitors to the area and encourages local people to enjoy the greenspaces close to where they live, sustaining local businesses and supporting our tourism industry.

A good network provides people without cars with a means of getting to their local shops and services, and to their nearest bus stop or train station.

The purpose of the ROWIP is to identify how well our greenspace and countryside access network currently performs these functions for Cheshire West and Chester residents and visitors, and to identify where improvements would enhance this role.

What are Rights of Way Improvement Plans?

The ROWIP is a product of the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000 (CROW Act) a piece of legislation associated with the phrase 'right to roam'.

The duty to produce a ROWIP is recognition by the government of the need for authorities to take a proactive role in managing their their rights of way network rather than directing resources towards problems as and when they occur.

The ROWIP contains:

- An assessment of the extent to which local rights of way meet the present and likely future needs of the public.
- An assessment of 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.
- An assessment of the accessibility of local rights of way to blind or partially sighted persons and others with mobility problems.
- A statement of action proposed for the management of local rights of way, with particular regard to matters dealt with in the assessments.

This means that the ROWIP encompasses all public rights of way (PROW) recorded on the Definitive Map and Statement, together with all routes and means of access which have public rights over them, but are not recorded.

We must take into account cycle tracks permissive routes, routes through open access land and other routes which are known locally and which potentially could be recorded.

The ROWIP is **not** limited to recorded rights of way alone. Throughout this document the term '**network**' is used in preference to the 'rights of way network'

How is this document structured?

Chapter 2: ROWIP examines our network and looks at the range of opportunities that exist.

The analysis reveals where provision is particularly poor, or in need of development. We have used GIS to help make this assessment, as well as asking people what they think about the network.

Five themed chapters (3-7 inclusive) then examine the role of greenspace and countryside access in respect of: **Assets and Maintenance; Economic Growth; Climate Change; Safety Security and Health; Greater Quality of Opportunity and Quality of Life.**

Each themed chapter assesses what different categories of user eg walkers, horse riders or cyclists need from the Greenspace and countryside access network.

The conclusions drawn throughout these chapters have led us to make statements of intent under each theme. These have been used to frame the improvements in the five year Implementation Programme (appendix 1).

Types of Right of Way recorded on the Definitive Map

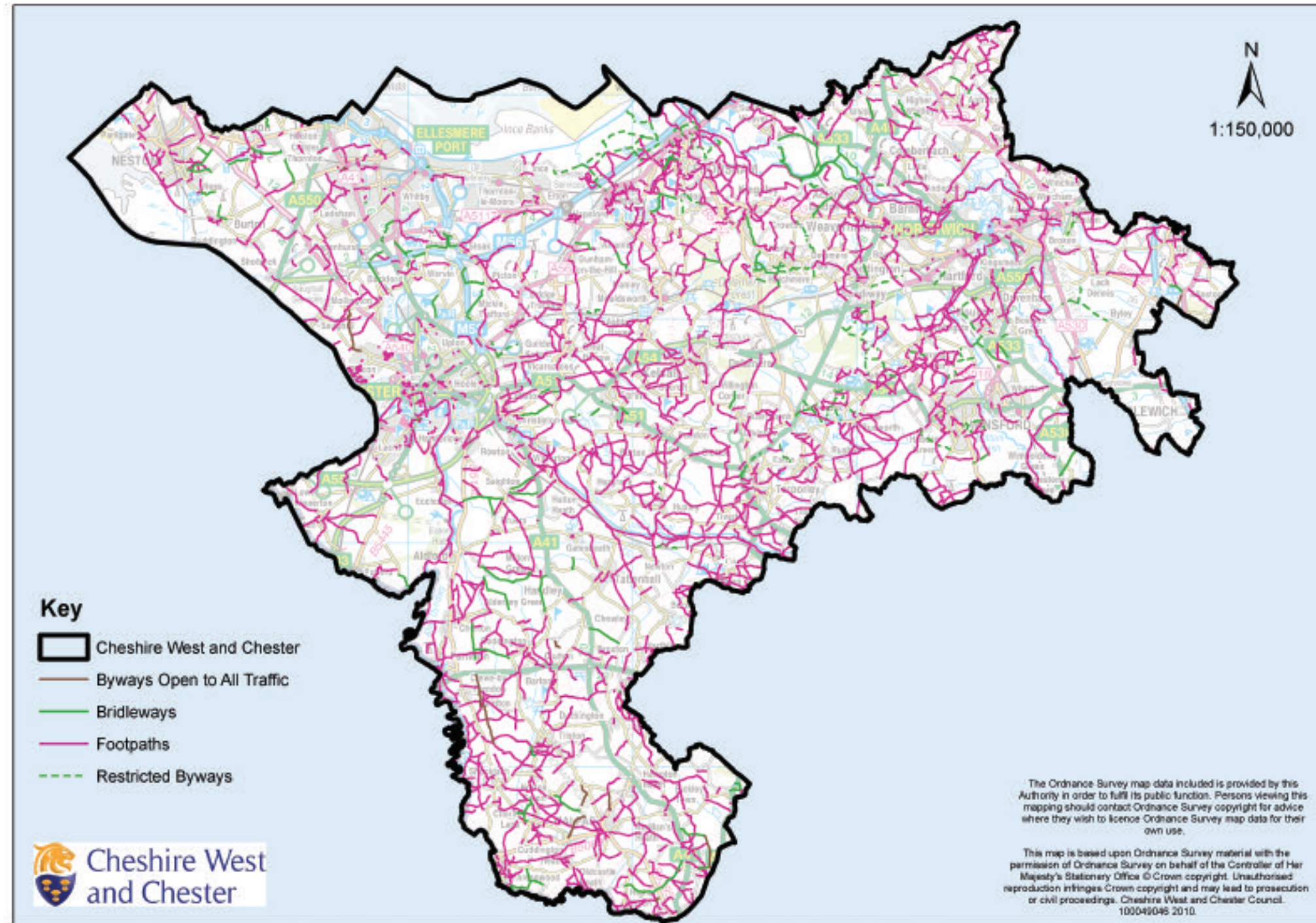
Public Footpath - rights of access for pedestrians with a 'usual accompaniment' (e.g. dog, pushchair, wheelchair)

Public Bridleway - rights of access for pedestrians, horse riders and cyclists. Cyclists must give way to other users. You may also lead a horse on a bridleway.

Restricted Byway (RB) rights of access for pedestrians; horse riders; cyclists and horse-drawn carriages.

Byway Open to All Traffic (BOAT's) – rights of access for pedestrians; horse riders; cyclists; horse drawn carriages and motor vehicles (properly taxed and licenced).



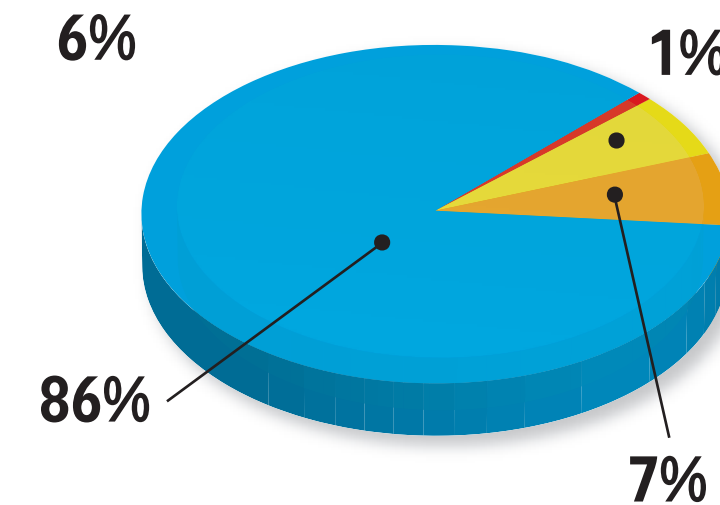
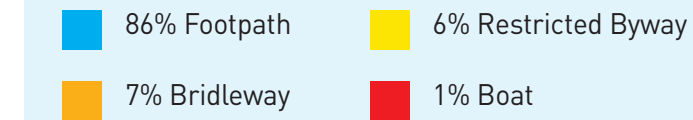


2. Our network access assets, assessment and maintenance

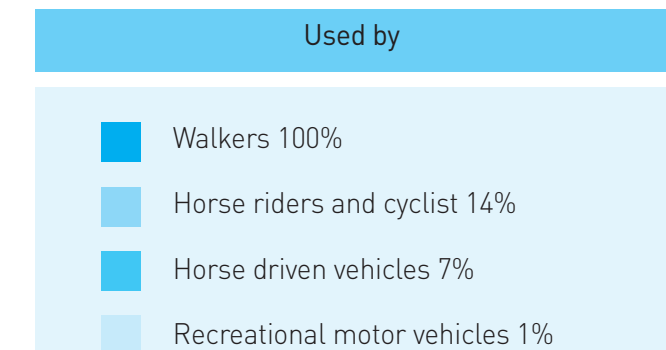
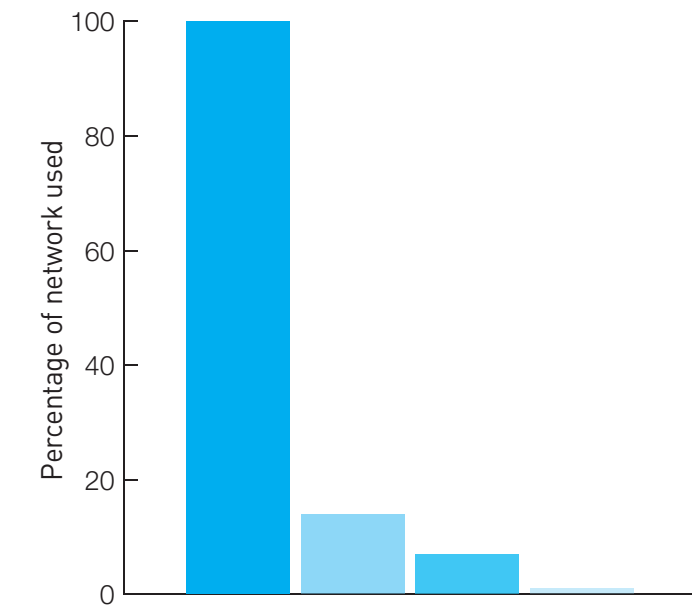
What have we got?

This section describes and assesses the opportunities available to Cheshire West and Chester residents and visitors. The gaps and areas of deficiency identified through this process will help to target the improvements described in the implementation programme.

The following chart displays what percentage of the total PROW network (approximately 1280km) is made up by each type of path.



The following chart displays how much of that network can be used by walkers, horse riders and cyclists, horse drawn vehicles / carriage drivers and recreational motor vehicles:



One immediate conclusion which can be drawn from these figures is that proportionately there are not many routes that are available to horse riders and cyclists when compared to the network available to pedestrians.

Provision is poorer still for the drivers of horse drawn carriageways or the recreational motor vehicle.

What have we got for walkers?

Walkers are the only type of user who may use the entire 100% of the recorded PROW network. Although there is localised fragmentation, there is generally good coverage for walking in the borough.

Permissive routes and unrecorded ways augment the recorded network but localised fragmentation remains unchanged.

What have we got for horse riders and cyclists?

Horse riders and cyclists may use public bridleways, BOATS and Restricted Byways which make up 14% of the network.

The map reveals a highly fragmented network, and there is no connectivity possible without including the highway network, a fact that raises a range of road safety issues.

What have we got for carriage drivers?

The PROW network available for off-road carriage driving is virtually non existent, Carriage drivers may only use Restricted Byways or BOATS which make up 7% of the network.

What have we got for recreational off-road motor vehicle users?

Recreational off-road motor vehicles drivers may only use BOAT's which make up 1% of the network

However, drivers of horse drawn carriages and off road motor vehicles may also use unsealed and unclassified roads of which there are a substantial number across the borough, but there is often uncertainty over which routes may and may not be legally used and who is responsible for maintaining them.

Improving information about which routes may or may not carry public vehicular rights would benefit users and network officers alike.

How much of the network is accessible for people with mobility or visual impairments?

Analysis of our current network for accessibility and condition has allowed us to assess how much of the network is available for people with mobility or visual restrictions.

We have used the following parameters to assess the accessibility of the network:

- Minimum width at gaps/gates of 1 metre
- No gradient greater than 1:10
- Surface condition firm
- No Steps



A note on recording routes

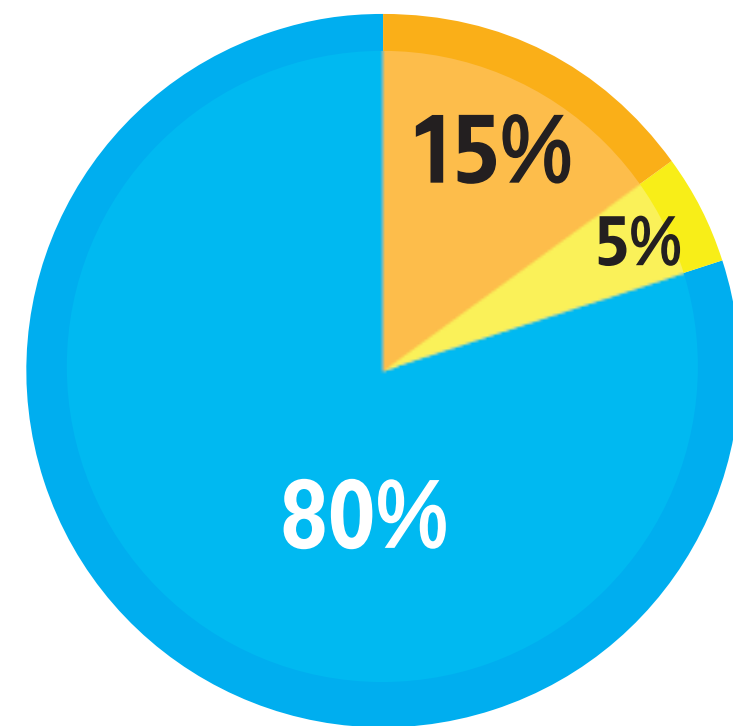
Under the CROW ACT 2000 (S.53-56) any historic footpaths or bridleways not recorded on the Definitive Map and Statement (DMS) which were in existence by 1949, will be extinguished unless they are added to the DMS by the cut off date of 2026.

An exception to this rule is vehicular rights, which will not be extinguished but will become 'unrecordable' i.e. it will not be possible to record them to the DMS.

Using these parameters we have found that **15%** of the entire walking network is accessible for people with restricted mobility or visual restrictions.

Accessibility for a standard wheelchair

Must have a minimum width of 1 metre and a firm surface; no gates; steps or stiles and a gradient not exceeding 1:10.



80% is not suitable, 15% is accessible to wheelchair users
5% has potential to be easily improved to make it suitable

What about Access Land, Greenspace and other types of public access?

Cheshire West and Chester does not have a huge amount of Access Land due to the nature of its landscape (land defined as open country, mountain, moor heath and down or registered common land as defined by part 1 of the CROW Act). However, it is well provided for with Greenspace such as Urban and Country parks and open space for access and recreation.

Many of these sites provide opportunities for horse riding and cycling as well as walking.

There are also many ways available to use through landowner permission, either informally through permissive agreements with the Council or through Environmental Stewardship schemes.

Access to attractive countryside and Greenspace varies throughout the borough. Access to waterbodies; canals; rivers and other watercourses is good in places but poor in others.

Most canal tow paths are open to walkers but may not be available to other categories of user and there is little coastal access at the moment. There are some small areas of accessible woodland and one large forest at Delamere.

General Conclusions

The analysis of our Greenspace network reveals particularly poor provision for horse riders and cyclists. Poorer still is provision for drivers of horse drawn vehicles and off-road motor vehicles.

Other deficiencies include local gaps in the network for walkers, route severance, poorly routed paths and limited access to attractive features and landscapes. Now that information is available regarding the accessibility of all our PROW network there is a opportunity to target priority routes for improvement.

Maintenance, Inspection and Enforcement

Most public rights of way cross private land. Responsibility for them is shared by the landowner and the Highway Authority.

Put simply, the landowner is responsible for keeping them free of obstruction and for looking after 'furniture' items such as gates and stiles along the route, whilst the Highway Authority is responsible for maintaining them in good condition and for signing and waymarking them.

In addition to maintenance work, the authority actively inspects the path network to ensure that it is free from obstructions and other problems.

During 2010 the authority has surveyed in detail the total rights of way network for the whole of Cheshire West and Chester totalling 1287km of paths.

This information includes data regarding all furniture items and view points as well as surface condition, gradients and accessibility.

To support this important data inspections are completed annually of a random selection of paths of 5% of the network. This is done annually in line with national methodology for all Highway Authorities introduced in 2003.

The results of the survey are reported back as a Local Performance Indicator and targets are set to improve results. Although based on small number of paths, the survey provides a useful annual 'snap shot' of our network's condition and provides a general indicator of how well the authority is performing in terms of maintenance and enforcement. During 2009 the percentage of routes were classed as easy to use was 65% and in 2010 97%.

Our enforcement protocol for dealing with obstructed paths and other problems is well established and has been very effective since its approval.

The number of enforcement notices served has been decreasing steadily from 79 in 2001 to 5 in 2010 for Cheshire West and Chester. The number of prosecutions has remained at about 2-3 per year.



3. Economic growth

Introduction

The contribution of the network to the rural economy of England and Wales has long been recognised, but has never been more evident or more studied than since the Foot and Mouth Disease (FMD) epidemic of 2001.

At the outset of the epidemic, large numbers of Rights of Way were closed and the public were advised to curtail their visits to the countryside. It only took a few days for it to become clear that this would create commercial difficulties.

Domestic visitors went to coastal and urban spaces and overseas visitors didn't come at all. The impression was that the countryside was 'closed'

As a predominantly dairy farming area it was no surprise that FMD had a huge and severe economic impact on the area. What was more surprising was that the most severe impact was on industries other than farming.

The impact on the hotel and catering industries was particularly significant and this gives an insight into how business rely on each other to such an extent and how reliant these businesses are on visitors to the countryside.

It is worth reflecting on how elements of our network support the visitor offer 'product'.

- Promoted long distance routes such as the Sandstone Trail, Delamere loop and Bishop Bennet Way
- Greenspaces that include country parks such as Marbury Country Park, Northwich Woodlands and Wirral Country Park.
- Urban parks with historic houses such as Castle Park in Frodsham
- Delamere Forest
- Canal towpaths and rivers

However the network must be viewed as part of an extensive rural 'offer' which includes working farms; gardens; waterways; golf and adventure sports.

Infrastructure improvements to the network can be part of holistic projects linking to one or many of the elements above to maximise tourism potential.

Greenspace access also has a role to play in the regional and sub-regional strategies for tourism where the contribution of Public Rights of Way has already been recognised

Audit results

- Most adults enjoyed visiting promoted routes such as the Sandstone Trail, Delamere Loop and coastal path along the River Dee to the Wirral.
- The top reason that people are discouraged to use the network is over grown path.
- Most tourism journeys along the network are over 2 hours.
- Greenspaces that people most liked visiting in the borough were promoted trails, Castle Park and Grosvenor Park.
- The most frequent recreational trips undertaken used off road footpaths, bridleways or cycleways. Most of these trips took under two hours.
- Most people prefer to use circular routes rather than linear.
- The fragmentation of the bridleway network significantly inhibits the development of equine tourism and the leisure riding market. Equine businesses on or near the newly established long distance horse riding trail 'Delamere Loop' have all experienced an increase in business.
- Bridleway maintenance needs to be improved surfacing, waymarking, drainage etc

Consultation - What people said they wanted

- Address fragmented bridleway network
- More vegetation clearing
- Information on where to stay / eat

Possible solutions

- Look at the visitor options as a product and market accordingly
- Improving access to further tourism and leisure uses of the network in accordance with what users have said they would like to see, taking into account route lengths, route shape (i.e. circular or linear) and route location near to visitor attractions or eateries.
- Connections with public transport are asked for by users and businesses alike to increase the ease with which people can access attractions.
- Broadening the diversity of the visitors will maximise economic benefits.
- Engage with rural businesses in route development.
- Information and promotion needs to be targeted at specific audiences for maximum impact. Working with partner organisation would avoid duplication and combine efforts.





4. Climate Change

It is only comparatively recently that the contribution of the network non-motorised travel has been recognised. The network has always provided an opportunity for people to access services in both rural and urban areas by foot or bicycle however they have usually been regarded as more of a leisure or recreational resource.

The unsealed nature (grassed/soft under foot) of many routes has often discouraged their use for purposeful journeys.

To address this, we need to encourage a culture of using the network for function as well as leisure.

Combined with the careful targeting of surface improvements and other maintenance measures, this could pay dividends in not only reducing congestion and pollution, but improving peoples health through 'active' travel choices.

The borough has a higher than average car ownership. Most residents live in small to medium sized towns or villages and car reliance is high. Given this there are obvious challenges in encouraging people to walk or cycle.

The boroughs walking and cycling strategies will identify future objectives and will strive to help people change their travel habits.

Through initiatives such as 'safe routes to school' children can be taught good habits early on and significant headway can be made into reducing the congestion of the school run.

Likewise, the promotion of work place travel choices by employers and employees alike could deliver both health and environmental benefits.

Consultation - What people said they wanted

- People tended to regard the network as being for leisure and recreation and would prefer to see it improved for that use.
- People would like to see improvements and improved accessibility to the network that link up useful local destinations.
- People want routes to be promoted so people know they exist and better links to public transport options.

Possible solutions

- The short length of many car journeys offers considerable scope to develop network alternatives
- Information provision is key to encourage people to choose the network for short purposeful journeys e.g. leaflets and information boards.
- Infrastructure improvements that address what people have said about surfacing and connectivity

Audit results

We drew the following conclusions from the information people gave us:

- Many regular, non-motorised, purposeful journeys are made on the network, especially to local shops, workplaces or schools. There is a difference within rural and semi urban areas.
- However, the majority of peoples journeys along the network are for leisure or recreation purposes.
- To use the network for more purposeful journeys people expressed a desire for good even surfaces that are connected to useful places and well lit where appropriate.
- The distance people were prepared to travel or cycle is an important consideration. 30 minutes walking is about as far as people are willing to consider with a functional journey before choosing the car.





5. Better Safety, security and health

There is a strong and well documented connection between health and access to the network. Firstly greenspace provides numerous opportunities for physical activity and there is a wealth of research and information concerning the health benefits of moderate exercise, such as walking, horse riding and cycling.

Secondly, access to Greenspace makes a direct positive contribution towards mental health and emotional well being.

However, people in England are more sedentary than they used to be and their health is suffering as a consequence. A big part of the problem is the reliance on motorised transport.

To really target improvements for health effectively we need to work with colleagues in the health fields (e.g. GP Led Commissioning Consortiums) and there are many existing projects, strategies and initiatives in Cheshire that we need to be able to make connections with to deliver improvements.

A quarter of all car journeys are less than two miles in length. It is easy to see that the convenience and habit of getting into the car has ousted walking and cycling as the preferred mode of transport for short journeys.

Our highway network needs to be improved to become an environment in which people feel safe and comfortable to walk and cycle. Too often speed, lack of crossings and sheer volume of traffic deter people from making active travel choices, as well as reducing their quality of life in general.

We have combined and analysed various sources of information to find out how people in Cheshire West and Chester currently use the access network for their physical and mental well being and what improvements could be made to make it easier and encourage others.

Audit results

We drew the following conclusions from the information people gave us:

- Walking is the most popular activity when visiting Greenspace and the countryside
- People in the borough are regularly participating in physical activity on the access network, however the fact that they rarely describe 'exercise' as their reason for doing so indicates that there is scope for education and awareness raising of the potential health benefits of walking cycling and horse riding.
- Evidence suggests that the greatest take up of physical activity on the network occurs close to where people live. There is particular demand for circular routes of varying length.
- People said maps or leaflets would encourage them to walk more, especially helpful would be descriptions of the routes so people could choose whether it was suitable for them or not e.g. Are there any stiles on the route?
- People said there was a lack of safe places to park horse boxes or park for dog walking.

- People are more likely to participate in groups, they feel reassured and more likely to explore new routes as well as benefiting from the social interaction and reduced perception of isolation.
- There is a need to work jointly with partners in the health care professions in order to find solutions that will deliver improvements for those with greatest need (e.g. hard to reach groups, non users and people with mental health difficulties).
- There is great potential for linking up with local initiatives which aim to increase physical activity to maximise resources and capitalise on existing success

Consultation - What people have said they wanted

- People prefer circular routes with minimal barriers such as stiles.
- People use greenspaces and the countryside to unwind, relax and enjoy the fresh air. There is less traffic and it is more peaceful. People can enjoy the nature and landscapes during their walk.
- People find it hard to build exercise into their daily lives.
- People are aware of the emotional and relaxation benefits of walking but are less likely to recognise the fitness benefits of walking regularly as opposed to other moderate exercise such as swimming.

- People find walking in a group very motivating.
- People were concerned about walking in areas where there was no lighting or there was a perception of danger.

Possible Solutions

- Innovative and creative solutions are required for targeting information, encouraging non users and raising awareness raising of health benefits.
- Improvements and promotion of circular routes around where people live.
- Improvements to the type of information that is available to people about the network, improved website and on-line mapping facility.

Where printed information is produced maps must be easy to use, there should be more pictures, less text, and indicators for items of interest along the route (e.g. lakes and monuments) and they should have corresponding markers to confirm people are on the right path.

- Support and encourage local walking groups.
- Infrastructure improvements must be made to address what people have said about health, safety and security.





6. Greater quality of opportunity

On the face of it, the Greenspace network appears to provide opportunities for people to enjoy the countryside and greenspace without prejudicing any particular group on the grounds of ethnicity; age, income or physical or mental ability.

In theory it is available to use free of charge. No special equipment is needed and no special abilities or knowledge are required in order to make use of it. In other words, because nobody is deliberately excluded it appears to be provided to all.

However, it has become increasingly clear that this traditional view does not reflect reality. Not only are there still significant physical barriers on the access network that exclude many people with reduced mobility but map reading skills are often needed to negotiate the landscape and give details of terrain or gradient.

Sturdy footwear in the form of walking boots is needed for some surface conditions and access to private transport is needed to access some of the country parks and beauty spots which has the additional complication of having a charge to park.

It is also recognised that young people and people from certain socio-economic and ethnic backgrounds are greatly under represented in the countryside greenspaces.

The reasons for this are myriad and the subject of national research but certainly we need to break down as many barriers as possible to offer a truly accessible network

Audit

Data on the diversity of the boroughs residents can help to give us a picture of ethnicity, age and physical ability. This will help us to target areas for improvement

We drew the following conclusions from what people told us:

- Most people find information on where to walk via ordnance survey maps, local knowledge or sign post and way marking.
- Lack of transportation.
- Lack of knowledge and available information on routes readily available.

These results reveal scope for broadening the diversity of visitors to our Greenspaces in terms of age and ethnicity and reflect a good participation rate from those who considered themselves to have a disability.

Levels of satisfaction with the amount of Greenspace available was high, however the quality was a concern and would need improvement.

Consultation - What people said they wanted

- People wanted an increase in the level of access available and would like to see the development of a network that was free of physical barriers, such as stile and vegetation and of an adequate width. When unavoidable, stock control measures should employ the least restrictive option.
- A few key fully accessible routes should be developed and promoted, with further comprehensive accessibility information for the entire network such as width, surface, gradient etc.
- There is a need for circular routes of differing distances starting and finishing at places like towns, villages and car parks.
- There is a need to access sites by vehicle that have good facilities such as parking, disabled toilets and rest areas.
- People would like the opportunity of accessing good Greenspaces and recreational attractions by public transport for those whose health or financial circumstances mean they can not drive or do not have access to a car.

Possible solutions

- More research into the needs of under represented groups.
- Target accesbilty information, tailored to specific audiences.
- On going dialogue with under represented groups to monitor success of improvements and gauge future needs.
- Staff awareness and training to ensure inclusive delivery of the Greenspace team.
- Circular route development close to where people live that are non-intimidating, easy to use and which can provide a start to experience and explore within a safe environment.
- Explore better links with public transport.
- Education of all users to encourage tolerance and awareness of people with differing needs.
- Detailed information provision so people have the ability to make their own choices on which routes are suitable for them.
- Equality Act 2010 - Gives us a bench mark to provide consideration to the act and the provision of limitations such as gates, gaps etc.



The National Trust commissioned Onepoll to conduct a survey of over 3000 people in 2009

Britain’s favourite childhood memories are:

- Playing games in the garden or park
- Building a den
- Seeing wildlife in its natural habitat
- Learning to ride a bike
- Swimming in a british river, lake or sea
- Climbing a tree
- Going to the cinema for the first time
- Going on rides at theme parks
- Flying a kite

7. Quality of life

Introduction 6

Quality of life is a term used to describe the general well being of people and society.

A number of factors can influence quality of life including health; recreation; education; natural environment; happiness and a feeling of belonging to name just a few.

It is extremely difficult to measure quality of life as it is so subjective, differing from individual to individual. Many studies suggest that well being is increased by Greenspace contact as this can be used to enhance people’s lives in multiple ways.

Being able to access and enjoy Greenspace may encourage more physical activity through walking and cycling.

The restorative qualities of a peaceful natural environment reduces stress and a relieves the pressure of a hectic lifestyle.

Audit results

- It was considered essential to protect open spaces in particular larger parks and gardens.
- Maximise sites potential by providing community events and activities.

- 35% of residents in rural wards never visit a formal park. But visit country parks.
- 20% of residents living in urban wards visit country parks weekly.

Consultation - What people said they wanted

- Less stiles and gates to increase accessibility.
- Accessibility information on a range of sites and promoted routes, where there are refreshment facilities and toilets and places to park safely.
- Information regarding guided walks, events and activities.

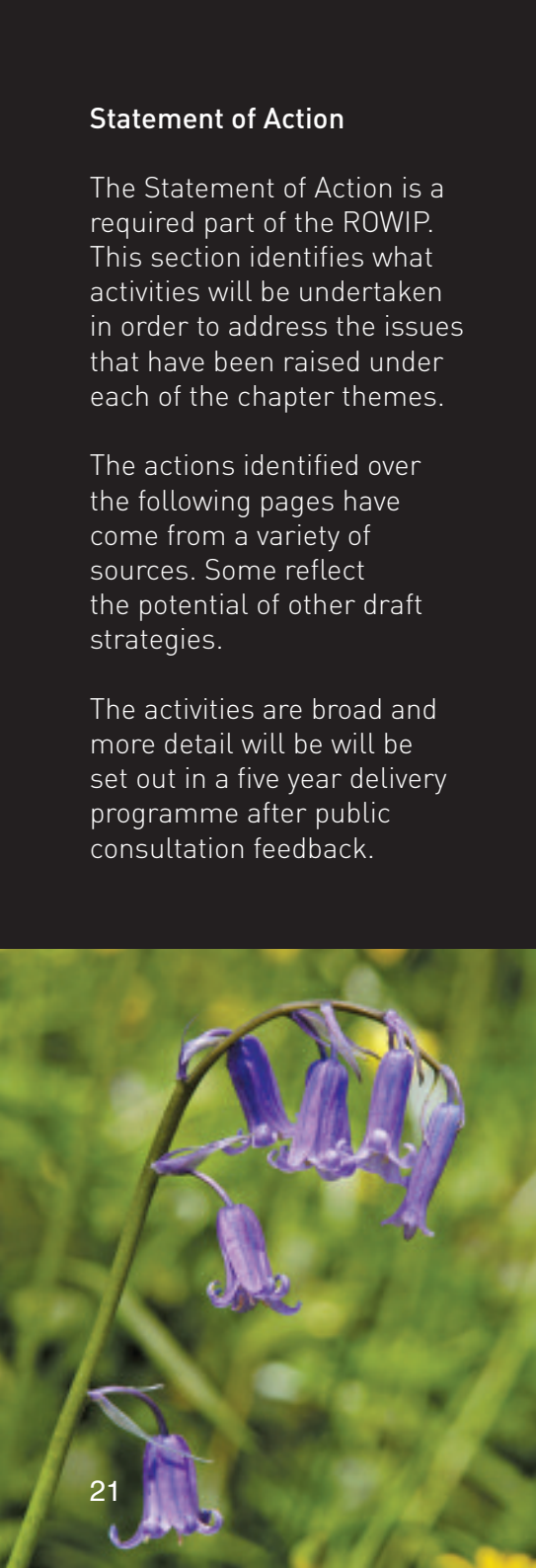


Possible solutions

- Ensuring an improvement programme that allows for the least restrictive option will give independence to people with reduced mobility and visual or hearing impairments
- Accessible Greenspace may help to relieve the sense of isolation and loneliness some people feel. For example, going out and taking a short walk in a safe and welcoming environment may be the only outside contact many elderly people have.
- Experiencing nature can have a calming influence on many children. Many children have an alarming lack of awareness of even the most basic elements of nature so accessible Greenspace can be a route to bringing the classroom outside.
- Overall prioritise improvements with the network that will inspire, influence and empower individuals to make lifestyle choices and adopt behaviour changes that will improve their quality of life.

The survey also found that:

- 38% of children now spend less than an hour a day outdoors
- 87% of parents wished their children spent more time outside, yet one in four won’t allow them to do the things they did as children because they are worried about safety.
- Whilst one in four children has played tennis in the past year, twice as many have played the game on a games console.



Statement of Action

The Statement of Action is a required part of the ROWIP. This section identifies what activities will be undertaken in order to address the issues that have been raised under each of the chapter themes.

The actions identified over the following pages have come from a variety of sources. Some reflect the potential of other draft strategies.

The activities are broad and more detail will be will be set out in a five year delivery programme after public consultation feedback.

Statement of Action

Assets and maintenance (AM)

- AM1** We will aim to increase the percentage annually of routes that are easy for the public to use.
- AM2** We will develop an overall Greenspace branding style to deliver consistency of image and ease of producing promotional material that is easy recognisable in various formats.
- AM3** We will work with colleagues to agree standard procedures for access maintenance and improvements activities to ensure the natural and historic environment is protected (environmental impact assessment).
- AM4** we will develop best practice and priority procedures for maintaining the Greenspace Access Network.
- AM5** We will review our prioritisation system for dealing with Definitive Map Modification Orders (DMMO's) and Public Path Orders (PPO's) (with consultation with Cheshire Local Access Forum).
- AM6** We will assess, develop and deliver solutions to Definitive Map anomalies such as cul-de-sacs, boundary changes and permantant building obstructions, using the prioritisation system used for DMMO's.
- AM7** We will work to improve information available to the public on the Definitive Map and Statement.

Economic growth (EG)

- EG1** We will improve the condition or management of existing routes identified during consultation and network survey as significant for tourism or leisure visits.
- EG2** We will work with colleagues to integrate information about the access network into other promotional information / websites etc.
- EG3** We will develop and distribute a range of promotional materials (not just leaflets) aimed at certain user categories to promote top locations across the borough.

Better safety (BS)

- BS1** We will seek to address safety concerns highlighted whilst using the Network during consultation.
- BS2** We will identify off-road routes on the network for improvement that will encourage pupils and students to walk or cycle to school.
- BS3** Working with colleagues within the authority we will seek to improve accommodation for vulnerable road users where the Greenspace network links with the adopted highway network.
- BS4** We will ensure that wherever landowner / environmental constraints allow, the option of least restrictive access is applied whenever new path furniture is installed or existing furniture is replaced.

Quality of life (QL)

- QL1** We will increase the opportunity the people have of accessing Greenspace.
- QL2** We will make it easier for people to incorporate walking / cycling / horse riding into their everyday lives and work with health organisation to sustain this change.
- QL3** We will work to encourage voluntary groups and local communities to adopt local routes, helping to maintain and develop them for local community needs.
- QL4** We will identify opportunities for forming new partnerships with other organisations e.g. Primary Care Trusts where these would help deliver improvements to the network or assist in drawing down funding.
- QL5** We will cultivate further involvement and integration with existing and future access plans and initiatives within the authority and beyond.

Climate change (CC)

- CC1** We will aim to increase the opportunity that people have to leave the car at home and choose sustainable transport.
- CC2** We will seek opportunities to create or upgrade the network where necessary to create continuous and connected routes from where people live to shops, services and works and schools.

- CC3** We will work with internal colleagues to raise the profile of the contribution the GS network has on purposeful journeys.
- CC4** We will reduce reliance on car journeys to the network by developing countryside access opportunities closer to where people live.

Equality of Opportunity (EO)

- E01** We will offer the information people need to make informed choices when using the greenspace access network to match their needs.
- E02** We will work with partners / colleagues in the health professions, Age Concern, older peoples network and adult services to target different groups, particularly older people, people with mental health difficulties and under-represented groups using a variety of means.
- E03** We will give extra weight to route improvements for health where health problems are reported to be greatest and focus on the formation of circular routes with easy terrain.
- E04** We will make connections with colleagues in the adult services and elsewhere to develop a consultation process with under represented groups and the mobility and visually impaired to assess their Greenspace Access Network needs.
- E05** We will follow the Equalities Act 2010 to comply with standards for mobility and visually impaired users where appropriate and reasonable.



Five Year Delivery Plan

Project Description	Policy reference delivered	Staff / project cost	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	Year 5
Random survey of 5% of the ROW network annually	AM	£*	5% random survey	5% random survey	5% random survey	5% random survey	5% random survey
Increase paths 'ease of use' by 5% over 5 years	AM, EO	£-££*	Improve by target 1%	Improve by target 1%	Improve by target 1%	Improve by target 1%	Improve by target 1%
Develop a maintenance priority system	AM	£*	Develop a maintenance priority system and include on the corporate website	Review	Review	Review	Review
Provide additional information on Rights of Way Network available	AM, EO, QL, CC, BS, EG	££**	Redevelop online mapping to show furniture items and surface	Additional routes on Discover Cheshire	Additional 5 routes on Discover Cheshire	Additional 5 routes on Discover Cheshire	Additional 5 routes on Discover Cheshire
Fault reporting system	AM, BS	£**	Fault reporting via corporate website	Redevelop to incorporate fault reporting via online mapping	Review	Review	Review
Develop easily indentifiable branding	AM, EG, QL, EO	£-££***	Produce design and consult with CLAF and user groups	Incorporate design on to electronic information	Incorporate design on to hard copy leaflets	N/A	N/A
DMMO priority system	AM	££*	Develop a priority DMMO, include on the corporate website and present to the CLAF.	Process 3	Process 3	Process 3	Process 3

Project Description	Policy reference delivered	Staff / project cost	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	Year 5
Unrcorded paths using volunteers	AM, CC, QL	£-££*	Project set up, investigation of 1 path	Investigation of 2 paths	Investigation of 2 paths	Investigation of 2 paths	Investigation of 2 paths
Additional Greenspace information on Discover Cheshire website	AM	£**	Add walks for all routes on to Discover Cheshire and 10 additional Greenspace sites.	5 additional Greenspace sites	5 additional Greenspace sites	Review	Review
Work with parish / town council community groups to adopt local paths	QL, EO, EG, BS	£**	Contact parish and town councils to assess take up	Facilitate interested paish and town councils to adopt local paths	Review	Review	Review
Develop priority system for improvements	AM, EG, BS, QL, CC, EO	£*	Finalise priority system for improvement projects and review current list	Review	Review	Review	Review
Select 5 priority safety projects to investigate	BS	£-££***	Select 1st project to investigate	Select 2nd project to investigate	Select 3rd project to investigate	Select 4th project to investigate	Select 5th project to investigate

Project Description	Policy reference delivered	Staff / project cost	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	Year 5
Select 5 priority economic growth projects to investigate	EG	£-£££***	Select 1st project to investigate	Select 2nd project to investigate	Select 3rd project to investigate	Select 4th project to investigate	Select 5th project to investigate
Select 5 accessibility projects to investigate	EO	£-£££***	Select 1st project to investigate	Select 2nd project to investigate	Select 3rd project to investigate	Select 4th project to investigate	Select 5th project to investigate
Select 5 links to fragmented paths to investigate	CC	£-£££***	Select 1st project to investigate	Select 2nd project to investigate	Select 3rd project to investigate	Select 4th project to investigate	Select 5th project to investigate
Select 5 quality of life projects to investigate	QL	£-£££***	Select 1st project to investigate	Select 2nd project to investigate	Select 3rd project to investigate	Select 4th project to investigate	Select 5th project to investigate
Investigate how S106 funding can deliver ROWIP policy	AM, EG, BS, QL, CC, EO	£**	Liaise with colleagues in planning service to include Greenspace objectives in all S106 options. Target 1 major	Target major developments			

Key

*internal staff resources

**with colleagues in other services

*** with external partners

£ up to £5k

££ 5-20k

£££- →20k

Policy references

AM- Assetts and Maintenance

BS- Better safety

QL- Quality of Life

EO- Greater Equality of Opportunity

EG- Economic Growth

CC- Climate Change

Glossary and useful Terms

Access Network-

Accessibility - a term used to refer to either
a) access to goods, premises and services for people with disabilities or
b) access to key services for all sectors of the society, regarding transport; physical, geographical and economics barriers

Access land - land defined under the the CROW Act 2000 as being land which the public normally have a right to access on foot. It includes open country, registered common land and other land dedicated for purposes by its land owner. Note that the term access land may also be used, for example, by Ordnance Survey, to describe other land to which there is open public access, though not necessarily as of right.

Attractive countryside - may include for the purposes of the ROWIP, but is not restricted to, areas containing one or more of the following, hills; ridges; cliffs; woods; hedgerows; dry stone walls; watercourses; meres; heaths; marsh; meadows and coast.

BOAT - Byway Open To All Traffic, a category of right of way

Bridleway - a category of right of way

Carriage driving - recreational pursuit involving the riding of various types of horse drawn carriage, sometimes enjoyed on rights of way.

Cheshire Local Access Forum - the local access forum which covers all of Cheshire (outside the Peak District National park). An independent body set up to advise the Cheshire West and Chester and Cheshire East Borough Councils on access issues (see Local Access Forums).

Community Plan - plan for the future of a community devised by Local Strategic Partnerships. Set out proposals for the way in which a community wants to develop and respond to changes in the future. No set format and will usually contain statements of principle, physical design proposals and targets.

Connectivity - extent to which parts of an access network interlink with each other.

Core Strategy - Councils main strategy document.

Country park - area of countryside usually owned by the local authority which has been set aside for public enjoyment

CROW Act 2000 - Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000, introduced Rights of Way Improvement Plans, access to open country and Registered Common land, 'cut off' dates for Definitive Maps, Local Access Forums and various other powers and duties in relation to countryside access.

Cycle track - route available to the public on pedal cycles with or without a right of way on foot. A cycle track may be alongside a carriageway or it may be off-road.

Definitive Map and Statement - the legal record of public rights of way held by each highway authority for its area.

DEFRA - Department for the Environment, Food and Rural Affairs.

DfT - Department for Transport.

Discovering Lost Ways - Former Countryside Agency (now Natural England) funded initiative to establish the whereabouts of unrecorded public rights of way in England.

Environmental Stewardship Scheme - national initiative whereby farmers and land managers are paid to manage their land in an environmentally sustainable way.

GIS - Geographical Information System, electronic mapping used for storing and manipulating geographical data.

Greenspace - An open space used for Recreation and Enjoyment that is not developed.

Greenspace Access Network - All access on greenspace and plan.

Highways Act 1980 - key act relating to various aspects of rights of way management, including maintenance, enforcement and Definitive Map and Statement procedures.

Highway Authorities - local authorities which are responsible for maintaining the network of public roads and paths (county councils, unitary authorities and metropolitan borough councils).

Local Access Forums - independent bodies set up across England and Wales by the CROW Act 2000 to advise local highway authorities, Natural England and other bodies involved with access to the countryside.

LDF - Local Development Framework, a portfolio of local development and related documents consisting of development plan documents, supplementary planning documents, statement of community involvement, local development scheme and annual monitoring reports. Together all these documents provide a framework for delivering the spatial planning strategy for the local authority area.

Local Plans - development plans for local areas devised by Borough or District Councils (as planning authority) replaced by Local Development Frameworks.

Local rights of way - term encompassing all recorded rights of way together with other paths and tracks in an area enabling public access

LSP - Local Strategic Partnership, a single non-statutory, multi agency body, which matches local authority boundaries and aims to bring together at a local level the different parts of the public; private, community and voluntary sectors. LSP's produce community plans.

LTP - Local Transport Plan, a strategy for development of local, integrated transport, supported by a programme of transport improvements. The LTP also forms a bid to government for funding of the improvements. The LTP sets out a series of targets to allow each authority to monitor the effect of their strategy.

NWDA - North West Development Agency, one of eight regional development agencies which are non-departmental public bodies. Their primary role is as strategic drivers of regional economic development in their region

Off-road riding / cycling / driving - term informally used to describe use of unsealed tracks by riders / cyclists / drivers (although some of these routes legally speaking will be 'roads').

Open Country - land mapped as mountain, moor heath or down through provisions of CROW Act 2000.

Permissive / Permitted paths - paths which the public may use by permission of the land owner. The permission may be formal (i.e. Written agreement) or informal and may be for walkers only or extend to other types of user. The permission can be withdrawn.

PCT - Primary Care Trust, an NHS body catering to a specific geographical area, responsible for providing primary care to individuals within the area and tasked by the Department of Health with improving the health of the community, securing the provision of high quality services, and integrating health and social care locally.

Public path - term encompassing both public footpaths and public bridleways.

Public footpath - category of public right of way.

Purposeful Journeys - journeys making use of the Greenspace Access Network which are more functional than leisure in nature.

Recreational Motor Vehicles - any motor vehicle including 4x4; motorcycles, scramble bikes etc when driven/ridden legally on the public highway network for leisure purposes as opposed to functional travel.

Registered Common land - land recorded under the Commons Registration Act 1965 and open for public access on foot through the provision of the CROW Act 2000.

Restricted Byway - category of public right of way.

Safer routes to school - national scheme to encourage greater use of alternatives to the car for the school run.

Social Inclusion - the process by which efforts are made to ensure that everyone, regardless of their experiences and circumstances can achieve their potential in life.

Travel Plan - a package of measures and initiatives that aim to reduce the number of car journeys made by an organisation, by providing people with greater travel choice.

Travel Wise - a national partnership developed to reduce society’s dependence on car use by raising awareness of environemtal; health, economic and social effects of car use, changing attitudes towards car use, promoting more sustainable modes of travel, and lifestyle which require less travel and encouraging action to change travel behaviour and reduce unnecessary car use.

UCR - unclassified county road, informal term for a publicly maintainable road not being classed as an A,B or C road.

Waymark/ing - the signing of public rights of way with arrows of various colours to indicate their route and status.

Acknowledgements

- Colleagues in the Greenspace Team
- Members of the ROWIP Steering Group
- Cheshire Local Access Forum
- Cheshire West and Chester Research and Intelligence unit
- Parish and Towns Councils
- Landowners and their representatives
- Members of the public
- Mid Cheshire Bridleways Association
- Ramblers Association (North and Mid Cheshire Areas)
- Wirral Footpaths and Open Spaces Preservation Society
- Chester and North Wales Cycling Touring Club
- North Staffordshire Bridleways association
- All wheel Drive Club



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