

Annex B:

Rights of Way Improvement Plans Progress Reports

Annex B: Nottingham City Council Rights of Way Improvement Plan Progress Report

B1 Policies and Strategies for Improving the Local Rights of Way Network

There are a number of policies directly related to the local rights of way network. For example the Nottingham Local Plan (Revised Deposit Draft January 2003) Policy T12 the extinguishment and diversion of public paths for the purpose of facilitating development and T11 the protection of the cycle route network. Other key policies include the New Deal for Transport Walking and Cycling Strategy (March 1999) and New Deal for Transport: Better for Nottingham (March 1999). The Primary Pedestrian Route Strategy is currently being developed which will be used to inform the soon to be updated Walking Strategy. The Best Value Performance Indicator No. 178 (Ease of Use) will insure accessibility and will inform the development of the ROWIP. Consideration will also be given to the Council's position on the designation of areas for extinguishing or diverting rights of way for crime prevention. All policies compliment each other, support Government targets and reinforce the need to improve existing facilities, highlighting their importance and the need for their protection and promotion as a sustainable mode of transport.

There are further policies which, although not directly related to the local rights of way network, do provide a context for their importance. These policies include the City's Nature Conservation Strategy 2000-2005 and the soon to be developed Open and Green Spaces Strategy which aims to improve public access to and through the City's many open and green spaces. There is also reference made to the importance of public access in the various Management Plans produced for specific sites.

Further consideration will be given to how the policies and strategies of neighbouring Authorities impact on the development and improvement of the City's local rights of way network and to the Good Practice Guide developed by the Countryside Agency.

B2 Objectives for Improving the Local Rights of Way Network

- To raise the importance and profile of the local rights of way network as an alternative, healthy, safe and sustainable mode of transport and
- continually improve the network to encourage more people to change their modal habits and travel patterns whilst
- continually accessing future demands and the different needs and abilities of existing and future users of the local rights of way network.

B3 Authority's Progress in Preparing the ROWIP

The Authority is currently producing a ROWIP consultation document which will be sent out to all user groups and individuals to establish network deficiencies, existing and future levels of needs and demands. Feedback from the consultation will then help set targets, actions and priorities. Using the Local Access Forum as an informative tool, the Authority is collating information on the state of the existing local rights of way network and ways in which it may be improved. This includes ensuring all public routes are legally defined, accessible, properly maintained, signed and well publicised. Initial discussions have also taken place with Nottinghamshire County Council on how both Authorities can raise the profile and importance of walking, cycling and riding both within and between the urban and rural environments. Full consideration has also been given to how the ROWIP will be used to reduce dependency on private car use (especially short journeys), cut congestion and air pollution, encourage a healthy community, reduce road casualties, raise the importance of caring for your local environment thereby improving the quality of life for both local people and visitors to the City.

B4 Key Issues to be Addressed

1. Access to open space and the wider countryside
2. Access to local recreational/leisure facilities/ places of employment.
3. Access to local services, amenities and public transport nodes
4. Access for All / Ease of Use
5. Connectivity of existing and newly created routes
6. Fragmentation/loss of network by new development (and their protection)
7. Safety of vulnerable users such as the young, elderly and visually impaired
8. Investigate and establish the status of any unrecorded paths/routes
9. Balance public access with the level and perception of associated crime
10. Unauthorised use by Mechanically Propelled Vehicles
11. Design of new routes and "secured by design" (designing out crime)
12. Regular inspection, cleansing and maintenance

B5 Ensuring the Integration of the ROWIP and the LTP

The Authority have ensured the integration of the ROWIP into the LTP by developing a partnership approach which includes scoping meetings with relevant officers within the Authority such as transport planners, rights of way officers, safer routes to school and accident investigation team, cycling and sustainability policy officers. Allocation of officers and maximising resources will be given a high priority. The Authority's Area Committees and Area Focus teams will be used as a medium for communicating LTP and ROWIP targets and objectives to the local community and for gaining feedback on specific schemes. External partners include Nottinghamshire County Council, The City's Local Access Forum, user groups and the Countryside Agency. Early consultation is viewed as an essential element for ensuring the successful integration of the ROWIP and LTP.

B6 The Transport Shared Priority Objectives and Wider Quality of Life Issues

The following proposed schemes will all make a positive contribution to the Transport shared Priority Objectives and wider quality of life issues through improved accessibility and connectivity, encouraging more people to walk and cycle, improve health and well being and pedestrian safety while cutting congestion and air pollution.

- Create “Access for All” route(s), along existing “corridors” Trent Valley Way (Wilford to Clifton) and Fairham Brook (Silverdale Walk to Green Lane),
- Upgrade Sneinton Greenway including vehicle control measures,
- Upgrade Hucknall Road “country walk” (to adoptable standard) and promote as a link from Bulwell / Bestwood Village/ Hucknall to City Hospital and as a “Safer Routes to School” for Stanstead Primary and Top Valley Comprehensive Schools,
- Upgrade (to adoptable standard) primary City centre alleyways where they provide non-vehicular routes and connectivity between busy roads for example Hurts Yard, Norfolk Place and Parliament Place. (This also supports the “lost ways” project currently being developed by the Countryside Agency),
- Develop a recreational circular route around Colwick park for both horse riders and cyclists with suitable horse box/cycle parking facilities,
- Upgrade surface of existing public bridleway along Fox Covert Lane to Clifton Village and construction of new French drain to address erosion of surface during periods of heavy rain,
- Upgrade (to adoptable standard) Elm Avenue / Coronation Oaks and Robin Hood Chase to public bridleway status (route runs between Mansfield Road to Cranmer Street to Woodborough Road to St Ann’s Well Road), and
- Extension of the existing public bridleway no 128 along the River Leen (Basford to Bulwell) from Junction of Coventry Court off Cinderhill Road to Bulwell Town Centre and NET.

Nottinghamshire County Council

Rights of Way Improvement Plan Progress Report

B7 Current Position of ROWIP Preparation

The Pilot ROWIP (March 2004)

The County Council was selected by the Countryside Agency to be one of eight pilot authorities nationally to prepare a local authority pilot Rights of Way Improvement Plan. Work commenced in 2003 and the pilot Plan was published in March 2004.

The pilot area covered the Districts of Ashfield, Broxtowe and Gedling, which represents part of two LTP areas, Greater Nottingham and North Nottinghamshire.

The steering group for the Study included officers from the County Council, the three District Councils, the Ramblers' Association, and the British Horse Society. A wider Stakeholder Group met twice with consultants during the preparation of the Plan.

The pilot ROWIP has provided a well researched overview of the problems and opportunities of rights of way in three of the seven Districts in Nottinghamshire. It also sets a framework for the preparation of the full ROWIP by November 2007. There has been a considerable amount of data collection on the conditions, use and demand of the network. A large number of provisional policy statements and an action plan were identified, which will require evaluation and consultation before being taken forward into the full ROWIP. Some key areas for development emerged from the pilot including:

- More awareness raising about the network.
- Better standards of provision on existing routes.
- A more connected network.
- Safer and more accessible environment for users.
- More pro-active procedures for planning and Definitive Map work.
- Better information on user distribution and network conditions.

Progress is now underway on the full ROWIP, including; the establishment of a new wider steering group; a survey of 14,000 county council employees with a 10% response rate; allocation of a committed budget for publishing and developing the Plan including additional resources for delivering 'quick wins'; continued officer support from the Countryside Access Team and two full time ROWIP dedicated officers are now in place to take the pilot and the full Plan forward.

The Local Access Forum

The Nottinghamshire Local Access Forum was established in July 2003 as a requirement of the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000. The Forum, a consultative advisory body, consists of 18 members from a cross section of interests including; agricultural, conservation, user groups and disability awareness. The main emphasis of the forum's work has been on consultation responses to central government on issues arising from the CROW act, for example, those relating to Open Access and Motor Vehicles in the Countryside. The forum is playing an increasing role in the development of the ROWIP, particularly with reference to the now established LAF ROWIP sub-group. The role of this consultative sub-group is to advise and make recommendations to the county council on the development of the ROWIP.

Joint Working with Nottingham City Council and other Local Authorities

There is a close and successful working relationship between officers from the City and the County Council on access and rights of way issues. Joint projects include for example, the promotion and development of the long distance recreation route – The Trent Valley Way; joint communication and meetings with both authorities Local Access Forums; discussions and correspondence on the development of the ROWIP process; and regional County Surveyors Society meetings sharing knowledge and experiences.

Nottinghamshire's Countryside Access team continues to work with both district and borough councils, and neighbouring authorities, particularly on joint funding initiatives aimed at improving strategic routes such as Multi Use / Greenways and long distance trails.

B8 High-Level Statement of Policy and Objectives for Improving the Rights of Way Network

As part of the pilot ROWIP, 18 policy statements were drafted; 11 relating to network improvement, 6 to network users and 1 on supporting partnerships. The policy statements are detailed in nature and will form an element of the first draft of the full ROWIP which will be subject to consultation in 2006. However, they cannot be generally described as "high level" so a provisional list of strategic objectives for the full ROWIP is set out below. These will be subject to an early round of consultation as part of the Provisional LTP.

It is important and essential that the provisional objectives of both the ROWIP and LTP recognise and encompass the council's statutory duties:

- To assert and protect the rights of the public to use and enjoy the Public Rights of Way network, and to maintain an accurate and up to date definitive map.

And both plans need to:

- Recognise the interests of agriculture, forestry and other land occupiers in the management of the Public Rights of Way network.

The provisional key objectives of the ROWIP are:

1. To protect, maintain and seek to enhance the network for all lawful users.
2. To improve access to the network for all, including those with visual impairment or mobility problems, by adopting the principle of the least restrictive option.
3. To improve the safety and connectivity of metalled roads into the rights of way network.
4. To increase awareness of the network and the understanding of the wider benefits arising from its use, such as leading an active and healthy lifestyle, and making a positive contribution to the local economy
5. To ensure that both the LTP and ROWIP complement and assist each other in the delivery of their common objectives.
6. To provide a complete and up to date definitive map and statement, with particular reference to map anomalies and the 'Lost Ways' project.

The matrix below sets out some provisional actions included in the pilot ROWIP (and likely to be included in the full ROWIP) and an indication as to which provisional objectives they link to.

Actions	Objectives					
	(a)	(b)	(c)	(d)	(e)	(f)
Network Maintenance						
Signing and waymarking	✓✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Structures	✓✓	✓✓			✓	
Surfaces	✓✓	✓✓		✓	✓	
Ploughing and Cropping	✓✓	✓✓			✓	
Enforcement	✓✓	✓✓				
Network Enhancement						
Disabled Access	✓✓	✓✓	✓	✓✓	✓	
New and enhanced routes	✓✓	✓✓	✓		✓	✓✓
Road safety and connectivity	✓		✓✓		✓	✓
Planning and Development	✓✓	✓✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Transport modal interchange / gateways to countryside paths and sites	✓✓					
	✓	✓✓	✓	✓✓	✓✓	
Network Awareness						
Publicity and promotion	✓✓	✓✓	✓✓	✓✓	✓	
Information on the accessibility of routes 'for all'	✓	✓✓	✓	✓✓	✓	
Definitive Map						
Up to date	✓✓		✓		✓	✓✓
Up to date information conveyed to	✓	✓	✓	✓✓	✓	✓✓

Actions	Objectives ✓✓ = direct link ✓ = indirect link					
external agencies (e.g. OS)						
Ensure users / landowners confident re: legal status	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓✓
Lost ways	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓✓
Partnerships						
Land occupiers / farmers	✓✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓✓
Parishes	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓✓
Internal colleagues	✓✓	✓✓	✓✓	✓✓	✓✓	✓✓
Other public and private bodies	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓

Performance Management

- BV178 (also a LTP indicator)
- Quality of life indicator

B9 Rights of Way Improvements Linking to Transport Objectives

We will identify and enhance routes that link to the wider transport network with emphasis on the development of linear access such as former railway corridors and riverside paths / towpaths.

The following are examples of potential routes that will make a significant contribution to the shared LTP2 and ROWIP objectives:

- Trent Riverside Path
- Nuthall Railway and links to Derbyshire
- Extension of Silverhill / Teversal Trails
- Other railway lines as part of the strategic multi use network (e.g. Bevercotes, High Marnham, Bilsthorpe, Rainworth, Ollerton, and Newark to Bottesford).
- Whitewater Bridge, Ollerton.

