

Appendix I

Rights of Way Improvement Plan

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Introduction

- I.1** In discussing the South Yorkshire approach to Rights of Way Improvement Plan and LTP2 it must be understood that some aspects of the Rights of Way Improvement Plans are not directly relevant to the LTP2 criteria, and vice versa. That said the value of the Rights of Way network in meeting the LTP2 objectives is substantial. All four South Yorkshire Authorities are committed to improving the utilitarian and leisure routes for the benefits of residents and tourists alike.
- I.2** The following aims incorporate the overriding themes for Rights of Way and identify issues where Rights of Way Improvement Plans can help meet LTP2 objectives. They have been grouped under the relevant LTP2 key priorities

Improving Accessibility

Mobility Impaired Use (compliance with ROWIP and DDA requirements)

- I.3**
- Access Audit the Rights of Way network, adopted footpaths and Public Open Space (POS) within 5 years
 - Identify and carry out works on strategic routes for utilitarian and leisure use for upgrading to full accessibility standard
 - Improve access across the Rights of Way Network, adopted footpaths and POS using Least Restrictive Access Guidance, especially in relation to maintenance of network
 - Promoting the Accessible network to local residents and tourists (access for all)
 - Improve the maintenance of PROW network, especially those routes for mobility impaired users

Wider Accessibility (especially in relation to Social Inclusion)

- I.4**
- Identify and develop strategic routes in line with LDF and public consultation
 - Expand and promote the Trans Pennine Trail (TPT), its links and other cycleways/bridleways (within and across South Yorkshire borders) to increase off-road access for walkers, horse-riders and cyclists between urban centres for utilitarian and leisure use (*also links to air quality, congestion and road safety*)
 - Expand and promote the network for utilitarian and leisure use in combination with public transport routes (*links to air quality and congestion*)
 - Promote routes in a variety of formats (utilising the internet as well as more traditional methods)
 - Reduce fears/concerns of using the routes (including better signage, and maintenance)
 - Develop volunteer schemes such as Adopt A Path and utilise public consultation where appropriate
 - Continue to improve performance relating to e-government and customer service aims by developing the rights of way internet sites. This includes identifying promoted walks, access for all routes along with general information about rights of way, volunteers and problem report forms etc

Road Safety (particularly casualty reduction)

I.5

- Identify, develop and promote connecting cycling routes (not isolated stretches as at present)
- Identify, develop and promote safer routes to school (from homes and public transport)
- Identify, develop and promote other walking and cycling routes for utilitarian journeys
- Identify, develop and promote the upgrade or creation of new bridleway links, creating off road routes especially in areas where there is a high density of livery stables
- Assess safety of road crossing points particularly bridleways
- Identify, develop and promote the use of Quiet Lanes
- Work with stakeholders to identify and manage vehicular use of the Countryside Rights of Way network

Economic Regeneration

I.6

- Develop and promote the TPT for tourism and local use, providing links into Urban Centres and public transport systems
- Develop South Yorkshire as a recreation tourist destination, horse riding centres, cycling routes, mobility impaired users etc (building on TPT, Pennine Cycleway, Pennine Bridleway)
- Work with Stakeholders (e.g. Business Link and FWAG) to improve farm diversification (accommodation, tourist attractions, increased Rights of Way network etc) making maximum use of legislative changes

Quality of Life (also includes those under Accessibility)

I.7

- Increase use of the network as part of a healthier lifestyle
- Develop volunteer programmes (surveying, access auditing with disabled users, adopt a path and practical work, leaflet production etc) to encourage use, activity, sense of ownership etc
- Work with the Health Trusts to develop a selection of promoted routes for different levels of ability across South Yorkshire (Healthy Walks Programme)

Top Three Priorities

I.8 The SY ROWIP Top Three Priorities at this time are:

Ensure the Implications of the Disability Discrimination Act Legislation, Where It Applies to the Countryside and Rights of Way, Are Addressed

I.9 Greater access for all should enable South Yorkshire to attract more visitors and local residents using the countryside. This in turn will work towards economic regeneration, changing the image of South Yorkshire and may release funding from Yorkshire Forward for promotional work.

- I.10** The practical aspects of the route development will meet needs of local residents (as population ages) as well as tourists
- I.11** Utilitarian access will also be covered on urban rights of way.
- I.12** This will include the development of DDA and countryside/rights of way policies, surveying existing routes, developing and promoting access for all trails and using the 'Least Restrictive Access' guidance when carrying out maintenance and improvement works.
- 1.13** Impact on other areas - **Positive** Impact on:
- Economic development
 - Quality of Life
 - Accessibility
- I.14** **Neutral** impact on congestion, air quality - may find increase in vehicles, and increased need for disabled parking. However this may be offset by other transport initiatives, and increased use of the network for short journeys. Possible increased parking demand at certain locations where promoted routes start and finish.

Develop the Network of Multi-User Routes

- I.15** This has recreational, tourism and road safety benefits. It is working on developing routes that can be used by pedestrians, horse riders and cyclists (multi user) along with some that will be accessible to those with mobility impairments. These could be permanent or permissive.
- I.16** This priority will meet and be met by developing other requirements from the aims listed above and those other aspects of the ROWIP not directly applicable to the LTP2 criteria. There will also be cross links with Priority 1.
- I.17** Impact on other areas - **Positive** Impact on:
- Economic Development – encouraging visitors and local residents to use the network. Longer Distance trail users may require accommodation, meals and supply purchasing
 - Road Safety – taking cyclists (particularly those less confident users) and horse riders off roads, especially country lanes, will reduce traffic incidents and probably more importantly the fear of and risk of accidents that prevent people from using the countryside
 - Quality of Life - creating more off-road route opportunities usually encourages greater use, therefore having a positive effect on health and well being
- I.18** **Possible Negative** Impact on Congestion as users get to start points – this can be overridden by developing links from urban areas to the network or access points to encourage greater use of public transport (bus and rail).

Increase Maintenance of the Network

- I.19** This will have a range of impacts from improving the BVPI to increasing accessibility. A better maintained network increases likelihood of use and visual improvements.

I.20 Impact on other areas:

Positive on Quality of Life and Accessibility. Should have positive impact on congestion and air quality as more users walk and cycle.

Evidence

I.21 There is national research providing evidence for the value of countryside recreation for the general population as well as the potential value of mobility impaired access. The public consultation carried out as part of the ROWIP process should provide evidence of needs and creating priorities for each of the four South Yorkshire Authorities.

I.22 Table 6.2 in the main document shows the timetable for each Authority's production of its ROWIP.