

Rossendale Borough Council Overview and Scrutiny Public Rights of Way Task and Finish Group - Lancashire County Council response

Topic Area - Publicity/Communication	
<p>Lancashire County Council a) Mountain bike trails need to be properly signposted and publicised.</p>	<p>Signage within Lee and Cragg Quarries needs refreshing. This will be carried out during August 2014 with existing waymarkers and signage being replaced like for like to replace items which have been damaged due to weathering etc.</p> <p>The mountain bike trails are already well known amongst mountain bikers. Ideas around future promotion and publicity are linked to the proposed cycle shop and visitor centre. Once this is in place the site will have the car parking and toilet facilities which would justify additional marketing and promotion.</p>
<p>Lancashire County Council/Rossendale Borough Council a) That more emphasis is placed on encouraging walkers, runners, cyclists and horse riders into Rossendale to bring in additional revenue ie spend on food and drink, taking into consideration the plans for the new Rawtenstall Town Centre development.</p>	<p>Encouraging tourism spend in Rossendale is probably more appropriately led by the Borough Council, but the County Council will support such promotion by maintaining PROW and prioritising the most popular routes .</p> <p>This relates to various forms of information including signposts, waymark arrows, website maps and other information, social networking and traditional leaflets. The Public Rights of Way team will consider how best to provide appropriate information for the public. We anticipate this will be implemented over the next 1-2 years</p>

<p>b) Lancashire County Council and Rossendale Borough Council should consider working with partners to produce and publicise up to date information both in written and digital form on Public Rights of Way. This would particularly relate to long distance routes such as the Pennine Bridleway, Rossendale Way, Irwell Sculpture Trail and National Cycle routes.</p>	<p>We will continue to work with Natural England to secure funding for the ongoing maintenance of the Pennine Bridleway National Trail – including contributing information to the website.</p> <p>This relates to various forms of information including signposts, waymark arrows, website maps and other information, social networking and traditional leaflets. The Public Rights of Way team will consider how best to provide appropriate information for the public. We anticipate this will be implemented over the next 1-2 years.</p>
<p>c) That consideration be given on the use of social media (facebook), which would allow for an interaction page. People could then highlight problems they are encountering on the facebook page and also give positive feedback on individual routes.</p>	<p>This relates to various forms of information including signposts, waymark arrows, website maps and other information, social networking and traditional leaflets. The Public Rights of Way team will consider how best to provide appropriate information for the public. We anticipate this will be implemented over the next 1-2 years</p>
<p>Topic Area – Involvement by the Voluntary Sector</p>	
<p>Lancashire County Council a) Lancashire County Council should consider working alongside relevant interest groups to discuss the possibility of setting up a ‘Walkers are Welcome’ scheme, similar to that set up in Hebden Bridge, which would encourage more people into Lancashire and the Borough of Rossendale.</p>	<p>The 'Walkers are Welcome' scheme recommended by the group to be set up by Lancashire County Council is probably more appropriately led at a district level with contributions from the Public Rights of Way team in both provision of information and maintenance and improvement works but at the current time there are significant constraints in identifying additional, or even maintaining previous levels of, resources necessary for raising the standard to that necessary to achieve accreditation</p>

<p>b) That options be explored to encourage the voluntary sector in maintaining and enhancing Public Rights of Way with particular emphasis given to providing clarity on issues relating to public liability insurance and what work can be undertaken.</p>	<p>The report recommends increased use of the voluntary sector. This is something in which Lancashire County Council is bucking the national trend of cutting back on volunteer schemes. We are promoting a Local Delivery Scheme and we plan to expand this as it develops, particular to include community and user groups not only the parishes and towns so far participating. Such volunteers can play a useful role in maintenance and also in historical research and information, meaning that volunteering in this field is no longer restricted to those people who are fit and active. This is more useful than volunteers surveying the network to record the defects because there are insufficient resources to rectify all the issues uncovered which demotivates the volunteers and makes it harder to prioritise those issues which have the greatest actual effect on users of the paths</p>
<p>c) That more information in made available on the County's website promoting the Local Delivery Scheme to the voluntary sector/community groups.</p>	<p>The County Council will make more information available about the Local Delivery Scheme as part of a wider roll out of the initiative.</p>
<p>Lancashire County Council/Rossendale Borough Council a) That the County Council should work in partnership with the Council to look at establishing a 'Statement of Interest' from people in the community, involving schools, scout groups and colleges to undertake the surveying of local paths.</p>	<p>Volunteers can play a useful role in maintenance and also in historical research and information, meaning that volunteering in this field is no longer restricted to those people who are fit and active. This is more useful than volunteers surveying the network to record the defects because there are insufficient resources to rectify all the issues uncovered which demotivates the volunteers and makes it harder to prioritise those issues which have the greatest actual effect on users of the paths.</p>

Topic Area – Maintenance/Management Responsibilities	
<p>a) As there are lots of footpaths around Rossendale which are not classed as Public Rights of Way, clarification was required as to who should maintain these.</p>	<p>Clarification of the status (in relation both to public rights and to maintenance responsibility) of the many paths not recorded on the Definitive Map and Statement is raised in the report. This is actually quite a big task. It is partially covered by the initiative that we are starting with volunteers to identify paths that might otherwise fall victim to the 2026 cut-off date for the Definitive Map and Statement. Where there is any dispute, which in the majority of cases there is, the statutory procedure is long and demanding and although it clarifies public rights does not <i>per se</i> clarify maintenance liability although this can be inferred in many cases. A minority of public paths are not maintainable by anyone.</p>
<p>b) That the County Council have greater liaison with the Borough Council to identify their responsibilities for management and improvements of Public Rights of Way, including budget prioritisation and the role and responsibilities of each responsible department.</p>	<p>As the report identifies, there are many different budgets and processes that influence access to the countryside. The County Council's PROW team will work with the Council to aid understanding.</p>
<p>Lancashire County Council/Rossendale Borough Council</p> <p>a) That whilst the Planning Department consult with LCC/The Ramblers/ Peak and Northern Footpaths Society as statutory consultees on future developments affecting PROW as well as issuing statutory notices, they should also consider extending this on a voluntary basis to other appropriate walking, running, cycling and horse riding groups where PROW are affected by future developments</p>	<p>The recommendations in relation to extending consultation regarding planning applications affecting public rights of way and advice given the developers can be adopted at very little cost.</p>

<p>b) Developers should be made aware that development affecting the setting of a PROW will require public advertisement and stop orders/diversion orders as appropriate.</p>	<p>The recommendations in relation to extending consultation regarding planning applications affecting public rights of way and advice given the developers can be adopted at very little cost.</p>
<p>Topic Area – Specialist Needs</p>	
<p>Lancashire County Council a) That there needs to be publicity on how to access a ‘tramper’ and highlight the selected routes that are safe to take the vehicle and also consideration should be given for the County Council to work with relevant organisations to seek funding for a ‘disabled route for those less mobile from such places as Paths for Communities.</p>	<p>Trampers are permanently available at our two Country Parks and many Countryside events are tramper friendly. We will seek to widen the availability through the short and long term loan of trampers to local groups/businesses for use in appropriate locations.</p>