

Report to the Cabinet Member for Environment, Planning and Cultural Services
Report submitted by: Head of Planning and Environment
Date: 14 September 2016

Part

Electoral Division affected:
(All Divisions);

Lancashire Rights of Way Improvement Plan, 2015-2025
(Appendix 'A' refers)

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Executive Summary

The Rights of Way Improvement Plan (RoWIP) sets out how the County Council intends to manage and improve Lancashire's public rights of way network in order to give better provision for walkers, cyclists, equestrians and people with mobility problems.

Recommendation

The Cabinet Member for Environment, Planning and Cultural Services is requested to adopt the Lancashire Rights of Way Improvement Plan, 2015-2025.

Background and Advice

Lancashire County Council is required by the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000 to prepare and publish a Rights of Way Improvement Plan (RoWIP), which sets out how the County Council intends to manage and improve Lancashire's public rights of way network in order to give better provision for walkers, cyclists, equestrians and people with mobility problems. The first RoWIP was approved by the Cabinet Member for Environment, Planning and Cultural Services on 4th February 2015 and the Act requires it to be reviewed every ten years. This is the first decennial review.

Over the last 12 months the Public Rights of Way (PROW) team has been developing and consulting on the required update of the Rights of Way Improvement Plan. The update has also had the benefit of input from the Lancashire Access Forum.

The plan covers Lancashire, Blackpool and Blackburn with Darwen and presents the approach to the improvement of public paths, byways, access land and other areas

or linear routes to which the public have de facto access. It sets out proposals for improving Rights of Way and wider access in Lancashire. These are grouped into the following themes:

- Condition and connectivity
- Education and Information
- 20 and 30 minute walks
- Multi user routes
- Encourage community involvement in improving wider access
- Definitive Map

The draft Plan builds on the initiatives the councils have already been working on, as well as looking for external opportunities for improvements to the network, and improvements in operational practice.

This RoWIP consists of an 'Assessment of Need' as well as a 'Statement of Action'. The Assessment sets out the adequacy of the rights of way and wider access network. The Statement sets out how the County and Unitary Councils will work with others to address the demands and needs identified in the assessment.

Consultations

An extensive consultation has taken place on the draft RoWIP. Views have been submitted by members of the public and ramblers groups. The draft has also benefitted from the input of the Lancashire Local Access Forum.

Implications:

This item has the following implications, as indicated:

Financial

The RoWIP recognises the substantial financial challenge faced by the County Council. The draft Plan focuses on the areas that the County Council has already been working on, as well as looking for external opportunities for improvements, together with improvements in operational practices. Importantly, there are no financial commitments beyond existing resources.

Risk management

The County Council has a statutory duty to update the RoWIP and the update is now due. If the RoWIP is not adopted, there is a risk the County Council will be out of step with Blackburn with Darwen Council and Blackpool Council that have already adopted the RoWIP. Additionally, opportunities might be lost for implementing the new objectives of the Plan.

List of Background Papers

Paper	Date	Contact/Tel
Rights of Way Improvement Plan , 2015-2025	August 2016	Andrew Mullaney (01772 534190) or David Goode (07917836629)

Reason for inclusion in Part II, if appropriate

N/A

