



Rights of Way Improvement Plan 2011 - 2026

Implementation Plan 2011 - 2015

www.cheshireeast.gov.uk/prow

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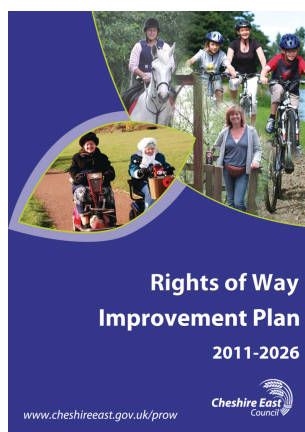
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1 ROWIP policies and initiatives

Introduction

- 1.1** In April 2011, Cheshire East Council published its Rights of Way Improvement Plan (ROWIP) 2011-2026 which set out the strategy by which the Council aims to improve public rights of way and countryside access across the Borough.



- 1.2** The ROWIP has 5 chapters:-
1. Introduction - an explanation of what the ROWIP is and how it was produced;
 2. Evaluation of Cheshire's ROWIP 2006-2011 - an assessment of successes and ongoing challenges;
 3. Network assessment - a description of what countryside access is available to the public in Cheshire East;
 4. Demand assessment - a description of what people want from public rights of way and countryside access at the present time and future demand trends; and,
 5. What we need to do - listing policies and initiatives through which we aim to make improvements. These are common to the Local Transport Plan 3 (LTP3).
- 1.3** The policies and initiatives stated in chapter five state what we need to do and are repeated below. For full background details please read the ROWIP strategy available at www.cheshireeast.gov.uk/prow.
- 1.4** The actual projects to be delivered under the ROWIP strategy will be set out in 4-yearly implementation plans, this being the first.

1 ROWIP policies and initiatives

Policy H2: Promotion of active travel and healthy activities

Work in partnership to promote walking, cycling and horse riding as active travel options and healthy activities

Promote opportunities and facilities: highlight opportunities for active travel and healthy activity by promoting new and existing facilities using appropriate media such as signage, walking and cycling maps, leaflets, events, internet sites and other technologies. This will focus on routes and sites that are accessible by modes of active travel or public transport (such as important leisure routes or key employment locations) and will involve working with health agencies, help to promote active travel and other activities as a lifestyle choice for all ages amongst our residents and visitors. Close working with the Peak District National Park Authority and other visitor organisations to provide helpful information and promote a consistent and warm welcome to visitor attractions.

Organised walks, rides and activities: undertake and support organised walks, rides and other activities which encourage people to partake in healthy activities that they may not otherwise have the confidence or knowledge to do.

Public information on the public rights of way network: enhance the accuracy of the Definitive Map and Statement to provide an up to date and accessible format. This will facilitate changes to the network, through the necessary legal processes, for the benefit of landowners and the public.



1 ROWIP policies and initiatives

Policy H3: Public rights of way and green infrastructure

Protect and enhance our public rights of way and green infrastructure and endeavour to create new links where beneficial for health, safety or access to green spaces

Sustainable access to green spaces: aim to improve access for all members of society, including disabled people, to and within green infrastructure, including the public rights of way network, town parks, public open space, the Peak District National Park and country parks.

Link key services: seek to improve the routes and green infrastructure that link key services (e.g. schools, community centres and tourism destinations) by routes and green infrastructure such as canal towpaths. Investments will include improving surfacing and signage, where appropriate, and creating links where gaps exist in the network.

Leisure routes for cyclists, horse riders and walkers: endeavour to create and enhance leisure routes for cyclists, horse riders and walkers on the public rights of way network and highway network.

Litter, environmental health, safety and security: encourage users to reduce litter and will improve environmental health, safety and other security concerns through education and clean-up campaigns.

Country parks, town parks and public open space: ensure adequate maintenance and improvement of land within the Council's ownership that is used for formal and informal public access and recreation, at a local level and sites which are tourism destinations.



1 ROWIP policies and initiatives

Policy S7: Walking

Work with stakeholders to improve facilities for walking so that it is attractive for shorter journeys

Footway and footpath improvements: promote improvements to the condition of highway footways, footpaths and public rights of way. In particular, support the development, on safety grounds, of low cost measures, such as verge improvements. Consideration will also be given to resurfacing, removal of litter and other environmental health issues, provision of lighting and seating, where appropriate, and the removal of barriers and obstacles to open up more routes for more people, particularly those with pushchairs and disabled people. This initiative will also recognise the environmental and biodiversity benefits of creating attractive green spaces alongside walkways and cycleways.

New walking routes: support the development of new routes where required but not currently provided, such as on rural roads and in villages, and support initiatives to connect up the highway footway and public rights of way networks for greater pedestrian movement, including links to the canal system.

Pedestrian crossing points: support the provision of safe crossing points, wide pavements, dropped kerbs and other pedestrian facilities where necessary to encourage travel on foot and improve perceptions of safety along routes and make routes more accessible to disabled people.

Route signing: promote the signing of dedicated on- and off-road pedestrian routes to encourage greater use by pedestrians. Initiatives will include the provision of signs relaying destination, distance and time information.



1 ROWIP policies and initiatives

Policy S8: Cycling

Work with stakeholders to improve facilities for cycling so that it is attractive for shorter journeys

New cycle routes: seek to provide appropriate highways improvements (e.g. on-road cycle lanes or wide nearside lanes) and off-road routes to make commuter cycling a safe and quick alternative to car use. Focus will be on creating a network of joined-up routes catering for a range of cycle skill levels and will capitalise on the potential of the canal system for cyclists.

Junction and route improvements for cyclists: promote the provision of filter lanes, advanced stop lines and toucan crossings, where applicable, to prioritise and enhance the safety of cyclists at junctions. Undertake surfacing and lighting improvements on existing key links. Such measures will be incorporated into the design of new or amended highways, as well as retrospectively to existing road junctions, where possible.

Cycle facilities: work to provide greater access to cycling facilities (e.g. cycle parking, changing facilities, showers, hire & ride schemes) in town centres, at community facilities (e.g. libraries) and service and employment centres.

Route signing: encourage a greater uptake of cycling through the provision of route signs which state the destination, distance and journey time to selected destinations, to complement other sources of information.



2 Prioritising improvements

Prioritisation

- 2.1** The projects listed here have been collated from suggestions gathered from the public, user groups and other organisations and are recorded in both geographical and database format for ease of interrogation and sharing with other departments and organisations.
- 2.2** The suggestions have been assessed and scored through a prioritisation methodology which was selected and amended by the Cheshire Local Access Forum, the statutory body advising the Council on access to the countryside. The scoring reflects the policies of the ROWIP and the benefits offered by the suggestion in terms of need:
- improving access where current provision is poor;
 - improving access in a community where there is a high level of deprivation;
 - improving access for disabled people, horse riders and cyclists;
 - improving safety of non-motorised users on roads;
 - Improving access to services such as shops and schools
 - Improving access to areas of interest such as water bodies or woodland; and,
 - Improving access which will bring about a benefit to the visitor economy.
- 2.3** The prioritisation methodology also incorporates an assessment of the costs of the scheme in terms of capital and resources, and of the feasibility of delivering the suggestion. In the following tables, the amount of staff time required to deliver the project is indicated by stars: * low, ** medium, *** high. Similarly, the estimated cost of the project is indicated by pound signs: £ low, ££ medium, £££ high.
- 2.4** Those suggestions scoring high in terms of delivering benefits and scoring low in terms of costs have been ranked to be taken forward. The top 5 suggestions in each of the leisure walking, leisure cycling, horse riding and cross-cutting categories have been selected. A large number of transport-related suggestions are listed in the statement of action as these tend to be large scale projects which run for a number of years and in which public rights of way will contribute one part of the whole.

Statement of action

- 2.5** The following statement of action lists an indicative set of projects that the Council aims to deliver within the 4 year period 2011-2015. What can actually be achieved is dependent to varying degrees on the availability of funding and on landowner agreement. The Council will need to retain flexibility in order to take advantage of opportunities arising, for example, from future development proposals or other partnerships. It follows that the Council may deliver alternative projects to the schemes listed here.

2 Prioritising improvements

- 2.6** It is realised that funding from central government, local authority budgets and other sources are likely to be minimal in at least the short term future. Therefore, the importance of partnership working in improving the network and the need to draw in external funds from other sources must not be overlooked.
- 2.7** The delivery of projects will also be subject to the organisational changes occurring within Cheshire East Council. A review of the Council's functions and budgets across Green Spaces and the wider Health & Wellbeing service is anticipated as a result of the Comprehensive Spending Review and other pressures.
- 2.8** Alongside these ROWIP projects, ongoing maintenance works and smaller scale improvements will continue to be undertaken through the maintenance budget of the Public Rights of Way team. These works are aligned to the policies of the ROWIP as well as satisfying the authority's duty to maintain public rights of way. This duty is undertaken in accordance with the authority's prioritisation system for different categories of maintenance and enforcement issues on public rights of way.

Table 1 Prioritised projects 2011-2015 - leisure walking

Ref.	Site name	Suggested improvement	Partners	Staff time	Estimated cost	Potential funding sources
W41	Salt Line Country Park, Alsager	Investigate improving access to the Alsager end of the Salt Line avoiding roads	Alsager Town Council, Alsager Partnership	**	££	Highways
W67	Nantwich Riverside Loop	Install additional signage at Water Lode bridge over the River Weaver to signal the Loop route to non-regular users	Nantwich Riverside Loop partners, Nantwich Local Area Partnership	*	£	ROWIP budget
W47	Wood Park, Alsager	Improve the link path between the Salt Line and the ATC hut to provide a safe and attractive route for residents to access the facilities	Landowners, Alsager Town Council, Alsager Partnership	*	££	ROWIP budget, External funding bid with partners
W35	Odd Rodde Footpath No. 41, Church Lawton	Improve access from footpath and Old Knutsford Road onto the Trent and Mersey Canal towpath, particularly for disabled people	Congleton Disabled Access Group, Landowners, British Waterways	*	£	ROWIP budget, External funding bid with partners
W45	Dane Valley Way, Congleton	Investigate the feasibility of improving the path between between Havannah Street and Havannah Lane	Landowners, Community Group, Congleton Town Council, Environment Agency	**	££	ROWIP budget, External funding bid with partners, Developer contributions

3 Statement of action

Table 2 Prioritised projects 2011-2015 - leisure cycling

Ref.	Site name	Suggested improvement	Partners	Staff time	Estimated cost	Potential funding sources
C4	Cycle route to Brereton Local Nature Reserve	Set up a promoted route from Holmes Chapel and Congleton to reach Brereton Local Nature Reserve by bike, using quieter roads and public rights of way	Highways, Landowners, Visitor Economy, Health Improvement	*	£	ROWIP budget
C2	Congleton Bridleway No. 34	Resolve drainage issues on bridleway which connects housing in Buglawton with the Macclesfield Canal towpath	British Waterways, Community Group	*	£	ROWIP budget
C3	Poynton Footpath No. 7	Investigate the possibility of enabling cyclists to use this route on Princes Incline as a means to link Poynton and Hazel Grove with the Middlewood Way	Landowners, Poynton Town Council, CycleWilmslow	**	££	ROWIP budget
C1	Mobberley Footpath Nos. 45 & 52	Investigate the possibility of upgrading these footpaths to bridleways to extend the network of routes available to cyclists	Landowners, CycleWilmslow	**	££	ROWIP budget
C5	Alsager Road, Hassall	Investigate making Alsager Road safer for cyclists to create a circular ride from Alsager	Highways, Alsager Partnership	**	££	Highways

Table 3 Prioritised projects 2011-2015 - horse riding

Ref.	Site name	Suggested improvement	Partners	Staff time	Estimated cost	Potential sources of funding
H39	Congleton Bridleway No. 31	Create a connection between the bridleway and the Biddulph Valley Way to improve the network of rides available	Border Bridleways Association, Landowner	***	££	ROWIP budget, Developer contributions
H38	St John's Public Open Space, Congleton	Create a bridleway route to link with Havannah Lane and Tommy's Lane and the wider network	Border Bridleways Association, Landowner	**	££	Developer contributions
H30	Poynton Footpath No. 51	Investigate the possibility of upgrading to bridleway status to give access onto the Middlewood Way and surrounding network	Landowners, Horse rider user groups	**	£	ROWIP budget
H20	Seven Sisters Lane, Ollerton	Provide a verge path or field edge path to provide access to Ollerton Bridleway No. 6 for users using Seven Sisters Lane.	Landowners, North Cheshire Riders	**	££	Highways
H23	Specific footpaths in Ollerton Marthall, Moberley & Knutsford	Investigate the possibility of upgrading footpaths to bridleway status to create a valuable area of off-road riding.	Landowners, North Cheshire Riders	**	£	ROWIP budget

3 Statement of action

Table 4 Prioritised projects 2011-2015 - cross cutting projects

Ref.	Site name	Suggested improvement	Partners	Staff time	Estimated cost	Potential funding sources
X14	Towns	Develop publicity highlighting available walking and cycling routes within towns to encourage active travel	LTP, user groups, Local Area Partnerships, Town & Parish Councils, Health organisations	**	££	ROWIP budget, External funding bid with partners
X15	Horse riding promoted routes	Transfer North Cheshire Riders' promoted routes on to Discover Cheshire website	North Cheshire Riders, Landowners	*	£	ROWIP budget
X1	Mersey Life Project	Mersey Life Project Improving access to the river for all	Mersey Life Project, Environment Agency, Bollin Valley Partnership	***	£££	External funding bid with partners
X6	Local leisure routes	Develop and publish circular promoted routes with Local Area Partnerships	Local Area Partnerships, Visitor Economy	**	£	ROWIP budget, External funding bid with partners
X7	Promoted 'green routes'	Develop and/or reprint 'Green Walks': promoting routes which use public transport outwards and walking or cycling on the return journey	Public transport providers, Local Area Partnerships	**	£	Public transport providers

Table 5 Prioritised projects 2011-2015 - transport-related

Ref.	Site name	Suggested improvement	Partners	Staff time	Estimated cost	Potential funding sources
T33	Macclesfield Canal Towpath, Congleton	Improve the surface of the towpath in Congleton, bridges 66-78. The route offers links to the town centre as commuter and leisure route	Congleton Town Council, Community Group, British Waterways	***	£££	External funding bid with partners
T44	Macclesfield Canal Towpath, Macclesfield	Improve the surface of the towpath in Macclesfield, bridges 30-46 as a potential commuter and recreational route close to the town centre	British Waterways, Local community groups	***	£££	External funding bid with partners
T23	Prestbury Footpath No. 37 and Macclesfield Riverside Park	Upgrade the footpath and route through the Country Park from Prestbury to Macclesfield as a joint use path for walkers and cyclists	Prestbury Parish Plan, Local community groups, Bollin Valley Partnership, Sustrans, Local Area Partnership	***	£££	External funding bid with partners
T45	Macclesfield Canal Towpath, Bollington	Improve the surface of the towpath, bridges 26-28 to create good linkages to town and Discovery Centre	Bollington Town Council, British Waterways, Visitor economy	***	£££	External funding bid with partners

3 Statement of action

Ref.	Site name	Suggested improvement	Partners	Staff time	Estimated cost	Potential funding sources
T1	Peak Forest Canal Towpath, Disley	Improve the surface of the towpath to create an active travel route to the facilities in Disley and commuter destinations further afield	Disley Parish Council, Disley Footpaths Society, British Waterways	***	£££	External funding bid with partners
T42	Reaseheath College link to Crewe-Nantwich Greenway	Creation of an off-road shared use path between college and Crewe to Nantwich Greenway	Reaseheath College, Sustrans, Highways	***	£££	External funding bid with partners
T25	Cranage to Holmes Chapel link	Creation of an off-road shared use path between Cranage village and playing fields with Holmes Chapel town and facilities	Cranage and Holmes Chapel Parish Councils	***	£££	External funding bid with partners
T21	Salt Line to Wheelock Rail Trail link	Creation of a connecting route between the country parks to create a longer leisure and transport route	Landowners	**	££	ROWIP budget
T28	Middlewich Branch towpath	Upgrade towpath condition as a link between communities and 3 schools	British Waterways	**	£££	External funding bid with partner
T52	Congleton Bridleway No. 31	Tommy's Lane, Congleton: improve surface, signage and maintenance	Congleton Community Group	*	££	ROWIP budget

3 Statement of action

Ref.	Site name	Suggested improvement	Partners	Staff time	Estimated cost	Potential funding sources
T29	Middlewich Footpath No. 19	Upgrade for use by cyclists commuting from town to Midpoint 18 employment centre	Landowner, Developer	**	££	ROWIP budget, Developer contributions
T24	Pickmere Footpath No. 13	Upgrade footpath between Pickmere and Wincham linking school with community	Pickmere Parish Plan, Cheshire West & Chester Council	**	££	ROWIP budget, External funding bid with partners



4 Monitoring

Monitoring and assessment

- 4.1** We will monitor the progress of this ROWIP and the subsequent implementation plans through annual review assessing the delivery of projects against the ROWIP strategy and implementation plans. This review will note improvements made together with usage, travel mode and health statistics, where available. This reporting will be completed as part of LTP3 annual review and reported to the Council's Public Rights of Way Committee and the Cheshire Local Access Forum.
- 4.2** In addition, monitoring may be undertaken through national indicator sets as these are developed and through the results of the National Highways and Transport Network Satisfaction Surveys.
- 4.3** The 'Ease of use' random surveys following the Best Value Performance Indicator 178 methodology, will be conducted internally and used to monitor the maintenance condition of the public rights of way network.
- 4.4** Finally, the CROW Act 2000 set the requirement for ROWIPs to be reviewed at intervals of not less than 10 years. Given that the strategy extends beyond that timeframe, it is recognised that periodic review will be required and that these Implementation Plans will in effect enact that appraisal.



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This information is available in other formats on request