

CHESHIRE EAST COUNCIL

REPORT TO: PUBLIC RIGHTS OF WAY COMMITTEE

Date of Meeting:	7 September 2009
Report of:	Green Spaces Manager
Subject/Title:	Update on Development of the Rights of Way Improvement Plan (2011-2026) within the Local Transport Plan 3

1.0 Report Summary

- 1.1 This report provides an update to Members on the development of the Rights of Way Improvement Plan (ROWIP) (2011-2026) within the context of the Local Transport Plan 3 (LTP3).

2.0 Recommendations

- 2.1 That the report be noted.

3.0 Reasons for Recommendations

- 3.1 No decision is required by Members at present.

4.0 Wards Affected

- 4.1 All.

5.0 Local Ward Members

- 5.1 All Members.

6.0 Policy Implications including - Climate Change - Health

- 6.1 The development of the ROWIP is aligned with the health and wellbeing objectives and priorities of the Council as stated in the Corporate Plan (2.1.1 Encouraging healthier lifestyles), the Local Area Agreement (National Indicator 8 Adult participation in sport and active recreation) and the Health and Wellbeing Service commitment to the Change4Life initiative.
- 6.2 In addition, the ROWIP, as an integrated part of the LTP3, will be set within the context of the Local Area Agreement indicators concerning air quality and CO₂ emissions.

7.0 Financial Implications for Transition Costs (Authorised by the Borough Treasurer)

7.1 None arising.

8.0 Financial Implications 2009/10 and Beyond (Authorised by the Borough Treasurer)

8.1 Some consultation costs during the current financial year are anticipated, as yet unknown.

9.0 Legal Implications (Authorised by the Borough Solicitor)

9.1 It is a statutory duty under section 60 of the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000 for every local highway authority to prepare and publish a Rights of Way Improvement Plan.

9.2 Non compliance with the requirement for the full integration of the ROWIP with the LTP3 could result in criticism from statutory monitoring bodies and agencies.

10.0 Risk Management

10.1 No matters arising.

11.0 Background and Options

11.1 Members will be aware that the current ROWIP covering Cheshire East Borough is the former countywide document prepared by Cheshire County Council, published in February 2006. It is proposed that a new ROWIP be prepared for Cheshire East Borough to focus on the post-LGR needs of the new Borough and to form part of the new Local Transport Plan (LTP3).

11.2 It is a statutory requirement that the ROWIP be fully integrated with LTP3. The national transport goals enshrined in LTP3 are as follows:-

- reducing carbon emissions;
- supporting economic growth;
- promoting equality of opportunity;
- contributing to better safety, security and health; and,
- improving quality of life and a healthy natural environment.

11.3 Earlier this summer, Natural England published a good practice note on LTP and ROWIP integration. The document promotes the optimisation of the role that rights of way can play in the wider transport system and highlights the benefits of the integration of the two plans:-

- a more holistic approach to transport, addressing the rights of way network as an integral part of urban and rural transport systems;
- strengthening of the long term sustainability of the rights of way network as its role in the wider transport network is recognised;

- securing more direct and integrated funding and delivery;
- encouragement of new ways of working with internal and external partners including local access forums;
- promoting a shift to 'active travel' in which walking and riding are considered as a choice of transport modes;
- advantage in delivering positive benefits for people and the natural environment – a more active lifestyle in a greener, healthier, low carbon, quieter and safer environment.

11.4 The timetable and project plan for the development of the ROWIP will be drawn up to align with those of the LTP3 project, resulting in the publication of the final plans in April 2011. A Steering Group is being established to monitor the development of the ROWIP and its integration with LTP3. A representative of the ROWIP will also sit on the governance structure for LTP3.

11.5 This second ROWIP will build on the first which was assessed under Natural England's ROWIP evaluation process. The Cheshire ROWIP was regarded as a good document and one that demonstrated best practice.

11.6 It is anticipated that the next ROWIP will comprise:-

- an assessment of the present and predicted demand for the network of rights of way and other access routes;
- an assessment of the present network, particularly with regard to the needs of people with mobility and visual impairments;
- an assessment of the gap between the demand and the present network; and,
- a statement of action, designed to address the gaps identified.

11.7 There will be an extensive consultation process for the ROWIP and LTP3, with opportunity for Members and for the public to have input to both documents. It is anticipated that consultation will begin later this financial year and Members are encouraged to participate when invited.

12.0 Overview of Year One and Term One Issues

12.1 Not applicable.

13.0 Access to Information

The background papers relating to this report can be inspected by contacting the report writer:

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