

CHESHIRE EAST COUNCIL

Public Rights of Way Committee

Date of Meeting: 7th December 2015
Report of: Public Rights of Way Manager
Subject/Title: Cheshire East Rights of Way Improvement Plan 2011-2026:
Implementation Plan 2015-2019

1.0 Report Summary

- 1.1 This report presents the Cheshire East Rights of Way Improvement Plan (ROWIP) 2011-2026 Implementation Plan 2015-2019.

2.0 Recommendation

- 2.1 That the Cheshire East Rights of Way Improvement Plan 2011-2026 Implementation Plan 2015-2019 be noted.

3.0 Reasons for Recommendation

- 3.1 On 13th December 2010, the Public Rights of Way Committee gave the Green Spaces Manager the delegated powers to compile, for approval by the Portfolio Holder, the ROWIP Implementation Plan 2011-2015 based on a prioritisation methodology that was presented. The second Implementation Plan covering 2015-2019 has now been prepared and is in the process of being put to the Portfolio Holder for Open Spaces for approval.

4.0 Wards Affected

- 4.1 All Wards affected.

5.0 Local Ward Members

- 5.1 All Local Ward Members.

6.0 Policy Implications

- 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:
Outcome 4: *Cheshire East is a green and sustainable place*
Outcome 5: *People live well and for longer.*

6.2 In addition, the ROWIP, as an integrated part of the Local Transport Plan.

7.0 Financial Implications

7.1 Potential funding sources, which will include external grants, are identified in the Implementation Plan, but are not committed as the funding is unknown and the actual projects developed may vary from those presented in the Plan.

8.0 Legal Implications

8.1 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. A ROWIP should contain a statement of the action which the authority proposes to take.

8.2 Non compliance with the requirement for the full integration of the ROWIP with the Local Transport Plan could result in criticism from statutory monitoring bodies, agencies and local user groups.

9.0 Risk Management

9.1 No matters arising.

10.0 Background and Options

10.1 Under the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000, every highway authority in England is required to prepare and publish a Rights of Way Improvement Plan (ROWIP) for its area. The plan must then be assessed and reviewed within ten years and at similar intervals thereafter. ROWIPs were created to publish the authority's assessment of:

- the extent to which the local Public Rights of Way network meets the present and future needs of the public;
- the opportunities provided by local Public Rights of Way for exercise and other forms of open-air recreation and the enjoyment of the local authority's area; and,
- the accessibility of local Public Rights of Way for blind or partially sighted persons and others with mobility problems.

10.2 The ROWIP strategy for Cheshire East was developed through consultation with residents and the wider public, Ward Members, local user groups and parish and town councils. The strategy covers the period 2011-2026. This strategy is integrated into the Local Transport Plan in recognition of walking and cycling as means of travel.

10.3 On 17^h January 2011 the Portfolio Holder for Health and Wellbeing approved the Cheshire East [Rights of Way Improvement Plan 2011-2026](#) which sets out the strategy for this period.

- 10.4 ROWIPs are also required to contain a statement of the action which the authority proposes to take for the management of local Public Rights of Way, and for securing an improved network of those routes. Therefore, under the ROWIP strategy there are rolling 4-year implementation plans detailing projects through which the policies and initiatives stated in the ROWIP will be delivered.
- 10.5 The first [ROWIP Implementation Plan 2011-2015](#) has expired, and the next Implementation Plan has been prepared.
- 10.5 Suggestions for improvement projects are submitted by residents, Ward Members, local user groups, community groups, parish and town councils and officers. These suggestions are prioritised using the methodology selected and amended by the Cheshire Local Access Forum and which was presented to the Public Rights of Way Committee on 13th December 2010. This methodology takes into account the benefits of the scheme in the context of local need.
- 10.6 The highest priority suggestions have been selected for each category of suggestion: walking, cycling, horse riding, transport-related and cross-cutting projects. It is intended that these suggestions be investigated and developed first, with the acknowledgement that some may not be feasible and other opportunities may arise through partnerships, funding opportunities and development sites that result in alternative projects being taken forward.
- 10.7 On 13th December 2010, the Public Rights of Way Committee gave the Green Spaces Manager the delegated powers to, in consultation with the Chairman of the Committee, compile the Implementation Plan based on the prioritisation methodology. The Implementation Plan was then approved by the Portfolio Holder for Health and Wellbeing on 14th March 2011.
- 10.8 A new Implementation Plan has been drawn up, assessing the delivery of the preceding Plan, and setting out the intentions of the Council in relation to the period 2015-2019. The report is being presented to the Portfolio Holder for Open Spaces for approval.
- 10.9 Monitoring and reporting shall be undertaken through annual progress reporting to the Public Rights of Way Committee.

11.0 Access to Information

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

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