

CHESHIRE EAST COUNCIL

REPORT TO: PUBLIC RIGHTS OF WAY COMMITTEE

Date of Meeting: 10 June 2010
Report of: Mike Taylor, Green Spaces Manager
Subject/Title: Update on Development of the Rights of Way Improvement Plan (2011-2026)

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).

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 ROWIP, as an integrated part of the Local Transport Plan (LTP3), will be set within the context of the Local Area Agreement indicators concerning air quality and CO₂ emissions.
- 6.2 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.

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

7.1 None arising.

8.0 Financial Implications 2010/11 and Beyond (Authorised by the Borough Treasurer)

8.1 An allocation has been designated within the Greenspaces Community and Visitor Services Development budget for the development of the ROWIP documents, to cover research, consultation and publishing costs.

8.2 Delivery against the projects set out in the ROWIP implementation plans will require further funds starting in April 2011. Work is currently being undertaken to establish how funding for these projects can be secured from within the Local Transport Plan and other sources.

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 Local Transport Plan 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 was prepared by Cheshire County Council and expires in March 2011. A new ROWIP is therefore being developed to reflect the new geographic area of Cheshire East and to coincide with the preparation of the new Local Transport Plan, into which the ROWIP must be fully integrated.

11.2 The project management system employed for the ROWIP has seen a Project Board and Steering Group established to assist with the process of developing the plan. The Project Board consists of a broad range of officers from different Council services, who contribute their expertise and knowledge in helping to define the scope and focus of the new ROWIP as well as improving links between departments. The Steering Group consists of elected Members from the Rights of Way Committee, together with the Portfolio Holder for Health and Wellbeing. Their role is to direct the project programme and to monitor progress against the project time plan.

- 11.3 The ROWIP encompasses an assessment of the rights of way network and the wider access to the countryside that the public currently enjoys. The ROWIP then goes on to consider the demand in using that rights of way network and the wider countryside. The difference between the provision of access and the current and potential demand is then analysed with a view to drawing up a programme of projects by which to bridge this gap.
- 11.4 In line with the Local Transport Plan, the ROWIP will comprise a 15-year strategy spanning 2011-2026 with 3-year implementation plans. The Local Transport Plan chapters are intended to be structured around the priorities of the Sustainable Community Strategy, with a geographic focus on the large towns of Crewe and Macclesfield, the market towns and the villages of the Borough.
- 11.5 An extensive consultation process for the ROWIP and Local Transport Plan have been developed spanning the spring, summer and autumn of this year. This work includes engagement through Town and Parish Councils, Local Area Partnerships, web based consultation and direct contact with user groups and the wider public. Members are invited to comment through the aforementioned consultations. Further engagement with Members is being planned, to include a Members' workshop event. Consultation is initially concentrating on confirmation that the priorities for the ROWIP identified for the County Council plan remain valid for Cheshire East.
- 11.6 It is intended that the ROWIP strategy be presented to this Committee at its September meeting seeking recommendation to the Portfolio Holder for approval. This would be prior to the draft Local Transport Plan strategy being presented to Cabinet in October 2010 before being put out to public consultation and returning to Cabinet in December. Implementation plans for the ROWIP within those for Local Transport Plan will be developed when the funding for the 3 year period is known, early in 2011.

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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